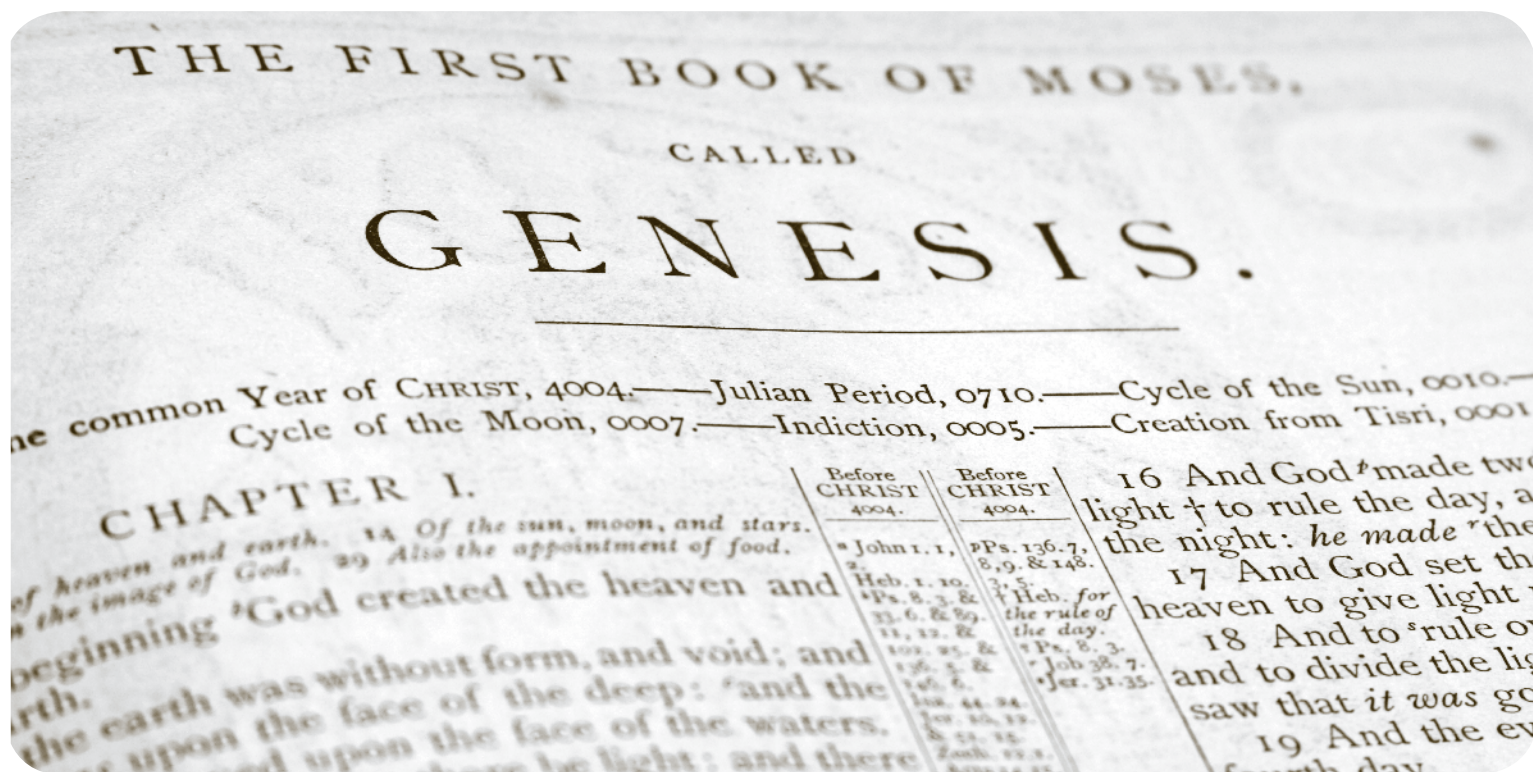


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The Bible Through History: Why So Important?



Cover Story

The so-called New Atheists — Richard Dawkins, Stephen Hawking, Sam Harris, and the late Christopher Hitchens — have not simply been apathetic in their unbelief. They have been evangelistic — even malicious about their disdain for the Bible and those who believe in it.

Dawkins in particular loves to come to America and say nasty things about Christians, proud of his reputation as a brave voice for “reason.” If he were really brave, he’d go to Egypt — or any Muslim-dominated country for that matter — and insult Islam. The penalty in most cases is hanging or beheading.

