

Why I Am Still a Christian

In 1927, the famed British mathematician and atheists, Bertrand Russell delivered a lecture and subsequently published as an article in a larger work by the same name, entitled, *Why I Am Not a Christian?* In his arguments, he takes on two critical aspects of Christianity, the existence of God and the exemplary life of Jesus Christ. He expressed his belief that Darwinism gave a much better explanation for the existence of life while dismissing the various apologetic reasoning classically used to defend theism. He also stated his skepticism that Jesus ever existed. Even if Jesus did exist, according to Bertrand Russell, He was an imperfect man and not a very good Christian. Bertrand Russell was one of the greatest minds of his day. His frank and open dialogue about his sense of the failings of the classic arguments for the existence of God have provided successive generations of skeptics, atheists, and agnostics alike a basis for furthering their own system of anti-religious and anti-Christian worldviews. Many of the contemporary writers, in many ways, are often simply repackaging Russell's arguments. Sounding similar to the introduction of Richard Dawkins' recent work, *The*

God Delusion, Russell wrote in the preface of the book containing his article, "Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes...A good world needs knowledge, kindness, and courage; it does not need a regretful hankering after the past or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men." As with many of modern atheistic works, the anger and cynical flavor of these words reflect something more than mere intellectual struggles with theism or Christianity. Something more existential, emotional and sinister seems at work. Russell's lecture and article also prompted several Christian responses, taking him to task point by point. One such writer, John R. W. Stott, wrote a book in 2003 entitled, *Why I Am a Christian*, based on a series of lectures he gave in 1986 at All Souls Church, in London. I have found books by Stott, Ravi Zaccharis, Lee Strobel, John Polkinghorne, R. C. Sproul, and Allister McGrath to be extremely helpful in strengthening my faith and furthering my resolve to follow Jesus Christ, His life and His teachings.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Daniel's Article	1
Students	3
20Somethings	3
Music Ministry	4
Library	4
Women's Ministry	5
Children's Ministry	6
The "Big Game"	7
February Calendar	8
Wednesday Night Dinner Information	8
Spring Discipleship	8
Weekly Events	8
Attendance	8

One thing that occurred to me in the midst of the general philosophical banter of this debate is the way these issues have shaped my own story. Many in our church have a similar background to me. Many of us grew up in Christian homes, even committed Baptist homes. My family went to church EVERY Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening. It wasn't until high school that I was confronted with a world that suddenly seemed bigger than the church and theology of my childhood. In high school, we learned about other cultures and worldviews that when juxtaposed with Protestantism seemed completely alien. In addition, high school brought other challenges to cherished and unchallenged notions of God's existence, His creative work, His miraculous encounters with humanity, the sending of His Son into the world, the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ, and the yet future resurrection of all the dead to everlasting joy or judgment. When these very spiritual, existential, emotive concepts collide with the sterile and objective observations of microscope and telescope, believers are often confronted with challenges from the academy. Secularism, materialism, syncretism, and rationalism emerge from the historic and scientific pursuits of any student engaged in the American educational system.

The multifold clash remains even to this day a nearly daily conflict between my childhood religious system and the world outside the safe confines of evangelical, Bible Belt Christianity. I can categorize this battle into three major arenas of philosophical, historical and theological. The philosophical includes the powerful and influential arguments for the existence of God. The historical arguments deal with the credibility of the historical claims of the bible, especially with reference to Jesus Christ and His resurrection. The theological arguments focus on the bible's understanding of the human condition and the remarkable uniqueness of the person, teachings, life and death of Jesus Christ. During the first three Sunday evenings in February, I am going to take three brief messages to describe some antidotal proofs that have been particularly impactful on me. The ideas do not originate with me, but have landed on me in such a way as to verify in my heart and mind that my childhood faith is not the machinations of my parents or Baptists or religious people in general. Instead, sober and cogent thinkers have good reason to believe the claims of Jesus Christ as God's own Son, the Savior of the world.

