

The Berea Baptist Banner

Displaying Biblical truth for twenty-six years in the printed page.

The Rise and Results of Protestantism

By Edgar G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

The Church that Christ established while on earth has become very common and insignificant, not only in the eyes of the world, but also in the eyes of the majority of professing Christians. No one can really believe in his heart that one church is just as good as another without believing a little deeper down in his heart that none of them are really any good.

According to Bro. Carroll's "Trail of Blood" the first division which resulted in there being two kinds of churches in the world took place in the year 261 A.D. Most certainly this division came about as a result of one group's teaching and practicing things which were contrary to the teachings and practices of the church which Christ established. That being true, could anyone say that one of these churches was just as good as the other? One of those churches is known today

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Wresting the Scriptures

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16).



Have you ever stopped to consider why there are so many religions today? Have

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There is a problem in Christianity today, as there has always been a problem in the past, of Christians and others wresting the Scriptures "unto their own destruction."

HEROD, The Sensual Man

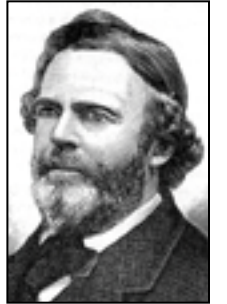
By George C. Baldwin
(1817 - 1890's)

"Now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; if worse deeds, worse sufferings must ensue."
---Milton

An eminent British scholar has observed of the Bible, "This glorious book of our God, like His work of nature, abounds with almost endless variety. The amount, however, of the biographical element is very remarkable, and

it not only demands special attention, but will be found to embrace within its development a large proportion of the whole circle of truth." Two things will be found true in relation to this department of Scripture, viz., the biographies are very brief, mere outlines, and they include those of bad as well as those of good men. The life of one who may unhesitatingly be classed among the former now claims our attention.

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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Faith Through the Word

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20).

The Lord's prayer is found in John chapter 17. What we often call "The Lord's Prayer" is found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4, but these accounts give

the model prayer which Christ taught His disciples. In His high priestly prayer in John 17 our Lord first prays for Himself in verses 1 to 6. In verses 6 to 19 He prays for the eleven, the seventy, and others that followed

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The Answer of A Good Conscience Toward God

By Timothy J. Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that



is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven,

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Thrice Three Times Blessed

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

Jesus Calls His Disciples Blessed---or Happy, How Much Happiness Do We Enjoy?

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

We can better understand the nine Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-12 if we remember that the word here translated "blessed" may also be translated "happy," as in John 13:17, I Cor. 7:40, and elsewhere. I prefer the word "blessed" because it suggests happiness or joy due



to the goodness and favor of God, whereas the word "happy" suggests the unchristian idea of luck. But we miss entirely the meaning of Jesus if we forget that the word He used for "blessed" refers to happiness, joy, or bliss such as is characteristic of and is conferred by God Himself.

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The Bible was written by over forty different men, inspired by God, from all walks of life, from different areas of the known world, over a span of fifteen hundred years---and yet it presents a single, harmonious, life changing message.

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1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

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Rise and the Results

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as the Baptist Church, the other as the Catholic Church. And certainly if one of them is right, the other is wrong. If salvation comes to us by grace through faith, then it certainly does not come to us as a result of our being baptized by means of a homemade baptism or by our doing penance or some work of charity.

The church that Christ put here has been here every day since He established it and it will be here every day until He comes back. It has never been a huge thing, but has always been found consisting of the few of Matthew 7:13-14. The other fellow's church has become extremely large and might very well consist of the many of Matthew 7:22-23. And since the true church has been here every day since it was established, that means it was already here on the day Martin Luther nailed up his ninety-five thesis which started the so-called reformation.

Before we enter into the discussion on the rise of Protestantism, let us hasten to say that the salvation of the individual members of the different churches is not under consideration here at all. All that we can be positive about on that subject is that those who have believed are not condemned, but those who have not believed are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18). And what they must believe about Him is that He died for our sins according to Scripture, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scripture (I Cor. 15:3-4). No one is lost because he belongs to a Protestant church, neither is anyone saved because he belongs to a Baptist Church.

Without any thought then as to who is saved and who is lost in the different churches, let us consider the reasons for the rise of the earlier Protestant churches. The first one of course, was the Lutheran church which was founded (not by Christ) by Martin Luther. Luther was a Catholic Monk of the Augustinian order, a teacher in the Wittenberg University and had a church under his charge. He, as pastor, or priest of the church was more responsible for what his people believed than anyone else. Vedder, in his "Life of Martin Luther" tells us on page 19 that Luther might have lived and died without any clash with the Catholic Church had it not been for the coming into Germany of a Dominican Monk by the name of Tetzel and his scandalous sale of indulgences there. Pope Leo X was promising the fullest indulgences for all sins to everyone who would contribute to the extent of his ability. That meant to the poor Catholics of Germany that if they would give all they possibly could give they would not have to stop over in

purgatory when they died, but would go straight on to Heaven. In other words, the Pope, who was badly in need of money, was selling them a direct ticket to Heaven (?) for the price of all they had plus all they could get. This made paupers of the Catholics in Germany. They no longer had anything left to give to Luther. We hear him saying this wolf is shearing my sheep. But, let us keep in mind that it was Martin Luther who had taught his people the hellish doctrines of purgatory and indulgences which made it possible for Tetzel to step in and shear his sheep. The trouble came about because of who was getting the money rather than because of what was being done.

The Catholic Church soon saw it was impossible to stop Luther and his new church so a compromise was agreed upon. Under this agreement the Pope agreed to tolerate Luther and his new church provided Luther would cooperate with the Catholic Church in persecuting the Anabaptists. This he gladly did, and we are told that he became even more severe in his treatment of them than the Catholics were.

Now that a new church had come into the world, let us think, for a moment, on the subject of who needed a new church. We said before, and now we repeat, that the church which Christ put here was in the world at that time. That being true, our Lord certainly had no need for a new one. The Anabaptists, as they were called then, and the Catholics both contended that they were the one and only true church. That being true, there was absolutely no place in their theology for an invisible church. Had anyone been able to think up such an idea as the invisible church before the days of Martin Luther he would not have been able to find a place to set it. But now someone was sorely in need of a new church, and the invisible church idea was an essential element in the process of obtaining one.

Let us think, for a moment, on how Satan works. We might consider his activities in the field of whiskey drinking as an example. He takes a nice looking popular young man who takes his social drinks, and uses him as an example for others. But when this man becomes an outright drunkard, he becomes a horrible example and is no longer of value to Satan. So he must find another nice looking popular young man that he can use.

In the days of Martin Luther the Catholic Church, steeped in her corruption and greed, as she was and with her Nunneries many of them, being open houses of ill-repute, had become a horrible example, and Satan could no longer use her to advantage under the existing conditions. He needed one with a semblance of respectability.

Many of our Baptist people quote Luther seemingly in the same vein as they do Paul, but it is hard to find any

reason to believe that he was ever born again. History seems to be clear that he persecuted the Anabaptists even to the death, and Christ said people would do that because they know not the Father nor the Son (John 16:2-3).

The next Protestant Church to be brought into this "religion loving world" was the great Church of England, known in America as the Episcopal Church. The founder and builder of this church was Henry VIII, king of England. He married Catherine of Aragon in 1509, and was crowned King that same year. After some seventeen years with Catherine he grew tired of her and fell in love, that is if he were capable of love, with a beautiful sixteen year old brunette by the name of Anne Boleyn. She, however, refused his approaches except in marriage. He, in turn, approached the Pope on the subject of a divorce from Catherine. But Catherine happened to be the aunt of the King of Spain at that time, and Spain happened to be the Pope's greatest financial supporter in those days. So for some reason or other the Pope refused to grant Henry a divorce. After some four years of unsuccessful efforts to get a divorce, he declared himself to be the head of the Church of England. So the Catholics in England woke up to the fact that they had a brand new papa.

In January 1533, Henry had his wife Catherine thrown in prison and married Anne Boleyn. In May of that same year, some four months after he had married Anne, he got around to having his church annul his marriage with Catherine. So during his first four months as a church father he had two wives, one in prison and one in the palace.

After three short years he grew tired of Anne, so he had her pretty brunette head cut off while she was still a young woman of 23. The same day, in which Anne was beheaded, Henry proposed to Jane Seymour. Ten days later they were married. Jane lived with him one year and died, and so far as we may know she may have died a natural death. Jane died in 1537 and, unless history has lost one of his wives, he lived a widower until 1540.

In January 1540, he married Anne of Cleves for political reasons. But after only six months, he found out this marriage was not necessary from a political standpoint. So he divorced this Anne, gave her 3,000 pounds annually to live on, and a mansion to live in, then turned around and had the man's head cut off who had made the match between them. That same year (1540), he married Catherine Howard. She wore the queen's crown only two years before Henry had her head cut off. That seems to have been the quickest and most inexpensive way of getting rid of wives for a man like Henry who had the authority and the heart to do it. This wife lost her head in 1542, and the same year he married Catherine

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Rise and the Results

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Parr.

By this time, however, he seems to have lost his lustful attraction for beautiful women, and this, his sixth wife was permitted to outlive him. He died in 1547 after a rather active life, not only in the marrying business, but in the church building business as well.

It seems that during the first fourteen years of this great church's existence, her founder and builder lived with six different wives, two of whom he had beheaded, another died in prison where she had been thrown in order to get her out of his way, and still another had died of some cause or other. But it still seems that Henry was a good Catholic to the end so far as doctrines and practices were concerned.

One of the distinguishing doctrines of the Catholic Church is the one which says the bread and wine of their communion actually becomes the flesh and blood of Christ. A London schoolmaster by the name of Lambert began to teach that the bread and wine did not actually become the flesh and blood of Christ. As punishment for this awful crime, Henry had Prof. Lambert burned to death gradually. His feet were first burned off. Then he was gradually pushed further into the fire. By the time his legs were almost burned off, Henry tired of the fun and walked away. His guards, who had more heart than did this great church builder, thereupon, threw the whole body into the fire in order to hasten his death. Could we call that loving the brethren in reverse?

How can anyone believe that churches founded by such men and for such purposes as these protestant churches were, will in anywise be a part of the bride of Christ? Is there really any reason why we should expect to see Martin Luther and Henry VIII lined up with, and honored along with Peter, James and John, Paul and Barnabas and all the other faithful ones who labored together with Christ in the building of His early churches?

The Presbyterian branch of Protestantism was founded by John Calvin. It seems that many of Calvin's doctrines were Scriptural, but if they were all Scripturally sound would that justify his starting a new church when the one Christ started was already Scripturally sound? The Presbyterian Church is to be commended for many of her doctrines, but there are others which she must adhere to because she is a Protestant church even though they are strictly foreign to early church doctrine. As for her baptism, she refused to go back to early church baptism, but rather carried along with her the man-made baptism of her Catholic mother which was never

used officially by any church until it was adopted by the Catholic Church at the council of Ravens in 1311.

As for Calvin, himself, we find it hard to see in him the characteristic features found in the great men of the early church. Paul defended his teachings orally, and by the written word, but we can rest assured that the thought of burning the judaizing teachers at the stake never once crossed his mind. History, however relates that Calvin had Michael Servetus, who was an Anabaptist, burned at the stake because of his religious beliefs.

The persistent searchers of history can easily find that Luther, Henry VIII and Calvin all three were guilty of the death of people because of their religious beliefs. In John 16:2-3 our Lord said the time would come when people would do that, and the reason why they would do that was because they did not know the Father nor Him. Of course, if you still want to believe these men were Spirit-led born-again Christians there is no law against it.