But of course, Dawkins won’t do this. He stays safely in the countries that were civilized by the very forces he presumes to hate — the Bible and Christianity.

Contrary to the New Atheists’ claims, Scripture, sound theology, and Christianity are what brought about reason, logic, and the life of the mind. These, in turn, led to human freedom, liberty, and the value of human persons.

One day every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:11). Until then, though, we need to be prepared to give an answer for our hope (1 Peter 3:15). As historian and writer Dr. Glenn Sunshine recently told Summit in an interview, “[Christians]

have to know their stuff.”

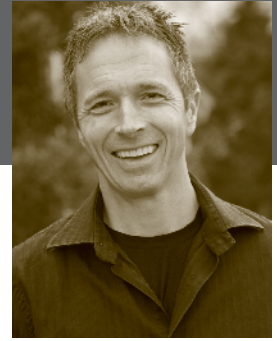
Christianity Transforms Reason, Logic, and the Life of the Mind

According to Baylor University sociologist Rodney Stark, Americans have been fed a misleading myth: that progress in new thinking, art, science, and technology came about through the rejection of Christianity. In reality, these disciplines saw significant progress during the time now inaccurately known as the “Dark Ages,” progress directly attributable to the Bible, theology, and Christian scholarship.

Take science for example. Stark points out:

from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



One of my joys as president of Summit is passing by the Summit hotel as I walk from my home to my office. In the moments between breakfast and class, the front porch is often filled with students taking a few minutes to bask in God's Word while soaking in the morning rays. I smile and greet them, and pray for them to develop a life-long hunger for the Bread of Life.

Amazingly, many Christians are backing away from God's Word. Once, the late atheist Christopher Hitchens was interviewed by "minister" Marilyn Sewell, who said, "I'm a liberal Christian, and I don't take the stories from the scripture literally. I don't believe in the doctrine of atonement — that Jesus died for our sins, for example. Do you make a distinction between fundamentalist faith and liberal religion?"

Hitchens replied, "Well, I would say that if you don't believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and Messiah, and that he rose again from the dead and by his sacrifice our sins are forgiven, *you're really not in any meaningful sense a Christian.*"¹ [Emphasis mine]

How interesting: an avowed atheist sees the centrality of the Bible and

a self-proclaimed minister does not. Some think expressing disbelief in the Bible's claims will soften the criticism they receive. The effect is the opposite: secularists already see Christians as soft-headed. *When Christians cave in to criticism, they just shrug and add one more descriptor: cowardly.*

Christians need not be embarrassed. This issue of *The Journal* presents intriguing evidence justifying the Christian's belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible. Even nonbelievers accept the genius of its moral teachings. British broadcaster Melvyn Bragg said, "The Bible is one of the fundamental makers of the modern world. It has set free not only its readers and its preachers but those who have used it as a springboard to achieve gains and enrichment in our world never before enjoyed by so many."²

Only in studying the Bible can people encounter the one at the very center of history, Jesus Christ. "In Jesus of Nazareth," wrote Carl F.H. Henry, "the divine source of revelation and the divine content of that revelation converge and coincide."³ Too, the Holy Spirit plays an important role in this dialogue. Henry explained, "Scripture itself is given so that the Holy Spirit may etch God's Word

upon the hearts of his followers in ongoing sanctification that anticipates the believer's final, unerring conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word."⁴

We must be conformed to the character of Christ. This is why we encourage Summit students to not just read the Bible once and set it aside, but study it as the living Word of God and seek constantly to apply its teachings. It's a project from which a person never graduates until finally arriving in God's presence and knowing the whole and complete truth (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Quick Note: Take Advantage of the Early-Bird Discount and Save \$200

There are just a few more days to claim the early-bird discount for attending Summit this summer. Students can sign up online at www.summit.org. The year 2013 is decisive — this year we can begin turning the tide, but we have not a moment to lose. Let's make this summer one to remember by filling every seat at Summit and preparing reinforcements to joyfully join the battle for truth in our day.

Notes

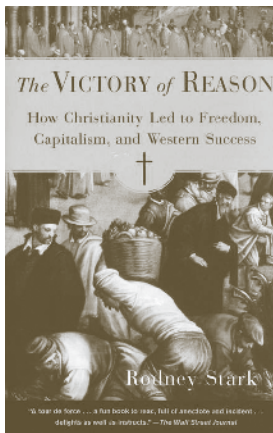
1. Ben Stevens, "The Gospel According to Christopher," Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-stevens/the-gospel-according-to-christopher_b_2231094.html.
2. Melvyn Bragg, *The Book of Books* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2011), p. 5.
3. Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), Vol. 2, p. 11.
4. Ibid., p. 15.

