

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

Various Charges Answered

A reader offers his candid opinion:

Paul/Victor

I must say something about your pompous writing style. Although I recognize some truth in your words, are you consciously trying to belittle people? Or is that just something else, like being vain and self righteous, that you do compulsively. I have been reading your tirades and wake up calls for several months now. Many things you say deeply resonate with me. Nevertheless, your arrogance and persistent self-contradiction consistently put me off. You do not speak with love. Yet you profess to speak on behalf of the God that is Love. Love, compassion, and genuine care are mere pretensions in your writing. This angers me because your message, at its core, contains spiritual truth. But you pride yourself on that truth and hypocritically attack anyone who questions or rejects its message. The message is not about YOU Victor! Or YOU Paul! Unfortunately, that's what's coming across. Mostly what's communicated is that you two are zealots issuing personal attacks to anyone whose opinion differs from yours. For Christ's sake (and I mean that literally), get it together! I'm sick of you two alienating people and telling yourselves it's their fault...they can't handle the truth. Have you ever asked yourselves whether it's not the truth people are rejecting, but the two of you? If not, please do. And don't even try writing back to me with some biblically infused ad hominem. I'm not impressed. I'm insulted. In fact, I think you should be thankful I'm willing to risk telling you how you are coming across. Most people just write you off as kooks.

Eli

Victor's reply:

Hi Eli,

Thank you for your letter. It is not every day that we receive one that is not filled with false, intellectual, religious doctrine and posturing. It is your frank opinion, and we understand what you are thinking and feeling. Indeed, Eli, we are thankful that you are willing to "risk" telling us how you perceive us to be coming across.

I will also limit the use of Scripture in this letter to you, as you ask, or demand, although truth is truth, whether expressed in the words the Bible uses, or in our own words. In spite of the intensive use of Scripture, we are not Bibliolaters, and feel no

compulsion to defend or use the Bible. That said, it is indeed the Word of God, Jesus used it constantly, and often we marvel at, and are thankful for, its truth applicable to all aspects of life.

I will defend ourselves in our response to your observations, not because we feel any need to do so, but because we want to clarify some things for your sake and that of others. What we are defending, by the grace of God, is that true faith which was originally delivered to the saints. In doing so, we confront and expose the false faith that is everywhere prevalent in the world, in its many expressions. You are quite influenced by it, as indicated by your conceptions expressed here.

You describe us, using words that we perceive to be inaccurate, extreme and unjustified, such as: pompous, vain, arrogant, hypocritical, self-righteous, and speaking ad hominem. You also accuse us of tirade, pretension, and "self-contradiction." You are wrong, Eli, and will be proven so.

Here you are, using all these condemning adjectives of us, and providing no substance, no specifics. Are we to simply take your word for it? Is that not arrogance of the first order? We have not spoken without substance in those things you consider condemnation. Are you not guilty of those very things you accuse us? Of course you are. Think about it.

If we were pompous or arrogant, it would mean that we don't really have what we claim to have. For example, if Jesus were to say (and He did), "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man can come unto the Father but by Me," one would have to admit such to be quite a claim, and nobody would accuse Him of arrogance or pomposity if they knew Him as He is. He has every right to speak those words. Truth is truth and facts are facts. No amount of false humility changes the facts. On the other hand, if any other person were to make the same claim, we would have to conclude that he or she is joking, deluded, mistaken, or arrogant and pompous. Therefore, in order to establish whether those adjectives are appropriate or not, we would first be obliged to establish whether the persons in question can rightfully make the claims they do. Are you in any position to make that judgment? On what basis and by what authority?

We, for the most part, contrary to your charges, are not giving our opinions, as do so many. We know whereof we speak, and give you sure evidence and testimony. You do not know, and cannot give us the same to support your position. Are we arrogant? Not if we simply know what we are talking about. If we know what we are talking about, it is only because God is our Teacher, Source and Inspiration. His Book also confirms our steps, learning and teachings. Think about it, Eli: He is our Authority. What or who is yours? Because we speak, knowing whereof we speak, with conviction, without apology or wavering, you and others call it arrogance.