As for the Methodist branch of Protestantism, we find that John Wesley, its founder, lived and died a member of the church founded by Henry VIII, the king who knew how to get rid of wives the quick, inexpensive way. He had neither a desire nor any intention of starting a new church. Some historians tell us that while on his death bed he requested his friends not to make it a separate church. And we learn from his own mouth that he was not a saved man when he started the Holy Club, which later became the Methodist Church, nor when he came to America as a Missionary to the Indians. So we conclude that the Methodist Church was purely unintentional on Wesley's part.

It is interesting to note that three hundred and eighty years after Martin Luther started the first Protestant Church there were still less than a dozen different kinds of churches in the world, but during the last fifty or sixty years there have been literally thousands of them started. According to Bishop Homer A. Tomlinson, head of the Church of God, there have been two thousand divisions in that one church alone in the last fifty years. If Christ does not come back before another fifty years has elapsed, it is beyond mortal man's power to visualize the condition professing Christendom will be in by the close of this twentieth century.

There is no wonder that the church which Christ loved and gave Himself for has become so common and insignificant in the eyes of the world. Satan has done more harm to the true church by his getting into the church business himself than he could have ever done by outright opposition to it. As a result of his getting into the church business churches are so plentiful they are a dime a dozen even in this time of high prices, and the world is being led to believe that one of them is just as good as another. Truly we are living in a time when the mustard plant has become a great tree, large enough for Satan to roost in. But just as truly, our Lord knows where Satan's throne is located in the churches.

As has already been stated there have been churches like unto the one Christ started at Jerusalem at all times since that time, and they will continue to be here until He returns. These churches will make up the bride of Christ. They are churches which have pastors, deacons, teachers etc., and therefore cannot be some imaginary, invisible intangible something. In fact, if you could take all the Protestant churches out of the world, you would automatically take the invisible church idea out with them. No one else has ever needed it, but Protestantism could not survive without it.

Learned men of all the different churches agree that the church which has been here all the time since the first church was organized at Jerusalem is the one known today as the Baptist Church. John C. Ridpath, a Methodist, says that as far back as the year 100 A.D. all Christians were Baptists. Mosheim, a Lutheran, says the first century was a history of the Baptists. Cardinal Hosius, a Catholic who lived in the sixteenth century, says none have been more grievously punished for the last twelve hundred years than have the Anabaptists. Ypeig and Dermout, Dutch Reformed Church, say Baptists may be considered as the only Christian Community that has stood since the days of the Apostles.

But, since so many Baptists allow themselves to be called Protestants, and some even call themselves Protestants, it is no wonder that our Encyclopedia writers try to place the origin of Baptists in the so-called Reformation Period. It is indeed interesting to follow these writers as they try so hard to locate the origin of Baptists. There were no people

called Baptists in the fifteenth century, but by the beginning of the seventeenth century the woods were full of them. So the logical thing for these writers to do was to say the Baptists had their beginning in the sixteenth century. It was during the sixteenth century that the prefix Ana was gradually dropped from the name Anabaptist. By the beginning of the seventeenth century there were no more Anabaptists, but the Baptists of the seventeenth century and the Anabaptists of the fifteenth century were still the same people. The Church Christ put here in the world has been called by many different names at different times and in different places, but its people have always been the same people. There is no reason, known to the writer, why we should not believe true Baptist Churches of today are a direct successor to the original Church at Jerusalem.

In II Corinthians 11:13-15 we find that Satan has transformed himself into an angel of light, and his preachers into ministers of righteousness. In Matthew 7:22-23 we see the destiny of Satan's poor deceived co-workers. It's going to be a pitiful sight to see that great host of church workers, preachers, teachers etc., standing before the Lord pleading for salvation on the grounds of their good works, and to hear Him say depart from me, ye that work iniquity, I never knew you. That little word "never" does away with all efforts to class this great host of people as those who have fallen from grace and are lost. They learn too late that salvation is of the Lord, a free gift to all who will believe, and that it cannot be earned by doing good works.

We have discussed at length what has taken place concerning the church, now briefly, what have been the results? We find that as a result of all this, no matter what you believe nor what you wish to practice you can find a so-called church that is ready to receive you with open arms. You no longer have to conform to early church teaching and practices in order to be a member of something called a church. In Ephesians 4:5 we read "**One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**" but we get out on the streets and hear people ask which is your faith, or which baptism do you believe in? Is it possible that Christ has become numbers conscious too, and is now ready to accept people any way they want to come? In Isaiah 55, He tells us our ways are not His ways, and in early church times He called people fools and hypocrites who tried to be saved their own way and refused to come His way. Is there any reason why we should believe that He has changed His attitude on the subject in these last days?

In I Corinthians 1:10 we read, "**Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that**

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Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

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DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.....	783 Khz.....	10,000 AM

Rise and the Results

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ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” In all fairness now do you hear all these thousands of Protestant groups speaking the same thing? Do you see them having no divisions among them? Are they all perfectly joined together? And do they all believe the same thing? If all church members obeyed these great commands in this one verse of Scripture there would be only one kind of church, and you can rest assured that so far as Christ is concerned there is only one kind.

If all the great host of different kinds of churches make up the bride of Christ, we must admit that He will be marrying a bride who speaks one way out of one side of her mouth, another way out of the other side and many other ways in between. Can anyone conceive of Christ who prayed in John 17:11 that His church might be one even as He and the Father are one, even thinking of taking unto Himself a bride who has scandalously, maliciously, premeditatedly, and should we say joyfully broken His every command concerning the oneness of the one who is to be His bride? A man may act in such a way that he will have very little choice, and therefore must take whomever he can get if he wishes to take unto himself a bride, but our Lord has not come to that place yet.

There are those who want to believe that the true church lay imbedded in the Catholic Church all through the dark Medieval ages and on up until the time of Luther, Henry VIII and Calvin. To really believe that, however, would necessitate our believing that the gates of hell did prevail against the true church for at least a thousand years. In 451 A.D. all Catholics were admonished to pray to Mary, while in John 15:16, the true church is commanded to pray to the Father in the name of Christ.

In 1123 Catholic preachers were denied the privilege of marrying, but in I Timothy 3:2 we are told that a New Testament preacher must be blameless, the husband of one wife. In 1229 the Catholic people were denied the Bible; in II Timothy 2:15 New Testament believers were admonished to study the Bible. In 1311 the Catholic Church quit baptizing by immersion, the original mode of baptism, and began sprinkling and pouring. If the true Church was the Catholic Church at that time the baptismal line of succession back to John the Baptist was broken. In that case no Church on earth today could possibly be a direct successor to the original Church which Christ organized when He chose His twelve apostles.

All through that dark Medieval age the Catholic Church was the arch enemy of the true Churches. That is why untold

millions of the saints met their death at the stake, or were buried alive at the hand of the Catholic Church. The early Protestant Church founders were also guilty of the death of the saints. That being true, we find it utterly impossible to see the Catholic Church, Martin Luther, Henry VIII and John Calvin on the same side of the Cross of Calvary that the saints whom they were killing were on (John 16:2-3 and I John 3:14).

Then there are those who try to justify Protestantism by saying that when Jesus said **“I am the vine, ye are the branches”** He was including all the different denominations, but a person’s I.Q. does not have to be too very high in order for him to see that the branches were the individual disciples to whom He was speaking, and that they all belonged to the same Church.

This is written in an effort to get our Baptist people to appreciate the greatness of our heritage, both Biblically and historically. The Church which Christ put here should be very precious to us, because it is exceedingly precious to Him who loved it and gave Himself for it.



The Answer of a Good

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and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (I Pet. 3:18-22).

The subject under consideration is scriptural baptism. The Lord Jesus commands all whosoever come to Him believing and being born again to submit to the ordinance of scriptural baptism by the authority of one of His local New Testament churches. Baptism is ordained of the Lord for a specific purpose, and no one can become a member of one of the Lord’s churches except he or she is first saved by the grace of God unto repentance and faith, and is then baptized in water by a true missionary Baptist church. There are some things that baptism does and some things baptism does not do according to the Scriptures.

First let us note that baptism does not save. No one will be saved from sin because they were immersed into a pool (or any other body) of water. In speaking of baptism, the Apostle Peter was referring to Noah and the ark. He says that baptism is **“the like figure”** of what took place when those eight souls were saved from the flood by entering into the ark. A figure is a symbol, a representation of something else. The waters of the flood which destroyed the old world would have destroyed Noah and the seven others with him, except they were in the ark. A person is not saved by the baptismal waters, but is saved by being in Christ, whose death, burial, and resurrection are pictured by

the ordinance of baptism. Baptism is **“the like figure”** which **“doth also now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”** **“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”** (Rom. 10:8-10). A person is saved by faith in Christ’s death for sin, His burial, and His resurrection for our justification. If you do not believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose again to bring you righteousness toward God, then you are not saved but lost, and no amount of water will cleanse your heart from sin and unbelief.

What baptism does do is make a declaration. Baptism being a figure or symbol of something else declares that which is symbolized. Baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When the ordinance of baptism is administered by one of the Lord’s churches, the Saviour and what He did to save lost men, women, boys, and girls is vividly portrayed. A picture of something is not the real thing, but reminds us of and declares the qualities of that which is pictured. Baptism is not that which saves, but it reminds us of Jesus who saves and that which was necessary for salvation, namely the offering of Himself upon the tree of the cross as the propitiation for our sins. **“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,”** (Heb. 10:10). **“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”** (I John 2:2).

Baptism is a declaration on the part of the one being baptized that he or she has believed in Jesus and obtained forgiveness and remission of sins. Baptism is not the putting away of sins, but is the answer of one whose sins have been put away by Christ. **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”** (Acts 13:38-39). Under the Old Testament there were various ordinances, and these could not save a person, but were pictures of the One Who would come to give His life a ransom for many that they might be saved, Jesus Christ. All the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament that were ordained by the law of God given through Moses were not to be trusted in for salvation, but pointed to the One in Whom all must trust in order to be saved, the only begotten Son of God. (Read Heb. 9:9-14.) When a person is

saved, that person’s conscience is cleared before God because all that person’s sins have been forgiven and he or she is now made alive to serve the Lord. Jesus’ blood was shed to cleanse people from their sins. **“Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”** (Rev. 1:5,6). A person who goes down into the baptismal waters and comes up out again is declaring that he believes that Jesus’ blood has purchased redemption for his sins and brought him forgiveness and spiritual life.

Jesus Christ only can save you from sins and purify your conscience from dead works unto life before God. **“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”** Jesus was my substitute upon the cross, suffering the penalty of my sins. He took upon Himself my sins so that He could give me life toward God. **“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”** (II Cor. 5:21). **“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,”** (I Pet. 2:22). **“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed”** (I Pet. 2:24). Jesus laid down His life for me, who was dead in trespasses and sins, so that I might be made alive unto God to serve Him in righteousness. If you will be saved, then you must trust in the Just One who died for the unjust. If you will escape the condemnation of sin as Noah escaped the pouring out of God’s wrath upon the earth in the flood, then you must turn from your sins and trust in Him who suffered the death of the cross and rose again with power over death and the grave.

Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God because those who are saved will want to follow Jesus in all things. **“And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel”** (Mark 5:18-20). Those who are saved will want to be where Jesus is and will want to do the things that Jesus commands them to do. One of the things Jesus commands His children to do is submit to scriptural baptism and serve Him in and through His kind of church. **“O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy**

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The Answer of a Good

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endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Ps. 107:1,2). One of the ways in which we say or declare that we are redeemed by the grace of God is by baptism. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God, a conscience which recognizes the mercy of God toward one's own sins. **"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"** (Ps. 103:10-12).