“Some think expressing disbelief in the Bible will soften the criticism they receive. The effect is the opposite: secularists already see Christians as soft-headed.”

Dr. Jeff Myers

“Biblical Christianity has been working — sometimes quietly — to end slavery from the earliest days of the church.”

“For centuries the ancient Greeks seemed on the verge of achieving science. They were interested in explaining the natural world with suitably abstract, general principles. Some were careful, systematic observers of nature — although Socrates considered empiricism such as astronomical observations a ‘waste of time’ and Plato agreed, advising his students to ‘leave the starry heavens alone.’”



The Victory of Reason

by Rodney Stark.

Available at Summit's bookstore:

summit.org/store.

account and numerous gods. “Greek learning was a barrier to the rise of science!” Stark claims.²

So how did Christianity change this? For starters, Christian epistemology (the study of knowledge) begins with a creator God, who spoke a physical world into being, including us humans, who have been given stewardship over the world. Furthermore, at

the appointed time in history, God sent his son to physically live, die, and rise again. Therefore, Christians did not discount the physical world, as did the Greeks and adherents of eastern religions. “If we really want to understand the natural world, we have to look at the natural world as we think it is,” Sunshine said. “Not as we think it ought to be [as did Plato and others].”

Yet at the same time, as Stark chronicles, logic and reasoning were an essential part of understanding truth. One must be able to think through the narratives, letters, and poems of Scripture in order to fully comprehend the biblical metanarrative. Early Christians understood this. The laws that govern the physical world indicate God employs order, logic, and reason. Being made in his image, so ought we. We study Scripture because it tells the truth about God, the world, and man’s relationship to God and the world.

The Bible Introduces Personal Freedom

It’s been well documented in both academic circles and in popular culture that William Wilberforce and his compatriots acted to end the African slave trade because of their Christian faith. Wilberforce may be the most famous one, but biblical Christianity has been working — sometimes quietly — to end slavery from the earliest days of the church.

Continuing in the tradition of Greek philosophy, Roman culture

rarely emphasized individual worth. Greco-Roman thinkers addressed most of their policy arguments to the *polis*, not toward the individual. Before Christianity became the dominant religion in Europe, few non-European languages even had a word for *freedom*.³ But the Bible’s acknowledgment of personal morality (Matthew 5:48; Matthew 7:12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:15) changed that. And over the course of centuries, the idea of personal freedom began to take root.

“Slavery ended in medieval Europe only because the church extended its sacraments to all slaves and then managed to impose a ban on the enslavement of Christians (and of Jews). Within the context of medieval Europe, that prohibition was effectively a rule of universal abolition.”

This was a radical change in thought spurred by the church. “Christianity arises in a culture where slavery was so embedded, I would argue that it was impossible to imagine a culture without it,” Sunshine said. “Imagine America without wage labor.” Seeing the metaphysical freedom Jesus granted his followers, the early church sought to do the same thing in the physical realm, according to Sunshine. “We too should set people free,” he said. “We can’t set them free from sin and death, but we can set them free from other types of bondage.”

Flowing from the notion of the right to individual freedom — which originated in principles found in the Bible — are concepts without which

See **Bible**, page 4

the modern world would not exist: personal property, meaningful work, and capitalism.

The Bible Introduces Human Value

The Bible's signature contribution to the realm of ideas, though, is the bedrock for the two ideas discussed above: human value. Reason, logic, and freedom are empty shells without the concept that all humans are created in the image of God and have inherent value and dignity. For centuries, prominent thought held that a person's worth was necessarily linked to external features: nationality, skin color, sex, or socio-economic class. But the Christian worldview changed the paradigm. Even one of Europe's leading atheist academics acknowledges this. In a dialogue with Pope Benedict XVI, the secular philosopher Jürgen Habermas conceded:

“For the normative self-understanding of modernity . . . Christianity has functioned as more than just a precursor or a catalyst. Universalistic egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights, and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love.”

Justice and love are impossible if the person is not first inherently valuable, a precept made clear by God's fashioning Adam and Eve in his own image. Where we see this notion most challenged today is in the realm of bio-ethics: abortion, eugenics (sex-selective abortion, genetic manipulation, etc.), and euthanasia. But the existence of a

person's inherent dignity has always been a hallmark of the Christian worldview.

