



# CALVARY COURIER

Aug - Sept 2011

## Letter from the Pastor

*Epistemology - a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge. How do we know what we know?*

*As we deal with an ever more secularized society, we, as those who seek to follow Jesus Christ, will find ourselves increasingly labeled as those who think in nonsensical ways. For example, popular pundit Bill Maher views us as being*



*irrational people who have electrical fires going off in our heads. He and other folks believe that they alone use reason and that everyone else is a bit off. Actually, they think that we are a lot off.*

*We are accused by the Maher bunch of believing in "fairy tales" like the virgin birth, the resurrection, Noah's ark and the Nephilim of Genesis 6; events that are nonsense. Admittedly, there is nothing about these events that we can prove in any way. How can you look back 2000 years and prove scientifically that Jesus rose from the dead. Seeing that this sort of event cannot be empirically tested, nor "peer reviewed," it must be false. When is the last time that any of us saw someone raised from the dead after being killed by experts and placed mummy-like in a*

*tomb? Since this event is by nature impossible, unrepeatabe and unverifiable, we are told that it must be viewed as mere myth, a fairy tale that you tell to children, like Santa Claus. At least Santa doesn't throw you into Hell if you are naughty.*

*The difficulty in this kind of Maherian rationale is that it allows only one means of knowing about anything: empiricism. Empiricism, in its current form, holds that knowledge can only be gained through observation, experimentation, and reason. In other words, science is the only way to know anything. If we cannot experience it with the senses, if we cannot place it in a test-tube or if it does not make sense to the rationale people, then it is to be rejected outright as nonsense.*

*There are many difficulties with this epistemology, this exclusionary means of knowing. Allow me to entertain a few of these difficulties.*



### CHURCH MINISTRY

#### Sundays

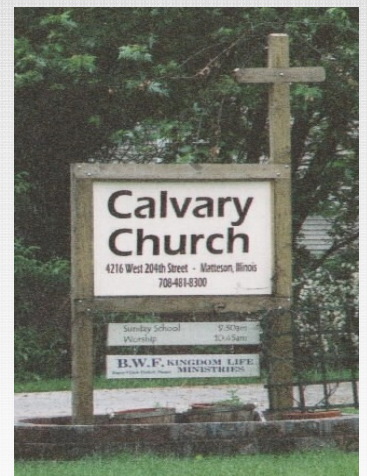
10:00 am – Morning Worship

#### Wednesdays

7:00 pm – Church Prayer Fellowship

***"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.***

*Matthew 3:6 (NASB)*



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CALVARY MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

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1. You cannot empirically prove that empiricism is the only means of knowledge. There is no way to step away from the empirical method to test this, seeing that no other means of knowing can be allowed a priori by which to evaluate its validity. Although the intent of empiricism's exclusivity is to avoid uncertainty and subjectivity, this exclusivity completely devalues the philosophical branch of metaphysics as a waste of time. It allows no competition.

2. Empiricism demands individual, personal demonstrations of knowledge. Nothing can be taken on a hearsay basis. For example, the testimony of the apostle John is written off as lunacy or a lie when he says "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the word of life." (NIV) Although John has passed on a written record of his empirical findings, his work is scoffed because the content of the testimony fails the reason test of the reasonable elite. Because what John records here and elsewhere is deemed unreasonable it is condemned as "fairy tale" material. At the same time, the elite demand that we all take it as indisputable that evolution is happening because some scientists say so. Very few of us have the time or resources to gather the empirical data ourselves, so we are called upon to trust their conclusions, they being the elite rationalists and all.

3. Empiricism has often led to erroneous conclusions. One need only look at the past science, now totally rejected, that labeled those of African descent as being mentally inferior to their Aryan counterparts. Is coffee good or bad for us? The "science" on this is in near-constant flux, which it should not be if it is science.

I have confirmed with some empiricists that science is proven to be reliable because it so often proves itself to be in error. Although this sounds very unreasonable and downright silly, empiricism's adherents place their full faith that science will eventually get all of the right answers, repudiating and refining today's scientific dogma with the revised truth of tomorrow which will, in its turn, be sacked by next week's findings. "We know that such-and-such is completely correct and true! Well, that is until we find out more and revise our 'truth.'" This seems like telling others what a good driver you are because you have had so many accidents, assuring them that tomorrow's driving will be better. I have noted that the grand Theory of Evolution is subject to constant and often large scale revision in the light of

the latest findings which overthrow the conclusions of yesterday's findings. Yet it is held to be true to the point of affecting nearly everything within western culture.

4. As I have already alluded to, empiricism tends to entrust true knowledge to a small group of mental elites whom we are all supposed to trust simply due to their superior mental prowess. We are supposed to take as a given that these elites are governed by nothing other than a pure desire for unfettered and uncorrupted knowledge. If you are not in the elite peer group, then you have no place to question their findings. To question them is to proclaim your ignorance and intellectual inability. I always question the elite.