The answer of a good conscience is the answer of a conscience that is dead to sin and alive to God. Before a person is saved, that person is dead toward God, dead in sin. That person has no righteousness before God, but is guilty and condemned and can only work the works of sin and death. **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:7,8). When that person is saved, he is made alive unto God in Christ and dies to sin. Jesus died for sin so that we might die to sin, not to be the servants of sin any longer. A good conscience is one which has been cleared of the guilt of past sins and freed from the power of sins in the present, and which has hope of being saved from the very presence of sin in the future when Jesus comes again. (Read Rom. 6:3-11.) Baptism pictures our death to sin, as Christ died to sin once; and as He rose, we are made alive to walk in newness of life toward God. Those things which once enslaved the sinner are removed by way of death, and fellowship with God is now realized by way of new life in Christ.

Beloved, I don't want anything more to do with my sins. When a person is saved, he or she dies to sin. Sin is to no longer have dominion over God's children. I have been spiritually raised up with Christ, as portrayed by coming up out of the waters of baptism, and I don't want to wear the grave clothes of sin any longer. Jesus has washed me from sin in His pure and precious blood. The Holy Spirit has made me alive unto God, to whom I was dead because of sin, through the new birth. And the answer of my conscience toward God is thus, even as the Apostle Paul did state: **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"** (Gal. 2:20).



The answer of a good conscience toward God is that a saved person is living in hope of the resurrection. Whenever the gospel is preached, it is preached not only that Jesus died and was buried, but that He rose again. He was the Good Shepherd and gave His life for the sheep; but He also took it up again and will one day call them up to be with Him. **"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father"** (John 10:17,18). A person who follows the Lord in scriptural baptism does not stay down in the water, but comes up again, picturing the resurrection of Christ; and one day Jesus will raise up all whom He has saved, and we shall be with Him forever and ever. **"The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."** My Saviour lives, and He lives in me, and one day I will live with Him. Jesus said, **"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (John 14:1-3).

"Behold, what manner of love the

Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3). Beloved, a person cannot become a child of God by baptism. **"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"** (Gal. 3:26). If you will not receive Christ, you will never be a child of God and you will die in your sins and be forever separated from the Lord. A person who is saved has believed that Jesus rose again bringing that person justification and life and that one day all who are saved will be with Him where He is. If we believe we are going to one day see Him up there, then we ought to be living like it down here. A person who follows Christ in baptism is declaring that Jesus rose from the grave, has called that person from sin and death to righteousness and life, and one day will call that person from the grave to the skies, where we shall meet Him in the air and forever be with the Lord. (Read John 5:24,25,28,29.)

Beloved, if you will be saved, then you must trust in Christ who died, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. If you are saved, then what is the answer of your conscience toward God? Will you follow Him in scriptural baptism? Will you serve Him in and through His kind of church, which is the only body on this earth that has the

authority to administer proper scriptural baptism, and that only to those who repent of their sins and believe on Jesus for forgiveness of sins and everlasting life? (Read Acts 8:26-39.) This man (the Ethiopian eunuch) was saved because he believed on the Jesus of the Scriptures. Then, he symbolized his faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in baptism. Why did they (Philip and the eunuch) go **"down both into the water"**? Because you have to be immersed to picture a burial and then come up picturing a resurrection. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Are you rejoicing today because God has saved you, or are you still the servant of sin? Only Jesus can set you free, He who suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust. Back in Noah's day, all the while that the ark was being prepared, Noah was a preacher of righteousness; but only eight souls were saved, the eight souls that were in the ark. Are you in Christ by faith today?



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Him while He was on earth. Verses 20 to 26 marks the last section of the prayer which is for all future believers in all ages. This final part of the prayer constitutes an eternal intercession (Heb. 7:25).

THE PERSON WHO PRAYS

The person who is seen here pouring out His heart to God is the eternal Son of God, the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Christ does not pray as the Divine Being, for Deity does not pray. But the Second Person in the trinity has become a man. As the God-man He prays to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God. As the Mediator of the covenant He engaged to take an inferior office to the Father. This was an inferiority of office, but it was not of person, seeing Christ is equal with God.

Christ prays as our covenant Head and representative. He is soon to suffer and die for the covenant people. Here He is seen claiming for them all that He is about to merit. This prayer was for all whose names are in the book of life before the foundation of the world. For these He was soon to lay down His life. Oh, wonderful thought that Jesus prayed for me. He provided for my care long before I was born. How thrilling to know that Jesus prayed for His people centuries before they had a being!

Arminian critics charge that belief in the doctrines of grace is a hindrance to prayer. Christ seemed to have no problem with sovereign grace and prayer. He prayed for His people in their unbelief that they would believe. In John 17 Christ prayed for the fulfillment of God's gracious purpose which concerned

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the salvation of His people. Jesus Christ did not have a problem in praying that God's elect should be saved. It is a pity that some of His professed followers do!

How we value the prayers of our pious friends. But of how much more worth is this petition of the eternal Son of God? This high priestly prayer of Christ was a means of our salvation. His prayer was most assuredly heard. In John 11:41-42 Christ declared: **"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always. . ."**

There was no uncertainty in this prayer of our Lord. Christ does not say that they might believe, if they have a free will to do so. He knew from the beginning who would believe and who would believe not (John 6:64). He knew for whom He prayed by His foreordination and foreknowledge. Christ knew the sheep given to Him to save in the covenant of redemption. He prayed for the unborn (Ps. 22:31; Jer. 1:5), the other sheep which He must bring (John 10:16). He prayed for those whose names had been graven upon His hands before the morning of time (Isa. 49:16).

THE PERSONS FOR WHOM HE PRAYS

The persons for whom He prayed are seen in the words: **"...for them also which shall believe on me."** These persons had not yet come to faith, and most of them had not yet been born. They did not at that time know Christ; they had not yet come to Him.

Christ does not say which shall believe in God, or believe in the church, or believe in the ordinance of the church, or believe the creed, or believe even the Bible. He said: **"...which shall believe on me."** They must believe that Christ took their place and died in their stead. They must believe His blood washed away their sins. They must believe that He rose for their justification. They must believe that Christ now stands in the presence of God to plead their cause. They must believe that Christ is their Prophet, Priest, and King.

The faith that saves is faith in Jesus Christ: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. . ."** (Acts 16:31). It is by faith in Him men are justified: **"And by him all that believe are justified from all things"** (Acts 13:39). It is faith in Christ that keeps one from being lost: **"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"** (John 8:24). It is faith in Jesus Christ that assures of everlasting life: **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"** (John 3:36). It is faith in Christ that frees from condemnation: **"He that believeth on him is not condemned"** (John 3:18). This is why

the Bible calls Christ **"the author and finisher of our faith"** (Heb. 12:2).

Saving faith in a whole Christ for the whole of salvation is distinguished from all other kinds of faith. A person may be a great theologian, or teach in a seminary, or preach in a pulpit of a fashionable church, or teach a Sunday school class, and yet lack real faith in Christ. Believing about Christ is not enough; you must personally believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ to be saved. The Bible makes it plain that some believe in vain (I Cor. 15:2).

THREE ESSENTIALS OF SAVING FAITH

First, there is knowledge. Contrary to modern thinking, faith is not a leap in the dark. It is not believing without evidence. Faith rests upon the best evidence, the Word of God. No one can believe in Christ without some knowledge of Christ. All faith in Christ is grounded upon the knowledge of Christ's person and work. **"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee. . ."** (Ps. 9:10). The Apostle Paul said: **"For I know whom I have believed"** (II Tim. 1:12). Paul knew the character of the Redeemer to whom he had committed his eternal interests. He knew Christ could be trusted to keep safe his soul unto the judgment.

We must know Jesus Christ as set forth in God's Word (Isa. 53:11). In John 17:3 our Lord declared: **"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."** Unless we know Christ, we cannot believe upon Him. The person who truly believes on Jesus Christ believes **"the record that God gave of his Son"** (I John 5:10). As John came near the end of his gospel he wrote: **"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"** (John 20:31).

Second, there is the assent of the heart to what we know of Him. There must not only be the knowledge that Christ is able to save and that He is the Savior of sinners. There must also be an assent of the heart to all these claims. **"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"** (Acts 8:37). The sinner must **"receive Him"** (John 1:12).

Third, the soul with reference to Jesus Christ trusts in Him, relies on Him, leans on Him as being all the Bible says He is. It is the soul leaping on Christ as his Prophet, Priest, and King. It is the soul reaching forth to embrace and appropriate the Christ in whom it believes. Zaccheus **"received him joyfully"** (Luke 19:6). Paul expressed it thusly: **"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise"** (Eph.

1:13).

Saving faith is knowing what God has said about Christ in the Word, receiving with all your heart what the Bible says, and then relying upon Jesus Christ on whom you have believed. Knowledge about Christ comes by hearing about Him. Receiving Christ comes by hearing about Him. Trusting in Christ for the whole of salvation is the simple result of hearing and trusting that He is the Savior.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY BY WHICH THEY SHALL BELIEVE

Christ prayed for His own in connection with the instrumentality by which they would believe: **"Them also which shall believe on me through their word."** Not all faith is the faith of God's elect. Not every professed believer is included in the Lord's prayer in John 17. Only those who believe on Christ through the words of the holy apostles are under consideration. True saving faith is begotten by the Word which was given to the apostles by the Holy Spirit of God. "Jesus did not recognize in the future any faith capable of uniting man to God, and of preparing him for glory, except that which should be begotten and nourished by the teaching of the eleven apostles" (Godet).

"Through their word" does not mean that the words were in truth merely from the eleven. Their word would be His Word and the Father's Word: **"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them"** (John 17:8). These eleven apostles in a very special way were alone God's ambassadors (II Cor. 5:20). They stood in Christ's stead.

John 17:20 established the truth that real faith is begotten by and grounds itself upon the Word of God delivered by His inspired apostles. The idea of the Hardshell Baptists that the Spirit imparts faith without the written Word cannot be reconciled with John 17:20. If God saves His elect without hearing the written words of the apostles, then God must have some elect for which Christ did not pray in John 17. Christ prayed in John 17:20 that His people would be saved through the word (oral or written) of His inspired apostles. Will someone cite me a verse where Christ prayed that His people would be saved without hearing the Word of God?

Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Independent Baptists do not deny the Spirit gives faith. That is not the issue between the Hardshells and us. The real issue is how does the Spirit give faith? They say the Spirit gives faith directly to the sinner without the preaching of the gospel. We say that God saves His elect by the means of the preaching of the gospel. This is the great gulf between us.

I do not want to misrepresent their position. Therefore, I shall let them state their own case.

During the Throgmorton-Potter Debate held in Fulton, Ky., in 1887, Elder Lamuel Potter, representing the Regular Old School Baptists, said: "So far as the Lord being dependent on means, or any other power in the world, in the conversion of the sinner, Regular Baptists do not believe he is. We do not believe that the Spirit of God depends upon means or instrumentalities for this work. We believe that the Spirit of God operates upon the sinner in his conversion, any where, under any circumstances that he may choose, just precisely as he pleases; that it is not dependent on instrumentalities" (*Throgmorton-Potter Debate*, p. 21).

Elder John R. Daily in a debate with W. P. Throgmorton in 1912 said: "Men in heathendom are regenerated by the Spirit of God without the Gospel" (*Daily-Throgmorton Debate*, p. 273). Elder S. T. Tolly, editor of *the Christian Baptist* in Atwood, Tenn., wrote in the June 1971 issue of his paper: "We believe that there will be millions of the 'elect' saved in heaven who have never, nor will they ever, hear the gospel of the Son of God."

Elder R. V. Sarrels of Ayle, Texas, has written a *Systematic Theology* for the so-called Primitive Baptists. On a sheet put in the book to me he says: "Running through the whole of my *Systematic Theology*, like a crimson Thread, and with a steady consistency, is the fundamental Bible truth that God's work of eternally saving his loved ones is not limited to gospel lands, and is therefore not accomplished by or through the preached gospel."

