

~Other Speakers S-Z: Lou Sutera:

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalm 85:6)

Where does a revival begin? John Rosebury, who wrote articles occasionally for the Alliance Witness, said, "The need today is not for a transitory revival. The need today is for the Eternal One to dwell with us forever." We don't want an emotional "spurt." We don't want emotionalism. We don't want something transitory--here today and gone tomorrow. God needs to come back to us and be at home among His people.

John Rosebury went on to say, "A revival that begins in the character of God will be as a river ever increasing and widening until lost in the sea of God's great eternity." Isn't that the kind of revival we want, one that grows and grows and grows? In Psalm 85:6 the Psalmist prayed for a revival wrapped up in the character of God--"that we may rejoice in thee." Revival begins in the character of God. Revival is rejoicing in God. Knowing God and His character must become our amazement, enjoyment, and rejoicing.

In the book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Dr. A. W. Tozer makes a profound statement: "The gravest question facing the Church today is God Himself. It is my opinion that the Christian concept of God that is current in the middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent that it is utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God, and it actually consists, for professed believers, in something amounting to a moral calamity."

If that's what Dr. Tozer thought in the middle of the twentieth century, how much worse is it at the end of the twentieth century!

In Psalm 2:11 we read, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling," which sounds like a paradox. But serving the Lord with fear represents a high and lofty view of God. Those who fear God are going to rejoice. They will have joy because they have that lofty view of God. The fear of God underlies and undergirds the spirit of rejoicing. What a truth!

Proverbs 28:14 states, "Happy [joyful] is the man that feareth alway." Again, man with a high and lofty view of God is one who will rejoice in God Himself. We're to have a high view of God and joy. The Psalmist prayed, "Revive us again, that thy people may rejoice [have joy] in thee." We must rejoice in God but with holy fear and trembling. Candidates for revival must have this combination of rejoicing and fear. It's not enough to just have joy; we must fear God also. So, the joy of the Christian, according to Psalm 85:6, is related to the character of God. A high and lofty view of God is essential in order to rejoice in God.

The tragedy today is that the sinfulness that permeates society has been able to creep into the Church. What is the sin of society? It relates to what we have done to God: we have humanized Him. We have brought Him down from His throne to our human level. We act as if God is a human being like the neighbor next door. We think He acts and reacts as men do. The first thing we then feel is that He's not trustworthy. We are tempted to have human reactions toward Him. The sin of society is the sin of humanizing God.

Once we humanize God we start to deify man. Why? Because man is idolatrous by nature and has to worship something. If we dethrone and bring the God Who should be worshipped down to human level, we have to enthrone something or somebody else. Who do we enthrone? Man, who then becomes his own god.

The term "secular humanism" basically relates to bring-ing God down to a human level and making a god out of man or lifting man up to a god state. Man is the ultimate end of all. "If it feels good do it." "Do whatever you feel is good for you." We've brought God down; we've lifted man up and made a god out of him. This is the deifying of man after the humanizing of God. We become our own gods. That's the philosophy in the world today. The world says, "Let's bring God down to a human level and man up to a god level. Man is the end of all."

Once you do that you minimize sin. There are no more absolutes. Everybody is his own god and therefore each has his own standards. Everything then is "relative," with nothing black-and-white but all a neutral gray. We don't call the scarlet sin scarlet anymore. Now it's a pretty pink. There still should be black and white because God has never changed, but we have changed Him! The changing of God and the deifying of man has resulted in the minimizing of sin. We now give sin different terms than God gives it, getting away from the terms of the Bible in relation to what sin is all about. This is the tragedy of our present society.

I hear people say, "I'm not going to worship God. I'm not going to bow down to Jesus Christ. I'm not going to serve God." If they don't do that, they're going to bow down to something or someone else, because by nature we are incur-ably idolatrous. We have to worship something or someone.

If we take God off His throne and make Him like a human as the world has done, then we have to worship something. We have to bring something else up to the "God state." And if we have to put something else in the "God state," we put ourselves there! If we humanize God, the logical and natural result will be to deify man! We are living in that kind of a society today. This is called secular humanism.

Carl Menninger, the father of modern psychology asked, "Whatever has happened to sin?" I'll tell you what's happened. We have minimized it as a result of what we've done to God and then we've lifted man up to the God state. Once we make a god out of man, that god is the boss and calls the shots. He dictates the terms, gives the orders, and sets the standards. Man becomes his own god.