~ Daniel

Students



The Big Football Game Party Sunday,

February 3rd, from 5:00pm - 9:30pm, dinner served at 5:00pm with the whole church



Heartbeat is February 21st-24th (Thursday kickoff night, then Friday night after school through Sunday morning), our DiscipleNow Retreat at MRBC for \$50. Sign up in Common Grounds or email Zach at zach@matthewroad.org for more information. Invite all your friends, teammates or classmates; all are welcome! (Open to all 7th grade-12th grade students).

Our theme this year for Heartbeat is "Consumed", which is a call to be consumed with God's love in a growing relationship with His Son Jesus Christ. I'm reminded of Hebrews 10:28-29, "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." My prayer is that our students reflect God with the same consuming fire in their faith. ~ Zach

20Somethings



Who are we?

We are... sinners in need of God's Grace, part of God's plan for the future, going to make an impact on the world for Christ; we aren't children any more, we are making the decisions that will effect the rest of our lives. We matter to God.

- 📅 February 3rd The Big Game party, 5:00pm, CommonGrounds
- 📅 March 21st Passport Party and Underground Church - see Rachel for more information
- 📅 April 18th Pontoon boat, \$10pp – more details to come
- 📅 Mission trip to the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico, July 28th - August 3rd - more details to come

Weekly Events:

Sunday AM: II Peter at 9:45am

Sunday PM: Systematic Theology at 6:00pm (Sunday nights we usually hangout after 7:17)

Wednesday nights: Bible Study in back of Common Grounds. We are studying *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* at 8:30pm.

Music Ministry

My first youth group experiences were at a church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, just outside of Nashville. When I was in the seventh grade, I was part of a small group that worked through the youth edition of Henry Blackaby's Bible study, *Experiencing God*. We met for nine weeks as we learned about recognizing God's leadership in our lives and responding in faith and obedience. Over the next several years, I had the opportunity to lead additional groups of my peers through the material. All that I had learned was put to the test when my family moved back to Florida just before I began high school. I chose to believe that God wasn't calling *just* my father to a ministry position in Plant City; it was His will for my entire family. While living in Florida, I was blessed with opportunities for training and service and I even met my future bride. Overall, I can confidently say that the difficulties of moving were insignificant compared to the blessings I received and the joy of joining God in His work. Needless to say, I encountered the themes of "knowing and doing the will of God" at a very formative time in my life.

I know that many of us at MRBC have a great deal of passion for and familiarity with Dr. Blackaby's material. As a result, I'm excited to announce that the music ministry of Matthew Road Baptist Church will be working toward a presentation of *Experiencing God: the Musical* on June 2, 2013. All of our choirs and many of our instrumentalists will be leading in worship that day. The material presents the core teachings of the well-known Bible study through beautiful music that features soloists, ensembles, and even opportunities for the congregation to join in as we worship together. Additionally, I will be using this space throughout the semester to explore the seven central teachings of *Experiencing God*. Our rehearsals for this program will begin this month, so it is the perfect time to join us for the first time (or the first time in a long time)!

I believe that we have a great semester of music ahead of us that will culminate with the musical presentation just before the summer. I look forward to worshipping our Lord with you! ~ Jeff



COME JOIN ONE OF OUR CHOIRS!

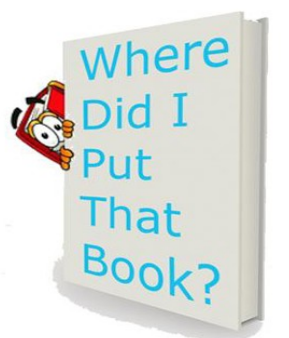
Children's Choir (Kindergarten through 6th grade) meets on Wednesday evenings before AWANA at 6:00pm in the second floor of the education building. We will use fun songs to learn biblical truths and develop musical skills.

Proclamation is our student ministry choir, which uses modern praise music as a starting point to develop a lifestyle of worship. We meet in the choir room at 5:45pm on Wednesday nights before Collide.