The Hardshell Baptists teach that God gives faith without the preaching of the gospel. They have an elect people with a faith not begotten and grounded upon the words of the apostles of Jesus Christ. They repudiate the words of Christ in John 17:20: **"Them also which shall believe on me through their word."** They have God with some people for which Christ did not pray. **"Their word,"** meaning the words of the apostles (oral or written) and do not allow for a lot of fancy twisting and turning by which some try to make the Word the living Word, Christ.

FAITH COMES THROUGH THE WORD

The sayings of men, pro and con, are not very important. **"For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow"** (Job 8:9). The question is: Does the Bible teach that God gives faith through the Word, or that the Spirit gives faith independent of the Word? What say the Scriptures? How did faith come to people during the ministry of Christ? **"And many more believed because of his own word"** (John 4:41). **"As he spake these words, many believed on him"** (John 8:30). Men and women were brought to

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faith in Christ by the Word He spoke to them. His Words were the instrumental meaning of their faith.

How was it with the First Baptist preacher, John? **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe”** (John 1:6-7). John was to bear witness of the Light, or Christ. The purpose of his ministry was that men might believe in Christ because of his witness or words. God employed the preaching of John to make believers. God sent John that men through him might believe. This was no problem to the first primitive Baptist. It is a pity that we have some today who call themselves Baptists who contend that God gives men faith in Christ without the gospel witness. They are the very opposites of the First Baptist.

How did God bring men to faith in the Book of Acts? Acts 4:4 declares: **“Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.”** Here the many who heard the Word preached by Peter and John believed the preaching they heard about Christ. At the great Jerusalem conference Peter declared: **“Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe”** (Acts 15:7). Especially note the words: **“That the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”** The faith here was given by the Spirit through Peter’s preaching. Acts 18:8 says: **“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”** The Corinthians who heard Paul preach the gospel of Christ believed it. Where do we find any one in the Book of Acts who had faith imparted by the Spirit without the gospel?

What did Paul teach about the means of giving faith in the Book of Romans? **“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be**

saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:8-17).

Paul’s arguments are as follows: First, men cannot call on a Christ in whom they have not believed. Second, they cannot believe in a Christ of whom they have never heard. Third, they cannot hear about Christ without a preacher. The spread of the gospel is dependent on living messengers. Fourth, these messengers cannot preach except they be sent by the Holy Spirit and the church (Acts 13:1-4). Lastly, he adds: **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). Genuine faith comes by a message heard from human messengers, and the message heard is by the Word of faith that men preach. Paul says nothing about some being brought to faith without the preaching of the Word. This idea does not come from the Bible, but from the Third Chapter of Imagination!

Hear Paul again in I Corinthians 1:21: **“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”** Whom does God save? **“Them that believe.”** By what means does he save those that believe? **“By the foolishness of preaching.”** The preaching of the cross is only foolishness to them that perish (I Cor. 1:18). Where does the Bible mention some saved without the preaching of the cross?

I Corinthians 3:5-7 shows the preaching of the gospel is the means God uses to bring men to faith: **“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?”** Men believe through the preaching of the Word by human messengers. Contrary to the thinking of some, the Lord has given every believer a minister by whom he has believed!

The Ephesians were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4) and predestinated to the adoption of sons (Eph. 1:5). But how did God bring these elected and predestinated ones to the faith they were ordained to (Acts 13:48)? Ephesians 1:12-13 gives the answer: **“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”**

After they heard **“the word of truth, the gospel,”** they trusted in Christ. The preaching of the gospel was the means of their faith, and their faith was grounded on the Word. Where does the Bible speak of those who trusted in Christ and have never heard the gospel?

Hear Paul again in II Thessalonians 2:13-14: **“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

God loved and chose a people to everlasting salvation. But how did He choose to save them? **“Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; Whereunto he called you by our gospel. . .”** God works belief in the hearts of His elect by the ministry of the gospel. This is confirmed by I Thessalonians 1:4-5: **“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”** Where does the Bible speak of those chosen to salvation who are brought to belief of the truth and who are not called by the gospel? I say again that such people exist only in the realm of imagination!

THE OLD BAPTISTS

What did our Baptist forebearers believe about the gospel being the means of imparting faith to God’s elect? What was the view of the early primitive Baptists in England? In 1644 seven Particular Baptist churches put forth what was called “the London Confession.” In Article XXIV they declared: “That faith is ordinarily begot by the preaching of the Gospel, or word of Christ. . .” Their proof texts were Romans 10:17 and I Corinthians 1:21.

In 1656 the Somerset Confession was put forth. Article XIX says: “That the Spirit is administered by or through the word of faith preaching (Gal. 3:2), which word was first declared by the Lord himself, and was confirmed by them that heard him (Heb. 2:3), which word is called the gospel of God’s grace (Acts 20:24), the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:19), the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). . .”

The Second London Confession in 1677, Chapter XIV, Section 1, reads: “The Grace of Faith, whereby the Elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the Word. . .” Chapter X, Section 1, also says: “Those whom God has predestinated to Life, he is pleased to call in his appointed and accepted time, effectually by his word, and Spirit. . .” The

1689 edition of this confession became the Philadelphia Confession in America in 1742.

The Circular Letter of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1788, written by Elder David Jones, declares: “The precious grace of faith is a free and sovereign gift of God, conveyed through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the instrumentality of the Word; and is co-existent with regeneration, if not an essential part of it. . .” (*Minutes of the Philadelphia Association*, p. 240). In a Circular Letter in 1784 Elder John Gano, writing on effectual calling, said: “This impression or call is sometimes immediate, as in the instance of Paul and others; though more ordinarily through the instrumentality of the word and providence of God” (*op. cit.*, p. 202).

The Hardshell Baptists in America claim John Gill as a sound Hardshell Baptist. I have always wondered how they could do this with a straight face. Look at what Gill said on Romans 10:17: “That is, by preaching; for the word hearing is used in the same sense as the preceding verse; and designs the report of the Gospel, or the preaching of the word which is the means God makes use of, to convey faith into the hearts of his people; for preachers are ministers or instruments, by whom others believe” (*Gill’s Expositor*, Vol. VIII, p. 523). I would ask the so-called Primitive Baptists: “Do you agree with Gill that the preaching of the Word is the means God uses to convey faith into the hearts of His people?” If not, then why do you claim John Gill as a Hardshell Baptist?

The old and primitive Baptists in England and America believed that God used the preaching of the gospel as a means to convey faith to the elect. Those who deny this first appeared in America about 1832, and they were led by Elder Daniel Parker. These people were in truth new school Baptists.

HARDSHELL ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED

1. Objection: *Infants and insane persons are deaf and dumb and cannot hear preaching; therefore, they are brought to faith without the gospel.*

Answer: No one, young or old, can hear and believe the gospel apart from the sovereign working of God’s Spirit of grace upon them. It would require no more effort on the part of Almighty God to bring an infant or an insane person to faith by the gospel than an adult. God made John the Baptist as a babe in his mother’s womb leap at the mention of Christ (Luke 1:44). The Bible does not plainly tell us how God saves the infants and insane. These cannot be used to prove a doctrine as theories without plain Scripture prove nothing. It is wrong to try to over turn by the unknown the known. Don’t forget that in John 17:20 Christ prayed that future elect would be

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Following Holiness

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saved **"through their word."** We can be sure that if infants and insane persons are included in this, they are some how brought to hear the gospel and be saved. Otherwise, Christ has some elect for which He did not pray.

2. Objection: *God has some elect in all nations, but the gospel has not been preached in all nations. Hence God saves some elect without faith in Christ wrought by the Word.*

Answer: **"All nations"** in Revelation 7:9 can mean no more than all the nations which exist on earth in the seven-year tribulation period. This is not all nations which ever lived on earth, for many nations have come and gone across the centuries. **"All nations"** like **"all men"** means all kinds of nations, but not necessarily all nations without exception. This must be so, for the Bible mentions some nations who go to Hell: **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"** (Ps. 9:17).

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that the Hardshell position is very untenable. It is not in harmony with the position of the old and primitive Baptists of England and America. Worse still, it cannot be reconciled with the prayer of Christ in John 17:20. Hardshells make the Lord to have some elect for whom He did not pray. I say this because in John 17:20 Christ prayed for the future elect to be saved through the words of His inspired apostles. Hardshells have a vast host of people who never hear and believe the gospel. Thus they have some for which Christ did not pray.

While Hardshells make much of the sovereignty of God it seems to me that they deny it when it comes to God giving His elect faith through the preaching of the gospel. They say that God is able to save His people without the gospel, but He lacks the power to send His elect the Gospel so they may have a minister by whom they believe. According to them, God can call a **"ravenous bird from the east"** and a man to execute His counsel **"from a far country,"** but He lacks the power to convey faith to His people by means of gospel preaching. Is such teaching a defense of the sovereignty of God, or is it a subtle denial of it?

Jesus Christ prayed in John 17:20 that His people would be saved through the Word of His inspired apostles. We can be sure that the Father answered this prayer of Christ. Saving faith is begotten by and is grounded upon the Word of God. God has no people for which He did not pray.



CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



IS RACISM BIBLICAL?

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. A lot has happened since I last wrote; a whole lot.

But first let me thank Bro. Cockrell and the staff at the *Banner* for their prayers and request for prayers on my behalf. The blurb in last month's issue brought joy to my heart. I would also like to thank the above for sending the bundle of *Banners* to my new unit's chapel.

Those of you who have read this column for a while know I've been struggling with an illness. Well, the wonderful doctors at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, better known to Texas Prisoners as the John Sealy Hospital, finally diagnosed my problem and treated it.

I had a heart condition called "constrictive pericarditis"---which is a fancy term meaning the sac-like membrane around my heart (the pericardium) had thickened and calcified restricting my heart from pumping properly. This condition caused the fluid retention in my legs, abdomen, and lungs along with severe fatigue and shortness of breath over the last year.

The only cure for constrictive pericarditis is a surgery called "pericardiectomy" to remove the pericardium. So on March 13th a team of surgeons cut me open from the top of my sternum to the bottom, spread my chest open, and cut away the defective membrane. I was so bloated I lost 39 pounds of excess fluid within 48 hours of the surgery.

I spent four and a half days in ICU, then returned to my unit where I continue to heal and recuperate. At first just breathing was painful but I'm pretty much back to normal, I just can't lift anything too heavy. I know I'm better because my fast gait has returned and I can breathe normally. Before the surgery I couldn't walk ten yards without gasping for air, now I'm going to the gym and walking laps around the basketball court for an hour at a time.

Thank you, dear reader, for your prayers and please keep me in them as I write these columns and study God's Word. The Lord has answered yours and mine and deemed it necessary for me to continue this pilgrimage. All

glory and praise is given to the Lord!

Now for this month's subject: Racism is rampant in Texas prisons, as I'm sure it is in prisons around the country. Even among professing Christians I see subtle and even blatant acts of racism, on the cellblock and in the chapel--which begs the question: Is racism condoned by God?

Groups such as the KKK, Aryan Nation, Christian Identity organizations and myriad prison gangs claim the Bible teaches racism, but does it really?

The first incident of racism in the Bible, I think, is in Numbers 12.

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman" (Num. 12:1).

God surely didn't condone this act but swiftly punished the offender:

"And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed, And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous" (Num. 12:9-10).

