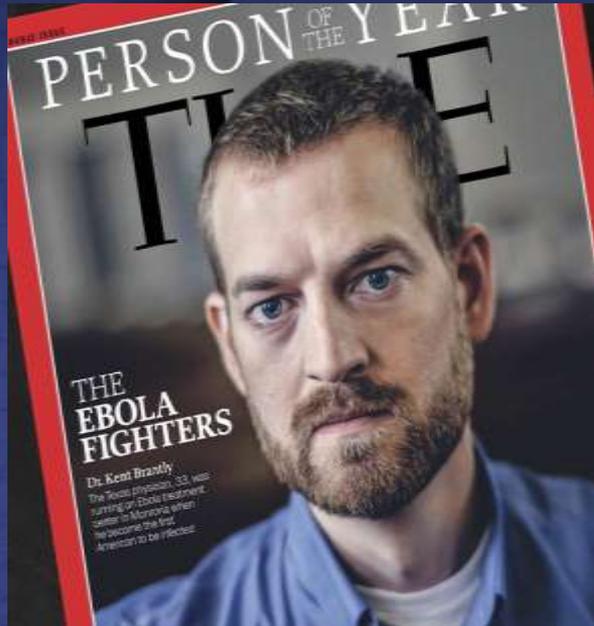


The Love – Hate Crisis

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35

A Crisis of Trust



- Reuters, June 27, 2014 that reported on D. Kent Brantly being infected with Ebola also spoke about the situation in Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown.
- A family forcibly removed an infected family member from the hospital to take her to a traditional healer.
- Officials retrieved her only to have her die in the ambulance on the way back to the hospital.

The Issue...? TRUST!

Can there be a more serious crisis than what is supposed to be a cure is seen as the illness?

Hotel for Saints OR Hospital for Sinners

- How does the world see us?
- The church's favorability ratings have fallen for more than four(4) decades.
- We sometimes say the world hates us because of our counter-culture message. That's true to an extent.
- Is it the whole truth?

Research Says Something Different!

- Most who hate the church cite “its unloving and judgmental disposition” not its fundamental doctrines.
- We have a credibility problem.
- We must view our symptoms through their eyes.
- But we can't get well if we don't admit we are sick.

Four Symptoms of our Sickness, by Don McLaughlin

1. The Best People Fit In With Me.
2. The Smartest People Think Like Me.
3. The Safest People Fear What I Fear.
4. The Good People Are Good Like Me.

1. “The Best People Fit In With Me.”

- Only “certain people” fit in here.
- We must not change any truth revealed in scripture.
- Attitudes must change..
- A church socially committed to the “homogenous principle” will not survive in our world.
- We need to do more than “survive,” we need to “thrive” in a world increasingly different than us.

“The Ugly In Christianity” by Hillary Ferguson

“I proudly called myself a Christian. Now I shy away from the term. I avoid discussions about it because I have family members I love so much who are still part of the Church. But, I will never again be one of them.”

Why? When she was 18 the following scenario occurred.

“Praise the Lord! Ted Kennedy is dead!”

Jesus Does Not Just Love Us When He Agrees With Us!

“A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one
another. By this everyone will know that you are
my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

“Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

Romans 5:7-8 NLT

2. “The Smartest People Think Like Me.”

- Dallas Willard, in *Renovation of the Heart*, suggests our inner selves are formed by the world, but it must be transformed by the Holy Spirit of God.
- **We are what we think!**

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Romans 12:2

James 3:13-18 (NLT2)

If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

We have Normalized Combative Reactions

- Could it be we place a higher value on “individual expression” than we do on “individuals?”
- Do we love “America,” just not “Americans?”
- Wouldn't Jesus want us to assume the position of humbly listening to others with empathy.

Too Much Either/Or Thinking

- Some possibilities are: both are partially right, both are partially wrong and both are completely wrong.
- Are we addicted to self expression and an inflated sense of rightness?
- Would we not be better served with the humility, wisdom, and courage to listen, consider all the information available and only then draw healthy conclusions?

3. “The Safest People Fear What I Fear.”

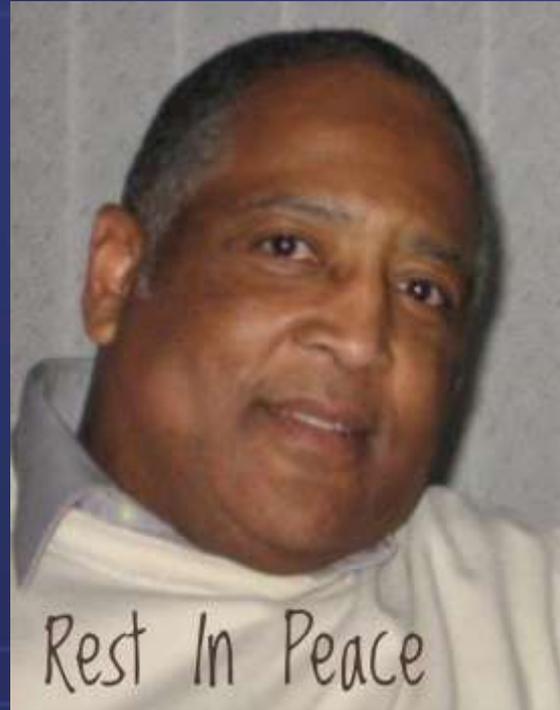
- “Fear has us in a death grip!”
- “Black Lives Matter” and “Blue Lives Matter.”
- Some law enforcement officers were talking about fearing law enforcement officers.
- The church should be a fearless place when the world is afraid, a place where people can share their hurts, anger and opinions without fear.
- Not everyone agrees with that perspective.

Is the church willing to serve as an alternative to this culture of fear and be a harbor of safety in a sea of rage?

4. “The Good People Are Good Like Me.”

- *“All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.”* Romans 3:12 (NLT2)
- Neither unquestioned goodness nor complete agreement can be expected in order to love, support or respect someone. They are false prerequisites. They don't exist.
- **Some allow our opinion of others to be shaped more by our favorite “News Network” than the “Good News.”**
- It was that way 2000 years ago.
- *“...Can anything good come from Nazareth?” “Come and see for yourself,”* Philip replied. John 1:46 (NLT2)

Art Davis



The Real Problem In Our World

- Not Black or White, Jew or Non-Jew, Rich or Poor nor any other unbiblical dichotomy that we imagine.
- The problem is Good and Evil!
- We must not equate either with a particular type of person.
- Jesus came to deal with evil and its effects.
- *“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”* Romans 5:8 (NLT2)

Romans 5:8-11 (NLT2)

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

The Church, The Problem or The Solution?

- Can we be healed of our own worldly attitudes, words and actions?
- Can we not be carriers of the disease of hate(the problem) but couriers of balm of love(the solution)?
- Can we love like God did and does?
- Can we love like Jesus did and does?
- Can we be a healing place for ourselves and others?

James 3:17-18 (NLT2)

“But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”