

DAVE HUNT: THE PASSING OF A GIANT

Tom's Perspectives
by Thomas Ice

Christian defender of our biblical faith, Dave Hunt (1926–2013) went home to be with our Lord on April 5, 2013 after a series of various illnesses. I greatly loved and respected Dave as one of the most sincere and genuine believers I have ever personally known. He was foreword thinking on many issues and was on more than one occasion the first Christian to spot a trend developing within Evangelicalism. Dave Hunt will be greatly missed by so many of us in the days ahead. Dave leaves behind his faithful wife, Ruth, and four children and many grandchildren.

BACKGROUND

Dave grew-up in a devout Plymouth Brethren home in California. I recall him saying that his parents kept the Christian Sabbath on Sundays and his father would not let him read the comics in the newspaper on Sunday because the day was to be devoted totally to the Lord. Dave remained a Brethren his entire life. The Brethren do not believe in a formally trained clergy. Dave was trained and disciplined in serving the Lord through his local assembly. Dave attended college and earned a degree in mathematics at UCLA. Since math majors must have the ability to think abstractly, it means that Dave had the God-given ability to understand concepts and think about their implications. This is something he demonstrated throughout his writing and speaking career. Dave often saw new trends developing within Evangelicalism before others. Dave spent countless hours studying God's Word and was a great Bible scholar, even though he was primarily self-taught.

Once when I was on a speaking tour with Dave and Ruth in Brazil, I ask Ruth how she met Dave. She also was a student at UCLA. One day she and a friend saw Dave walking across campus. Ruth told her friend, before she had met Dave, that he was the most handsome student she had seen at UCLA. Of course, she later met him and they were married a few years later.

Dave became an accountant in the Los Angeles area and owned a large home in which he led many Bible studies over the years and influenced hundreds of people for Christ during this time. Dave and his family lived for a number of years in Europe and Egypt. Dave would often sit in on the lectures of famous University professors in Europe. Dave loved Israel and visited there a number of times over the years. In 1973 Dave was able to enter full-time ministry during which he spoke all over the world and wrote many important Evangelical books. (I counted thirty-two.) Dave also wrote the script for the Billy Graham movie "Time to Run" released in 1973. Dave demonstrated throughout his ministry complete confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible. The heart of Dave's ministry was one of interacting with this world from the perspective of God's inerrant Word and he did a wonderful job serving his Lord in this way.

Dave also loved fishing! He loved to fish for men through evangelistic encounters, especially on an airplane. God would often sit him next to someone that needed to hear the good news. He also loved fishing for fish in God's great outdoors.

FRIENDSHIP

I first met Dave 30 years ago when I was a new pastor in the Oklahoma City area. Dave was in town speaking at a conference and I had him speak at our church during a Sunday evening service. On another occasion a few months later he spoke on a Sunday morning at our church and we had him over for lunch. It was at that time that I began to really get to know Dave. He began sharing with me about his forthcoming book *The Seduction of Christianity*¹ that was released in 1985. We also had a nice discussion about Calvinism, since I am a modified Calvinist. Even though he would later write a book against some of what I believe in that area, it never prevented him from being a gracious friend to me.

About nine months after *Seduction* came out, I was a pastor in Austin, Texas, I had Dave booked for a week of meetings mainly in Austin, San Antonio, and Houston. *Seduction* was a bombshell that exposed the rise of mysticism within Evangelicalism in the form of psychology and the “word-faith” teaching. At the time it was the number one selling Christian book in America. Everywhere we went Dave faced stiff opposition from pastors, students, and many others who complained that Dave must have misrepresented their favorite teachers or teachings. Dave answered their many questions with specific evidence and in a graceful manner. Dave was ahead of his time on these issues and received great criticism for what he wrote in *Seduction*. However, as time went on, many others began to provide research that has basically supported Dave’s original claims in his book that sold well over a million copies.