In order to understand the next incident of racism you need to study the Old Testament history of the land of Samaria. There's not enough room to do a full history here so I'll highlight some key points to help you see the bigger picture:

Omri, sixth king of Israel (Northern Kingdom), bought the hill of Samaria and built the capitol of the Northern Kingdom there. Years later it was besieged by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and taken. After the captivity colonist from Babylonia, Syria, Elam, and other Assyrian territories intermarried with the remnants of the Jews in Samaria. And because of these intermarriages with "foreigners" the "pure blood" Jews held them in contempt. (Nave's Topical Bible Reference System in back of *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible*, Zondervan 2001). Extra biblical history tells us the Jews so hated the "mixed blood" Samaritans they would walk hundreds of miles out of their way to go around Samaria just so they wouldn't even have to walk on the ground owned by them.

That sounds like pretty strong racism to me! But, was it condoned by God? Let's see:

"He [Jesus] left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:3-9).

The woman was expecting racism from Jesus because He was a Jew. But what Jesus gave here instead was truth, compassion, and mercy. The mere fact Jesus traveled through Samaria showed His contempt, not for the Samaritans, but for the self-righteous Jews. Instead of shunning the Samaritans Jesus bestowed upon them grace and mercy. Thus showing us His grace and mercy is **"not to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile"** and for **"every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"** under the sun.

Jesus commanded us to **"Go ye therefore, and teach ALL nations. . ."** He didn't say to separate into factions according to your color or national origin. If our Lord didn't condone or teach racism why should we practice it? The short answer is, we shouldn't! For **"God that made the world and all things therein. . .hath made of ONE BLOOD all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. . ."** (Acts 17:24a & 26a, emphasis DH).

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen" (Eph. 6:24).

Bro. Jeff, you are in my thoughts and prayers daily.

Bro. Kevin, it's been a rough year health wise, but I'm doing better and the Lord has blessed me through it all. I love you, man! Keep fighting the good fight, you are not alone.

Bro. Danny, I'm doing very well. The Lord blessed me with the surgery and in my recovery. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Bro. McSwain and Bro. Hilton, thank you for your encouragement and fellowship. Y'all are in my thoughts and prayers as well.

Krystal Ruthann, I love and miss you dearly. May the Lord bless you abundantly. You remain in my thoughts and prayers daily, too.



Wresting the

(Continued from page 101) ♦

you ever stopped to consider why there are so many doctrines that are obviously at odds with each other? The answer lies in the frailties and depravities of man. Man has a natural tendency to glorify himself and to act in opposition to God. Therefore, when man, with his own desires, enters into Christianity there will undoubtedly be heresies, false doctrines, lies, and hypocrisies. Paul says in 1 Timothy 4:1-2, **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”**

The great varieties in religion today, are not a result of the work of God. Nor is the tendency of men to compromise their long-held beliefs and doctrines a good sign – showing that men are willing to get along – as the Ecumenical movement would have us to believe today. You see, on every point of doctrine, and on every practice of faith, there is only the way of God, and the way of man. The way of God is the way that we should travel. We should not compromise our beliefs and practices just in order to get along with the world of religion around us.

I believe, that in large part, the fact that man wrests the Scriptures is responsible for the failure of Christianity, and religion as a whole, to reflect the will and desire of God. Today, I want to look at some ways that man does wrest the Scriptures, and in this way we will see how that man is apt to depart from the commands of God, and is apt to formulate his own doctrines and practices.

REMOVING FROM CONTEXT

One of the ways that man wrests the Scriptures is that he will take one Scripture (or perhaps more) and he will separate these Scriptures from the others, and he will devise a doctrine, or sometimes an entire system of beliefs, based on this solitary Scripture. I want us all to be reminded, that there are no contradictions, imagined or otherwise, in the content of the Holy Scriptures. Those that set up a belief or practice based on their own understanding of a certain Scripture, when that belief or practice is obviously contradicted by other Scriptures, have made a grievous error. The Apostle Peter said, **“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”** (II Pet. 1:20-21). Let me say, to begin with, that the Apostle Peter is here speaking of the OT saints, and the OT Word of God, but application is intended to include the men that God would use

as penman for the NT books that were being written. This can be seen by the fact that Peter refers to Paul’s writings as Scripture as well. (See our text verse, II Pet. 3:16).

However, in regards to the point that I am now trying to make, let me give you three things to consider from this verse that we have just read.

First, when the apostle says that no Scripture is of any private interpretation, I believe that he is saying that we, as men, are not the authors of the Bible. He is telling his readers here, that when the Holy Spirit moved these men to write the Scriptures, they did not interpret the meanings of the words or the intentions of the Holy Spirit. But they **“spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,”** without any additional interpretation of their own. Nor did they try to make plainer the words and meanings, but they were true penman, made use of by an infallible God. Paul told Timothy, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Tim. 3:16-17). I believe, and I am sure that you agree with me, that the Bible is the handiwork of God, and none of man’s wisdom was involved in the writing of it. This is made plain throughout the Scriptures, and I believe that this is something that Peter is addressing.

Second, when the apostle says that no Scripture is of any private interpretation, I believe that he is also instructing his readers (and this includes you and me) to be careful not to attribute to themselves more prerogative than they should have when it comes to interpreting the Scripture. What I mean, is that we are not to interpret the Scripture according to our own private understanding. Nor are we to seek to interpret the Scripture in a way that will make us seem unique – just so that we can seem to be scholars of the Word of God. In fact, I would dare say, that if you or I were to discover some private interpretation of any Scripture that tends to set us apart, either in a belief or practice, from all of the faithful Christians that have gone before us, then we have probably misinterpreted that Scripture, and we are, in fact, guilty of wresting the Scriptures. It should not be our desire to find some private interpretation in the Scripture, that we can claim as our own. The writer of the Proverbs said, **“For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety”** (Prov. 24:6). Now, I am not using this verse to teach that we should just go along with the crowd, but I am saying that we should take heed to wise counsel, and wise examples, and faithful lives, that have gone on before us. I am certain that it is not a wise thing to seek to interpret Scripture, just

with the desire or goal of ascribing our own understanding to every Scripture, and putting our mark upon it, regardless of the teachings of faithful men and women from around us. In doing so, we are seeking to set ourselves above them, and we send the message that we think of ourselves as better and more studious in our understanding of the Scriptures. Again, I know that from time to time, and in the case of certain doctrines and practices we will stand out and be different from many of our forefathers and contemporaries. However, it should not be our goal to be *different* from others, except in the cases where being *like* the Lord Jesus will separate us from others.

Third, I believe that Peter, when he says that no Scripture is of any private interpretation, is also telling us that we should not seek to interpret any Scripture privately from any other Scripture. This thought is very applicable to the point that I am trying to make – that men wrest the Scriptures, through privately interpreting portions of the Word of God. In other words, Peter is telling us that we should not separate any Scripture from its context, or from the Bible as a whole, and seek to ascribe to it a private meaning or separate understanding. You know, even the Lord Jesus, when He came to this earth, did not come to dispute any Scripture, or to make any Scripture irrelevant, or to place emphasis on any Scripture above any other Scripture. He said, **“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil”** (Matt. 5:17). It is noteworthy, that even the Son of God did not come to make the prophets or the OT Scripture irrelevant, or unimportant. In fact, He came to *validate* the prophets and the OT saints, not *replace* them. Therefore, you and I, as we study the Scriptures, need to take this same perspective. For instance, some among us would seek to diminish the importance of the Old Testament Scriptures, or even to ignore the Old Testament altogether. However, I think that we need to consider all of the Scriptures, and not to place more value or place more credence in one portion over another (though the New Testament, in particular, is the basis of the function and practice of the churches of God; still, the Old Testament has much for us to learn, when the light of the New Testament is applied to the Old Testament.) And this is true with all of the writings that are found in the Word of God. All of His words that are recorded for us to read, are of the utmost importance to those that follow Christ. Believe me, all of the Scriptures are in agreement, and to separate one from another and interpret it privately is a huge mistake. We read in Isaiah 28:9-10, **“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn**

from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:” I know that we could spend another message on these verses alone, but I want to make just two quick observations from these verses. According to Isaiah, if one desires knowledge or doctrine, it can be found only in the Word of God. And secondly, I believe Isaiah is also telling us here, that the Scriptures stand upon one another. They stand **“precept upon precept... line upon line.”** Never a one is separated from another in teaching contradictory doctrine or knowledge. But, in fact, all Scripture does support one another, and together the whole Bible will reveal unto us the entire revealed will of God for His people.

So, we can plainly see, that to privately interpret the Scriptures, or to remove any Scripture from its context (in order to more easily ascribe to it a private meaning), will lead, inevitably, to an improper wresting of the Scriptures.

STRUGGLING IN IGNORANCE

Another understanding that we can gather from our text verse, is that from time to time, men and women will wrest the Scriptures in that they will struggle in ignorance. Now, the verse that we have just read in Isaiah 28:9 does point this out. Remember that those that would learn knowledge and doctrine were **“them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”** Spiritually speaking, how is one **“weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts?”** How does one grow, and mature beyond the need for the milk from the breasts? Well, we can find this explained to us in the NT. We read in Hebrews 5:12-6:1, **“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection...”** So, it is incumbent upon Christians to move on from the milk of the Word, unto the meat of the Word of God. Those that fail to do this, are apt to struggle with the deeper things of the Word of God, and are apt to, in ignorance, wrest the Scriptures.

I suppose, that when you consider the points that I am making today concerning the wresting of the Scriptures, this thought that we are now considering, on the surface, would seem to be the most easily forgiven. In other words, we might, on the surface, be more understanding of one that, in ignorance wrests the

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Was the church in existence before Pentecost? If so, when was it started? - Mississippi

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The church was formed by our Lord during His earthly ministry. We cannot put any closer date than that on the church's initial institution. But we do know it was in existence before Pentecost.

That first church was far simpler in organizational structure than what we are used to in the twenty first century but it functioned in the manner in which a proper church should function. The complex organizational structure of the church today may be necessary to meet legal requirements and political situations and sometimes because of the size of some local churches, but such complexity is not necessary to be one of the Lord's churches. Nevertheless, the simple pattern in Acts gives us the pattern of the Lord's churches, completely different than the dispensational, invisible, universal church of general Protestantism and the uninspired notes in the Scofield Reference Bible.

Scripture gives us three incidents revealing that there was a simple organizational structure and function in the first church.

1. It had the necessary officers, as evidenced by Judas functioning as a treasurer. **"This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein"** (John 12:6).

2. It had an evangelical outreach into Judah (Matthew 10:1-42; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-2).

3. The members conducted a business meeting, electing officers as needed (Acts 1:12-26).

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In the 2nd chapter of Acts we see where they were all in one place in one accord. The day of Pentecost in Christendom today refers this to the beginning of the

Lord's Church. Where in this passage do you see anything referring to the beginning of the Church? Why were those involved not more expressive to that fact?

In Acts chapter 1 a group of 120 **"Men and Brethren"** were **"gathered together"** for prayer and supplication. Peter preached, the men and brethren voted. This was before Pentecost. Why were they voting?

Matt 28:16-20; This Scripture is commonly called the great commission. Unless you follow false doctrine concerning this Scripture you understand this was given to the Church, not succeeding apostles.

Matt 26:26 refers to the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Apostle Paul refers to this particular event in I Corinthians 11:20-29 to the Church at Corinth, and even goes so far as to say that those who partake of it irreverently are unable to discern the Lord's body. This begs the question, were Christ and the Disciples able to discern the Lord's body? The Lord's supper; is it a Church ordinance?

John chapter 3:23-29 refers to Christ and the disciples baptizing. Why were they baptizing if there was no Church? Why did John the Baptist say he was a friend of the **"Bridegroom"** if there were no Bride?

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The word "church" is used by our Lord twice in the book of Matthew, one referring to it being built by Him, and the other as the final ecclesiastical authority concerning members of it. Was the Lord mistaken about the existence of the Church?

The Church was started by Christ Himself when He began to call His disciples to follow Him for they were baptized believers.

