

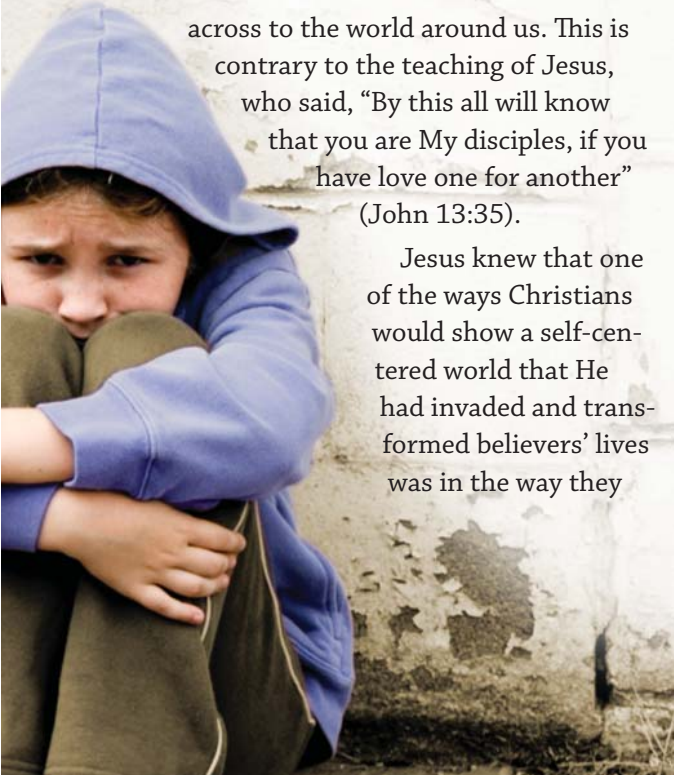
What the World Wants to Know

Do Christians care?

By Pastor Robert M. Reid

A study done in 1996 by George Barna indicated that 85% of non-Christian Americans held a favorable view of Christian's role in society. That view has diminished over the last ten years. The most recent Barna study found that 38%, roughly two out of five young non-Christians, had a negative view of today's Christianity. Why the dramatic shift?

That question prompted David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons to do some investigating. Their results are published in a book entitled *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why It Matters*. Most of the research and interviews spanned a three-year period and zeroed in on those born since 1965. The views the authors uncovered about present-day Christianity are rather negative. Many considered Christians to be too political, anti-homosexual, hypocritical, sheltered, judgmental, and insincere. That last criticism really caught my attention. When they say Christians are insincere, Kinnaman and Lyons mean, "Christians are concerned only with collecting converts and not genuinely interested in others." I cringe when I hear that; many times that is indeed how Christians come



across to the world around us. This is contrary to the teaching of Jesus, who said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 13:35).

Jesus knew that one of the ways Christians would show a self-centered world that He had invaded and transformed believers' lives was in the way they

cared for one another. They would display genuine interest in others' lives and translate that concern into practical acts of care and loving involvement. This kind of care demonstrates endurance; it continues to care when everyone else has ceased to care and has moved on to another, more popular cause. This kind of care does not look for recognition or applause. It works when no one else is looking. This is the "Good Samaritan" kind of care (Luke 10:30-36); it gets involved, invests resources of time and treasure, and stays connected with the one in need to see if more can be done.

I have seen this kind of care here at Calvary Monument Bible Church in many situations. One that comes to mind began in May 1998. A young man from our church began getting headaches. A CAT scan indicated that he needed a brain operation. The surgery resulted in a four-month-long coma, and when he awakened he had permanent brain damage. This meant that he would need special care. That care has been lovingly and graciously provided by the young man's family. A group of his brothers and sisters in Christ at CMBC volunteered to help his parents provide care for their son. From July 1998 through December 2007, 92 different individuals, from ages 10 to 90, have lovingly served Justin Fisher and his family. The time invested in showing God's love to this family has amounted to some 6,865 hours (that equals 3 ½ years of working at 40 hours per week). What a testimony to what happens when people realize that they are Christ's disciples, and they are to love one another!

Would there be a dramatic shift in how Christians are perceived if the world around us saw more demonstrations of Christians loving them and one another? Perhaps. Then again, our service is part of our worship, an expression of our love for Christ. We serve and we love others not to receive the praise of people, but to bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16). May people be able to see that we are Christians by our love.