

From the Editor: JAFE371

CURRENT, COLLABORATIVE, CROWDSOURCED, AND CONNECTED

by Melanie M. Cogdill

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“What hat subjects would you like us to cover in the JOURNAL?” was a question I recently posted on our *Bible Answer Man* Facebook page. Within a few hours comments were almost 100 posts deep. A majority of the ideas were subjects we have covered in past issues. It was encouraging to see we had anticipated topics of interest and had met that informational need for readers. However, it was the instant back-and-forth interaction that resulted in helpful discussion of what we could cover in the future.

As we have revamped our features section from three articles per issue to an average of seven, we are constantly brainstorming topics. We think of content ideas with fellow editorial staff members as we keep up with the latest religious trends, cultural phenomena, and bestselling books. Editors also review questions Hank Hanegraaff is asked on the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast for which we do not already have written articles, and we consider subjects for which we anticipate readers will need well-researched Christian responses. But ideas for content have now expanded to include polling and hearing from our readers via social media. In past issues we have provided both the biblical pros and cons of new technologies. However, a big plus to social media is crowdsourcing some of our content. Back in the “old” days readers would have to write or type out a letter to us, stamp it, stick it in a mailbox, and wait for us to receive it and respond. Now you can instantly be heard by communicating with us via private message on Facebook or by posting on our page, tweeting on Twitter, or sending an email.

The articles in this issue are the result of both your input through social media and the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast as well as the insights of our editorial team.

CRI is regularly and repeatedly asked (via the broadcast, our website, and on Facebook): Should I attend a church where the pastor has been divorced? In our Viewpoint column this issue, Michael F. Ross, himself a pastor and the author of our previous article on divorce and remarriage, thoughtfully addresses this potentially thorny subject.

Our inclusion of the rapture-related hermeneutics article on Matthew 24:40 is a direct result of CRI receiving questions weekly on this topic. And the review of the

bestselling book *Killing Jesus* by Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly is a response to many requests for our evaluation of it.

In addition to answering requests you give us, we also want to publish articles that address current cultural trends for which we need well-reasoned Christian responses. In the past nine months anyone consuming news media could not escape the ongoing worldwide discussion about former NSA contractor Edward Snowden and the information he has released detailing U.S. intelligence gathering practices. Is Snowden a criminal or is he a hero?¹ "Hacktivism" or the use of computers as a form of exposing criminal or questionable practices has been employed as "far back as 2008 with an attack against Scientology by the hacktivist group Anonymous.² More recently it's been used to uncover government practices, as in the case of Snowden and WikiLeaks. But what does that mean ethically for the Christian? Is hacktivism biblical civil disobedience? Is it unbiblical? In his article on the subject, Doug Groothuis lays the groundwork for understanding if it is an activity in which Christians can participate.

We also collaborate with our contributing writers as they pitch us ideas for articles. Author Joe Dallas, who has written for the JOURNAL for more than two decades, contacted us as soon as the Supreme Court decision was rendered regarding gay marriage. He thought that this was a topic we needed to address yet again. He was right! This is important because "the overriding question becomes, how are we to respond to social pressure, cultural stigmatizing, and legal sanctions if we continue to uphold the biblical definition of marriage, the family, and normal/God ordained sexual expressions?"

Part of our content depends upon a two-way conversation with our readers. It doesn't matter if you are "plugged-in" or not—we want to hear from you! So send us a tweet @crjournal, search for *Bible Answer Man* on Facebook ("like" our page and post on our wall or send a private message), send us an email to Response@equip.org, or fill out the contact form on our website at <http://www.equip.org/contact/>. Give us a call toll-free (888) 7000-CRI. Old-fashioned snail mail works too. Write to P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271-8500. You are an important part of the collaborative effort that brings you the content you read in our pages.

—Melanie M. Cogdill