Several years ago at a press conference in Toronto, Ontario, Rev. Runzie, former Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, was asked the following question: "What is the most pressing problem facing the world today? Is it air pollution, is it water pollution, is it population explosion, etc.?" He gave a profound answer: "We are in danger of trivializing God, and we stand in danger of degrading God [pulling Him down and changing Him] to a pal or buddy who lives next door."

Recently I saw a book entitled *The Trivialization of God*. The subtitle was *The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity*. We have a dangerous illusion that we can manage our deity. I suggest that we in the Body of Christ are also guilty of the sin of society: bringing God down to human level, making man the end of all and laughing at sin.

Why did the Jews crucify Jesus Christ? They said, "We will not have this man to rule over us." Every man wanted to do what was right in his own eyes. Who then is the boss? Who calls the shots? Man.

So, you in your own world do what's right in your own eyes. Another person is his own boss and does what is right in his own eyes, with everyone having his own standards. When a society goes that route it becomes a lawless society in which it is even too dangerous for a woman to walk the streets alone at night.

Perhaps our younger generation find it difficult to believe that there was once a day in America when you didn't have to lock your doors at night. There was a day when women could walk alone at night in any major city and be safe. Every man would have protected her as she walked down the street.

The principle of "cause and effect" now sets in. The cause is that "we have changed God." We've made Him like a human, resulting in the deifying of man. The natural result then is the minimizing of sin because there are no more absolutes. With every man his own god and therefore doing what is right in his own eyes, there is no more black and white. There are no more absolutes.

Civilizations that are in dust and ashes today all followed the same pattern. When a society comes to the point of humanizing God and deifying man, it is just a matter of time before it crumbles. Sixteen of the world's empires are in dust and ashes because they followed this course!

The tragedy is that the sin rampant in our society is also in the Church. Somebody once said, "Isn't it wonderful that the longer we live the more Christian the world gets all the time!" Here was the reply he received: "I think you're looking through the wrong eyeglasses. The longer we live the more worldly the Church gets all the time. That's why we look alike."

The Church of Jesus Christ was never more effective in changing its society than in the days when it was more opposite from the world, not like it. The Church is too much like the world, with only a thin theology separating us from it.

We're living in a day when we're trying to give our teenagers a non-offensive kind of Christianity. We're trying to make it so palatable that when they're in school they won't be persecuted.

We ought to be teaching the glory of persecution, to rejoice when persecuted for righteousness' sake because great is your reward in heaven (see Matthew 5:11-12). We ought to be raising a generation that is different from the world, with young people being glad and rejoicing that they can suffer for Jesus.

THE SIN OF HUMANIZING GOD

What is our basic problem? It is low thinking about God! "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (Deuteronomy 32:18). That's what God said to His children in the Old Testament. Their thinking about God had diminished.

Years ago Pastor Greg Cantelmo made the statement, "Rarely do we think about God, and when we do, so often what we think about God is so unworthy of Him. Although there are many misconceptions about God, the greatest problem we have with our thoughts about God is that they are so few." We don't really study the character of God.

The Word of God warns about the tragic possibility that we, even in the Body of Christ, can humanize God. Job said to Bildad when he was suffering from boils: "For [God] is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him . . ." (Job 9:32). He was saying, "Bildad, don't make the mistake of humanizing God. We are talking about Someone Who is not a man as I am that I should answer Him. Don't think God is a man."

In the next chapter even Job himself was tempted to humanize God. He asked God in verses 4 and 5, "Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man? Are thy years as man's days?" He was tempted to wonder, Is God like a man? It seems to be so natural for all of us to slip into that trap.

In Job 33:12-13 Job's friend Elihu said to him, "Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." Elihu is saying to Job, "You're making a mistake. You're bringing God down to a man's size. God is greater than man. In this you are not just."

In Psalm 50:16-17 we read, "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee." God is saying to the wicked, "Why have you verbalized My truths? You act like you're on My side. You even enunciate my principles. But you hate instruction and cast My words behind you." That sounds like our daily newspaper and yet we say we're a Christian nation.

"Offer unto God thanksgiving [that's a high view of God]; and pay thy vows unto the most High," (Psalm 50:14). Pay your vows to the Most High. Why? Verse 14 didn't end with a period. In other words, this isn't the end of the principle but just the beginning.

The next verse adds to it: "And call upon me in the day of trouble." Who is the person that can call upon God in the day of trouble? It's the person spoken of in verse 14 who has the high and lofty view of God and is ready to pay his vows to the Most High. God tells that person, "You call on Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me." He will deliver us because He knows our view of Him is so high and lofty that when He delivers us we will not take the credit for it but will glorify Him.