The Empiricists accuse us of being irrational because our epistemology allows for knowledge that is beyond mere science. We allow for the revelation of God through Scripture and personal experience governed by proper Biblical interpretation/hermeneutics. Biblical interpretation is not a subjective, but rather an objective science. Texts have one meaning which can be discerned, not personalized meanings to individuals contrary to the writer's intent. If someone takes a text to mean other than what the writer intended, they are wrong. Their interpretation is not valid.

My experience is subjective to you, but objective to me. I can confirm answered prayer and personal interactions with God that are not subject to scientific investigation, but are subject to Biblical inspection. (For example, if I hold that Jesus wore Nike water walking shoes, I will not find a Biblical ground for this and it should be dismissed.) I accept these experiences, as well as the Biblically consistent experiences of others. We have no elites to dispense knowledge to us, but rather we are each accountable to become experiential experts in the Faith.

When you are mocked by the Empirical Elites, remember that they cannot allow themselves to seek or entertain in other's knowledge that is beyond their current science. Despite the testimony of those who experienced the flesh and blood Jesus, they refuse to accept this "irrational" belief because their system of knowing, their epistemology, allows them no other option.

We know more.

--Pastor Steve

# Great Commission NEWS *from Carol*

- From John G. Bernard, President of **United World Mission**: "I personally accompanied Tom and Nancy (Jebo) on countless trips overseas and watched them love and care our missionaries with my own eyes over many years.... In brief, they were servants that were like loving, wise, prayerful glue that held a lot of the UWM family together, and I can hardly imagine our mission without them." For the rest of Mr. Bernard's testimony please see his letter on the board.
- **Daryl and Valerie** wrote: "recent events prompt us to ask you to keep praying for our safety, as well as the safety of our Venezuelan brothers and sisters in Christ." They received renewed visas the day before Valerie's flight. "We'd appreciate your continued prayer for Valerie's doctor appointment and possible surgery, Daryl's mother, and our travels. Thank you so much for your prayer support."
- A year ago (June 30) David LaRosa had his serious accident in Colorado. From **Sergio and Susan**: "We are so grateful that God preserved his life and health, and worked in his life for good in spite of the emotional and physical pain. Thank you once again to all of you who prayed for him and encouraged him (and us) during that difficult time." David is teaching English in Trujillo. Jessica is working through mid-August at her college - John Brown University.
- **Bowers** ask us to pray for rain in Mali so the farmers can get started growing their years worth of crops. Prayer also for the Duduya Well - more funding is needed. Bamako Christian Academy still needs teachers for grades 7-11 in Science, Math, Bible, Social Studies, Art, Music, and French; and a director for the school. "Please pray with us for these needs to be filled! Is God calling you or someone you know to be an answer to prayer?"
- **Rick and Susan** enjoyed 4 weeks of official vacation time. They wrote: "Pray for us as we get back into the swing of things... We really needed this vacation, and are grateful to the Lord for providing it. Thanks for taking the time to be happy with us about these things and ask the Lord to help us."
- **Tim and Belle** are planning a Sabbath break in 2012 as the Lord leads. Please keep the family in prayer as they are "waiting on God."
- Craig introduces Lazarus T. and his father. A witch doctor's description: "Lazarus 'ate' his mother" at birth. The rest of the story is on our missions board, plus the **Leadership Resources Autumn 2011 Ministry Schedule**
- **Brook and Sara Sarver** are praising God and building relationships in Thailand. "Praise God for continued blessing as Sara's pregnancy progresses...peace, patience and wisdom...Baby Sarver's debut in August." They included a "thumbs up photo" in their newsletter
- **July Action Newsletter** contains a special Africa Edition: Malawi, Uganda and Zambia.

## You Are Not a Speck—You Are Cherished!

*"... the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matthew 10:30*

The Lord sees you. He knows all about you. And I guarantee you on the authority of the Word of God, that He loves you. This is amazing when you realize that we are just specks on a globe that's about the size of a grain of sand or less compared to the size of the universe.

There's no more reason that the Lord of Glory should be interested in us than we should be interested in an ant floating on a piece of cheesecake in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. And yet our Lord looks down and He sees us as cherished individuals that He loves one by one.

The great God that runs the universe is concerned about you as though that were His only goal.

When was the last time you counted the hairs on your head? Can you trust a God who has them numbered?"

--Adrian Rogers, *Love Worth Finding*



## SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19

*Last Grant Park concert: Verdi Requiem-August 19th at 6:30. We will take the train up for that. If anyone is interested in joining in, they should see Ann! Thanks!*



## COMING SOON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

*New Fall Sunday School Session begins. 9:30 am Sunday School for all ages. 10:45 am Worship Service*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

*Small Group Bible Study at Glenn & Deanna's, starting September 10.*

# CONGRATULATIONS!

*Brook, Sara, and Hailey Sarver*



*Sarah, Audrey, Jack, and Jacob Miller*



**Psalm 123:7a**

**BEHOLD, Children are a gift from the Lord.**