You may have chosen loose words, but it is not about "writing style." God has given us the knowledge, spirit and ability to write as we do. You could not know that because

you have not known us in the past. If you had, you would know that what we have and what is expressed by us is not of ourselves, but from God. You do not know us in the spirit either, or you would not say the things you say, or make the judgments you make.

Hypocrisy? To be hypocritical, one would have to say one thing and do another, which contradicts the words. By your words, I assume you may think we speak of the love of God while not loving or speaking in the spirit of love. The false faiths and gods of this world have influenced you in your perception of love. There is one way, and one way only that anyone can know true love, and that is to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know Him? No, you don't (not that you claim to). Do we? Yes, we do. If we do know Him, and you don't, how is it that you could possibly know better than we as to what true love is like? Your problem, Eli, is your misunderstanding of love.

Pretence? What do you think we are pretending to do? To love? We do love. To be men of God? We are men of God. To preach the gospel? We do preach the gospel. To pretend what? You don't say. I believe you don't think one can have a true and personal relationship with God, or, if you believe that one can, that our ways and words would not be the outcome of that relationship. That is because of your misconceived notions of the character of Jesus Christ.

Self-contradiction? I suppose you don't think we are consistent in our teachings or conducting ourselves in the spirit of them. Again, are you able and willing to specify? If not, then are you not the one to whom your adjectives (all of them) apply?

Tirade? That speaks of harangue, diatribe, and vehemence. I can readily see how, on paper, words may seem harsh and unfair when they are not (I have erroneously and unfairly judged others' spirits and motives by their written words). I know we are not guilty of your accusation. I believe the problem is that you judge our words as tirade because we speak hard things. We speak light that dispels darkness, which people call light. We speak truth that exposes people. We are telling it like it is, not like people like to think or pretend it is. We are not "scratching backs" or "tickling ears." We are not pretending.

You judge our words to others as belittling. If we were speaking of people as less than they are, then we would certainly be guilty of your charge. However, if we truthfully and knowledgeably tell people that they are less than **they think they are**, for their sakes, then we are not wrong, and you, unwittingly, may be finding yourself standing against God Himself, if He is sending us to tell the people their sins and shortcomings. Belittling? I don't think so. Exposing and properly identifying? Yes. Disillusioning? Yes, and needfully so. People are full of illusions, and must be delivered of them. Keep believing lies and you die; believe the truth and you live.

Now, let us consider the crucial element of motive. If we "expose and properly identify" the status of men's souls in order to vaunt ourselves, then it likely would be true that we are arrogant and pompous as you say, or at least, critical and

judgmental. However, our motives can be known only by the Spirit and revelation of God, and not by judging after the outward appearance. Are you speaking from the Lord, or are you judging after the appearance, based solely on your understanding of things? Judging by your own understanding is not good enough for God, not for us, and not for anyone else, not even yourself.

Self-righteous? Again, if we speak out of our own virtue, you are right. If we speak the things revealed and given us of God, then we are proceeding in His righteousness, and not our own. How do you know? You assume that we are not permitted to say the things we say to others. You have read little if any of the Bible, you have never known what God has sent the prophets to do, and you have never known God Himself. He is not sending us to say we are better than others. He is sending us to say that unless people realize that what they think, say and do is wrong, unless they receive that which is right and true, and change, they are doomed to destruction. In our spirits, we don't want to see people destroyed. Instead we want God's will, and His will is that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Years ago, He called me to give my life that people would have the knowledge whereby they would be saved. I have given my life to that end, though not I, but He has taken my life and done with it as He has pleased. He has warned that if the world hated Him (and it did...they crucified Him), it would hate us as well. He also said that the world would speak well of false prophets, while of the true they would speak evil. Why is that? Is it because the true prophets spoke with "love?" Why were the false prophets honored while the true were persecuted and exterminated? Don't you think that it was the false prophets who spoke with "love"? They did not offend people, as you and many others are offended with us. Think about it, Eli.

