



The Beacon

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Note: throughout 2016 Pastor Curtis is writing articles on Progressive Theology

Progressive Theology 101 – The Bible

The Bible's place in Christianity cannot be overstated. It is the foundation on which we build our faith and practice. Yet the Bible has also been used to deny people rights, to start wars, to reject the truths of science, to discriminate and exclude and to make claims of superiority. Few objects in the world have caused more division than the Bible. Yet within its covers, the Bible calls us to compassion and love for our fellow humans; it commands peace and lifts up inclusion; it paints a picture of a loving God and a Savior who long to transform the world into a place where everyone is valued and cared for. So why is it so divisive? It all comes down to hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics is a big word for how one approaches understanding Scripture and how it is seen and interpreted. There are a couple of approaches to the Bible that are significant for Christianity today. There are many in Christianity who approach the Bible as the plenary-verbal inspired words given to us by God and to be taken literally. In other words, the words in the Bible were given by God to the writers and it is to be taken at literal face value. There are varying degrees of this. For example, a hard literal understanding of Genesis would read the story of the six-day creation and insist that the universe was created in six literal days by God. A softer version of this would not feel that the timeline was meant to be taken literally, but God pretty much created the universe in the way it was described in the Bible.

Another approach, which is, for the most part, the way the progressive mainline churches approach it, is to see the Bible as a human product written not by God but about God. The Bible was written by two ancient communities, ancient Israel and the early Christian movement. These two communities were writing in response to who God is in their midst and while it is fair to say that they were inspired and Spirit led, the writings are still a human product.

So why hold the Bible in such high regard if it is not the “inerrant, plenary verbal inspired word of God?” Because of what it says. It is not the idea that God wrote that makes the Bible sacred, it is what it says that makes it worth studying. These are the words that have stood the test of time. They have been the center of faith and practice by two communities for over 3000 years. It is because the Bible calls us to a life in compassionate communion with fellow humans and in deep and meaningful

relationship with God through Christ. The Old Testament brings ancient wisdom to bear and demonstrates God's love in liberation, providence, and faithfulness. The New Testament calls us to center on the life and teachings of Jesus who ushered in a new way of redemption and reconciliation and community.

While for some this may diminish the impact of the Bible, for me this understanding has opened up the Scriptures in a way I could never have imagined when I merely read it and took it literally. Because we apply the best scholarship to our understanding of the Bible we can draw out of it depth of meaning that our modern lens can never see. I pray you also are inspired by this approach to these ancient and wonderful words of life.

If you wish to know more, here are some books on the Bible.

Reading the Bible Again for the First Time – Marcus Borg
How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian – John Dominic Crossan
Reclaiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World – John Shelby Spong
Who Wrote the Bible – Richard Friedman

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Curtis

April Happenings at FBC

April 5: Beers and Bros at Fiddler's Elbow at 6:30
April 8-10: 31 Hour Famine ABYouth
April 13: Council of Ministries at 5:45 pm
April 14: AB Women Luncheon at noon in the Library
April 15: Third Friday Bingo at 7 pm
April 17: ABGIRLS Spaghetti Dinner and Auction
April 19: Beers and Bros at Fiddler's Elbow at 6:30
April 23: Church Hike/Ride see article below.

Happy Birthday to: Happy Birthday to: April 2: Dennis McCracken. April 5: Marlo Brown. April 9: Judy Rausher. April 10: Tori Wood. April 17: Pat Huntsman, Cindy Trent. April 19: Loren Rausher. April 22: Jane Nelson. April 23: Paul Ditton, Caitlin Fellows, Bugs Stanley. April 24: Tom Burnett. April 26: Shirley Cannon, Ryan Winzenried, Hunter Dabel. April 27: Jackie Mercado. April 29: Winnie Hollenbeck.

Thank You to all who worked so hard to make Easter so wonderful:

To everyone who read during the services of Holy Week.

To Aaron Flood for his beautiful music.

To Beth Bruce and the Cathedral Choir for the joy of their music

To Kelly Byrnes for his leadership for the Seder on Maundy Thursday

To all those who prepared, cooked, served and cleaned up the Easter Breakfast and reception I would list names but I would forget someone—it was amazing to see the number of folks that volunteered to help.

To all of those who donated Easter Lilies and flowers.

We know how to do Easter!!!

Thanks to all the dedicated ladies who cleaned the tables for Easter.

Thanks to Shirley Cannon and Karen Carter for their dedication .

Jackie Nielsen

ABW.

AB Women's meeting and Luncheon April 14 in the Library at noon.

Quilters Without Borders--Thursday, April 7

Zion Lutheran Church, 1070 So. Foothill Drive, 7:00 p.m.

Come help us tie quilts for charity. No skill necessary. Questions: Call Karen at 801-918-5104

Fellowship in the Great Outdoors! Join your friends/family from FBC for a morning of outdoors family fun. Bike, trike, rollerblade, walk on the Legacy Parkway Trail. When/where: Foxboro North Regional Park (1129 W 1100 N in Woods Cross) on Saturday April 23 from 9 am to noon. Besides the trail there is also a playground available. Feel free to bring a blanket/folding chair and a snack or lunch. If you have questions or would like to RSVP, please contact Maggie at margaret.chaney@comcast.net or text her at 801-386-2022. See you in the park!

