

# LIVING IN A SHATTERED SOCIETY

by Bryce Hartin

*I am indebted to Chaplain Graeme Winterton whose keen spiritual insight helped lay the foundation for this booklet and to Dr Allen Hall who assisted in refining the original draft.*

*Bryce Hartin.*

All thoughtful people are aware of the fact that there are some strange things happening in the society in which we live. Some of the trends that are now visible are nothing short of frightening.

Many parents live in fear and trepidation as they view the future welfare of their children. We see these trends, but what has caused them? What is behind them, and even more importantly, where are they leading us?

These are important questions and we would all do well to sit down and analyse the current intellectual climate, because much depends on our understanding of what is really going on.

## A Conflict

We have a conflict between 'absolute' and 'relative' thought. God is ABSOLUTE – He is absolute authority.

“Not so!” say the so called intellectuals of our society, “there are no absolutes – everything is relative!” and so we have a new revolution on our hands, a revolution of thought.

Now, we are getting used to revolutions. After all, we have had a string of them in the last few decades, but this one is different – vastly different, and it threatens to tear apart the very fabric of society itself.

I have already stated the fact that we have a conflict between two opposing lines of thought; one is 'absolute' thought, the other 'relative' thought. Absolute thought can be summed up in the absolutes of the Bible – the 'Thou-shalts' and the 'Thou-shalt-nots'.

## The Effects Of The Absolutes

God's absolutes have always had a tremendous effect for good on society, all through the centuries. Western society has basically been built on the Word of God.

Many of our institutions of learning have been based on the principles laid down in Scripture. The laws of our land are, in reality, based on the laws of the Bible. The very fabric of our society has been woven by the principles taught in the Word of God. Both ethical and moral standards have been largely influenced by what the Bible teaches.

So, if we make a penetrating analysis of our present democratic system of government, it can readily be seen that it was all originally structured on the authority of the Bible. The Absolutes of the Bible have always had a tremendous influence for good on mankind, but now this is all under threat. Things are changing for God's laws are not only being challenged, but rejected.

## Everything Is Relative

Wasn't there a time when things were discussed as to whether they were right or wrong? Now, everything is relative, nothing is absolute any more, man has changed the rules. In order to help us understand this drift in thought, I will give just a few examples.

**Adultery** is not considered wrong – it is simply passed off as 'having an affair' or 'a one night stand'.

**A lie** is simply 'a distortion of the facts', an exaggeration.

**Homosexuality** is not a sin but simply 'an alternative lifestyle'. So now we have homosexual churches and even homosexual pastors.

**Marriage.** We started off with 'premarital' sex and 'extra-marital' sex; then 'progressed' to 'inter-marital' sex. Now many are saying “Why marry at all?” Even the institution of marriage itself is under threat.

**Wife-swapping** parties have been popular for a long time to 'swinging' couples.

**Topless bathing** is not enough. More and more people want beaches set aside for nude bathing. They tell us that 'to wear clothing is suggestive'. In some tourist resorts, mixed accommodation is the **in thing**, including mixed showers and mixed toilets.

**Pornography** is on the increase. If magazines aren't mildly pornographic, many people aren't interested in them.

**TV Ratings** require the content of 'soapies' to include a certain amount of sex, crime and violence if they are to receive a good rating.

**The Occult explosion** is probably the most mind-boggling of all. Wherever we look, we are confronted by occult symbols worn on clothing, tattooed on bodies, printed on stationery and in magazines and thrown across our TV screens.

## A Revolution In Thoughtful

So when we analyse the present trends, we begin to realise that society is undergoing a tremendous revolution of thought which threatens to sweep away God's Absolutes completely. These absolutes were given to us by a loving God and designed to show the distinction between right and wrong.

In other words, they act as a guide to man, to show what he may or may not do. God designed the absolutes to keep evil in check and to prevent it from over-running the good. They act as a moral and intellectual guide. If these absolutes are discarded, we have no yardstick, no measuring rod. The line between right and wrong is rubbed out. Man can then do what he likes 'with a clear conscience'!

## This Is Exactly What Is Happening

Now that the absolutes are being rejected by so many people in society, we are heading into trouble, deep trouble! This is why many philosophers, educators, psychologists and statesmen around the world are becoming worried. They are frightened by what they see. To them, moral and intellectual

chaos is now certain, it is just a matter of time.

### **The Shift Is Gradual**

The shift from absolute to relative thought is gradual – it has to be. Satan is astute enough to know that if he introduced the changed too quickly, it would shock too many people. They would wake up to what he was about and resist the change. So he has adopted the well-proven method of 'progressive gradualism', which work like this:

Many things are rejected because they were wrong, come now to be **questioned**. The shift in thought has begun.

Then these things that are questionable, gradually come to be **tolerated**, in certain situations. The shift is now more pronounced.