Adult Choir meets Wednesday nights in the choir room at 6:45pm. We believe that even our times of preparation are an important opportunity for worship, fellowship, and encouragement. The beginning of our Spring semester is the perfect time to start singing with us for the first time. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesdays! ~ Jeff

Library Ministry

Lost a book? Found a book? Know you have a book from our library but can't lay your hands on it? Borrowed a book but forgot to check it out? Then please contact Ms. Jeannie at jeannie@matthewroad.org or call her at 972-641-2717, and let her know. Several books have gone missing from our church library, and we'd just like to know if they have found a new home.



Women's Ministry



Be a Sister of Strength!

Take the time to strengthen a sister!

Make a phone call! Send a card! Pray!

Let us walk this life together!!!

Have a prayer request? Need more information about our Women's Ministry classes or events? Need to get in touch with our Women's Ministry Coordinator?

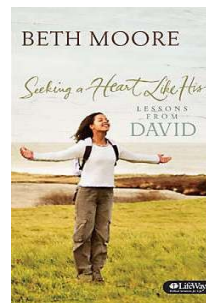
Then contact us at our email address:
womensministryofmatthewroad@gmail.com



For more information on February LNO at La Madeline, February 25th, please see the Women's Ministry Bulletin Board in the Worship Center, or contact Jennifer at womensministryofmatthewroad@gmail.com



- ♦ Ladies Sunday Night Bible Study begins Sunday, February 10th at 6:00pm. Please see the Women's Ministry Bulletin Board, down the nursery hallway, for more information. This is open to ladies of all ages!
- ♦ Ms. Joy's Ladies Bible Study begins Tuesday, February 12th at 6:00pm, in the choir room. This semester, we will be studying Beth Moore's "Seeking a Heart Like His; Lessons from David." In this examination of the "man after God's own heart," David will delight and disappoint you. You'll want to be just like him at times and nothing like him at others. If you've ever experienced doubts, temptations, losses, family problems, or personal inconsistencies, this study is for you!
- ♦ The Thursday Night Bible Study will also begin in February. We will be walking with the Israelites through the book of Exodus. Watch the ladies' ministry bulletin board, down the nursery hallway, for information.



We will need help with setting up, serving our precious guests, watching children, as well as assistance in other areas. Please be in prayer how you can participate in this amazing ministry opportunity!

Have questions or would like to sign up to serve?
Please contact Jennifer at
womensministryofmatthewroad@gmail.com

Children

Parables

MD²

Join us each Sunday night, beginning February 10th, for games, large group lessons, and small group discussion.

This spring we will be learning about Parables. Come and hear more about the stories that Jesus told.

Sunday nights - 6-7pm
Education Building - Upstairs
Children - Kindergarten through 6th Grade
(Small groups are separated by age.)

I'm a Christian Now!

We will begin a New Christian's Class on March 3rd.

This class is for kids who have recently made the decision to follow Christ or those who are thinking about making this decision.

We will be using the book "I'm a Christian Now" to answer questions about salvation, baptism, The Lord's Supper, and what it really means to be a Christian.



October 3rd - 24th, 5-6pm
Red Room, Education Building

See Maggie for details or to sign up.



SAVE THE DATE...



Each summer, our Children's Ministry hosts Vacation Bible School and Preteen Camp!

- Preteen Camp, at Mt. Lebanon: June 24-28
- VBS at MRBC: July 8-12
- VBS Meetings: April 14 @ 5pm and June 30 @ 5pm

Please contact Maggie at maggie@matthewroad.org to sign up or for more information.



Join us each Wednesday evening as we memorize God's Word, hear Bible stories, play games, and have a lot of fun!

Cubbies - 3&4 year olds
Sparks - Kindergarten through 2nd grade
T&T - 3rd through 6th grade
Wednesdays from 6:30pm - 8:00pm.

