



Real Life News & Notes

church of Christ of Grand Junction

A Relevant, Serving, Growing Family of Jesus followers

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DO CHURCHES CREATE ATHEISTS?

by Wayne Turner

(from Gospel Herald, July 2013)

Below is an article entitled "Do Christians Create Atheists?" It was written by Wayne Turner and forwarded to me by Jophn Clayton. Many of us will remember the "Does God Exist" seminar John Clayton did for us several years ago. We have him scheduled to speak for us on Sunday September 29. The article below challenges us to know why we believe and to know why we believe and then to live what we believe. Please consider what the article says.

In Faith-John Cooper

Do churches create atheists? It may seem like a strange question, yet it is one we should ask. In a time where church membership and influence is declining across Canada, and non-belief is increasing, we must ask if there is any correlation between the two trends.

In the past, in North America, it was assumed that everyone had some kind of religious affiliation, however nominal that might be. Today, an ever increasing segment of the population does not even admit to having any faith. As well, we have seen the rise of a new, very militant and aggressive atheism spearheaded by people like Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins and others. It is interesting to note that both Hitchens and Dawkins came out of religious backgrounds. When he was young, Hitchens attended religious schools. Dawkins was raised in an Anglican family. Both, while relatively young, eschewed whatever religious ideas that they might have been taught, instead favoring ideas that were more secular and, in their view, scientific.

Many of us have had some experience with people who have moved away from belief. Often they have been disillusioned or disappointed, either by their expectations of God or the behavior of those who professed to be believers. Some may have been very marginal in their belief to begin with, basing their involvement more on church or family culture, rather than personal conviction. Some, like the Laodiceans or even the Ephesians, may have just become lukewarm and lost their first love.

However, today, there is a new generation of young atheists who have abandoned their faith and church. They are more militant and active. On countless university and college campuses, they have come together in organizations for association, encouragement and even to work together to promote atheism. It has been suggested that these groups are the atheist equivalent to Campus Crusade for Christ. Many of these young adults came from religious backgrounds, and like Hitchens and Dawkins, have chosen not to believe in God. Why? Were they influenced by the atheist apologeticists or was there something in their backgrounds that led (or pushed) them away from faith?

The Fixed Point Foundation decided to find out how and why these young adults left. They decided to seek out students involved in these on campus atheist organizations. They asked the young people to "tell us your journey to unbelief." The goal was not to engage in debate, but rather to listen. While each person had their own story, a "composite sketch of American college-aged atheists began to emerge." In June, 2013, an article, "Listening to Young Atheists: Lessons for a Stronger Christianity" published on "The Atlantic" website, written by Larry Alex Taunton, director of Fixed Point, summarized the results. Of the atheist young people they sought for the survey, Taunton notes, "They are people who are not merely irreligious; they are actively, determinedly irreligious."

(Continued on Page 3)

Memory Verse For July: 1 Peter 1:22

"Love one another deeply, from the heart."

Order of Worship

Call to Worship Assembly
Children's verse— John Cooper
Announcements— Vince Urbina
Song Leader—
Meet & Greet

Lord's Supper—
Offering—
Children's church

Sermon - Doug Clayton

Elder's Prayer—David Scheuerman

Honored to Serve the Lord's Table in July

Steve Neff
 Johnathon Parks
 Brian Peacock
 Eric Pennal
 Ted Reaves
 Ed Riddle
 Tim Riddle
 Craig Roberts

For the Record

July 21, 2013	
Attendance	261
Average Attendance, 2nd qtr.	249
Contributions	\$5,727.00
Budget	\$6,208.96

Communion Preparation—July

Darlene Rettig

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Watermelon in Pit.

Tonight at 6 pm in the pit, we will have a watermelon bust. Everyone is invited! Bring watermelon or ice cream.

Thank You

Dear Doug,

I had the privilege of attending your church with my sister Sarah Gabriel for 5 Sundays. Everything was done according to scripture and I really enjoyed it all.

My special thanks to you, Doug, for the loving kindness you extended to my special niece, Vicky, and for all the sympathy and love that you gave to all of my relatives there in Junction.

If it is God's will, I will be back next year. You are in my heart and prayers.

*In Christian Love,
 Sue Lemley
 Graford. Texas*

Youth News

I will be leaving town after church today, so that means you won't be seeing me at the watermelon bust tonight or in the pit on Wednesday. I will miss you all dearly!

Watermelon Bust tonight: Join the whole church tonight at 6pm in the pit for watermelon and sweet fellowship!

Pit on Wednesday: Summer might be winding down, but pit is still going strong! Join us at 7pm on Wednesday for food and a devo.

PARENT MEETING COMING UP: Kids, tell your parents! Parents, tell other parents! We will be having a short

Continue to pray for the families who have recently lost loved ones. The Austin family, Zant/Williamson family, Crespin family, Lasley family, Larry, (Sanberg's friend) who just lost his wife,

EARL DUBOSE....pray for comfort and strength for him, his disease (PSP) continues to progress, he is home, and is in a wheelchair. Pray for his family, and for his wife who is his caretaker. She expresses thanksgiving to the church for your prayers and thanksgiving to God for answering those prayers ...the tumor she has was not malignant.

Many are traveling for various reasons at this time.... pray for safety in travel for all of them. And a prayer of thanksgiving for those who have traveled and safely returned to us this past week.

DARLENE RETTIG. asks for prayers for RENAE, who has ovarian cancer.

ALEX BARTHEL...having a difficult pregnancy, pray for the problems to subside and a healthy baby.

