

# Do you have commitment issues?

Being committed to making others' lives better

The Nov/Dec issue of *REV!* Magazine cited a recent Barna Group study that was checking commitment issues among the 72 percent of Americans who claim “they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ which is important in their lives today.” Among the results was the report that only 44 percent say they’re committed to “personally make the world and others’ lives better.”

What occurred to me first after reading this was that Bonhoeffer’s warning about cheap grace has come to seed. That was a more rational thought. My emotional response was exasperation along the lines of: “What are the other 56 percent thinking? What is the Lord going to do with all the self-identified Christians who don’t give a rip?”

Maybe you are thinking I’ve got on green glasses—that my rant is about taking better care of the physical world. But I don’t think that’s what Barna was measuring. (For the record, Carol and I are on the recycling bandwagon. We fill a big blue bin every couple of weeks and roll it out to the curb in spite of the inconvenience and the cost.)

Others of you might be thinking that I’m inferring we should be pursuing some way to help folks escape the rigorous realities of their lives. Nope. But one of the things that Jesus modeled for us and calls us to is being involved enough to do life with, provide appropriate sympathy for and be appropriately empathetic to others.

What has me riled up is that people who call themselves actively and personally committed to Jesus flat out declare that they’re not willing to live like leaven in the lump, like salt and light in the world. To live as hands and feet for Christ’s kingdom, as messengers of love and peace of soul to a world of people drowning in their need for exactly those things. For a huge number of our neighbors, life is borderline awful. Was it not the “bonus” commandment, right after loving God, that we love and care for our neighbors?

While listening to U2 sing, *Sometimes You*

*Can’t Make It On Your Own*, I was reminded that there is good reason why God said that it isn’t good for man to be alone. It occurred to me first that this is cause to be grateful for a life’s partner. Then my thoughts evolved to the fact that Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Good thing! Eventually I landed on the aloneness that my neighbors are no doubt feeling, some without a spouse, some without a family, some without friends and without the Lord.

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So I’m back to whether or not that’s important to us. Is it conceivable that more than half of us don’t believe that it matters? Or is it that we are unmotivated or unwilling (or both) to do anything about it? And does that call for another more foundational question—that of the genuineness of our (workless) faith? Is that why people have now and again said that they’d be happy to give Christianity a good look if they ever met the real deal?

So let me ask you flat out: Do you give a rip? I hope and pray you do. Over the past several months, it has been a joy to meet people throughout our national denominational family who do. Like the guy whose eyes welled up when he was telling me about several young men choosing to give their lives to Christ in trust-follow relationship in his ministry world. Like the guys who dropped everything to rush to the hospital to be with their buddy’s wife as she waited for word about whether her husband would live or die.

This morning, I prayed with that guy and a band of his buddies as we met to ask each other about plans to grow as followers of Jesus this year. It was sobering, and we were pretty open about the fact that we had not yet arrived but that we would press on and grow forward. We are choosing not to be among those who don’t give a rip.

*Mea culpa*—My apologies to the MB Foundation board and staff for overlooking them in the ministry team review (Conference Call, December 07). The Foundation plays a vital role!



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