So What Now?

It's not enough for Christians to understand the Bible's shaping influence on the world. As the West grows more and more post-Christian, the Bible's call to action becomes clearer. Sunshine advocates several practical steps:

- **Know the world's story, and know the Christian worldview** — “... always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. . .” (1 Peter 3:15-16). We must be knowledgeable and we must gently teach what we know.

- **Know how to communicate with a post-Christian culture** — While all truth is rooted in God's Word, those who don't acknowledge God's Word will never view it as an authority. Therefore, when discussing matters of public policy with nonbelievers, we need to be able to give biblical reasons using secular examples, as Paul did in Acts 17. “You need to be able to make a good, solid, prudential argument,” Sunshine said.

- **Have your actions match your words; live lives of integrity** — The message God has given us to communicate will always be more attractive to nonbelievers when they see a difference in how we live.

Notes

1. Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason* (New York: Random House, 2005), 17-18.
2. Ibid, 20.
3. Ibid, 24.
4. Ibid, 28.
5. Richard Wolin, “Jürgen Habermas and Post-Secular Societies,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 23, 2005), B16.

Why Study the Bible?

From Dr. David Noebel

1. It's part of world literature.

2. It has had a tremendous influence on the United States.

3. It has had a tremendous influence on Western Civilization.

4. It's the mark of an educated man.

5. It's the mark of a moral man.

6. It's the mark of a spiritual man.

7. It's the mark of a free man.

8. It's scientific.

9. It's historical.

10. It's philosophical.

11. It's God's owner's manual for mankind.

12. Every worldview has a “Bible.”

13. The Bible tells us to!

a look at our world

news and commentary



Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noebel, helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. To see the complete list of Doc's clippings, go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.

Biblical Christianity

In my book, *When the Crosses are Gone*, I warn that when a culture abandons thinking and logic in favor of feelings and emotions, it is doomed to destruction. Although emotions are a very important part of the human psyche, when they control every aspect of life, morality becomes a victim.

Today, there is widespread agreement that morality in America is deteriorating with breathtaking speed.

On one hand, we face a belligerent and intimidating lobby that desires the breakdown of biblical morality. On the other hand, a docile public — as well as church leadership — is terrified to stand up for truth lest it provoke the false accusation of bigotry, intolerance, and all sorts of phobias.

That deadly combination, which threatens to take us into the very abyss, is far more dangerous and everlasting than any “fiscal cliff” crisis. I’m not minimizing the potential for an economic collapse that the U.S., and the entire world, is facing. But that collapse itself is also related to our abandonment of biblical morality.

One central pull that is dragging us into the inferno is the drive for so-called “same-sex marriage.” It is central because it runs counter to the very purpose of creation.

For when God created humanity, He

created a man and a woman who anatomically, and in every other way, fit and complemented each other. When God Himself performed the first wedding, in the Garden, He communicated that this is the only acceptable marriage formula.

The intriguing part to this controversial subject is that, even within the homosexual community, there are people opposed to “same-sex marriage.” That is an indictment on the clergy and pastors who are chomping at the bit to perform these unprecedented ceremonies.

The urgency of some clergy and pastors stems from a fear of criticism and alienation by the most powerful lobby that ever existed. For seldom does a lobbying group have the entire media apparatus and all of Hollywood behind it. That mighty power has caused even many evangelical pastors to scurry about in agreement or stand completely silent. Some of those pastors started well, but they sold their birthright for a pot of popularity and acceptance.

There is only one antidote to this epidemic of conformity. There is only one barrier that can hold back this speeding madness. There is only one act that can zip shut the mouths of hungry lions.

Repentance. We must return to our first love for God and His truth.

Our Christian forbearers endured being devoured by ferocious animals and being dipped into boiling tar to light up the emperor’s gardens. And today, more than 100 million Christians live under severe persecution because they refuse to compromise and bow down to the Caesars of this world. So what is a little bit of ridicule and false accusation? How can a little non-acceptance by society compare to that?

Therefore, let us be courageous. Let us return to the Lord in repentance before we go over the moral cliff and plunge deep into Never-Never Land.

— Michael Youssef
Townhall.com
January 22, 2013

Science

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” – The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 8. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” – The Gospel According to John, Chapter 8, Verse 32.

These Biblical passages encapsulate the essence of science. Scientists observe the things around them, especially those that are pure and lovely, and describe them with truth and honesty.