I wonder if this isn't a picture of the North American so-called Christian culture. The statutes of God are in the law books of our lands. We pronounce the theological concepts of Christianity in so many areas of our daily life, but even some heathen did so also.

Verses 18-21 go on to say, "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself . . ." "Because," God says, "I didn't come and judge you immediately--because I kept silence--how did it affect you?" This sounds like our current times.

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself . . ." (Psalm 50:21). It can't be stated any clearer than that! The wicked have a thinking problem and their thinking problem is about God. That's the epitome of humanizing God--bringing God down from His throne and making Him like a human. God says, ". . . I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes" (Psalm 50:21).

"Now consider this, ye that forget God . . ." (Psalm 50:22). What is the essence of forgetting God? Is it that we never think about Him? No! The essence of forgetting God is changing our view about the character of God and Who He really is. ". . . Ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22). But, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." (That's because of a high view of God.) ". . . And to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23).

A short statement in Psalm 62:4 says this about the wicked: They consult. They have a conference. They get

together. What are they consulting about? "They only consult to cast him down from his excellency . . ." What words! That is the perfect illustration of a world trying to humanize God!

God even had to come to His own people to speak about the danger of humanizing Him. You'd think God would never have to do that to His people. ". . . For I am God," He says in Hosea 11:9. We can see ourselves in the Israelites. We act the way they did.

It's amazing that sometimes God has to do this. "Lord, why do You have to tell us this? We know Who You are. You are not a man." God says, "For I am God, and not man." "God, do you have to tell your people that?" Yes, He does! He says, "I am the Holy One in the midst of thee . . ." If ever there was a message of God that needed to echo and re-echo throughout the Church, it is this: "I am God, and not a man. I am the Holy One in the midst of thee . . ."

The New Testament picture of this is also a picture of tomorrow morning's newspaper. Romans 1 describes the tragedy of the sin of humanizing God. Young people need to make a mental note of Romans 1 and go back to that chapter many times in their lives, because we're living in a society that is the example of what is described here.

Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . ." We know that God is angry with the unrighteous-ness of men. What is the condition of these men who hold the truth? They ". . . hold the truth in unrighteousness." In North America we hold the truth but we hold it in unrighteousness.

Verse 21 describes the problem, "Because that, when they knew God . . ." There was a day when we had a better knowledge of God; we knew Him, but glorified Him not as God. We decided that we're going to change Him a bit. We're going to do something to God. The minute you stop glorifying God as God you're going to become unthankful. They were unthankful! (See Romans 1:21.)

Dr. Irwin Lutzer, pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, writes in *Living With Your Passions*: "Sexual looseness begins with ingratitude. The first step to moral ruin is cited in Romans 1:21, saying 'They did not honor Him as God nor were thankful.' Sin and unthankfulness always go together." The first step to moral looseness starts with unthankfulness.

They started to change God. When they didn't glorify Him as God, they became unthankful and ". . . vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Pro-fessing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God . . ." (Romans 1:21). What words! They were doing something to God. We ought to be reveling in the glory of an uncorruptible God.

The Bible says that there will be a society that is going "to change the glory of an uncorruptible God." They're going to "change it into an image." They will put limitations on God so that He'll have size and shape and form and limitations. He can't then be everywhere at the same time if He has size and shape and form. God is then no longer omnipresent.

They changed Him "into an image made like to corruptible man." There it is--"humanizing" God! God is changed "like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Romans 1:23). We live in a world full of cultures that worship those things--"birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things"--as God.

Voltaire, the French agnostic of the eighteenth century, was going to blot out the name of Jesus Christ so that His name would be used only in cursing on the lips of people. His printing presses in Paris poured out literature to change the world's view of Jesus. He wrote, "God created man in His own image, and man returned God the favor." There it is--changing God into man's image! (Note: Within twenty-five years of Voltaire's death his printing presses were being used by the Bible Society of France!)

Romans 1 represents the ultimate insult of a society humanizing God, and God's response to that ultimate insult against His very character. Romans 1:24 says, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." Isn't the immorality that is going on between men and women in our society startling indeed? You say, "Well, it has always been that way." I tell you, it has never been like it is today! We're living in a day where the more immoral a person is, the better book he can write and the more money he can make from it, instead of hanging his face in shame.

If anyone talked immorally when I went to school, we would say, "Hush, hush!" Others of that nature went behind closed doors or into a closet somewhere. Everybody in the class knew that fellow students who talked like that were the scum of the class. Today it is just the opposite. These folks may seem to be the most popular.

