

vealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but be-

came futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things (Romans 1:18-23).

It was then that I realized the battle has been around since Christ walked the earth.

The conversation that God allowed me to hear on that airplane was similar to con-

versations that have taken place for hundreds of years. Sure some details were different, but the summary was the same.

I silently offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God for giving me this unique opportunity and I prayed for these two individuals. Yes, I was sitting beside “the enemy” on the plane, but I realized as I stepped off the plane, that this enemy is lost and desperately needs the Gospel. ~

by Brad Harrub

# NAVARRE MESSENGER

January 3, 2016



## Sitting with the Enemy

Traveling most weekends for Christian evidence seminars means I frequently find myself on airplanes. Planes are unique environments in that for several hours you are often sitting in very close proximity to complete strangers. Some individuals are “non-talkers” and will use the time to catch-up on work, sleep, or listen to media. Other individuals are “talkers,” and will talk to whomever they find themselves sitting beside.

What do you do when sitting next to an enemy of Christ?

My favorite seat on the plane is right beside the window. With a window seat I can lean my head against the window and drift off to sleep, or I can stare out at God’s incredible creation and meditate or think—and I don’t have to worry about getting up if someone beside me needs to go to the bathroom.

On one Sunday afternoon, I settled into a window seat exhausted, anxiously awaiting the reunion with my family. It had been a very uplifting weekend seminar, but my voice was shot and I could barely keep my eyes open. A lady in her early for-

ties sat down in my row in the aisle seat and we exchanged pleasantries. A few minutes later a very boisterous man in his late fifties or early sixties sat down in between us. I greeted him kindly, but returned to my window for some much needed rest. Little did I know I would not sleep a wink on this flight, because it was on this flight I found myself sitting beside the enemy.

Before the plane ever took off the ground the woman held up several “free drink” coupons and asked if either of us wanted one—excited about the prospect of getting “a good buzz on.” That was my first red flag. After declin-

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Morning Worship Service\_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service\_6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages\_7:00 PM

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ing I resumed my slumped over position and settled in to rest. My two seatmates, realizing that I was going to rest, began chatting amongst themselves about where they were going and what they did for a living. The woman explained that she was flying into Nashville for a teacher's convention and that she was responsible for developing common core curriculum and tests in Tennessee. The man introduced himself as a trial lawyer from middle Tennessee. When he heard she was in education he began to share two court cases he had tried "against these overly religious people."

He began to talk about these "crazy parents" who were praying for students at a Wilson county school, and how his client had hired him to get them to stop. I could not believe my ears—this was a court case that I often presented in my weekend seminars on the attacks of atheism in America. The guy sitting beside me was the actual lawyer who sued the school system to shut down a group of praying parents.

This lawyer talked with pride about how he had stopped "those religious people from praying" at this particular elementary school.

By this time my mind was racing. Should I continue to listen or interrupt and defend the parents? Should I ask him questions about why he took the case? Before I could interject he continued on discussing how his firm had also sued Lipscomb University for building a library using some type of bond program. Again he complained about how there should be a separation of church and state. He sadly acknowledged that they had been unsuccessful in stopping the construction of the library—but he let this lady know he felt religion was a big problem in the school system. By this point I was dumbfounded—and my blood pressure was beginning to rise.

The woman picked up the conversation and shared that she was responsible for writing test questions for the new common core curricu-

lum. She echoed his frustration and said that part of her biggest challenge was figuring out how to get evolution into the curriculum without having people complain. The lawyer warned the lady that she was flying into Nashville, Tennessee, and there would be a large percentage of people who disagreed with evolution.

By this time I was astonished and fully awake. (In fact, at this point I literally took out my mini-iPad to take notes). It was like God was literally placing me behind enemy lines to see first-hand how "the enemy" thinks. My only frustration was that I didn't get the entire encounter on video.

The man asked the woman about her family and she mentioned she had a couple of young children. The lawyer shared that he had two boys, both of which had gone to law school to follow in his footsteps. He talked with pride about his sons passing the bar. It was very obvious from the man's conversation that his children

had inherited his love for material wealth and stuff. I listened to a man brag about raising children who craved luxury vacations and wanted bigger houses. This man reminded me of Solomon who tried to find pleasure in anything the world could offer (Ecclesiastes 2). His entire existence revolved around materialism and worldliness.

It was at this point that the conversation took a disturbingly sad turn. The woman lamented that her job often took her away from her children. The lawyer began to offer this woman parenting advice. He repeatedly told the woman not to sacrifice her own career for her children. They discussed at length how many hours they were putting in and how much time they were away from their children. The lawyer admonished the woman not to give up her life for her kids—but rather to use her busy life as an example to them. (And yes, I wrote down his words on my iPad so I would be sure and get them correct later.)

At some point the conversation turned more toward her work with common core. Again, I could not shake the irony of listening to someone boast with pride about her job of developing common core—an educational program that I often speak out against. She complained openly about parents and she even complained about many of the teachers who were against the program.

It was about this point that the plane started its initial descent into Nashville—and I was certain that I warped into the twilight zone. The lawyer asked the woman if test scores were still declining. She replied, "Yes." She went on to share with him that test scores had been steadily declining for decades. They both began to talk about how much young people had changed, and speculate on what was causing the demise of both schools and society.

I sat there convinced I must be in some weird dream. Surely these individuals who only minutes earlier were

talking about not sacrificing their careers for their children could see? Surely these two college-educated individuals remembered how just minutes earlier they had ridiculed religious people who did not believe in evolution. Surely these two individuals recognized that by removing God and the Bible from society there would be consequences.

Why were children's scores going down and why were we watching demise in the moral fabric of our society. The bottom line was these two individuals were actively working to ensure it happened. And yet, they could not see past the blinders of materialism and worldliness.

As we landed I watched two married individuals exchange phone numbers and talk about the possibility of getting together while she was in Nashville.

As I collected my things to get off the plane I reflected on the words of Paul:

For the wrath of God is re-