In fitting those observations into an intellectually ordered scheme, scientists create models that are inherently complex, although the simpler the models are, the more they are to be preferred. Complexity in scientific models usually arises from imperfect understanding of the observed phenomena. The greatest theoretical scientists are those who have simplified the models in their fields.

Chapter 14 entitled “The Christian Foundation of Science in America” in the book *Confirm Thy Soul, America* by James A. Weber argues convincingly that Christian belief — that a specific deity created all

continued on page 6

a look at our world

news and commentary, continued from page 5

things — gave early scientists their motivation to look for order in that creation, as opposed to earlier civilizations that did not have reason to expect order. Scientists believed an ordered physical world created by an omnipotent creator was there to be discovered, so they were motivated to learn as much about it as they could.

Just the concept of linear time, as compared with endless cycles of time as was a dominant dogma during much of antiquity, was fundamental to the development of modern science.

Isaac Newton, wrote, “When I wrote my Treatise about our system [*Principia*, his monumental work containing most of his discoveries in physics], I had an Eye upon such Principles as might work with considering Men, for the Belief of a Deity, and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose.”

Isaac Newton also looked on his work on Biblical prophecy, published in his book *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, as an effort to enhance Biblical belief. He stated that the Biblical books of prophecy were provided so that, as they are historically fulfilled, they provide a continuing testimony to the fact that the world is governed by the Providence of God.

Summarizing in the second edition of *Principia*, Isaac Newton wrote “The true God is a living, intelligent, and powerful being. His duration reaches from eternity to eternity; His presence from infinity to infinity. He governs all things.”

Chapter 14 of James Weber’s book contains similar testimonies from early giants of science including Pascal, Boyle, Leibniz, Ampere, Ohm, Morse, Faraday, Babbage, Mendel, Pasteur, Joule, Kelvin, Maxwell, and many others.

He quotes Werner von Braun as saying, “I find it as difficult to understand a scientist who does not acknowledge the presence of a superior rationality behind the existence of the universe as it is to comprehend a theologian who would deny the advances of science ... There are those who argue that the universe evolved out of a random process, but what random process could produce the brain of a man or the system of the human eye? To be forced to believe only one conclusion — that everything in the universe happened by chance — would violate the very objectivity of science itself.”

Weber lists three example causes under his subheading “Decay and Death of Science” — “extreme environmentalism which has retrogressively resurrected the false pagan view that God is in nature, contrary to the Christian belief that God created nature”; “materialistic evolutionism, [which holds that] the world was not created by God but rather existed eternally and all living things have evolved by chance”; and “the absolute belief that truth can only be achieved through empirical science rather than philosophy or theology.”

To me, most of this is complicated beyond my own comprehension, and I find this incomprehension unsurprising. In addition to the privilege of having been able to live a life enriched by the discoveries and the scientific method developed by the scientists listed above and many others, I value two particularly useful traits — humility and a devotion to the truth.

It is, to me, impossible to contemplate the initial observations that have been made in the astronomical, molecular, atomic, subatomic, and biological disciplines without humility without reaching the self-evident conclusion that it is very

unlikely that the real world can be entirely understood by the mind of man.

While we can observe many natural phenomena and manipulate some to enhance our lives, our current understanding of the physical world is an almost indiscernible scratch upon the whole. As Isaac Newton put it, “I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me” — and Isaac Newton was the greatest scientist of us all.

Progress in science depends upon the truth. And “truth” is under siege throughout our nation.

Truth, as revealed by reason and the quantitative scientific method and applied by our minds, probably will not empower those limited minds to comprehend the universe — but it is certainly our most powerful tool for prospering within that universe.

And, we are allowing our civilization to abandon the truth. Our energy systems have been severely damaged by lies. Our productive people are being oppressed by lies. Our government is controlled by liars. Our media is dominated by liars. And our key social systems have lost their respect for the truth. Even many of our churches have compromised on their most basic principles.

The truth is definitely the key tool that has made us free. And, as we abandon the truth we are losing our freedom.

The war between the truth and the lie in our nation is not over, but it is not going well and true science is under siege.

— Arthur Robinson
Access to Energy
April 2012, p. 1

Hall Aims to Transform College Culture with Evangelism



Nick Hall

David Noebel founded Summit with one goal in mind: to equip Christian students to counteract the false ideas taking so many minds captive in the university setting.