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Yes, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ was started prior to Pentecost during His earthly ministry. To answer the question in greater detail I have included an excerpt from **"Teachings on the Local Church"** (recently published, but now

out of print).

BIBLE PROOFS THAT THE CHURCH EXISTED BEFORE THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Before several scriptural proofs are given to prove that the church began during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ it is necessary to define what a New Testament church is. J.E. Cobb, in his book, Baptist Church Manual, wrote:

"A New Testament church is an assembly of people called out from the world by the preaching of the Gospel, accompanied by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and baptized in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, to a life of conformation to the will of God, to execute the will and perpetuate the ordinances of Christ until He comes." (2)

In light of this definition I offer the following proofs to establish the fact that there was a church in existence prior to the day of Pentecost:

1. The apostles were Scripturally baptized prior to the day of Pentecost as Acts 1:21-22 states: **"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, BEGINNING from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."** John the Baptist's mission as stated in Luke 1:17 was **"to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."** John prepared the materials for the first church by preaching and baptizing those who believed his message. Jesus Christ accepted those materials prepared by John to organize the first church as John 1:35-37 implies: **"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."**

Milburn Cockrell wrote concerning this historic event:

"The word **"church"** is ecclesia in the Greek. Ecclesia is compound from two Greek words, a preposition and a verb. The preposition is ek, meaning "out," and the verb is kaleo, meaning "call or I call." Thus when Christ called out John's disciples He organized His church. Christ did this the first year of His earthly ministry as seen in John chapter 1. The charter members of the first church were John, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael." (3)

2. The members of the first church baptized converts prior to the day of Pentecost as John 4:1-2 states: **"When**

therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)" They were later given the Great Commission as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20 by Jesus Christ authorizing the church to preach, baptize, and teach in His physical absence until the end of the age. This commission was given prior to the day of Pentecost.

3. The 12 Apostles were called, ordained and sent forth to preach by Jesus Christ before the day of Pentecost as Mark 3:13-14 states: **"And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."**

4. The first church was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and were instructed in matters of church discipline prior to the day of Pentecost as Matthew 16:19 states: **"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."** Matthew 18:17-18 explains the procedure for dealing with an offending brother: **"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."** These verses prove two things, first, the church is a visible assembly not an invisible one. Second, the church was already in existence when Christ gave these instructions.

5. The first church had an acting treasurer prior to the day of Pentecost as John 13:29 states: **"For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor."** The first church had an established treasury which Judas was responsible for even if he was dishonest.

6. The first church observed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper prior to the day of Pentecost as Matthew 26:26-30 states: **"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Muslimism seems to be gaining as the most prominent religion. Is it possible that this could become the worldwide religion spoken of in the end times? – Mississippi

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This is my opinion. All false religion is Satan's attempt at nullifying the truth of the Gospel and to confuse the world as to God's doctrine of salvation. Satan's church is the Catholic Church, it being the Mother of Harlots, Rev 17:5. All other religions excluding the Lord's Church have doctrines adopted from the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is all inclusive and thus will eventually welcome or forcefully include all religious entities.

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I doubt it. We really can't be sure what the recognized world religion will be in those days but, from what we can glean from the Book of Revelation, I personally see it either as the Apostate Roman church or the humanism that has so permeated professing Christendom in our day.

The last days religion will obviously be anti-Christian, and be promoted by Antichrist to the point where he will be worshipped. In addition, there are two outstanding features that would separate it from Islam: 1) it is obviously satanic; and 2) it has a counterfeit trinity. Neither would be acceptable to Muslims.

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It is a sad fact that the Muslim religion is gaining in popularity in these last of the last days. However, I do not believe it will be the prominent religion that is

spoken of in the last times.

Revelation chapter 17 clearly identifies who the prominent apostate religious organization will be in the end times. It is none other than the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope leading the way as the False Prophet. He will be responsible for leading multitudes to worship the Antichrist during the Tribulation Period. Under the umbrella of the Roman Catholic Church will be her Protestant Daughters along with various other false religions who line up under the Harlot's authority. The Old Whore and all her religious affiliates will be judged by the power of God which will prompt the saints in Heaven to rejoice as recorded in Revelation 19:1-3: **"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgements: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."**



Forum #1

(Continued from page 110) ♦

of Olives." This is the only time in the New Testament where it is recorded that Jesus Christ sang an hymn. It was the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy of Psalm 22:22 which is quoted by the writer of Hebrews: **"Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee"** (Heb. 2:12). Thus, the church, with Jesus singing in her midst was in existence prior to the day of Pentecost.

7. Jesus called His church His **"little flock"** before the day of Pentecost as Luke 12:32 states: **"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."** The flock is identified as the church of God in Paul's exhortation to the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:28: **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost that made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."** Even though Christ's flock was small and weak, it nevertheless was recognized by Him as a New Testament church prior to the day of Pentecost if the language of Scripture means anything!

8. Jesus left His church, which He called,

"His house" with authority to carry out His commands until He returned, before He ascended to heaven prior to the day of Pentecost as Mark 13:34 suggests: **"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house (I Tim. 3:15), and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch."**

9. The first church had a roll of 120 members prior to the day of Pentecost and were assembled together for a prayer meeting as Acts 1:14-15 declares: **"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty)." Not only were they assembled together in church capacity, they also conducted a business meeting prior to the day of Pentecost when they chose a successor to the apostolic office vacated by Judas in Acts 1:21-26.**

10. 3000 souls were added to an already existing church body by baptism on the day of Pentecost as Acts 2:41 declares: **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were ADDED unto them about three thousand souls."** Anyone knows that you cannot add to something which does not already exist. A church was necessarily already in existence on the day of Pentecost, else it could not have been **"added to."**

From these Scriptural proofs it is evident that the Lord's Church was started during the ministry of Jesus Christ, not before or after.

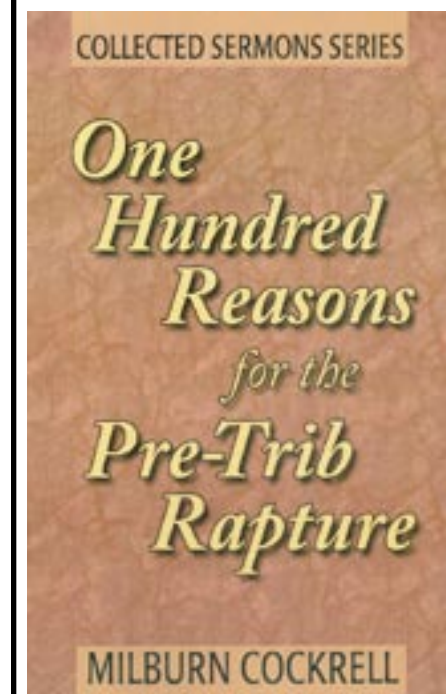
I end this section with a searching quote from the pen of Milburn Cockrell:

"...Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16:18 that He would build His church. He did not say Paul, or the Holy Spirit, or some man would start the church after He had gone back to the Father. Before leaving this world He said: 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do' (John 17:4). One either believes that Christ did establish His church during His personal ministry like He said He would, or they make Him a liar, and thus deny the divinity of the Son of God. Into which group do you fit? Do you believe Christ did what He said He would do? or do you believe what some man says He failed to do?" (4)

TOM ROSS

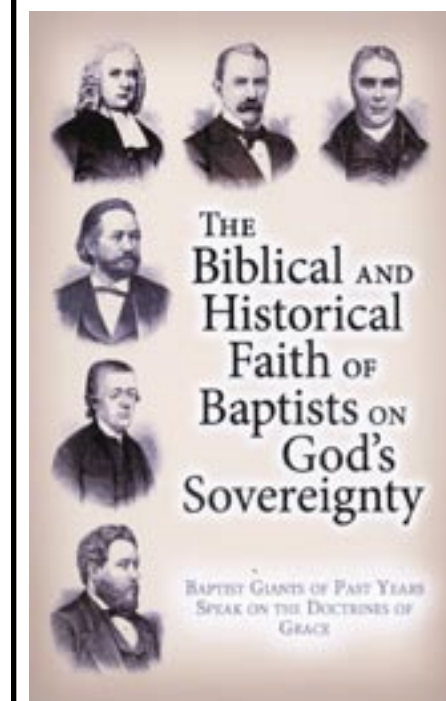


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Wresting the

(Continued from page 109) ♦

Scriptures, than we would be in the case of one that would deliberately wrest the Scriptures in some other manner or for some other reason. However, I believe that any Christian who refuses to study, pray, worship and grow in the Lord, really has laziness as his only reason for wresting the Scripture. Put in this light, perhaps it is not such a light thing to wrest the Scriptures because of ignorance; for, in truth, most of the time, ignorance is only a result of laziness. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, **“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal...”** (I Cor. 3:1-3). Twice in these first three verses of I Corinthians 3 the Apostle Paul refers to the Corinthians as **“carnal.”** But, we know that these are saved individuals, for he first calls them **“brethren”** in v. 1. What a terrible shame it is unto these Corinthians, that they could be **“brethren,”** and yet be considered **“carnal!”** Paul does not excuse the fact that they are still yet babes in Christ! Nor does he seek to use the fact that they are **“babes in Christ”** as a defense against their ignorance! Instead, he reminds them that they should not still be **“babes in Christ,”** but, considering the length of time which they have been saved, he has expectations that they should have been grown and matured beyond the state of infancy in Christ, and should now be partaking of the **“meat”** of the Word of God. In fact, the carnality of the Corinthian Christians, did not lay in the fact that they were babes in Christ; but, the carnality of the Christians lay in the fact that they were lazy and did not study the Scriptures.

I believe that this is true in the case of so many Christians today. Therefore, I believe that it truly is a terrible sin for one to wrest the Scripture because of ignorance. Now, I can understand a new Christian having some problem understanding some things in the Word of God. And I can understand all Christians having problems understanding some things that are of a deeper nature that are revealed to us in the Word of God. But, I cannot understand, nor can I find tolerable, the fact that the vast majority of Christians do not have an understanding of even the basic doctrine that is revealed to us in the holy Word of God. Ignorance is not an excuse when one has had ample time to study the Word of God! Ignorance is not an excuse when one should have a desire to learn of God and to learn of the glorious teachings that are revealed in His holy Word! Ignorance, especially, is not an excuse, when one

has ignored the public worship of our Saviour, and the many blessings that are found, in the church of Jesus Christ! In fact, if we are truly saved, we might say, that our own ignorance, as we encounter it in the things of God, should drive us to learn and study and grow. The things that we do not know and understand should awaken in us a desire to learn and know them – not to just set them aside and allow some other Christian to interpret it in whatever way he pleases and we will just agree with him.

Brethren, pray unto the Lord God (as will I) that through studious application to His Word, He will provide you with knowledge and understanding to replace your ignorance. Pray to the Lord God that you and I would be recipients of the meat of the Word, and not just the milk of the Word. Pray unto God that you and I would not wrest the Scriptures in ignorance.

USURPING IN PRIDE

Let me read to you part of the definition of the word “wrest:” *To take by force; usurp.* There seems to be a belief among men today, that we know more, and are more highly advanced than the men that have gone before us. I know that in the areas of science and technology we know more and are much more highly developed than were our ancestors. But the same is not true in matters of religion and morality. Today, religious men and women, and even those that claim to be Christians, will dispute the validity of assertions that are made in the Scriptures based on nothing more than their own feelings of superiority. It has gotten to the point, that many supposedly Christian men and women, will deny the inspiration of the holy Scriptures, just because that if they were to accept the Bible as it is written, they would either have to give up the name Christian, or they would have to swallow their foolish pride. We read in Proverbs 16:18, **“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”** To me, this is one of the more heinous crimes that a man can commit – that he should, in pride, dispute the Word of God. Men today, even in Christianity, will usurp the meaning of Scripture with their own interpretation. Men today, even in Christianity, will take a Scripture and force it to mean what they want it to mean. What gives any man the right to place his own will and purpose above that of God? What gives any man the right to interpret the Scriptures based upon his own merits, and with a desire to show himself approved? Shouldn’t we, as men, seek to conform ourselves to the mature Christian that is projected in the Scriptures, rather than to seek to conform the Scriptures to our own prideful selves?

