



Stoltzfus Christian Library

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OUR 5TH YEAR

ANNUAL UPDATE

Dear Library Patron,

12/11/2019

It has been said: “The only thing we learn from history; is that we don’t learn from history”.

Recently I’ve been struck by the headlines that state: **“In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace”**

In the meantime, Agnosticism and Atheism is growing by leaps and bounds! Someone who is Agnostic according to Miriam Webster’s is:

1: a person who holds the view that any ultimate reality (such as God) is unknown and probably unknowable.

broadly : one who is not committed to believing in either the existence or the nonexistence of God or a god.)

Definition of Atheism is: **1a:** a lack of belief or a strong disbelief in the existence of a god or any gods.

b: a philosophical or religious position characterized by disbelief in the existence of a god or any gods.

Are we prepared for this?

As society around us is changing for the worse, we as Christians can shrink back in fear, and disbelief, and go with the flow. Or we can face it head on. Are we willing to stand in the gap? Or will we be like the ones in Ezekiel 22:30 where it says: “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none”.

Let’s be willing to learn from history and stand for the truth. Evil triumphs when God’s people do nothing.

So, as sceptics continually face us, are we prepared to give an answer?

The Hope of Our Salvation and the Good News of the Gospel

A few months ago, I met a British man at the place where I work. This man wanted to purchase some flagstone. He was very friendly, so we started talking about various things. In the course of our conversation, he told me that he has learned a long time ago that he must watch out for the Amish and Mennonites. I wasn’t quite sure what he was referring to, so I prodded a little further; then told him that I’m a Mennonite. He seemed a little surprised but didn’t say too much about that. After a while I asked him if he’s a Christian. He said: “Oh yes, I would consider myself a Christian. I mean I don’t go to church, except on special occasions like Easter and so forth, but I’ve learned a long time ago that you don’t need to go to church to worship. I mean you can go up in that mountain over there and worship God in the nature”.

He then said: “Do you know why I don’t go to church? I’ll tell you... Religion has caused more wars and fighting than anything else. When I was a lad growing up in Britain; we had these two ladies who were our neighbors. I mean they went to church every Sunday morning, they were so pious, and didn’t miss a service! Well one day I saw a tramp go up to their door and knock. It was a hot Summer day; and he very politely asked them for a cup of cold water. I mean all he wanted was just a cup of water! Do you know what they did? They slammed the door on his face and told him to go away!”

As he was relating this story to me, I was wondering what my response would be. In my heart I desperately wanted to give a good answer about my faith. So, all the while; I was listening, but silently praying for wisdom and that God would give me an answer. I told him: “Do you know what I think? I’ll say that people like that aren’t true Christians, they profess with their mouth, but unless they live out the teachings of Jesus, they’re really not Christian at all.”

He then said: “Well there are so many religions out there. How do you know for sure that Christianity is the right one?” I told him: “There is at least one thing about the Christian religion that is profoundly different from the rest. Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was a man. He lived for a while, gave his teachings, and then he died. Muhammed, the founder of Islam, was a man. During his life he claimed to have had special revelations from God, he taught people his ideology, then he died. Jesus Christ was the founder of Christianity. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, lived as our perfect example, and died as a once and for all sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. But he didn’t stay in the grave! He arose again on the third day, and he’s living today, sitting on the right hand of God, interceding on the behalf of his people! That to me is a fundamental difference. We serve a living Savior!” At that point, he didn’t really have much to say, but he said that he wants to talk some other time.

So, what all people have in common, no matter what race or religion; is this:

1. Every person who inhabits this planet was uniquely and intricately created by God.
Acts 17:24-31 “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;
25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;
26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;
27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:
28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.
30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
2. Every person has sinned against God.
Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
3. Every person finds themselves separated from God deserving his wrath for our rebellion.
4. The good news: Is that God created a way through Jesus Christ that we can be saved!
Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

A CALL TO PURITY

How about us? Does our Salvation through Jesus Christ mean something to us? If so, is it something that spurs us to action?

Hebrews 6:19-20 says: “Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

So, is true Christianity worth knowing about? Is it worth studying, living it out, and dying for, as many of our forefathers have done? (See “The Martyr’s Mirror” for reference). Or are we just like any other religion, or nominal Christian out there? Lifeless... Just showing our face... Just another choice to choose from... Just another kid on the block...