Nick Hall was one of those students Doc had in mind. In 2001 he came through Summit because a kidney operation had sidelined him from a mission trip to Africa. That visit to Summit changed his life forever. “It was one of the first times we had really seen the combination of our minds and our faith,” he recalled recently. “We’d been challenged in church and in school, but it was the first time we had been exposed to people — one after another — who had been called to certain fields of influence.”

After his summer at Summit, Nick went on to college filled with a passion to reach out to his classmates. Today, Nick

leads one of the largest evangelistic outreaches in the U.S.

In college at North Dakota State University in Fargo, Hall’s heart broke as he saw his fellow students fall into the grip of false ideas. Alcoholism, drug addiction, and depression had become a plague. Seeking to live a life of Gospel-centered purpose that he saw modeled at Summit, he began a movement called PULSE to speak biblical truth and freedom to large numbers of his fellow college students. Through prayer, ecumenical unity,

campus-wide events, student mobilization, and evangelism, Hall sought to draw college students and pose the big questions to them in unintimidating environments. Hall’s friends and classmates easily caught the vision. PULSE now reaches 500,000 college students per year through its various events: concerts, prayer gatherings, support groups, and discipleship training.

Hall said he sees PULSE as a modern-day movement with its DNA rooted in people like Billy Graham and Josh McDowell. “We see ourselves as a young expression of those kinds of movements,” he said. While PULSE reaches students with the Gospel through small group events and printed resources on campuses, the large events have a distinct evangelistic

“I’m an evangelist. That’s my calling to the church.”

Nick Hall

flavor. “I’m an evangelist,” Hall said. “That’s my calling to the church.”

PULSE groups around the country are finding ways to work across denominational lines to “major on the majors,” as Hall put it, and are drawing attention for it. On a Wisconsin campus last year, the university’s LGBT groups noticed that the Christian students were working together to promote an upcoming PULSE event. The LGBT groups called the Christians into a meeting. “They thought they were ‘gay hating,’” Hall explained. The PULSE students explained what they were doing and the ideas behind PULSE and now have a witness to the LGBT groups on campus. “We can reframe the discussion rather than let it be all about the headlines,” Hall said. “This is how we build relationships.”

Today PULSE is active on over thirty college campuses, and Hall has led tours to about fifty cities each year. This fall he’ll embark on a tour of thirty cities from New York to Los Angeles. His next goal is a nationwide evangelistic gathering in 2015.

In thinking about the road that brought Hall to where he is now, he credited Summit and specifically Brent Noebel, who also battled kidney problems. “Brent had a profound impact on all of us — his life, his testimony, the brevity of life, and wanting to make his life count.”

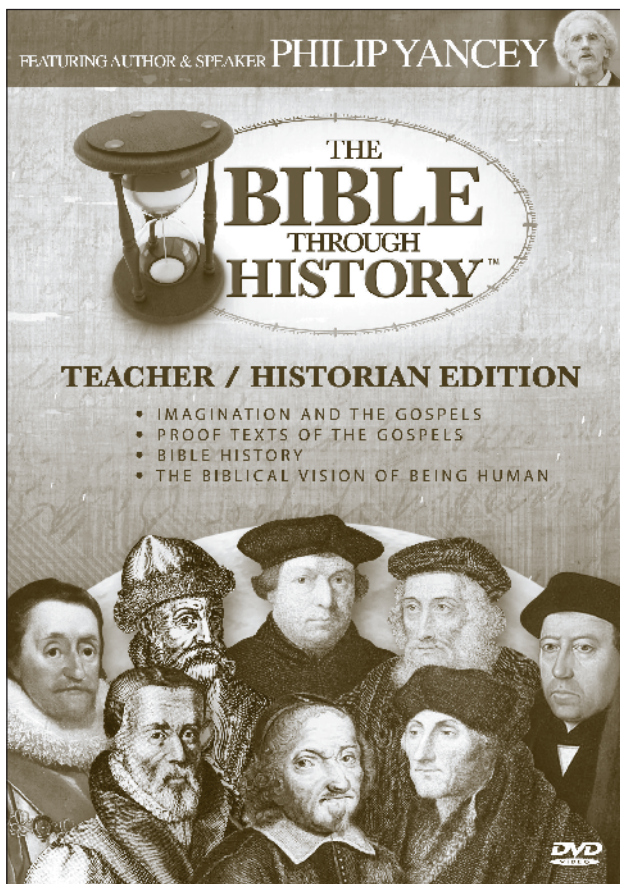


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