Eli, Paul tells me you are studying law. In law, it pays to know the law, your case, your opponent, and your client. You have not known the case, you have mistakenly judged us your opponents, and you take on clients who are guilty while you presume them innocent. You do so in that you think we are unjustified in what is said to them. We have not spoken to you as we have to them, because while you have not professed any faith in God, in many cases they have. They have also given us argument not out of mistakenness but out of insincerity, hypocrisy, and religious prejudice. Many have spoken *not* out of decent and honest search for truth and God's will, but out of sin, out of faith in false gods and doctrines.

Paul also tells me that you pay attention to Ken Wilbur. Ken is a philosopher, apparently brimming with knowledge, apparently respectful of others, with compassion, wisdom, and all those things people like to have coming their way from teachers or mentors. The problem is that it is man's love, wisdom and thought, and not God's. He is a false prophet, Eli. If you have respect for a false prophet, who are you to judge true ones? You are utterly in the dark and at fault.

Having said all that has been said, I want to make it clear to you that we presume no righteousness in ourselves whatsoever. In the flesh, we are assholes...murderers,

adulterers, fornicators, bastards, liars, thieves, and more. We are untrustworthy, unfaithful, selfish, hypocritical, proud, arrogant, ignorant...all the things you say we are. It is by the grace of God alone that we can stand, speak and do right. We are kept by His mercy and grace. You are right; there is not a stitch of love in and of ourselves. But as you said, Eli, it is not about us.

You are absolutely right when you say, "The message is not about YOU Victor! Or YOU Paul!" No man has spoken truer words than these. We know it, and we know it well, because He has made it known to us. There is not one day that goes by that I am not sorry for my past, and for the way I am in the present, in the flesh. If it were not for the facts that I know I stand in Christ's righteousness, and that all things have a purpose, including evil, I would not be able to live with myself, in the light of the righteousness of God. His character, love, might and light make us look like the dirtiest things in existence, I assure you. However, we are saved by His grace and love. We have been given a new nature that overrules the former nature of evil, the one I just described to you. We are guilty but declared pardoned by Him. Furthermore, we have been given the commandment and heart to speak to all, and to tell them that they are in "wrongness," that they need to repent from their righteousnesses, which are as filthy menstrual cloths. If you saw as God sees, you would cringe at your words and thoughts. Having been captured by Reality, we now address unreality, meeting it head on, so that its captives will be freed.

You are in unreality, Eli. Your pride and experience may tell you otherwise, but God knows better. He sends us to speak, to let you know that what you believe and have is of no value to Him. It is falsehood, and it is killing you. It killed Him. In fact, you ARE dead, and the words we speak from Him are spoken that you might have life. I don't even know you. That is the love of God. It is not a matter of emotion or romance, it is not a matter of "respecting the beliefs of others," nor is it a matter of "living and let live." It is a matter of living and giving others the key to life. They are using the wrong keys, insisting they have the right keys, and we tell them they are not only using the wrong keys, but are trying to open the wrong doors. Most people do not believe that one can know the right key and the right door. They equally do not believe that there is only **ONE** key and **ONE DOOR**. Preaching so, we are called arrogant, bigots, exclusive, self-righteous, and more. The truth is that we are sharing what we have, reaching to include all others, preaching not our righteousness, but His, speaking against the righteousness of men, by which they erroneously think to enter life.

Is it because we tell others they are wrong that you think us arrogant, vain, pompous, self-contradictory, hypocritical, and all those things? If we were competing or comparing ourselves with others, you might be right. You misinterpret our telling people they are wrong to mean we are unjustly criticizing and condemning them. Tell me, are you speaking to us in love?

You say that most people "just write us off as kooks." We know that. We knew that before we went into this. We have known that ever since we came to know the Lord

Jesus Christ (31 years ago for me). You tell us nothing of which we are ignorant. They thought He was a kook too, and all those with Him since. All those who personally identify with Christ suffer the hatred of those who do not identify with Him. Many profess His Name but do not suffer persecution and hatred simply because they are not His. Persecution is a price we as true believers must pay, and we gladly pay it because we love Him, and we love Him because He first loved us. He gave His life for us while we were taking it from Him. Now having life, He asks us to give our lives so that others may have life. We give it to you while you, and others, take it from us.