A 1993 newspaper clipping read: "In York, Pennsylvania, a coalition marks what they call a 'Great Sex-Out Day.' Officials in York are hoping to teach unmarried teenagers the joys of abstinence by asking everyone in the county to go without sex today." Imagine it. They're trying to teach the teenagers that if they can control themselves for one day they can control themselves on any day. So the "Great Sex-Out Day" was organized to call attention to the extremely high birth rate. Teenagers accounted for 21 percent of all births in that county in 1991. Isn't it tragic that we have to announce things like this in the newspaper!

We receive tragic letters from both young and old. Here's one written by a fourteen-year-old girl: "Dear Uncle Bill Orr, Will you please pray for me? I've had thoughts about running away and committing suicide. Things are getting bad in our family. I can't stand to think of my real mom and dad. My mom forsook me, and my real dad, grandfather, and my real mom's boyfriend all sexually abused me. I hate them too. Please pray that God will help me. My mom now can't stand me and I know it. I was wondering if you could send me something to help me, for I don't know what will happen to me. I really like your little books that you send. I have a boy in the church who wants me to give up my purity for him. My answer was, 'I will not! If you want me you'll have to wait until we get married.' I am not going to turn out like my real mom--no way! I'm going to change this generation in my family. Please write me back. Ask Ralph and Lou if they would pray for me. Can you send me a picture of you? You remember me, don't you?"

Letters like this are not uncommon. I'm talking about things we wouldn't have dreamed of before, such as immorality one with another. The Bible says that God gives them up to their own uncleanness. He lets their own hearts decide about their own bodies.

The problem is always the same and it is stated again in verse 25: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie" It always gets back to the issue of tampering with God--turning the truth about God in the Bible into a lie.

Once we humanize God, we end up having to worship someone or something else. They ". . . worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Here the creature is worshipping and serving the creature--man! This is secular humanism, the deifying of man! It is the natural result once we "change the truth of God into a lie"!

When God sees a society doing that, He turns them over to vile affections. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (verse 26). The women changed the "natural use." Learn those words! Teenagers, get them imbedded in your spirits. Society tells you about other lifestyles, but there is a natural use and an unnatural use.

This passage says that when society humanizes God, God takes His hand off that society and turns it over to do what it wants. It will be a society where the women will change the natural use into the unnatural, one with the other. This is a picture of lesbianism.

Ten or fifteen years ago I would not have spoken like this in a public setting. People would have said, "This preacher has a filthy mind. Get him out of here!" Today, if one doesn't speak about it, he is not being faithful to the Word of God in relation to the situations that are upon us. Where did all this come from? It came from our view of God.

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another . . ." That's homosexuality! ". . . Men with men, working that which is unseemly . . ." God says they're going to pay a high price for it: ". . . Receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (verse 27).

What a tragedy it is that we are living in such a day! I don't know if the AIDS situation is the essence of "receiving in themselves the recompense of their error which was meet," but the tragedy of it is that innocent people also suffer. Here we see the very heart of the issue--the homosexual society. Basic society is so plagued with this moral dilemma.

I hear people say, "God made them that way. That's just the way they were made." Of all people, the Christian should be the last to ever say that! God have mercy on those who have flaunted the Word of God and have now

even organized homosexual churches!

In his book *Confessions of a Happy Christian*, Zig Zigler says, "Some Christians, who of all people should know better, agree with them [homosexuals]. Even a casual reading of the Bible reveals the fallacy of this thinking.

"Leviticus 20:13 points out that homosexuality is a sin unto death. Surely any thinking Christian would know that an all-loving God would not make a person homosexual and then kill him for being one."

Mr. Zigler went on to say that the latest Master and Johnson sexual study made in the United States, which seems to want nothing to do with the Bible, clearly established that homosexuality is a learned or acquired habit. "They were successful in bringing 72 percent of those who wanted out of homosexuality out of the practice," he writes. When a person said "I want out of it," the worldly crowd could help 72 percent!

"Any casual reading of Romans 1 would remove any doubt as to how God regards the sin of homosexuality," he goes on. If the world can take care of 72 percent without the Bible, I think the Word of God can take care of the other 28 percent! I believe that God can take care of 100 percent.

I'm not speaking harshly against you who might be afflicted with this temptation. God has an answer and God can set you free. God didn't make you that way. Don't accept the lie that the world is breathing into your spirit. Homosexuality is not natural. It is against nature. You must decide whether you're going to agree with God or the world. I choose to agree with God and His Word.