Continued prayers are needed for the following and their families

MARGIE DAVIS.... Cancer

KALEA VEJRASKA... 7 yr old....has a brain tumor

AMBER... breast cancer

VINCENT PARRA... osteosarcoma.

TOM DECKER.. esophageal cancer.

CAROLYN DEBERRY.... Recovery from back surgery

MARIE BRANSON...continued healing

ERIN JOHNSON...Malignant brain tumor

LANDY BOYLE....shingles

LARRY LUCERO FAMILY...continued prayers for healing and prayers of thanksgiving that healing is taking place for Jr and the family.

VICKY BIOCIC – Severe Back Pain. She is possibly facing back surgery.

Continue to pray for our church family to be the servants that God wants us to be and that we may show His light to all we encounter along our way.

All those in the Military and their families. Pray that they will continue to be allowed to live their Christianity and share their faith. (their religious freedom is under attack)

Pray for all the leaders of our nation well as the world leaders that they will turn to God for guidance. That they will lead in a way to allow us to live our lives in a quiet and godly way.

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

James 5:16 NKJV

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, WITH THANKSGIVING, let your requests be known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6,7

Generally, the results came down to specific points. First, most (if not all) had attended church. Their atheistic views were a "reaction to Christianity." (In this case, Christianity refers to the broad spectrum of religious groups under that umbrella.) Second, the "mission and message of their churches was vague." In particular, through the article, Taunton tells the story of one young man's experience. The key moment in his life was when the church he was attending made a major change in direction away from Biblical content to a "teach less and play more" strategy to attract more young people. Throughout the study results, many noted that the "connection between Jesus and a person's life was not clear." Third, not surprisingly, the respondents felt that "their churches offered superficial answers to life's difficult questions." Further, they felt that church services were "largely shallow, harmless, and ultimately irrelevant." Fourth, despite their negative responses to what was becoming increasingly irrelevant and watered-down, they "expressed their respect for those ministers who took the Bible seriously." Taunton notes that among the militant atheists, there is a surprising respect for believers who take the Bible seriously enough to attempt to share its message with others. One student from Dartmouth stated, "I really can't consider a Christian a good, moral person if he isn't trying to convert me." Taunton shares similar comments from Hitchens and well-known entertainer (illusionist/comedian) Penn Jillette. Taunton notes, "Comments like these should cause every Christian to examine his conscience to see if he truly believes that Jesus is, as he claimed, 'the way, the truth, and the life.'" Fifth, the high school years were "decisive." Sixth, while the students generally stated that their transition to unbelief was for "exclusively rational reasons" many indicated it was "deeply emotional as well." This was sometimes coupled with disappointments with people and/or their expectations of God. Finally, Taunton includes the role of the internet. When asked about what may have influenced their move to atheism, instead of citing the writings of the new generation of atheist apologists, the students mentioned online videos and forum.

Perhaps of greatest value is Taunton's summary, that these young people were "idealists who longed for authenticity, and having failed to find it in their churches, they settled for a non-belief that, while less grand in its promises, felt more genuine and attainable."

It would appear, at least in some cases, churches have created atheists. It's a sobering thought, but one we need to take seriously. Sometimes, the only time when people appear to be passionate about their faith is when arguing, often behaving in ways that are inconsistent with their profession. People, especially young people...our young people...are looking for faith that is real. The words Taunton used were "authentic" and "genuine." That is, that a person's faith is expressed not only in that they believe the Bible, but that they live it—in character, attitude, purpose and activities.

We not only quote the Golden Rule, the chapters on love and faith and the Great Commission we also live them in our daily lives. We need to show our conviction and passion that Jesus is our Lord.



Church of Christ of Grand Junction

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Welcome to the church of Christ of Grand Junction! If you are visiting with us we want you to know how honored we are to have you. It is our desire to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as our-selves (Mark 22:30,31). We are attempting to share His love with others through following Jesus' words , —Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). If you have any questions about anything that you hear taught or see practiced we would be glad to share with you the reasons for the faith we have. Just speak with one of our shepherds or ministers or call 970-245-4210 and we will gladly assist you!

Sunday Morning Adult Classes—9:00 AM—9:45 AM

Curtis Fleming—Auditorium
Young Adult (Under 30)—Room 207
Sign Language Class—Room 103

Wednesday Evening Adult Classes—7– 8 PM

Dane Jennings - “Fruit of the Spirit”—Auditorium
Women’s Bible Class—103

Sunday Morning Children’s Classes

Cradle Roll—Birth to 2 —Nursery
2 & 3 yr. old—104
Pre KK, Kindergarten—205
1st & 2nd Grade—209
3rd thru 5th Grade—208
Middle School—213
High School—203

Wednesday Evening Children’s Bible Study

2 & 4 yr. old—104
Kindergarten 1st & 2nd—205
3rd thru 5th Grade—208
All teens meet in—203

Sunday morning worship begins at 10:15 AM

Mesa View Retirement Service Schedule Meets Sundays at 10 AM

Date	Servant Team	Study Text
July 28	Mike Hurd, Bud Treu	Mark 2:18-22
Aug 4	Bill Tidwell, Wes Yeager	Mark 2:23-3:6
Aug 11	Bob Heath, Darren Mahoney	Mark 3:7-12
Aug 18	Jerry Austin, Scott Delancy	Mark 3:13-19
Aug 25	Hunt Zumwalt, Steve Bagga	Mark 3:20-30
Sept 1	Scott Ferguson, Dave Scheuerman	Mark 3:31-35

Psalm 56:3-4

When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?
(NIV)