Leonard Ravenhill once said: “If you’re going to be a true Christian, I’ll tell you one thing amongst others: It’ll be a lonely life. It’s a narrow way, and it becomes narrower, and narrower, and narrower”.

You know, that is exactly how it is. If we are truly dedicated to Christ, we can no longer do the same things that we did before we became a Christian. We can no longer speak the same way, dress the same way, or act the same way. Christ is our head, and his love, mercy, and grace, calls us to a New and Holy standard of living. It’s as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Today, Jesus is calling our homes, our churches, our youth groups, and our missions, to a **NEW** and **GREATER** level of Holiness, Purity, and Accountability!

With the advancement of technology, it is increasingly easy to bring the evil and corruption of the world into our lives. I believe well over 50%, probably more like 75%-95% of our Anabaptist young men/men are becoming involved in pornography and masturbation at one time or another.

In Matthew 5:28 Jesus says: “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 the Apostle Paul exhorts us: “**18** Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

It is scientifically proven that sexual sin and lust is not only a sin against God and people around us, but against our own bodies. It literally changes the chemistry of the brain. It is a bondage, and the chains that bind us must be broken. It’s time that we stand up and stand out! It’s time that we take action; we must face this problem head on, or it will be impossible to have revival in our churches! To the ones of you who are still struggling with it: I want you to know that you don’t have to fight alone. There is hope, healing, forgiveness, and victory, available for you at the foot of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:6-10 “**6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

1 John 4:4b ... “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

Today, if you find yourself caught in sin. Repent. Find a mentor. Find someone whom you can trust, someone with whom you can share the whole truth, one who has battled the storms, who can help you on the journey to healing, victory, and accountability.

To our Woman and Girls, many of you handle yourselves, and are dressed according to Biblical modesty. I want to say congratulations! But there are others who are just about falling off the edge; (they just don't quite know where they stand.)

1 Timothy 2:9-10 “**9** In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”

1 Peter 3:3-4 “**3** Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

To both Men and Woman: Biblical modesty goes far beyond the way that we dress. It changes every aspect of our lives; from the way we dress, to our actions, (how we handle ourselves) to our speech.

If you remember last year's Library Update Letter, I mentioned about working on the mission field in Haiti. I returned home towards the end of March this year. Words cannot even begin to describe the shock, pain, and anguish that we felt this Spring and Summer. I was at home for about 6 weeks, when we found out that one of the staff members in Haiti, Jeriah Mast, was involved in sexual molestation of young boys. He was very active in the work of Christian Aid Ministries in Haiti. We worked together on the same team of missionaries; but knew nothing of what he was involved in. Most of you have heard about that situation, so I won't go into a lot of detail in this letter. If you need more information, please contact Christian Aid Ministries directly. I just want to encourage parents to be very vigilant in protecting, teaching, and training your children in the fear of God.

To all of us: Let's raise **HIGH** the banner of the Cross of Jesus Christ, and proclaim him **Lord** of our Lives, **Lord** of our Families, **Lord** of our Churches, **Lord** of our Youth Groups, and **Lord** of our missions. Let us lift each other up in prayer, in love, in unity, and accountability, and say as Paul did in Philippians 3:13-14

“**13** Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The Library

Thank you to each one of you who continue to give your support in whatever way it may be. Sometimes we wonder if we are reaching the goal of what a Christian Library should be. Other times Satan tempts us with discouragement, and we feel like giving up. But when we look at the oncoming generation, and the harvest of souls that need to be reached, we take on new courage!

Thank you for the many notes of encouragement that you have sent our way and left in the library over the years. Often, they come at the right time, and give us the encouragement that we need.