The “Big Game” Tailgate & Watching Party

THE “BIG GAME” TAILGATE & WATCHING PARTY		
G	SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD. BEGINNING AT 5:00PM	G
10		10
20		20
30	FOOD SERVED AT 5:00PM	30
40		40
50	GAME BEING SHOWN AT 6:00PM IN THE MANCAVE & COMMON GROUNDS	50
40		40
30	SANCTUARY BIBLE STUDY WILL STILL MEET AT 6:00PM. WITH A STUDY ON ACTS	30
20		20
10	MD2 WILL STILL MEET FOR GAMES AT 6:00PM IN THE FIELD OUT FRONT	10
G		G

February 2013 Events & Activities

For more information, please see our website, www.matthewroad.org, or call the church office at 972-641-2717.

- February 3rd:** The “Big Game” Tailgate and Watching Party, 5:00pm, MRBC Campus
Finance Committee Meeting, 5:00pm, Conference Room
- February 7th:** Young @ Heart Breakfast at Outlaws, 8:30am
- February 8th - 9th:** Super Start Preteen Retreat, see Maggie for information
Planet Wisdom Youth Conference, see Zach for information
- February 10th:** Quarterly Business Meeting, 5:00pm, Sanctuary
- February 15th:** Parent’s Night Out, 6:30pm, see Cyndi for information
- February 17th:** Teller Meeting, 12:00pm, Teller Room
- February 21st - 24th:** HeartBeat Youth Retreat, see Zach for information
- February 25th:** Ladies Night Out @ La Madeleine by the Parks Mall, 7:00pm

Do you, or someone you love, have marital, family, or personal struggles?
We can help through Professional Christian Counseling.
Contact Keith Dibble, LPC @ 972.343.9831.

Wednesday Night Dinners are back!

Join us Wednesday nights at 5:30pm for great food and fellowship! Please place your reservation at the welcome desk or contact the church office at jeannie@matthewroad.org.

Spring Discipleship

Sunday Nights:

- ◇ The Study of Acts - Sanctuary, 6:00pm (beginning February 3rd)
- ◇ Ladies Bible Study - Fellowship Hall, 6:00pm (beginning February 10th)
- ◇ Men’s Bible Study - ManCave, 6:00pm (beginning February 10th)
- ◇ Adult Bible Study - CommonGrounds, 6:00pm (ongoing)
- ◇ 20Somethings - 2nd Floor, Education Building (ongoing)
- ◇ Guy Talk for youth - classroom behind coke machine in CommonGrounds Bldng. (ongoing)
- ◇ Girl Talk for youth - classroom to the right of the stage in CommonGrounds Bldng. (ongoing)
- ◇ MD2 - Education Building, 6:00pm (ongoing)

Tuesday Nights:

- ◇ Ladies Bible Study, 6:00pm, Choir Room (beginning February 12th)

Thursday Nights:

- ◇ Men’s and Ladies Bible Studies: Walking with the Israelites through Exodus, 7:00pm, Worship Center, Cost: \$5. (beginning February 21st, childcare provided)

Friday Nights:

- ◇ Bible Study at the Germer’s home, 7:00pm, see the Germers for more info

Regular Weekly Calendar

Sundays

Morning Worship	8:30 & 11:00am
Morning Bible Study (all ages)	9:45am
Trek/Journey (Jr. & Sr. High)	4:00pm
Evening Bible Study (all ages)	6:00pm
7:17 Service	7:17pm

Mondays

PAW Program	9:00am
-------------	--------

Tuesdays

Young @ Heart Activities	9:45am
Grief Share	6:30pm

Wednesdays

PAW Program	9:00am
Proclamation Choir (youth)	5:45pm
Children's Choir (K - 6th grade)	6:00pm
Collide (youth)	6:30pm
AWANA Club	6:30pm
Adult Bible Study	6:45pm
Adult Choir	6:45pm
20Somethings	8:30pm

Thursdays

Bible Study (men & women)	7:00pm
---------------------------	--------

Fridays

In-home Bible Study (at the Germer's Home)	7:00pm
---	--------

Saturdays

Men’s Coffee Group	7:30am
--------------------	--------

Average Morning Attendance for January:

425

Average 7:17 Service Attendance for January:

151