

# Overcoming Cynicism



# **cyn·i·cal**

believing that people are generally selfish and dishonest in a way that shows no concern about treating other people fairly; distrustful of human nature and motives; sneering disbelief in sincerity or integrity; skeptical of organizations and institutions.

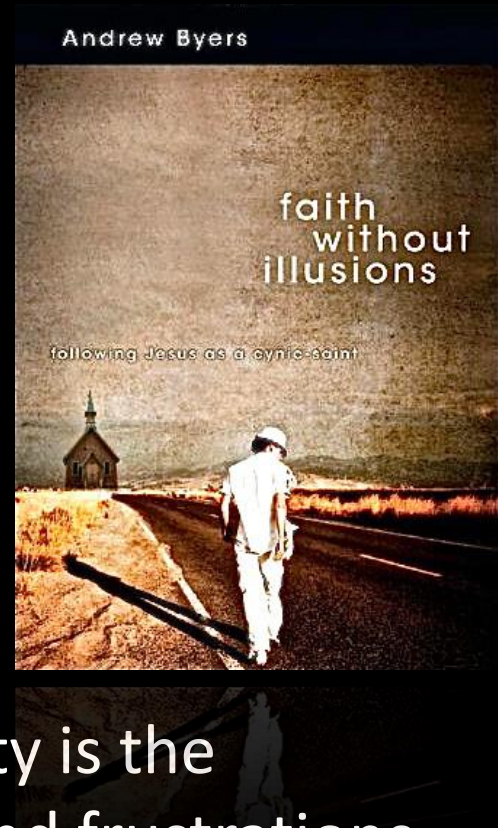
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cynical>

# The Headlines That Get In Our Head

- 4 Lies the Church Taught Me About Sex
- The 7 Great Lies in the Church Today
- 10 Lies Your Preacher Told You
- 10 Reasons Your Church Sucks
- 7 Lies Christian Parents Believe
- 6 Bad Prayer Habits We're All (Mostly) Guilty Of
- Sunday School is Killing the Church
- The Church is Failing Domestic Violence Survivors
- 10 Reasons Churches Aren't Reaching Millennials
- 6 Things I Hate About Being a Christian
- New Poll Finds Evangelicals' Favorite Heresies
- Biblical Illiteracy in US at Crisis Point
- The Church Just Wants Your Money



“So many believers have now slid into those dark pits that cynicism is becoming vogue in many Christian circles as a self-identifying trademark of a new spirituality—the edgy spirituality of the jaded. Since cynicism is emerging as a hip new way to be “spiritual,” religious disenchantment is often hailed as a spiritual virtue... Cynics have been wounded, or at least frustrated, and their edgy spirituality is the spirituality of those whose spiritual wounds and frustrations have become infected, when their brokenness has soured into bitterness. Cynicism is a sickness.”



Andy Byers, ***Faith Without Illusions:  
Following Jesus as a Cynic-Saint*** (pgs 8-9)