Here are some of the comments that we are receiving. To protect our patrons, we are not mentioning names:

- *I'm so glad the children have the privilege of going to a library that has upbuilding books to read. Thank you!*
- *Thanks for all the effort you put into providing wholesome reading material to the community.*
- *We enjoy the books we get. And it is a plus that we can send the children and we know you have only Christian books. Reading good books can be uplifting. Keep up the good work, and use the donation wherever needed the most.*

- *Thank you! We appreciate having lots of good reading material available for our growing family! God bless you!*
- *Keep up the good work in supplying Christian books for people who like to read and learn through books. Thank you.*
- *We've already borrowed a lot of books for our whole family. It **blesse**s us! Very good reading material.*
- *Donated books- We appreciate your library! Keep it Christian. God bless you and your efforts.*
- *The computer worked great this time: Thanks for all your hard work! The children love coming here!*
- *Just wanted to say Thanks a lot for all the time and effort you put into this library! It is so great having Christian books whenever you want them. They have been such an encouragement and inspiration! God bless!*
- *You're doing a great job! Keep it up!*

Ripe for Expansion

This Spring and Summer we tackled the huge task of remodeling the library. The old library area was in much need of repair and expansion. The roof was leaking badly; and the room was so full that we almost didn't have any room to expand.

Since remodeling and expanding the library, the budget has been very tight. We now have room to expand but are lacking enough funds to purchase many books. We would like to add 3 new bookshelves and about 500 new books this Fall and Winter as we are able, and as the Lord provides. If you feel led to help in this way, please see the reply card.

If you feel led to give a donation, there are now two options: one sheet is for monthly dedicated giving. This will greatly assist the ongoing work and ministry of the library and will help us to be able to plan ahead (Note that you can cancel anytime.) The other sheet is for one-time donations.

We are very concerned about the books that we offer in the library. In the past we haven't always had enough of time to review the books as well as we should have. For that reason, we have found the need for a 5-person book review committee to screen our books more vigilantly. This book review committee will be in addition to the 5-person board of director's that we already have and will give reports to the board of directors. All new books that are donated or purchased which do not come from a very trustworthy Anabaptist publishing source, will have to meet the scrutiny of the book review committee. The book review committee will also be able to give us good recommendations on books to purchase, and what age level the books fit, etc.

5th Anniversary Celebration

You are invited to our 5th anniversary celebration! Each year we have an open house day, when we have full staffing, and invite neighbors and library patrons to come for free coffee and donuts. The open house day is a great time to come with any questions that you may have; since we have staff available to help you. It is a good time to become familiar with the self-checkout process, etc.

This year, for the 5th anniversary celebration; we are planning a bigger event, where we will hold a program throughout the day! This program will not be limited to, but will include some of the following:

- We will tell the history, goal, and mission of the library.
- Have Spiritual edification.
- Have a time of singing.
- Invite authors to come and speak.
- Have activities for the children (story time, etc.)
- How libraries sort, handle, and repair books.
- The categories of books, and easy ways of finding the book that you know you want to read.
- How the checkout process works.
- Have a food stand available with coffee, donuts, and food by donation.

It will be a first of a kind for the library, so we are excited about it! All are welcome, so please bring your friends and family! Come prepared to participate! Currently we are aiming for towards the end of April. We still need to plan some of the events and activities, so Lord willing, we will soon be sending out a future notice of the program of activities and the day when we expect it to be held.

Lord willing, as we will soon face another year ahead of us. Let us remember that it could be our last. Sometime soon the Lord will return, and we will be called from this life. Are we prepared to die? Are our lamps trimmed and burning? It is true that the darker the world becomes the brighter our Christian witness and light can shine. But are we willing to allow God to use us? Are we willing to shine out our lights and pierce the darkness? Are we willing to share the Gospel with our neighbors? Are we ready to face persecution if it arises?

Today, I want to encourage you: If you are not ready, leave behind the baggage and bondage. Kneel at the feet of Jesus and find sweet rest in HIM!

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” John 1:5

Once again, we want to thank you for your support! It is greatly appreciated! Whether it was volunteering your time to help in the library, borrowing books, donating books, giving donations, or simply praying for us. Whatever it may have been, Thank you very much! May God bless you richly, without your support we could not continue to operate a Christian Library for the local community.

May God bless you as you continue to serve him!

Sincerely,
Samuel Stoltzfus,
For Stoltzfus Christian Library

P. S. We are again enclosing a contribution reply card and envelope for those of you who want to help with keeping the library in operation. Please place a checkmark on the appropriate box stating what you want your donation to help for, and please specify whether or not you would like to receive a tax-deductible receipt. If you are considering a year-end tax-deductible donation, it must be postmarked in 2019. Stoltzfus Christian Library is an official 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization; and is funded by your donation. Thank you, and may God bless you!