



How Should We Now Live? The Challenges and Opportunities of Living in a 'Post-Christian' America

by Jeffrey Breshears

Christians who understand what has happened in American society and culture over the past 50 years realize that we are entering a precarious new phase of history. In lieu of some unforeseen revival of moral-based sanity, not only is our economic system in peril but much of what has distinguished American civilization in the past. The Christian influences in our culture are rapidly eroding, and the fact that many Christians either don't see it or refuse to acknowledge the gravity of the situation doesn't alter the reality of it.

In *Mere Christianity* C. S. Lewis wrote of what he called the "key to history:" Over time, terrific energy is expended building civilizations and cultural institutions, only to have it all ruined as the most selfish, ambitious and cruel people claw their way to the top and eventually bring the whole system crashing down. In the end, greed and the lust for power corrupts most of the good that institutions and civilizations stand for. Sound familiar?

Commenting on the spiritual vision of the early Desert Fathers of the 4th century, Thomas Merton notes in *The Wisdom of the Desert*:

Society... was regarded by them as a shipwreck from which each single individual had to swim for his life... These were men who believed that to let oneself drift along, passively accepting the tenets and values of what they knew as society, was purely and simply a disaster.

Reflecting on Merton's comments, Henri Nouwen reminds us in his contemplative classic, *The Way of the Heart*, that our society is no better:

Our society is not a community radiant with the love of Christ, but a dangerous network of domination and manipulation in which we can easily get entangled and lose

our soul. The basic question is whether we... have not already been so deeply molded by the seductive powers of our dark world that we have become blind to our own fatal state and have lost the power and motivation to swim for our lives.

C. S. Lewis understood this well, which is why in *Mere Christianity* he characterized history since the time of Christ as akin to a civil war in which Christians find themselves living in rebel-occupied territory. As he put it:

Enemy-occupied territory – that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed... and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.

Now if you're like me, the image of Christians as "cultural saboteurs" carries some connotations that are unacceptable. But there is no doubt that we are called to be beacons of light and truth in an increasingly corrupt and degenerate society. So at least in that sense, our calling is to be counter-cultural subversives whose mission is to undermine the dominant beliefs and values of our society and its institutions. To think and act otherwise is a failure to understand and practice wholistic Christian discipleship.

The Areopagus Calendar

Winter Seminars

Christianity Thru the Centuries: From Jesus to the Present

Sundays, beginning Jan. 6th
11:15 AM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church
Room 276

*A new Sunday morning study led by
Dr. Jeffrey Breshears*

A History of Christianity In America: From the Civil War To the Scopes Monkey Trial

Wednesdays, Jan. 9 - March 27
6:45 PM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church
Room 105

How Should We Now Live? The Challenges and Opportunities of Living in a 'Post-Christian' America

Tuesdays, Jan. 15 - April 2
7:00 PM

(Location to be announced)

Winter Forums

"Power, Politics, and Evangelical Fragmentation: From the Scopes Trial to the Obama Administration"

Thursday, Jan. 17th
7:30 PM

Perimeter Church

A presentation by
Dr. Kenneth Collins
Professor of Historical Theology,
Asbury Theological Seminary

2012 THE BEST BOOKS

— PHILOSOPHY & APOLOGETICS —

John G. West, ed., *The Magician's Twin: C. S. Lewis on Science, Scientism, and Society* (Discovery Institute Press)

— CHRISTIAN HISTORY —

John M. Barry, *Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul: Church, State, and the Birth of Liberty* (Penguin Books)

— SOCIETY & CULTURE —

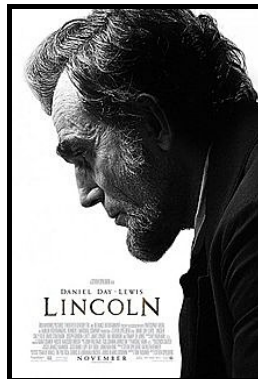
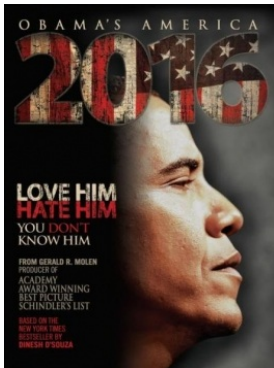
Dennis Prager, *Still the Best Hope: Why the World Needs American Values to Triumph* (Broadside Books)

— CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY —

John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion With God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction* (IVP Academic)



Three recommended films of 2012
with significant philosophical, theological,
and/or socio-political themes



The Areopagus Calendar

(Continued)

Winter Forums

**"The New Testament Canon:
Why These Books and No Others?"**

Saturday, February 23rd
9 AM - 12:30 PM
Reformed Theological Seminary

A presentation by
Dr. Michael Kruger
Professor of New Testament,
Reformed Theological Seminary



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Christian Discipleship
As a Lifestyle"**

Thursday, February 28th
7:30 PM

Perimeter Church

A presentation by
Nancy Sleeth

Founder/president of Blessed Earth,
and author of *Almost Amish: One
Woman's Quest for a Slower, Simpler,
More Sustainable Life*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Who Were Adam & Eve?"

Thursday, March 21st

7:30 PM

Perimeter Church

A presentation by
Dr. Fazale Rana

Biochemist and Vice-President of
Research and Apologetics for Reasons To
Believe, and author of *Origins of Life*
(2004), *Who Was Adam?* (2005), and
The Cell's Design (2008).