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

**Paul, Romans 15:13 NLT**

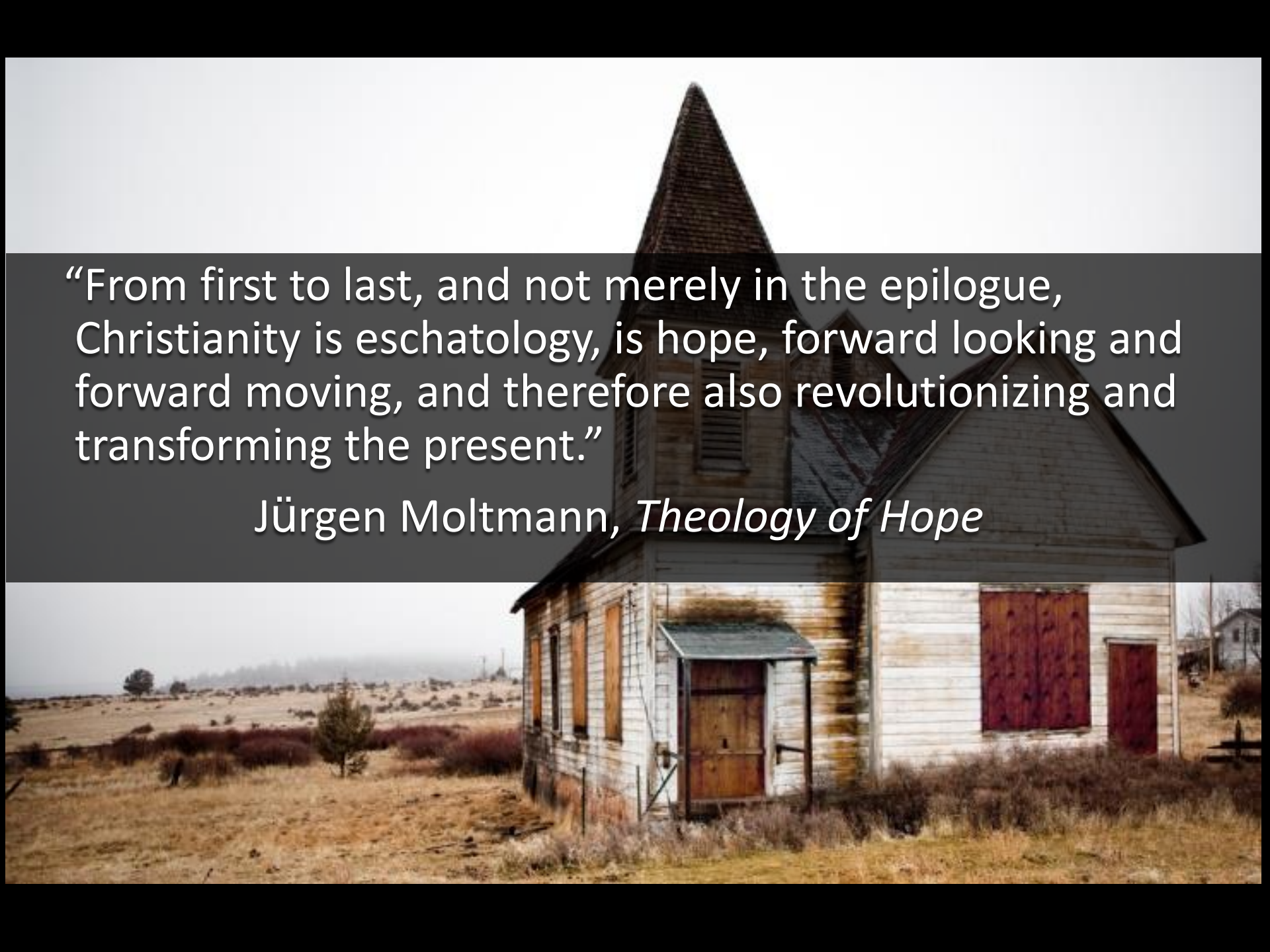
“If we are to understand prophetic criticism, we must see that its characteristic idiom is anguish, not anger.”

Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**Paul, Ephesians 3:10-11 NIV**





“From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue,  
Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and  
forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and  
transforming the present.”

Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*



“We are in dire need for redeemed cynics to dress their wounds that they may rise up and flourish in the truths revealed to them for the health of the church and for the glory of God.”

Andy Byers, *Faith Without Illusions*

## **Paul, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 12-13 MSG**

“If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don’t love, I’m nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God’s Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, “Jump,” and it jumps, but I don’t love, I’m nothing.

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love.”

“Love never gives up.  
Love cares more for others than for self.  
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.  
Love doesn't strut,  
Doesn't have a swelled head,  
Doesn't force itself on others,  
Isn't always “me first,”  
Doesn't fly off the handle,  
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,  
Doesn't revel when others grovel,  
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,  
Puts up with anything,  
Trusts God always,  
Always looks for the best,  
Never looks back,  
But keeps going to the end.”

“We don’t yet see things clearly. We’re squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won’t be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We’ll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.”

# Practical Advice for Overcoming Cynicism

1. Don't give up meeting with the church (Heb 10:23-25).
2. Don't network or yoke yourself with other cynics.
3. Be careful not to form your theology (setting it in concrete) while you're in a season of cynicism.
4. Make an intentional effort to heal & be constructive.
5. Listen to others who have been where you are now.
6. Serve others and give to those around you in need.
7. Ask the God of hope to soften your heart, to open up your mind, and to renew your spirit for His sake.

“I pray that God, the source of all hope, will infuse your lives with an abundance of joy and peace in the midst of your faith so that your hope will overflow through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Paul, Romans 15:13 VOICE

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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:  
[www.christiansburgmennonite.org](http://www.christiansburgmennonite.org)