So often today we get caught up in this thing of pride. We have an inkling (or perhaps more than an inkling) of some

thing that we are not faithful in, and we know that the Scripture would condemn us, but instead of studying and seeking to conform, we ignore and seek to adapt the Scripture to our doctrine or practice. Paul told Timothy, **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud...”** (II Tim. 3:1-2). These verses can be spoken of many that are professing Christians today. Many Christians desire to have **“...a form of godliness...”** but desire to deny **“...the power thereof...”** (II Tim. 3:5). These Christians are caught up in pride and in a desire to appear as Christians, but retain the things that the flesh desires to have – including a high consideration of oneself. Do you know that the Scriptures have the **“power”** to transform you, and conform you to the desires and will of God? Well, so many people today want to have **“a form of godliness,”** but not to the extent that the Scriptures would transform them if they were to believe and study the Word of God as they should.

But, in fact, this thing of pride can also affect the truly saved individual. Paul told the Romans, **“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”** (Rom. 12:3). So, let’s you and I be careful as well. Let us be careful to not interpret Scripture in a manner that would cast ourselves in a good light. I believe that Scripture, in general, when understood properly will tend to exalt God, and debase man. I hope and pray that you and I will not be offended by such an understanding of Scripture. And I hope and pray that you and I will not seek to wrest the Scriptures by usurping it in pride.

TWISTING IN HERESY

Let me read to you another part of the definition of the word “wrest:” *To change or twist the meaning of something; to alter something’s meaning.* Now, in many ways this final point that I am going to try to make is very similar to the previous point that I have just made. But in this final point I think that we will see a much broader application.

Throughout history men have tried to twist the words of God. Go back to Genesis 3:1-5. What do you find there? You find Satan himself attempting to twist the Word of God. This has forever been the method of men who hate God. They will take some part of His Word, or they will take some part of His commandments to men, and they will twist those words and seek to make what was and is good, into something that can be used by wicked men. The Apostle Peter was speaking of this type of man when he said, **“But there were false prophets also among the people,**

even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (II Pet. 2:1-2). These **“false prophets”** and **“false teachers”** (and their followers) existed in the OT, when the prophets were prophesying. These men also existed in the NT, when the apostles and others were teaching, preaching, and writing. And these men exist even today, while we seek to serve the Lord in spirit and in truth.

I think that it behooves you and me, to seek out these **“damnable heresies”** and to purge ourselves and others from these things. You know, many of these **“damnable heresies”** are accepted as truth in the Christian world today. We see these **“damnable heresies,”** and we do not speak out against them. We see these false doctrines and practices, and we do not condemn them. We see the failures of Christianity around us, and we do not cry out to alarm those around us. The heresies that are taught as truth are all around us. Men everywhere are wresting the Scriptures and twisting them in heresy. We need to be guardians of the truth, and to be lighthouses to spread the alarm.

Speaking of deceivers and false teachers, Paul told Titus, **“Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake”** (Titus 1:11). Later, Paul told Titus, **“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee”** (Titus 2:15). The church of Jesus Christ is the highest authority here on this earth. The church is vested with the mission of preaching and teaching. Therefore, it is in the church that can be found the authority to cry out against error, and to **“rebuke with all authority.”** I know that it is Paul that is encouraging Titus to be bold, and not to be afraid to **“rebuke.”** But you know, the authority that Titus had to rebuke did not come from Paul – it came from the church of Jesus Christ. Of course it is true that the pastors and preachers in the churches of Jesus Christ are the ones (and God help us) that need to be the primary sources of open **“rebuke”** to those that are in error; but I do want every one of you to remember your responsibility as well. It would do well for every one of us, as Christians, and especially as members in the churches of Jesus Christ, to be a little more bold in rebuking the evil and heretical teachings (and teachers) that are all around us. We need to make use of the **“authority”** that is given to the Church, and to seek to purge out error and hypocrisy.

♦ (Continued on page 113)

Wresting the

(Continued from page 112) ♦

Let's read one more verse from Titus. **"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself"** (Titus 3:10-11). Again, I pray that God would help us to be beacons of truth that would shine out in opposition to the heresies and heretics that are all around us. I also hope and pray that God would help us to restrain from twisting the Word of God, and that we would not be among those that wrest the Scriptures.



Thrice Three Times

(Continued from page 101) ♦

Nine times, then, at the beginning of His "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus declared that His people are a joyful people; for He was not speaking here of the mixed multitudes, but to His disciples, as we find in Matthew 5:1-2.

TRUE DISCIPLES ARE HAPPY

Moreover, He was not describing nine different kinds or groups of disciples, but rather nine varieties of joyful experiences which are or may be the portion of all true disciples. The nine Beatitudes can be seen in three groups of three each: the first three having to do with our attitudes or relationship to self; the next three with our relationship to God and His people; and the last three with our relationship to the people of this world.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That is, Christians who in spirit realize their own poverty are willing to receive riches of divine grace and thus find themselves in possession of the kingdom. Contrast to this blessedness the wretchedness of the Laodicean angel (pastor): **"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"** (Rev. 3:17).

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." The church at Corinth furnishes an example of how to obtain this blessedness. When the members failed to mourn over their sins, and especially over a most shameful sin of one of their number, they brought on themselves a sharp rebuke: **"And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you"** (I Cor. 5:2). But later the apostle could write: **"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. . . For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of**

yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! . . . Therefore we were comforted in your comfort" (II Cor. 7:9-13).

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." The meek think little of themselves and do not seek to exalt or advance themselves. But they have committed themselves and their ways to the Lord, and in due time He will see to it that **"they shall inherit the earth."**

JOY OF THE LORD

Thus the three Beatitudes dealing with our proper treatment of self are appropriate to our needs, as is always true of God's blessings. The next three, dealing with our relationship to God and His people, naturally follow upon a true judgment of self.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Jesus came not to call the righteous (that is, those who think they are righteous) but sinners (that is, those who realize they are sinners and feel their need of divine righteousness) to repentance. And the same God who brings us to hunger and thirst after His righteousness promises that we shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Remember that Jesus is not talking here to lost sinners, telling them how to be saved, but to disciples, telling them how they are happy. We cannot have fellowship and joy in the Lord when we hold grudges and ill will toward our brethren. The mercy to be obtained is not the mercy

of God satisfying eternal judgment upon lost sinners, but the mercy of God our heavenly Father upon His children as they walk in His Spirit.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Just as God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, so only the pure in heart can see God. The seeing here is not physical eyesight, for in the physical sense no man has seen God, because God is spirit. In proportion as our hearts are purified by His Spirit, we are able to get a clearer vision of God as He really is.

JOY IN TESTIMONY

Now we come to the last three of these Beatitudes, setting forth our experience with the world. The first of these three describes our mission in the world: the last two tell us what to expect when we are faithful in that mission.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." The peace primarily referred to is peace between God and man through Christ; peace between men is secondary. Our mission is the same as that of the apostle Paul: we are to pray men in Christ's stead, **"Be ye reconciled to God."** And according as we are faithful in this mission we shall be recognized as children of God. But now we are told that also according to our faithfulness to God and His service we can expect opposition and persecution:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Note that the joy is not in persecution for its own sake, or for our sake. People may be

persecuted for wrongdoing, or for race, or for politics, or for religion, and be miserable. But when they are persecuted for righteousness' sake they can justly claim God's blessing.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

In this last Beatitude note first the change from third to second person. By thus addressing the disciples directly, Jesus makes this a more personal Beatitude. Likewise, the reason assigned for persecution is now personal: not merely for righteousness' sake, but **"for my sake."** The world hates Jesus Himself even more than it hates His righteousness. Thus many people pay lip service to His moral character and teaching, but reject Him as God and Savior. Note further the triple accumulation of mistreatment for His sake; reviling, persecution, and malicious lying. And note, finally, that as our sufferings for His sake do abound, our blessings do much more abound: **"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad."**

Dear reader, are these blessings yours? Have you tasted and found that the Lord is gracious? Is Jesus Christ your only and sufficient Savior? And, if so, can you claim the blessings that He says are yours?



Herod

(Continued from page 101) ♦

In the Bible records we read of three Herods. The first is Herod the Great--the last king of the Jews. He was the second son of Antipater, the Idumean. When only fifteen years of age, his father was appointed Procurator of Judea, and he himself was elevated to the governorship of Galilee. In the civil war which then raged between the Caesaroan and republican parties, Herod was at first friendly to Cassius, but subsequently to Mark Antony, from whom he obtained the crown of Judea. He arose to great power in his regal position, but employed his vast influence and splendid talents in the most oppressive manner. He, without cause, murdered his beautiful wife, who was the last of the Maccabees, a family in which there had been one thousand high priests in succession. She was the last of the long and splendid line of Asmonean princes, with whose termination in her disappeared the last vestige of native royalty among the Jews, the stream of their national glory, like the mysteriously disappearing rivers of the East, vanishing for ever beneath the clod which covered Mariamne's grave. It was this Herod who, to gain favor with the Jews, rebuilt

♦ (Continued on page 115)



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Blind Watchmen and Dumb Dogs

Isaiah 56:10, **"His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."**

I do not know if a better description can be found to fit the average Baptist preacher of today. The Old Testament prophet was speaking of the lax prophets of his day, but his words apply to modern day church leaders who are asleep at the wheel, or to give a better ecclesiastical example, asleep in the pulpit.

A blind watchman sees no one and therefore, warns no one. A watch dog that will not bark is nothing more than a biscuit eater. He doesn't pull his own weight and is a danger to those who depend on his faithful bark. The modern day professional preacher is willfully blind and purposefully silent, when it comes to warning of the dangers and consequences of sin. In this age of enlightenment, we have arrived at the place where sin is no longer preached against. Instead, Bible principles are taught, Bible studies are held, prophecy conferences are offered and social gatherings in churches are at an all time high.

The average Baptist preacher places a premium on being spiritually politically correct, non-judgmental, sensitive, purpose driven, and popular. He shudders with horror that he could be seen as legalistic, mean spirited, narrow minded, old fashioned and out of touch with the times, and especially out of touch with youth. As a result, these preachers become blind watchmen and dumb dogs who facilitate the destruction of their sheep as they plunge headlong down the slippery slope of the world with its philosophies, standards, dress code, attitude, and actions.

Baptist preachers as a rule, no longer preach against drinking. I know all the arguments that can be given for taking just one drink, but not getting drunk, but why would you want to get near a rattlesnake? And even if Dad can "handle" it, can Jr. handle it when he grows up? Remember the church covenant. I just read about a wedding reception of some prominent Baptists in our town. The write up in the paper recounted how they celebrated at the wedding reception with dancing, wine and beer. How blatant. God help their preacher to grow a backbone and love his people by warning them of this serpent

in a bottle.

Baptist preachers hardly ever preach against sexual immorality and homosexuality and pornography. Churches are full of immorality in the pew and broken homes attest to this fact. I have been told that it doesn't matter if the preacher preaches against it or not, people will do what they want to do regardless. That is true to a certain extent, but there is a direct correlation between silent pulpits and the increase of ungodliness in churches and society.

