

This thread is becoming a tapestry. Its ultimate goal is to explain why, unlike most scholars, I ended up being able to write trade books and not only scholarly books. I'm taking a rather circuitous route to getting there (to change the metaphor). In my last post I discussed how and why I first became interested in the Bible, back as a fifteen year-old born again Christian.

At that point I became convinced that only Bible-believing Christians (who were, of course, also born again) were the real Christians and any other people who claimed to be Christian (for example, most of the people who went to my own Episcopal church) were not **really** Christian, except in name only. Again, the reason I thought so is because the born-again I hung around with all said so, and they seemed to know what they were talking about. Especially the fellow who "led me to Christ," a mid-20s something fellow named Bruce.

Bruce had a winsome personality and strong charisma, and he ran the Campus Life Youth for Christ organization that I got involved with, an organization (like Young Life) that tries to convert high school kids to its form of Christianity and then to sustain their faith through prayer meetings, Bible studies, and so on, but **mainly** through weekly social events that were a lot of fun and that included, at the end, a spiritual message. I thrived on these things.

And accepted everything Bruce ever said. The next year ...

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