Concerning your mention of those who condemn us, Eli, do you know they are right? Do they serve God? Do they receive revelation from Him? Are they laying down their lives for our sake and yours? Are they justified?

Speaking as you do to us tells me that you do not believe we are "kooks." If you thought we were, I don't think you would even bother writing. I am encouraged that you find some truth that "resonates" with you. I am thankful that you perceive that our "message, at its core, contains spiritual truth."

I send you a large letter. I hope you will come to know the Lord. Thank you for writing. Reply if you will. If it is any consolation to you, although I have sent this letter of defense to you, refuting your words, in all honesty I must tell you that I consider your words, and ask myself, others with us, and God if such words and judgments are not in fact true, and needful for me to heed. I see a personal objectivity in your letter that is uncommon. "Personal," I say, because you are influenced in ways beyond your own understanding or recognition. You think to do right.

I do desire to do right by all before God, and am painfully aware of my infirmities. I have not brushed your letter aside without consideration or prayer. On the one hand, I am always aware that the enemy comes with subtle, powerful and persuasive argument and accusation, to deceive if possible, the very elect of God. On the other hand, God is over every creature, believing or not, and could well be speaking to me by you to correct me. If I am wrong, and am as you say, then I bring great damage to the Kingdom of God, as you seem to feel. I thereby damn myself, and offend or cause others to stumble. For that, I would deserve to die, and for that, I would much prefer to die rather than do the evil. I mean that, Eli. I pray God, for each of us, to have our eyes opened, that we may know the truth, as we ought, to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is what it is all about.

An addendum: Last night I prayed to know the truth of this matter. This morning I awoke, still in prayer concerning your words, spoke to one person about it, and then the Lord spoke to me. He said, "If I talk to you, you will know what I am saying and that I am the One speaking to you. I will make that plain to you." Then I recalled how in times past, when I was bothered about, or pondering, critical words of others, He said to me, "I will tell you directly if you are offending." I have my answer.

Victor Hafichuk,
An unworthy servant and son of God

Paul's reply:

Greetings, Eli.

Victor has already replied to your letter, but I would like to add a few things from my perspective. Though we come from the same place, a more complete picture can be seen from two eyes, for more depth and texture.

I too am thankful for your honest expression of how you feel. I too understand where you are coming from. I have been there. I too once did not believe that God spoke to men, or that He was knowable. He changed that for me, as He did for Victor.

In the process of that change I saw in me all those faults, which you have listed. The only way a person can know his or her own depravity is to have light shone in the dark recesses of his or her being. Jesus Christ is the light of all men. When He does a work in a person, it begins with exposing the utter rottenness within and then the utter inability of that person to essentially change his or her self. I know that many people believe otherwise, that mankind is basically good, or able to become good. Many who profess to believe in Jesus Christ come from this view. However, the reality is different.

When God (Christ), chooses a person, it is not because that person is good. Jesus clearly said that no person is good. He chooses people to demonstrate not any superiority in those people (of which there is none), but to show the riches of His grace and mercy, of which all are in need. We are recipients of that grace, and for those given to know, they know it is of God, not us. Those who do not see God, Who is, after all, invisible, may think as you do, that we do this ourselves. Of course, if you and they were right, it would be without doubt that we were arrogant, or deceived, or both. However, it is God that causes us to be able to stand in those things that we do, and you are basically finding fault with Him, not us. He has sent us, Eli. God does send men to preach; His-story records this in Scripture.

Because I have known and seen my sin, I also know the freedom and liberation that Jesus Christ has accomplished in me by nailing me (and that nature) to His cross, and then raising me to new life in Him by His resurrection power, by which He overcame death Himself. I know that it is not my doing, but His life that now operates in me. I know this because I found it impossible to change myself, though I tried. I know it because I am now dead to the power of being right in my self. He, in love, killed me, so that it is no longer Paul, but Christ Who lives in me. That is Who you are now condemning.