ABGIRLS will be sending the following girls and leaders to the National Gathering in July

The group includes: Celine David, Megan Roth, Taylor Alstrom, Hanna Hassan, Virginia Price, Alexis Charles, McKena Wise, Amy David and Karen Carter. So to raise funds for their trip join us at:

AB GIRLS Spaghetti Dinner April 17th following worship in Keck Hall.

Auction items are available for bidding. Several great items are just for sale.

All proceeds will help us get to Washington, D.C. this summer.

Menu: Green Salad, Spaghetti made by Chef Ken, Garlic Bread, and Ice Cream. Delicious!

Karen says we need to sell at least 82 more tickets. Please help us!

Auction items will be available for bidding on Sunday, April 10, as well as on the day of the dinner.

The girls are also selling Car Wash Passes for \$15 each. Car wash includes inside and out!

Grateful for your support. AB GIRLS

Another writing from Pastor Curtis

Reflections on Good Friday

Take up your cross daily and follow me! – Luke 9:23

Easter is behind us as you read this article, but I am writing it on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. I went to the procession of the Cross downtown on Good Friday this year (yesterday). I had never been to this event but was asked to participate and since we weren't holding a service I thought it would be a good thing to do. We gathered at the Catholic Cathedral and after a prayer, some scripture and a hymn, the question is posed, "Who is willing to carry the cross of Jesus?" Someone volunteers and the cross is placed on their shoulders and we begin the journey to the next church. There were six stops along the way and there were about 50 of us by the end. As we walked there was a police escort that stopped traffic whenever we had to cross a street or were walking in the road. To be honest, it seemed quite disruptive to the flow of things downtown. People were forced to wait at green lights or to detour around the block because we were slowly following a wooden cross that was being carried. As I thought about it, it occurred to me that had I been in one of the cars being held up by this parade I might have been rather put out by the whole thing. Here it was, the Cross of Christ completely disrupting the Friday evening of downtown Salt Lake City, making people late, frustrating them as they try to get wherever they are going, some people wondering what the heck is going on. It was really quite remarkable and it made me wonder—how disruptive in my life is Jesus really? How put out am I by my faith? How many times does following Jesus delay the flow of my life? How often do I experience the cross stopping me in my tracks the way it did for so many on Good Friday?

The life and teachings of Jesus should be disruptive. He brought a message that was treason then and is pretty radical now yet how often does this message cause us trouble? Jesus intended to change the world, how we thought about God, others and ourselves. He intended to cause a revolution and to bring about incredible transformation. Look at how disruptive his message was for Peter, James and John who dropped their nets and left their families to follow Jesus. Consider Matthew who stopped being a patsy for the Roman Empire, exploiting his own people for profit, and became one of Jesus' followers. Look at Paul, who switched sides. Think about Mary Magdalen, Lazarus, Zaccheus and even Mary, Jesus' mother. Their lives were profoundly altered by the cross of Christ and it was anything but easy to fit in.

Being a Christian in America is really very easy. Almost too easy. How often are we really confronted by Christ? How often are we really challenged by the teachings of the Bible? How often are we forced to change course because we are blocked from moving ahead by our faith? I left the procession of the Cross wondering about this in my own life. As we celebrate the Joy of Easter, I pray we can remember that resurrection is something that comes out of the pain of death on the cross. That process of "dying to one's old self" can be painful, disruptive, inconvenient and send us in directions we didn't intend to go. Yet it is only then that we can truly experience the power of resurrection. The invitation that comes with the Eastertide is to "follow Jesus". Even when he is going where you would rather not go. I pray you have a blessed Easter season

Pastor Curtis

MAKE SUMMER COUNT!

Come to Camp Utaba for a week of friends, fun and faith. Connect with old friends and make some new ones, having fun and getting closer to God. There will be campfire, games and water fun. Of course, we will have all those traditional activities one expects at camp such as crafts, music, food, hikes and much more. This year we are running Teen camp and Elementary Camp simultaneously. The two camps will do some things together but will also be apart for some things but we will also have separate times in our age groups. Our camps are open to young people of all faiths. So don't let summer go to waste, make it count at Camp Utaba!

July 10-15

Grades 4-12

Teen Camp Directed by Curtis Price: Pastorcurtis@firstbaptist-slc.org

Elementary Camp Directed by Wendy Winzenreid and Lisa Hekking
wendywinzenried@aol.com ; lhekking@msn.com

Registration Form

Campers Name _____ Age _____ Grade going into _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Parent /Guardian _____ Parent/Guardian Phone _____
Home Church (if any) _____ T-Shirt Size _____
Any Food Allergies or needs? _____

Cost: \$210

This registration form along with a deposit of \$50 is **due on July 3, 2016** to insure your space at camp. Full payment is due at check-in. You will receive a follow-up letter after sending in registration with more details. Please make checks payable to Utah Association of ABC and mail to:
First Baptist Church Attn: Camp, 777 S 1300 E, Salt Lake City, Ut. 84102

Angel Fund:

Help send kids to camp! For some of our families camp registration fees are hard to come up with. We appeal to Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles to help make sure every child gets to go to camp. You can put your donations in the offering envelope and mark them Camp Utaba and we will make sure that everyone's fees are paid.