Then after things have been tolerated for a while, they gradually come to be **accepted**. The change in thought is now complete – or is it? No, we have moved beyond the point of mere acceptance. We've now reached the stage where, if you don't go along with the crowd, you're queer. There's something wrong with you. We have arrived at what many called 'the permissive society' where anything goes. If it feels good, do it!

### **Where To From Here?**

Let it be understood that 'permissiveness' is NOT the end of the road but simply a town through which we are passing. The town at the end of the road is named '**Chaos**'.

In the real world, we are all travelling on a bus. The name of the bus is called **SOCIETY**. God in His infinite wisdom placed brakes on the bus. These brakes are the absolutes, the 'thou-shalts' and the 'thou-shalt-nots' of the Bible, but man felt 'restricted' by these brakes, so he took them off the bus and discarded them. The bus is going downhill, fast!

Many passengers are now looking out of the windows of the bus and hoping that it will stop at the town of **Permissiveness**, but that is no longer possible. The down-hill slope is getting steeper all the time and the brakes have not only been taken off the bus, but thrown away. The **SOCIETY BUS** will continue its downhill plunge until it hits the town of **CHAOS** – and hit it we will! Just how many passengers will survive the crash is uncertain.

### **Where Does This Leave The Christian?**

If you are a Christian and read this article, my advice to you is “Get off the bus!” The Scriptures are clearly shouting at you to “Get off the bus!” Society is doomed; there is no way to save it! If you don't want to 'go down with the ship', get off, while you can.

We are told (2 Cor 6:17-18) “Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, said the Lord Almighty.” To 'come out from among them and be separate' is God's way of saying “**GET OFF THE BUS!**”

God's messenger (Rev 18:4-6) again told us “I heard another voice from heaven saying '**Come out of her, my people** that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven and

God has remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she has filled, fill to her **double!**”

In these verses, we are distinctly commanded to **come out**. The only alternative is to ride the bus to its doom.

### **Is Ignorance Bliss?**

Most passengers on the bus are totally unaware that the bus has changed direction. They are oblivious of the shift in thought that we've been talking about. They are so enjoying the company that they haven't even looked out of the window to see where they are going. Other passengers have a suspicion as to where they are heading, but secretly hope that they are wrong. After all, it's too mind-boggling to be true, or is it? They're not sure. In the meantime, they'll stay on the bus. Nobody else seems worried.

Others again can see where the bus is heading, but don't want to jump off – not at the moment – their friends are all on board and 'having a ball'! All the while, a loving God is waiting to walk with all who will get off the bus and begin to walk 'the way of holiness'.

### **The Cost Involved**

Everyone knows that if you get off a moving vehicle, you are likely to get hurt. Having said this, some people, it appears, manage to alight from the SOCIETY BUS with nothing more than a few scratches, while others are badly shaken. What this transition will mean for each individual Christian I am unable to say, but I can share some general observations that may be helpful. For most people to get off the bus, there is a cost involved:

1. You will be regarded as queer, perhaps not totally so, but just a few marbles short!
2. In some circles you will not be wanted. They didn't want the Prophets in their day and the Apostles weren't exactly popular either, were they? All but one were put to death.
3. You may find it difficult to find work! After all, who wants one of those 'Bible bashers' on the payroll.
4. The conflict with those around you will increase, because you have a standard that is totally different from theirs.

But these things are not new to Christians, All through the centuries they 'had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment : they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the swords: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth.” (Heb 11:36-38)

### **What Does 'Getting off' Mean?**

It is now very clear to thinking Christians that the BUS of SOCIETY has moved noiselessly away from New Testament Christianity. The shift has been very subtle, but none the less real. So if you intend to get off the bus, you'll have to retrace your steps to the place of departure. In other words, you'll have to allow the absolutes of the Bible to mould your life.

Your beliefs must be formulated by these same absolutes – your **behaviour must be governed** by them; your **speech** and **mode of dress must be controlled** by them and not dictated by society's standards. This is basically what it means to get off the bus.

So we are all influenced by two opposing spheres of thought, the so called 'community standards' of society and the absolutes of the Bible. Every person is being strongly pulled in two directions, but when the chips are down, each individual is responsible to decide the outcome.

*To every man there openeth  
A high way and a low,  
And every man decideth  
Which way his soul shall go.*

To get off the bus means that we will cease to act as others do from selfish motives. We will no longer talk like others in order to gain their approval. We will no longer dress like the crowd in order to be considered fashionable. In many cases, we will not read the same material or frequent the same places. After all, if we get off the bus, we must accept the fact that our lifestyle is, of necessity, going to be different from that of the passengers who remain on board.

### **No Neutral Position**

One thing we must get straight is that it is impossible to reconcile these two lines of thought. They are opposites and as time progresses, they are moving even farther apart. So no person can remain neutral in his attitude. Either we stay on the bus and go along with this revolution of thought **or** we get off the bus and accept the reproach and derision which will come as a result.

God in His infinite wisdom has erected some signposts for us along the way. I draw attention to some of these so that we may consider them.

