

## Priority Discipleship

by Jeffrey Breshears

While Paul was in Athens he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace with those who were there. A group of philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" They said this because Paul was preaching the Gospel about Jesus and the resurrection.

Then they brought him to the Areopagus, where they said to him, "What is this new teaching you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to us, and we want to know what they mean...."

Paul then stood up in the Areopagus and said.... "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth.... From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that everyone would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him...." (Acts 17:16ff)

This is truly an astonishing passage of Scripture on which to ruminate and meditate. The reality that God, in his infinite foreknowledge, determined when and where we should be born and live is cause for serious and sober reflection. We are *right here, right now* for a purpose, and it is imperative that each of us understand what our calling and role in this life is.

Earlier in the book of Acts, the apostle Peter implored the crowd that had gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" and "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" – after which we read: "And with many other words he warned them, and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation'" (Acts 2:38ff).

As 21<sup>st</sup> century American Christians, we are certainly living in the midst of the most corrupt

generation in our nation's history as we see the erosion of Christian influence in every area of life from law and politics to business, education, the media, the arts and entertainment, personal morality and public behavior.

There is a ferocious culture war raging in America today – which in reality is merely the surface-level manifestation of great cosmic conflicts being waged in the spirit realm – but it is obvious that many Christians (and Christian "leaders") are either oblivious to it or in denial of its reality. If ever it was essential to "make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16), now is the time. There are great issues at stake, and this is no time for either cowardice or trivial distractions.

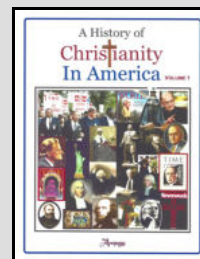
In human terms, all of us have strict limitations in terms of responding to this crisis on the bases of four criteria:

(Continued...)

### The Areopagus Calendar

#### Areopagus Seminars

#### A History of Christianity In America



An in-depth study of the major people, issues and events in American Christian history from colonial times to the present.

This history is unfamiliar to most Christians as it is rarely taught in churches or even in seminaries, but it is nonetheless informative, thought-provoking and inspiring. It is also relevant considering the present condition of American Christianity, society and culture.

Sunday mornings @ 11:15  
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church  
Room 270

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#### — DINNER & DIALOGUE SERIES —

#### American History Off the Record

Social & Political Themes in Popular Music

#### THE HISTORY & MUSIC OF WORLD WAR I

Saturday, July 20 and 27  
6 - 8 PM / Camps Restaurant

#### THE HISTORY & MUSIC OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

TBA

#### THE HISTORY & MUSIC OF WORLD WAR II

TBA

## Priority Discipleship

(Continued)

(1) Time – which is running out regardless of what stage of life we are currently in;

(2) Energy – which is dissipating entropically in accord with the second law of thermodynamics; and

(3) Resources – not only financially but also in terms of our mental, physical, and emotional state of being.

This makes it all the more imperative that we focus seriously on the fourth criterion:

(4) Priorities – those areas of our personal and social life that are most significant.

Thankfully, there is also a fifth factor that can regulate these criteria:

(5) Divinely-inspired Scripture and the internal witness of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised would guide us into all essential truth (John 14:15-16:53).

This increasingly corrupt, frenetic, over-stimulating and distracting culture in which we live demands that we be proactive in terms of priority discipleship: spending our limited time, energy and resources wisely so as to nurture our own and others' spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.



### ★ ★ ★ TOP 10 CLASSIC FILMS ★ ★ ★ PART 3: 1983 - 1989

Significant movies related to the arts, history, politics, society and culture that every Christian should know

*As the movie industry continues to produce more films that dumb-down and degrade our society intellectually, morally and spiritually, here are some films worth seeing (or seeing again) that were produced between 1983 and 1989:*

1. Zelig (Woody Allen, Mia Farrow, 1983)
2. A Passage to India (Judy Davis, Peggy Ashcroft, 1984)
3. This Is Spinal Tap (Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, 1984)
4. Platoon (Charlie Sheen, Willem Dafoe, Tom Berenger, 1986)
5. The Mission (Robert De Niro, Jeremy Irons, 1986)
6. Jean de Florette (Gerard Depardieu, Daniel Auteuil, 1986)
7. Manon of the Spring (Yves Montand, Daniel Auteuil, 1986)
8. Babette's Feast (Stephane Audran, 1987)
9. Glory (Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, 1989)
10. Driving Miss Daisy (Jessica Tandy, Morgan Freeman, 1989)

## The Areopagus Calendar

### Areopagus Seminars

#### Frontline Apologetics: How to Share Your Faith and Values Effectively with Spiritual Seekers and Religious Skeptics

A substantive and practical course in relational apologetics focused on questions and challenges to the Christian faith

Tuesdays, beginning Aug. 13th  
7:00 PM  
Perimeter Church  
Fellowship Hall

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#### Alternative Universes: A Survey of Comparative Worldviews & Religions PART 2: EASTERN RELIGIONS AND THE NEW AGE

Comparing and contrasting orthodox Biblical Christianity to Eastern religions and philosophies and the New Age movement

Wednesdays, beginning Aug. 14th  
7:00 PM  
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church  
Room 108

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#### C. S. Lewis: The Life and Works of a 'Mere Christian'

An in-depth study of one of the most influential Christian thinkers and writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Mondays, beginning Aug. 19th  
6:15 PM  
Abbott's Bar & Grill  
10900 Medlock Bridge Rd. (Hwy. 141)  
Duluth, GA 30097

(A Dinner & Dialogue seminar –  
pre-registration required)