In choosing to agree with God, I need to recognize that if I have tendencies toward homosexuality, I am no different from the man who has a tendency toward lying or cheating or adultery. It seems that each of us has an area in which we have a greater battle than another. If one person has a bigger battle in the realm of lying, we don't say, "He was born a liar." If another has a temptation more toward adultery we don't say, "He was born an adulterer; God made him that way." We were all born with a sinful nature, and in that sinful state we might have bents toward different temptation. But let's not say, "God made me this way," and use that as an excuse to ignore the fact that we can be delivered by God.

We need not, in the Body of Christ, fear homosexuals. We need to be praying for them, ministering to them, loving them, and letting them know that they can be delivered, instead of listening to the outcry that there is no hope for them. They can be delivered and set free just as a man guilty of adultery, or a man with a problem with lying or stealing may be set free. Let's believe that the same God who can set the adulterer, liar, and robber free, can also set the homosexual free.

Why are so many believing this lie? We're in a society that is under the judgment of Almighty God. Because men have changed the truth of God into a lie, He has turned them over to their lusts, where they do that which is not natural. That's why the world talks about it as a natural way of life. Twenty-five or thirty years ago I doubt if anybody would have called it a natural way of life. Society has been turned over by God to do its own thing. It seems that because so many have gotten involved in it we say, "Well, it must be a natural lifestyle."

Romans 1:28 reveals the problem again: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" How many times is our thinking about God at the center of the problem? Again, ". . . God gave them over to a reprobate [filthy] mind, to do those things which are not convenient" because they didn't want to think about God.

Verses 29 and 30 read like our present-day newspapers: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things . . ." We live in a world filled with evil! Who'd ever have dreamed we'd live in such a day? And when you think you've seen it all, the Bible says there are still going to be "inventors of evil things"! I have files full of items that I can't bring to a public forum. We say, "Can it get any worse?" Wicked people seem to keep on inventing evil things.

Verse 30 says "disobedient to parents." Some of you grandparents say, "Wow, if I ever talked to my parents like I see children doing today, I'd be taken out to the woodshed! My dad said something once and we knew what he meant!" Grandparents in this age have to watch kids talking back to and disobeying their parents and thinking nothing of it. I'm not scolding the children. I'm warning them about the atmosphere of a society that's on its way down! The tragedy of the problem in this society is that it has attempted to change God. One of the results then is a "spirit of disobedience" to parents.

"Without understanding, covenantbreakers . . ." (verse 31). Couples go to the wedding altar and say, "Till death us do part," but are really saying, "Till debt do us part," or something far less. Approximately thirty years ago one out of every forty marriages ended in divorce. Today it's one out of two. What happened? In verse 31 we read, ". . . Without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. . . ."

Romans 1:32 puts the issue in a nutshell: "Who knowing the judgment of God . . ." We in North America know the judgment of God. We have the Bible. Its principles are written all throughout our land. It is open and we can read it. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death . . ." Someone has said that this is God's response to such blatant attempts to humanize and discredit Him.

Young people, learn it! Don't breathe the atmosphere of this world! Society has changed, but the Bible and God have never changed! "They which do such things are worthy of death." We know that, but what do we do about it? Because we've so lowered God, we say, "Oh, so what! God will change His mind!"

It goes on to say, ". . . Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Even though we know that they who do such things are worthy of death, and even though we know the judgment of God, we still say, "So what? God has changed. He isn't the judge we read about in the Bible." "Not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them . . ." God says that He's angry with people who live that lifestyle but also with the people that have pleasure in them who do such things.

We are really learning something about the character of God and Who God is! We learn that God is not only angry with those who live that lifestyle, but also with those that have pleasure in them who do such things. That is significant.

Following are a few clarifications of the statement "not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them":

- ! They receive a vicarious satisfaction in the sinful deeds of others.
- ! They approve of those who practice these things.
- ! They applaud others who are sinning.
- ! They give hearty approval to those who practice these things.

Al Menconi said, "The thing that bothers me most about Christian young people is how they can admire rock stars who hate their God."

Many years ago my brother and I heard that some insects were coming over from Liverpool, England to North America. While in Pembroke, Ontario, the city's newspaper headlines read, "Beatles Invade Washington!" We hadn't heard of the Beatles before. Showing me the paper my brother said, "Lou, look at this! 'Beatles invade Washington!' I'm glad we're up here, not down there getting stung!" Then he read about four fellows who had forgotten where the barber shop was and had come over with a new kind of music to entertain Americans.

