Reading the Bible for yourself is dangerous. Very dangerous.

This week has been an amazing mix of the usual media frenzy that seems to have taken hold of our culture.

A legend from the music world has died. A great Baseball legend has also died. People due to wars around the globe certainly have died and everyone it seems is going to heaven.

Heaven. You die and you go to heaven. Really? Are you sure? How do you know? Did your minister, your priest, your guru or your spiritual adviser tell you this "fact" with a straight face.

Did grandma and grandpa tell you this. Did someone suggest to you that the Bible teaches this "fact"? You might be surprised to learn that the early church gathered in small groups to learn directly from the Apostle Paul and Christ's own disciples various teachings that have nothing at all to do with the teachings of various religious
organizations that populate religious culture.

Paul suggested in one of his writings to the church, that he did not want the early church to mourn like other people living in his day, who had no hope, who did all kinds of strange things when it came to worshiping the various gods of his era.

I am not going to do what I usually do and give you a portion of scripture in this short newsletter, to prove what I think about the subject or to offer an opinion. I have had many people in my family, friends that I have made over the years die. At most funerals I attend, someone is bound to suggest "They are in heaven now."

Heaven?  
Now?  
You mean this very minute?

I've read in the paper, that some religious groups promise that if they kill other people they will also go to heaven and enjoy a life that is so full of joy that they can't wait to get to the other side, of their respective idea of Heaven. It seems, that even people who kill others intentionally go to heaven. Wow. Doesn't anyone go to hell anymore? Is there a hell? How do you know? Who told you that? This can go on forever.

Here is a thought - Why not open the Bible for yourself and study this subject. Don't listen to a minister, a TV evangelist, a priest, a CNN, CBS, NBC or ABC correspondent or worse, a musician that just won a Grammy Award, talk you into their concept of what happens when a person dies - Where the person might be, or if they are looking down on the rest of us or also attending the award ceremony with the living and "enjoying the evening" as a special guest.

The point is, check the Bible out yourself. Many church groups don't want you too and this fact goes back centuries. Question everything.

Reading the Bible for yourself is dangerous. Very dangerous. However, checking things out for yourself is as important today as it has ever been and probably more so. Read. Dig deep. Think for yourself. Pray for insight and here is another good tip, consider not trusting everything you read in the paper or you hear coming from the mouths of people who are religious in dress or speech.

Be a real New Yorker. Look over your shoulder. Don't listen to strangers offering spiritual candy to you from their tricked-out religious garments, who smile at you. I never did trust anyone who always smiled. For the real food that God offers, open the Bible for yourself and let the Spirit speak to you.

Okay. Here is one nice piece of scripture: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

May God bless you and give you peace.

Best regards,

Tony Romeo, Pastor / REACH-NYC

P.S.: Below (please scroll down) you will find some worship and study opportunities available to you this weekend, to learn more about God and the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible.

**Friday night, TONIGHT at 7 p.m., we meet at Cafe Reach, 232 West 11th**
Street, NYC in a relaxed and judgment free zone, where we share in some good conversation on spiritual matters. Candle light and round tables make it a great atmosphere to be yourself and to make new friends.

Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m. we are now serving breakfast at Cafe Reach, at Historic Manhattan Church, 232 West 11th Street, NYC in what we call Bible With A Bagel. We study the Bible with a nice warm breakfast enjoyed with a hot drink, in a home-like setting. We have freshly made oat meal, fresh fruit and a New York City whole grain bagel. I would love to meet with you as we study the Bible together and share the Word.

No matter what your faith tradition, you are invited to join us for study at a time and place convenient to your schedule. We are all part of God’s family.

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Join us tonight
Friday, February 17, 2012

Topic Discussion:
When I die I'm going to Heaven?
How misconceptions start.
CAFE REACH
232 West 11th Street
at 7 p.m.

Cafe Reach meets at Historic Manhattan Church
in the West Village, New York City

Cafe Reach is a
REACH-NYC sponsored event.
Members of all faith based traditions are welcome.

Bring a poem to share, a story to tell or an instrument to play.
Come meet in a relaxed and candle lit atmosphere.
A warm welcome, good food and hot drink
will be waiting for you.

Help us design a new and dynamic concept to learn about God
and to share peace and joy in this great city!
Saturday morning February 18, 2012
9:30 a.m.
FREE Breakfast With The Word.

Join us for a nice warm breakfast, a healthy whole grain NYC Bagel, Oat Meal, fresh fruit, a hot drink and wake up your mind with the study of God's Word.

This is a relaxed setting where all are invited to join in no matter what your faith tradition.

We meet at Historic Manhattan Church in the West Village at Cafe Reach
232 West 11th Street, NYC
Just one and a half blocks west of Seventh Ave.

Saturday Morning's at 9:30 a.m.
Study begins at 9:50 a.m.

See you for Bible With A Bagel.
Invite your friends.

Breakfast is served at 9:15 a.m.

This free breakfast is sponsored by supporters of REACH-NYC and we thank them.

This Saturday afternoon, February 11, 2012 at 3:30 P.M.
Small Group Bible Study and Conversation at
The Chapel At Union Square
in the Mezzanine Section / Library
Seafarers International House
123 East 15th Street, NYC
Corner of Irving Place.
Donations to REACH-NYC help us in our efforts to reach out to the people of New York City. REACH-NYC is a recognized tax-exempt corporation by the IRS and all contributions are fully tax-deductible.*

Contributions can also be made by check and sent payable to: "REACH-NYC" and mailed to: REACH-NYC, P.O. Box 651, North Salem, NY 10560.

Thank you in advance for helping the REACH-NYC ministry!

*A receipt will be sent recognizing all contributions at the end of the year for tax purposes.