Real Christians Live By Faith (The President's Desk)

Ron E.M. Clouzet

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd

Part of the Practical Theology Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol13/iss1/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Adventist Theological Society at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Perspective Digest by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.
I’ll just come out and say it: What makes a person a Christian is that he or she lives by faith. This faith is not self-confidence, nor is it faith in anything other than in the God of the Bible. And that’s it.

Increasing evidence today, from Barna Research and other groups, points to a clear disconnect between what Christians theoretically believe in and what they actually do with their lives. Many believe the Bible is God’s Word but don’t read it, they believe they love God but hardly spend time with Him, or they are that’s it.

But shocking as it was to His disciples, He chose not to do what sense dictated. Instead, the Bible says He stayed an additional two days before He went to Lazarus. And He went only after He knew he was dead! (vs. 11). What would you have done in Christ’s place? The genuine expectation of the sisters, the friendship with Lazarus, the request made in public, the typical responsiveness of Jesus in those cases—all pointed to Him going immediately to the sick.

But Jesus walked by faith and not by sight. Everything about His ministry aimed at the glory of God and not the fulfillment of common sense. It was the serious time spent each day in communion with His Father that allowed Him to know what to do and when to do it. He trusted the voice of the One who woke Him “morning by morning” (Isa. 50:4, KJV). He listened to God’s voice as an eager disciple would his wise master. Thus, though He was wholly human, He lived additionally in a dimension wholly different from that of humanity. He lived by faith and not by sight.

How Jesus lived, curiously enough, is how Christians ought to live. The greatest problem with Christians today—and Adventists, in particular—is that we are no longer Christians. The Christian is the person saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). But we hardly live by faith anymore. We often live by feeling or by consensus or by expectations placed by others or by common sense.

Some, to be sure, have given “living by faith” a bad name. I remember years ago, a minister who convinced many in his congregation that it was time to move to the hills in view of the upcoming final persecution. That is seeing what is not there, and it’s called presumption.

To live by faith is to live by what is written—and what is meant by what is written—not by what is imagined. To live by faith calls for faithful exegetical awareness of the biblical text, that is, for careful understanding of inspired writings. And when what we study is still not clear, we should move forward with what is, not with what isn’t.

Often the Lord may hold back more light from us simply because the light He has given us is still ignored.

Another example from our Lord: Remember when the Greeks sought to “see Jesus”? (John 12:21, KJV). When you look at the context, you realize this was the day Christ had pronounced the “woes” against the Pharisees because they chose to live by their convictions rather than by what God had said. At the end of this sad discourse, Christ, heartbroken for His unbelieving leaders, declared that He would leave the temple desolate, never to return until His second coming (Matt. 23:37-39). The Greeks no doubt heard all this while in the temple’s Court of the Gentiles. It is at this point that they were encouraged to
The President’s Desk

I’ll just come out and say it: What makes a person a Christian is that he or she lives by faith. This faith is not self-confidence, nor is it faith in anything other than in the God of the Bible. And that’s it.

Increasing evidence today, from Barna Research and other groups, points to a clear disconnect between what Christians theoretically believe in and what they actually do with their lives. Many believe the Bible is God’s Word but don’t read it, they believe they love God but hardly spend time with Him, or they are that’s it. And evidence, nor is it faith in anything other than in the God of the Bible. And that’s it.

To live by faith is to live by what is written—and what is meant by what is written—not by what is imagined. To live by faith calls for faithful exegesis of the biblical text, that is, for careful understanding of inspired writings. And when what we study is still not clear, we should move forward with what is, not with what isn’t. Often the Lord may hold back more light from us simply because the light He has given us is still ignored.

Another example from our Lord: Remember when the Greeks sought to “see Jesus”? (John 12:21, KJV). When you look at the context, you realize this was the day Christ had pronounced the “woes” against the Pharisees because they chose to live by their convictions rather than by what God had said. At the end of this sad discourse, Christ, heartbroken for His unbelieving leaders, declared that the Gentiles’ Court of the Gentiles. It is at this point that they were encouraged to

Perspective Digest, Vol. 13 [2008], Iss. 1, Art. 5
January 25, 1990, Avianca Airlines Flight 52 ran out of fuel and crashed to the earth, causing the loss of many lives. In its report of the incident, the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) disclosed that the whole tragic accident might have been prevented if the flight crew had used the correct specific terms to describe its critical problem to those in the control tower.

Out of fuel. “In fact they used the wrong terms. If they had described their situation as having “minimum fuel” or “emergency fuel,” as they were supposed to under the circumstances, the air traffic controllers would have known to respond decisively and immediately. Those were the terms controllers were trained to be listening for, but because they didn’t hear them, they did not realize the gravity of the situation.

Reference

1. The Desire of Ages, p. 823.
2. Ibid., p. 625.
3. Ibid.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY?

In order to anticipate every possible eventuality, the Federal Aviation Administration has designated a standard form of