### **God's Signposts**

- a) In Rom 12.2 we read “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Here Paul is teaching us that staying on the bus and being conformed to this world are one and the same.
- b) In 1 John 2.15 we read “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” In this verse, 'loving the world' is the same as 'staying on the bus' and if a man chooses to love the world, then “the love of the Father is not in him.”
- c) In 1 Pet 1.15-16 we are told “As He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy!'” In these verses, getting off the bus is synonymous with 'living a holy life'.

Some readers may think “Boy, that's a high standard!” I agree, but it is the standard that God has set for His people. He can expect no more than this and He will accept nothing less.

Some readers are perhaps wondering just how we can tell who really belongs to the Lord and who doesn't? Or, just who has gotten off the bus and who hasn't?

Scripture is quite plain on this point too. Paul says (Ga 5.24) “They that are Christ's have crucified (past tense) the flesh with the affections and lusts.” The flesh mentioned here is our 'selfish desires'. To crucify these selfish urges means 'to put them to death' so that they will have no more power over us. Conversely, those that haven't dealt with these fleshy or selfish desires, do not belong to Christ. In other words, they are still on the bus.

## Does Our Profession Add Up?

It is a sad fact, but none the less true, that the Christian church has become a 'mixed-multitude' – very similar to the Israelites when they inter-married with the pagans around them.

Many within the framework of the Christian church talk about being 'born again'. They 'talk the talk' but they don't 'walk the walk'. Others have grown up in the church and have learnt the language, but they don't 'live the life'. These are the people that our Lord had in mind when He queried “Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the thing which I say?” (Luke 6.46) These same people are the ones that often talk piously about getting off the bus but never actually get around to doing so.

Our Lord's message is spelled out very plainly for us all, but the rattle of the bus and the excited laughter of the passengers tends to drown it out. But we'd better put our ear to the Bible and listen very carefully to what God is saying to us, because it may be a lot later then we imagine.

### The Choice Is Ours

As mentioned previously, we must either get off the Bus of Society and opt for a daily walk with our Lord on the highway of holiness or stay on the bus and ride it to our doom. This is one of those situations in life where we all have to make a choice. No one else can make this decision on our behalf. The ball is squarely in our court. But before you give serious thought to what you intend to do, let me point out one or two options you have:

1. If you feel that a daily walk with the Lord is 'too restrictive' and you decide to 'stay on the bus a little longer', just remember: God may hold you to that decision. He has every right to do so. After all, it was your decision! Sure, you fully intended to get off the bus, but the fact is, you didn't! God will judge you on what you did, not on what you intended to do. The issues we all face in this matter are eternal and the consequences are all eternal.
2. If you do get off the bus, the bus will keep going on its way. Then the gap between you and society will widen further. What I am saying here is: “The gap between the few who accept the authority of the Bible and the majority who don't, will grow wider.” History has almost run the full circle. Real Christians must stand up and be counted.

Reader, are you bound for the Celestial City or the City of Destruction? If you are headed for the wrong destination, I trust that what is written here will help you to change direction while you can. Remember there may come a day when you will desperately want to change course, but then it will be forever too late.

Bryce Hartin.

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### OTHER FREE BOOKS

**The Christian, His Enemies And His Armour**, was also written by Bryce Hartin as an aid to the spiritual warfare in which all Christians are engaged. The writer feels that perhaps the greatest assistance he can offer is to give some Biblical instruction on the Christian's enemies - what they can and cannot do - and on the Christian's armour and how to use it.

It's free to download at:  
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**Riding The Waves** is a booklet, by the same author, in which the background of today's religious trends and the formation of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement is discussed. It can be downloaded from the above site.

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### TONGUES

**Today's Tongues**, by Bryce Hartin, is a small booklet which gives a counsellor's eye-opening insight into today's tongues phenomena. It takes very little time to read, yet gives a clear and convincing argument of the unscriptural nature of modern speaking in tongues. Please take the time to study this material, with an open mind and in the light of Scripture.

**All About Speaking In Tongues**, by Fernand Legrand, reveals how Pentecostals 'created' Charismatic Catholics and gives further Scriptural understanding of the falsity of today's tongues. This book is well written, by someone in the know, and deals with much Scripture.

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## OTHER FREE BOOKS

### Roy Hession

**The Calvary Road**, by Roy Hession, very simply outlines personal revival (sanctification) through being filled with the Holy Spirit. The 'how to' of Christian Surrender is revealed for all who would seek the Lord with all their heart. This is not another self help book but a most humbling revelation of the sin we fail (or refuse) to see and which keeps us from an intimate walk with Jesus. Go to the download page at <http://www.christianissues.biz/revival.html>

**We Would See Jesus**, also by Roy Hession, is a wonderful follow-up to The Calvary Road. For this book and **Be Filled Now!**, Go to the download page at <http://www.christianissues.biz/revival.html>

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