Their press secretary, Derek Taylor, said about them: "It's incredible, absolutely incredible. Here are these four fellows from Liverpool. They're rude, they're profane, they're vulgar, and they've taken over the world. It's as if they've founded a new religion. They're completely anti-Christ. I mean, I'm anti-Christ as well, but they're so anti-Christ they shock me, which isn't an easy thing to do!" I think that ought to settle the Beatles issue right there. God says, "Don't have pleasure in them that do such things."

There are some wicked modern-day groups as well. One such group is KISS. Some people say it stands for "Knights In Satan's Service." I don't know if it does or not, but I believe they are knights in Satan's service. One of them, Gene Simmons, while being interviewed on TV, told the whole world, "I have already slept with more than two thousand women." That ought to settle that one for us.

Metallica promotes suicide. They have a song called "Fade to Black." "Suicide is the way out," the lyrics say. Merciful Fate promotes Satanism. The song called "The Oath" from the album "Don't Break the Oath" is a direct quote of the actual pledge of allegiance to Satan. It is the whole pledge that you would actually say if you were pledging allegiance to the devil himself!

King Diamond promotes Satanism. He is a Satanist and he doesn't try to hide the fact. He dresses the part on stage and his music is an extension of his belief in Satanism. That ought to settle King Diamond.

An article on "God Haters" that appeared in the January/February 1995 issue of Media Update said,

"Is there a better description of the condition of so much of today's popular music than 'God Haters'? The

hatred of God and things of God is readily evident, even in the names of many rock bands. Deicide (which means "kill God"), God-flesh, Eyehategod, biGod 20, The Jesus and Mary Chain, MC 900 Ft. Jesus, Jesus Jones, the Jesus Lizards, Liquid Jesus, Jesus Loves You, Fear of God, God's Girlfriend, Heretic, Atheist, Smoking Popes are just a few of the groups we're talking about. The full list could practically fill this column. The point is, these people are going out of their way to make a mockery of God.

One hundred years ago, Nietzsche wrote, "God is dead." At our last check, Nietzsche is dead, and God is very much alive. Still, we find rockers trying to do what Nietzsche was unable to do.

The opening for Nine Inch Nails' fall tour in 1994 gave them a chance to show off their sexually graphic stage show and sell a T-shirt that proclaims, "Kill God . . . Kill Your Mom and Dad . . . Kill Yourself." Trent Reznor of the group venomously screams, "God is dead/And no one cares." (Los Angeles Times, 10/5/94)

If a fashion statement that kills God isn't your cup of tea, maybe you would do better with Fudge Tunnel's T-shirt. It says, "Kill a man and you're a murderer. Kill thousands and you're a conqueror. Kill everyone and you're a god." (Metal Maniacs, 10/94)

Alternative diva Tori Amos shows her disdain for God in a song, "God, sometimes you just don't come through. Do you need a woman to look after you?"

Metallica's song about Jesus is called "The God That Failed" and states, "Broken is the promise/Betrayal/The healing hand held back by the deepened nail/Follow the God that failed."

"Alice in Chains" 'Man in the Box' tells its listeners simply to, "Deny your maker."

Danzig, a satanically oriented band, sings, "I wanna be the God who kills/I wanna be the Christ who dies/Upon the fires/Of infamy."

Thrash metal super group Pantera is more into overthrowing God than killing him: "Driven and burning to rise beyond Jesus . . . I of suicide/I the unlord" (from the song "Becoming").

[This] list could go on and on. And it will, you can count on it. We are not even talking about the sexual and social immorality that is talked about--these are just the God-haters. What we find is that these people weren't content to do away with morality. Now they have to try to do away with God too."

A group in British Columbia called The Dayglow Abortion has a record entitled "Feet of the Fetus." Their songs feature suicide, murder, bestiality, bondage, and incest and use many, many four-letter and other words of immorality. The picture on the cover of the record is of President and Mrs. Reagan sitting at a table in a restaurant eating the feet of a fetus! The Ontario police department laid pornography charges in Toronto against the producers--the first time such charges were ever laid against a record.

These people spit in the face of our Lord! Yet young people have their posters on the walls of their bedrooms and listen to their records, giving entrance into their lives to people who are spitting in the face of our God.

God says He is angry with those who live lifestyles of immorality, Satanism, and hatred of God and everything connected with Him. God says that they who are worthy of death do the same. The tragedy is that what God says doesn't trouble them.

