

BOOK: KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE
By PAUL E. LITTLE

Preface

"People Who Don't Believe the Bible Have Never Read It."

Some men write books in an ivory tower, shut off from the world with paper and pen (or computer). The author of this book, my husband, was not one of this kind. Paul wrote his books in the midst of a packed schedule of travel, lecturing, and "eyeball-to-eyeball" conversations with university students. He began talking about his faith while still a student at the University of Pennsylvania and when he graduated, he turned from accounting, his major, to a full-time career of telling the message of Jesus Christ to the student world. He took his message to schools from coast to coast in the United States and on five continents. It seemed his suitcase was incessantly getting either packed or unpacked!

In the course of his relentless schedule, Paul learned to capture his audiences with extraordinary wit. He'd say: "It doesn't matter what you think of Play-Doh, Napoleon, or Richard Nixon. It does matter what you think of Jesus Christ." Or he'd invent graphic illustrations like saying, "The Christian experience is not like a man with a fried egg on his ear who claims the egg gives him peace and joy. Rather, the Christian experience is securely bound to the objective, historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

But there was more than wit that kept Paul's books selling widely long after his death. I saw him aim his messages, whether in the university or in the church, for the non theologian, the person in the classroom or the pew. He was never wishy washy but could sort out the central biblical truths and express them in lucid simplicity. When he sensed that some non-Christians got hung up on peripheral questions like how churches function or how Christians act, it concerned him. He knew they were missing the life-changing impact that Jesus Christ could bring to their lives. He'd say, "I want to make the message clear. Most people who don't believe the Bible have never read it!"

This need for a clear explanation of what Christians believe hung heavy on Paul's soul until he finally began to write something on paper, and I knew a book was about to be born. He called it *Know What You Believe*. In it he covers questions he'd heard people ask: "Is God a pure mathematical mind, a ball of fire, or a celestial policeman?" And, "Does God first reconcile me and then love me?" And then, "Does God give out little packages of peace, joy, love, etc.?" and many others.

For seventeen years people from all walks of life have read this book. The student, the church member, the non-church member have used it extensively. Now for this new edition, after 24 printings, I have done some minor updating and changed most biblical references to the New International Version. It is still entirely Paul's original work. Along with his first two books,

How to Give Away Your Faith and *Know Why You Believe*, this book has sold hundreds of thousands of copies. Many letters have come to me to tell of God's sovereign work through Paul's writings. I am amazed and deeply grateful to God for the people touched and the lives changed. This excerpt from one of these letters describes more eloquently than I could the power of the Lord Himself revealed in these works:

My husband and I were having problems getting along. I thought it would do him good to read *Know What You Believe*. But when I began reading it myself I realized I was not a Christian. I knelt down and prayed to the Lord. Now we are both trusting the Lord and our relationship has been completely healed.

Marie Little