In the late 80’s and early 90’s I had written a book with H. Wayne House called *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?*² that critiqued the Christian Reconstruction Movement. Twice I was challenged to a debate against a couple of Reconstructionists and on both occasions I chose Dave Hunt as my debating partner. At that time there were not many Evangelicals who were up on this issue, but Dave was the exception. He was a great asset in dealing with the false teachings of the Reconstructionists.

Over the years I was able to get to know Dave and Ruth fairly well. When Tim LaHaye and I started the Pre-Trib Research Center in 1992, Dave was one of our original members and usually attended our conference every year until his health began to prevent him from coming. Dave presented a number of papers at our Study Group conferences. One year I ask Dave to present a paper on “The Islamic Threat to Israel,” which he did. Dave told me later that his paper for the pre-trib conference was the catalyst for expanding it into his book *Judgment Day*.³ I have always thought that *Judgment Day* was the best book I ever read that provides the Scriptural basis for prophecy concerning Israel and the blending with current events about the modern state of Israel. Once again, Dave demonstrated in *Judgment Day* his exceptional ability to explain the Scriptures on a topic and their implications in today’s world.

DAVE HUNT EXPOSED

Even though Dave was one who strictly followed the Bible, as we all should, he was at the same time fun to be around personally. He enjoyed jokes and pranks and could laugh at himself. My wife Janice and I had the privilege of going on a trip to Israel about ten years ago with Dave and Ruth. I sat next to Dave on the flight to Tel Aviv and we discussed . . . rather argued the whole way about whether the Bible taught Calvinism. One day during the tour Dave had somehow gotten about a two-inch tear in the seat of his pants. I showed a few of the guys on the trip with us and then told Dave about the tear. Without missing a beat, Dave said, “I guess you can say that Dave Hunt was exposed in Jerusalem.” I followed up on that by saying that when we get

home I would write an article and call it: "Dave Hunt Exposed in Jerusalem." We thought many of his critics would enjoy such an article.

Later in the trip Dave let me take a picture of him standing under the sign of an office of a New Age Global Center. Also, down by the Dead Sea, there was a hotel called the Golden Tulip. TULIP is the acrostic representing the five-points of Calvinism. Yes, I have a great picture of Dave standing by that sign with a big smile on his face.

Once when I was at his home in Bend, Oregon a few months before the arrival of the year 2,000, I noticed that Dave had a huge supply of wood for burning in a fireplace. Dave and Ruth had moved into the house a few months earlier and the wood was already there. Since Dave had written a very good book exposing the Y2K hoax⁴ a year before it happened, I told Dave that he must be stocking up on wood and survival supplies for Y2K and I would write an article about his hypocrisy. Of course, he found it to be funny and he was once again right in his analysis of a contemporary event.

CONCLUSION

Dave Hunt loved Bible prophecy, especially the any-moment Blessed Hope of the rapture of the Church. One of reasons for his love of Bible prophecy is he believed it demonstrates that the Bible is true. This was the central idea in his book *How Close Are We?*⁵ In the time spent with Dave over the years I have no doubt that Dave loved the hope of the rapture, not because he wanted to escape life here on earth, but because he sincerely longed to be with Christ. This was his motive in living the godly life and working so diligently for the cause of Christ. He was a tireless servant of Christ. Dave has been like an Apostle Paul to me when Paul said to follow him as he follows Christ (2 Thess. 3:9). Dave longed to see Christ in person at the rapture but that was not to be. He is now with the Christ he loved. Dave will be greatly missed here below but he has left behind many great resources that will continue to benefit many. Maranatha!

ENDNOTES

¹ Dave Hunt & T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985).

² H. Wayne House & Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse? Analysis of Christian Reconstructionism* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1988).

³ Dave Hunt, *Judgment Day! Islam, Israel and the Nations* (Bend, OR: The Berean Call, 2005).

⁴ Dave Hunt, *Y2K: A Reasoned Response to Mass Hysteria* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999).

⁵ Dave Hunt, *How Close Are We? Compelling Evidence for the Soon Return of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993).