God also says that He is displeased and angry with those who have pleasure in them that do such things! These are haters of God and God says we should be angry with the haters of God and not join them. We should not be partners with them in their sinful God-hating lifestyle.

"And Jehu . . . said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" (II Chronicles 19:2). Young people, do not love them that hate your Lord! Should you support them and help them prosper by buying their records? You are paying their bills. Should you support them and love them that hate the Lord? Jehu also said to Jehoshaphat, "Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." There is God's principle. God is not only angry with them that live this lifestyle, but His character is such that when we identify with them and go after their entertainment and approve of them, we incite God's anger against us because we are basically part of insulting and rejecting the true character of God.

Some adults also need to clean their houses of country and western music because some of it is filthy and

vile. Thank God for both young and old who are beginning to hear the voice of God and clean house.

Rev. H. H. Barber, pastor of Calvary Temple in Winnipeg, Manitoba, wrote in the April 1986 issue of Pentecostal Testimony, "Jesus takes the broken pieces of our lives and makes us whole. Rock music is speaking the revolutionary language of the people who tell us there's no meaning in life, there's no God, there's no heaven, there are no values, man is his own god, man doesn't need forgiveness. Christianity and the spirit of the age are diametrically opposed."

In a crusade in western Canada a fourteen-year-old was deeply touched by God. He said that no one told him to, but when he went home he burned all his vile music albums. He said, "God spoke to me and I've gotten rid of every one of them."

Harold Vaughan said, "The reduction of God is a mental illusion, folks. There never has been a shrinkage in an unchanging God. Fortunately, the only thing that has shrunk is our image of that God. The great need before the Church today is a fresh vision of the majestic God Who is."

A.W. Tozer's book *The Knowledge of the Holy* takes the attributes of God and tells us what each one means to us while living on this earth. This book is not just to help us understand what God is like, such as "One Who is up in the sky some-where." It shows what the attributes of God mean to us while living on earth and how they affect us right here and now. Dr. Tozer writes, "God is incomprehensible, truthfulness, holiness, self-sufficiency, eternity, divine transcendence, faithfulness, goodness, mercy, grace, love, sovereign, immutable, infinite."

The Psalmist prayed, ". . . Revive us again: that thy people may rejoice . . ." (Psalm 85:6). What kind of rejoicing is this? In God Himself! We all want a revival that begins in the character of God. For us to have a revival, the attributes of God need to become vital and vivid in our lives once again. Then we'll see God come back to us and feel at home among us, and we will feel at home in His presence.

In Psalm 139 we see the Psalmist with the right view of God and how it affected him. This is the opposite of everything I've previously described. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me" (Psalm 139:1-5).

David here is reveling in an attribute of God. He is reveling in the fact that God is omniscient, that God knows everything! The Psalmist takes five verses to revel in a God Who knows everything about him. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (verse 6). He's saying, "It's just magnificent; it's wonderful." He's thinking about and reveling in an omniscient God.

Verses 7-12 state: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." The Psalmist is saying, "Where can I hide from God?" For six verses he revels in a God Who is all-present--everywhere at all times. "Where can I go to get away from God?"

Years ago the Russian cosmonauts went into space. They said, "Where is this Christian God? Christians tell us He is in the heavens. Here we are in the heavens and we can't find him." They were making fun of Christianity and debunking Christianity because they couldn't find God out in space! Aren't you glad they couldn't find Him in outer space? If they could, we would have nothing to preach!

How can one hide from a God Who is all-present-- everywhere at the same time? And how could one expect to find Him in space in a lower dimension?

David had a high, lofty view of God and was reveling in it in verses 13-16, "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect . . ." Abortionists, who say that a fetus is not a life, have a problem with this verse. ". . . And in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (verses 16-17).

Here he's reveling in a God Who can make the intricate human body, the life that can be born, the whole human anatomy and life itself--the miracle of it all! He's reveling in a God Who is omnipotent, a God Who has such power! Those thoughts are so precious! How great is the sum of them! "If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee" (verse 18). David has reveled in the all-powerful, omnipotent God for six verses, telling us that God knows everything about everyone of us. These verses reveal to us a God Who is all-present, and whether He's here or somewhere else, He's everywhere all the time! And David revels in that kind of God.

Then David rejoices in a God Who can make the magnificent creation of the body and human life--and the miracle of it! He revels in an Almighty God Who has the power to do things like that--eighteen verses reveling in the attributes of God!

What did all this do to the Psalmist? How did it affect him? When we have a revival that's built in the character and attributes of God, it's going to affect us the same way it affected David.

