

# Hunger in america by richard mitchell



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Response This thought provocative essay makes me wonder if mental instability is the same as fundamental literalism. With respect to Bill Barnhart and his mindless interpretation of “ in vain shalt thou use many medicines .....”, as reported by the author, the question that comes to the mind of any right thinking individual is: what is the mental status of Bill Barnhart? Is he mentally stable? Is he mentally retarded? This question comes up since the passage was not addressed to Bill Barnhart but rather to the daughter of Egypt. Thus before any person should crucify Bill Barnhart, his mental status should be verified. Of course, it is true that most mentally retarded and unstable persons are fundamental literalist and will, definitely, give mindless interpretation to written and spoken languages. It is not their fault given that they are “ mentally ill” thus advocating critical thinking as the cure for fundamental literalism will not help. It is like asking a physically challenged person to run.

2. Response Bill Barnhart’s son did not have cheerios and grape juice for his last meal. In my understanding, the story of Bill Barnhart is an allegorical one, which is given to show that reading (cheerios and grape juice) for fundamental literalist (hungry people) does not provide a solution to their problem (hunger). The hunger from which Bill Barnhart’s son suffered from is the mindless, non-attentive, non-judicious and non-reflective reading of language. Eating the meal made of cheerios and grape juice was supposed to relieve him his hunger, rather he died after eating. Thus the meal of cheerios and grape juice should be taken as the medicine that fundamental literalists take when they are hungry. It is therefore not true (False) that Bill Barnhart’s son took cheerios and grape juice for supper.