We don't take it personally because it is not personal. You are no different than all humanity, which without exception condemns God. That is why He had to die on the

cross, because every person has rejected Him. If anyone was capable of "accepting" Him, then He would not be their Savior, and all others would be condemned since it would be possible that men could be right with God, without a Savior. Think about it, Eli. We are saying the exact opposite of that which you accuse us of. You say we are belittling others. We are truly saying that all have sinned (us included), and that God has made the way for all to be released from that cycle of death through His Son Jesus Christ. How small in His sight are those for whom He was laying down His life? We are bringing the only hope and life there is for those in this world, or any other. Arrogant? Not if true, which it is.

Is a lamp pretentious, because it shines light for you to see? Is a cow pretentious, because it gives milk? Is a man of God pretentious, because he speaks the words of God to life?

You say God is love, but what is love? God is also sovereign, and not a hair on your head falls without His knowledge. So what do you have to say about all the horrible diseases, wars, and suffering in this world? What kind of brute and ogre do you make God out to be, Who is love, and perfectly capable to remedy anything because He has all power over everything? If He does not "allow" these things to happen, it must be because He is actually doing them. If we are hard, what does that make Him? But could it be, Eli, that you do not know what you are talking about, missing some essential ingredients? It must be. We know it is so, without question.

The love of God causes a person to choose firstly whom they will please, men or God. This is a very real choice, with consequences. The world, if it loved God, would be a very different place. Being at enmity with God, as the world is, means being alienated from His peace, His love, and His ways. His addressing of those at enmity is not accepted by the world, and is not considered "loving." How will those who do not know God's ways or peace accept His verdict on them, if they are given to being contrary? This is more of expecting good to come from men, in whom there is no good.

The religions of man (including that which calls itself "Christian") practice a form of acceptance and "loving," which inform you, Eli, but in the sight of God are not His acceptance and love at all. Jim Jones "loved" the inner city people of San Francisco, the down and out, the disenfranchised, and the poor and racially discriminated against. Was he in the love of God? Jesus said that men love their own; this is not at all the same as His love. In the end it will be seen that all of man's love is no different than what Jim Jones practiced.

In His love we warn, rebuke, inform, and speak light to a world in sin, so that it would be set free from sin. It is the only way to a sure and better place, and it is also His will that all will come to something better. He has left no one out. We are not here to force or strive. His Word will not return to Him void.

We contend for the faith of the true saints of all ages. Those who walk in their own righteousness, arrogating Christ to themselves, seeking to kill Him while condemning others, have a hard time with what we preach, and we do not spare such. We speak to their treachery and falsehood, and if you had any sense of what it is we do, you would not contradict yourself so, Eli. You would be most joyful, as all lovers of truth are, that the prince of this world is being judged, and the rightful Heir and Ruler is being established, bringing peace and goodwill to all men. God is doing this, through the most ordinary and unexpected means, so that it will be known that the power is His. That is what is happening here.

Paul

Eli wrote the following reply to both letters:

bla bla bla...

Victor and Paul respond:

Eli, as you ought to tell, we took the earnest time and effort for your sake. We did so by the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the love of God towards you. Did you bother to responsibly and respectfully read what we wrote? Apparently not. Is your response the love of God you criticize us for not having? We rest our case. Our hands are clean of your blood.

Victor Hafichuk
Paul Cohen

Eli concludes (for now):

Nice. I'll get back to you. And no, you're right, I didn't read you before I wrote. That was my knee-jerk reaction to (8) EIGHT, count'em, eight pages of response to my paragraph of indignation. I've developed something of an allergic reaction to large reading loads. The truth is I regretted sending that childish response, and I regretted it more after having read your messages. Really I do appreciate your honesty, time, and thoughtfulness. I will take time to consider what you have said and respond in kind.

e.

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