Verse 19 says, "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God . . ." He's identifying with what God says about the wicked. ". . . Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men." He's taking the same view that God has about sin in the world. "For they speak against thee wickedly . . ." He is angry at the wicked because they speak against his God. ". . . And thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies" (verses 19-20).

Would David say today: "I don't go to them for my entertainment. I don't buy their records when they spit in God's face. I hate them with a perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies." He is not talking about hating flesh and blood, but about hating the actions and lifestyle of the wicked. Therefore, he disassociates himself from them. We see the result in David after he spent eighteen verses reveling in the character of God--a high view of God and a holy hatred of sin! Notice that he is not minimizing sin!

When society humanizes God and deifies man it ends up minimizing sin. We see David as a man who has a high view of God, not one that humanizes God. He does not end up simply minimizing sin in the society around him, but takes the same stand against sin in himself that God takes. He doesn't keep pointing his finger at others. Because of his reveling in the character of God for eighteen verses, he refuses to minimize sin in his own life, expressed by his personal cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24; emphasis added).

We'll pray like David after we have walked through eighteen verses on the character of God with the Psalmist. We then will have a hatred for the sin of society around us and will separate ourselves from it. But more than that, we will also say, "O God, turn the searchlight on me. Show me the sin in my life. Let me see my own heart in the light of Who You are. I want You to know my heart and all my thoughts."

The first verse of Psalm 139 started out, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me." Then twenty-three verses later he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." In verse 1 it is simply a matter of fact that God has searched us and knows us. But in verse 23 David says, "Search me and know my heart." He's saying here, "Lord, I am ready to have a conversation with You about what You know about me. Let's talk about it together. Come and reveal it to me. I want You to search me and know me. Let's discuss it so that I can be made clean and white. I hate sin and I want You now to show me what You know about me. I'm not afraid of the light. I'll push myself into the light of Your character if You'll reveal what I am really like."

What is David doing? He's closeting himself in with God alone. "I'm seeing God, and forgetting about what everyone else does and thinks. I don't care what anybody else says. I know what I need, because I've seen the Holy God. I've seen myself in the light of that Holy God. I want Him to make me clean and pure, and to deal with whatever there is in my life that is not like God."

This is the view of sin we need in the church. I may hear people say, "Well, you know, we all sin everyday in word, thought and deed." We seemingly give ourselves an excuse to sin! We plan a program of sinning in our lives. I John 2:1 says, "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not." When you see God for Who He is, you will program "no sinning" into your life.

If you fear God, you don't need to be afraid of Him. But if you don't fear God, you need to be frightened of Him! If you fear Him, then you can rejoice that He is the God He is. He loves to have you come to Him, and you

THE SIN OF HUMANIZING GOD

love to have Him search you and make you clean and pure with a desire to walk holy in the light of His very character. We want God to be preparing us for the day we walk on Heaven's shores and hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

The sin of society--humanizing God--has crept into the Church. Have you been humanizing God as a Christian? Have you been bringing God down to a human level and putting man (yourself) up to a God level, calling the shots and running your own life? Then you minimize sin, giving it a lesser name than what you know it is.

My heart goes out to the young people who live in a society that's breathing the base atmosphere depicted in Romans chapter 1. Oh, that God would raise up an army of young people who would say, "We will stand alone even if we are the only ones in our high school. We are going to go with God because God is the winner. His Book is established forever and someday the world will see that God was right all the time. We want to go with God."

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, deal with us in our sinfulness of humanizing Thee. Lord, we need a revival that begins in Thy character. We've had so many transitory spurts. We've had so many emotional uprisings. We've had "camp meeting decisions" that are just emotional spurts.

God, grant us "judgment-day" honesty in the light of Who Thou art. Closet us in with Thee, a holy God, where no one else is involved. Personalize these truths to our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit. Speak to us individually concerning the areas in which we have been guilty of the sin of humanizing Thee, becoming our own gods, and therefore minimizing sin. Show us where we have been trying to reason with Thee and bring Thee down to our level--thus, the sin of lowering God.

O God, let us see Thee for Who Thou art and let us pray, "Search me, O God, know my heart: try me, know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

Lord, let the heart cry of Thy people be that Thou wouldst come back to us in all Thy glory, and that once again Thy glory would fill the temple; that men and women would be drawn like a magnet to the foot of the cross because of the glory of God.

O Lord, our prayer is for a revival that begins in Thy character; a revival that shall be as a river ever increasing and widening until lost in the sea of Thy great eternity. Grant it to us, O dear Father.

Amen.