Baptist preachers won't usually dare touch the issue of dress and appearance. Just who does the preacher think he is, telling people what to wear and not to wear? I'll tell you who he is. He is the man of God who watches for the souls of his people (Hebrews 13:17) and he has every right to condemn nakedness, and tight clothing that reveals the body and fires the sexual imagination and blurs the line of demarcation between the sexes. Make no provision for the flesh, and don't flaunt the flesh either.

Baptist preachers won't preach against tattoos, body piercings on men and women and earrings on men, because they want to "reach" them. Reach them with what? You do not have to look like the world to reach the world. When Paul said he bore in his **"body the marks of the Lord Jesus"** (Gal. 6:17), he wasn't speaking of a tattoo of Jesus. I understand that it is through the preaching of the Gospel that men are saved, but there is never a teaching of separation that follows the preaching of the Gospel to those who have been saved. Jesus said to *preach the gospel to every creature* (evangelism) and Paul said to *preach the word* (to those who have been evangelized), *reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering*. It is not an either/or situation. We are to preach the gospel *and* preach the whole counsel of God, which includes reproof, rebuking and exhorting.

I was once told, as a young preacher, to not preach against "things" but just preach the gospel and love people. The preacher who gave me this advice didn't preach against sin and railed against those who did. It was later found that during his ministry he had done just that: preached the gospel and loved people. Actually, he loved many people, many women that is, to whom he was not married. By the way, warning people of danger is loving them.

Baptist preachers seldom preach about hell and eternal punishment of the lost in an eternal lake of fire. Hell should never be preached without the cross of Calvary as the emphasis, but the cross is often preached with no mention of hell. Why is there a need for the cross if there is no hell?

Baptist preachers do not often preach on the authority structure of the home, with the husband as the head and the

wife as the completer. Parents are to be in charge of children, administering correction and discipline through love, training them to be submissive to parental authority in preparation for their submission to God in salvation.

Baptist preachers often fail to preach against ungodly entertainment via television and videos. Christians should not watch others commit acts that are ungodly and which they themselves do not commit. Christians should not listen to others profane, mock, and blaspheme the name of God, especially when they themselves refrain from such wickedness. Exposure to such filth de-sensitizes the believer to sin and its consequences, breaking down barriers and inhibitions, weakening believers and preparing them for a fall.

Baptist preachers are hesitant to preach against corruption among politicians, afraid of offending those who vote for liberals based on party alone. Right is right and wrong is wrong. Just call it for what it is.

Preaching against sin heightens awareness of right and wrong and re-establishes the standard of absolutes. There is a God and a devil, a right and a wrong, a heaven and a hell, and everyone is going to one or the other. Preaching standards of right or wrong help to remind there is a standard for which God's children are to live up to. Specific, pointed preaching is effective. Telling people they need to live a Christian life and please God only tells them what to do, without telling them how to do it. If the Ten Commandments were written by man with today's understanding, they would be condensed to one statement, *"Thou shalt not do wrong."* Though the preceding statement is true, it doesn't say anything specific about sin. I once heard a vague sermon against worldliness. Worldliness was never defined, no examples were given, and no consequences were listed. The preacher just said it was bad and we ought not to be worldly. I left the sermon agreeing that worldliness is bad, but without a clue as to whether or not I was worldly.

In most cases where there is an emphasis on evangelism, there is no emphasis on instruction in righteousness for the newly saved. The emphasis is to "reach" them by appealing to them or relating to them or understanding them. After reaching them with salvation, we need to reach them with right living. They are not to be **"conformed to this world"** (Romans 12:2) but *be conformed to the image of Christ* (Romans 8:29). To be conformed means to be pressed into the mold of something, which means submission. Modern Christianity places an emphasis on hanging on to your "rights," and fitting God into your life, instead of totally surrendering to God in submission to His will and standards. When we don't preach separation from

sin and the world for God's children, it undercuts the preaching of the Gospel and therefore affects the harvest long term, for future generations.

We have a full generation in power today who have not heard the truth about sin, and brother, it's evident in churches, politics, schools, families and the workplace. May God be merciful to those preachers who are not living up to their calling to preach the word.

A.D.D. OR B. A. D.?

The topic of A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder) or A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder) can stir emotion in some, especially among parents whose children are affected. It was originally known as Minimal Brain Dysfunction. There are two basic types of A.D.D.: (1) Passive, where the child is not hyperactive, but can't focus and (2) Active, where the child is hyperactive along with a deficiency of attention, also known as A.D.H.D. Plainly stated, A.D.D. children can't focus their attention on anything for a long time.

This disorder is legitimate, but has been exploited over the years. Let me give you my simplistic, rather hard, but common sense analysis on this disorder. Most kids will not focus their attention very long on anything unless they are already interested in it, or unless they are motivated to do so. I am no expert in this area, but my experience from pastoring A.D.D. kids and their parents, being a father myself, and consulting with my wife (who has legitimate expertise in diagnosis and treatment in this area) tells me that a lot of the kids diagnosed with A.D.D. may not really have it. One thing they all have in common is descent from Adam, with a predisposition to sin and rebel against authority. They may be more B.A.D. than A.D.D.

How many times have you heard a parent say, "I just can't do a thing with him (most A.D.D.'s are male)," only to hear later that Jr. was just diagnosed A.D.D. You mean an adult with life experience, usually with formal education, and common sense (hopefully) can't outwit, outmaneuver, or outsmart their child? Kids learn early how to manipulate and threaten. The majority of children, whether diagnosed as A.D.D. or not, will not perform or work at quality level unless they are motivated to do so. The method of motivation is up to the parent, first, then the teacher. Depending on the child, it may be positive reinforcement, or it may be a belt or switch on the bottom or legs (See the book of Proverbs for further instruction under "rod").

Am I denying the reality of A.D.D.? Certainly not! But I am saying there are too many parents who, when met with a little resistance from their child, listen to some liberal claptrap about attention deficiency and how "kids today just can't

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focus or mind,” then they whisk them off to be labeled and medicated. Now, the child may really have A.D.D. or some other legitimate learning disorder. But the child may just be strong willed. Or the child may be a little hyperactive with a seeming deficiency of attention brought on because he’s not *made* to stop long enough to focus.

I think some parents are deficient in paying attention to their kids. When the home is a Godly home, with the parents in charge, and boundaries are set and rules enforced through discipline and training, administered in love and compassion, that home will have fewer “cases” of A.D.D. children.

The Bible says TRAIN up a child. That means to bend the tree in the direction it should grow. Training requires effort and means teaching children they are accountable, and responsible for their own actions. Children are not responsible or wise enough to train themselves properly. That’s why they have parents.



Herod

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the temple. In the thirty-third year of his reign our Saviour was born. To this Herod the Wise Men came. He it was who strove to possess himself of Christ, and who issued the decree that all the male children under two years of age who were found in Bethlehem should be slain. In his sixty-eighth year, tortured by a guilty conscience, enfeebled by a broken constitution, surrounded by direful conspiracies, attacked by a deadly disease, he died a horrible death; and went to his grave amid the rejoicings of the people whom he had oppressed.

The second person of his name mentioned in the Scriptures is Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, who was born three years before Christ. He became emperor of Judea, in connection with the kingdom of Chaleis, and rose to the position of one of the greatest princes in all the East. His government gave universal satisfaction to the nation, which had so lately experienced the evils of his grandfather’s despotic reign. This is the Herod who, to please the Jews, put to death the Apostle James, who cast Peter into prison, and whose strange death is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts. It occurred in Caesarea, where games were being performed in honor of Claudius, and the people of Tyre and Sidon had come to sue with him for peace. On the morning of the chosen day, while the heavens were glowing with the luster of the orient, and nature in gladness smiling back a response, he appeared before them

seated upon a throne; and Josephus says, “He had on a garment made wholly of silver; which, as the sun’s rays illuminated it, shone so surpassingly resplendent that it spread a terror over those who looked upon him.” Proudly he arose and pronounced an oration, the effect of which was overwhelming. The vast crowd was swayed to and fro with tumultuous excitement, like a wild sea lashed into surges by the breath of the storm-king, and shouted, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.” Majestic in his supreme selfishness, the wicked monarch greedily received this blasphemous adulation. In his own conceit he stood upon a mountain-peak of glory; but his footing was the treacherous crust which covered a volcano. For in that moment, doubtless the proudest of his life, a terrible disease, a messenger from God struck him, and from that scene of royal magnificence he was carried to his palace, where, after five days of inexpressible suffering, eaten by worms, he expired, closing a reign of only seven years. It may interest you to know that the Agrippa before whom Paul preached was the son of this man.

Between these two, Herod Antipas, to whom I shall call your special attention, lived. He was the son of Herod the Great, and is called Tetrarch of Galilee. His brother Archelaus reigned over Judea, and bore the royal title of his father. In order to supplant him, Antipas interceded at Rome; but his covetousness met a deserved rebuke in Caesar’s confirmation of his father’s will. On his way to the eternal city an event occurred which gave coloring to all his after life. He met and became enamored with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip, a woman who has justly been called the Jezebel of the New Testament. She had married her own uncle, and Salome, the famous dancing girl, was their daughter. Reciprocating Herod’s criminal passion, and, in defiance of law and morality, she abandoned her husband and married the Tetrarch. The sun of Herod’s fair fame, whose brightness was already dimmed by fraternal envy, sank in hopeless gloom at the perpetration of this shameless public wickedness. His own excellent but dishonored wife, the daughter of an Arabian prince, left Galilee in disgust and returned to her father’s court. Such was the elevated position of this guilty pair, such the pomp and influence of their surroundings, that only one man was found who dared to rebuke them, and that was the brave and fearless John the Baptist. In the name of his God he rebuked this guilty man and woman, the influence of whose example was so corrupting and disastrous; for society is never so much injured by malign influences existing among lower classes and working upward, as by corruption in high places which inevitably works downward. By doing this he incurred the wrath of Herod, who had before this

feared his power with the people; and, what was more fearful, he drew upon himself the bitter hatred of Herodias, who in the dark depths of her guilty soul swore revenge on the virtuous denouncer of her crime. By Herod’s order John was thrown into prison, and confined there during a long period, for it would seem that no opportunity occurred in which malicious vengeance dared to enforce its gratification.

The desired opportunity at length arrives. It is Herod’s birthday, and grand festivities have been ordered for its celebration. The metropolitan Tiberius is crowded with gay throngs in holiday attire. A gorgeous banquet is served in a magnificent hall of the royal palace. The lords, in their robes of state the high captains, in their military uniforms; the elite of the nobility are there. Galilean beauty and fashion are there. Rich wine, from golden goblets, freely quaffed, has excited the guests to wild merriment. Boisterous hilarity resounds along the bannered walls. *It is Belshazzar’s feast repeated.* But all is hushed as a strain of music bursts upon the ear, and the attention of the crowd is fixed upon the fair form of a beautiful girl who comes tripping into the hall, and begins to dance. The music grows quicker, wilder. Her graceful but wanton movements become swifter and swifter. The excitement deepens. Every pulse beats fast. But one man of all that admiring throng applauds the loudest. It is Herod. Intoxicated, not only with wine but with delight, he is “greatly pleased,” and his passion-full eyes gleam like consuming flames, while he cries aloud with an oath, **“Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee, to the half of my kingdom.”** The dancer pauses and returns his voluptuous gaze. She is prepared with the request, because her mother, who has laid this plot to ensnare Herod into the gratification of her revenge, has previously instructed her, and she says---O, what a request to fall from the lips of a girl!---**“Give me here the head of John the Baptist in a charger.”** Look at Herod now. A change has come over him, for he sees the plot, and sorrow is depicted on his face; but he yields. The command is given, and in a brief period the executioner returns bearing in his hands the gory charger with its ghastly contents, and delivers it to the now trembling damsel, who carries it to her mother. The imagined feelings of Salome, as she carries that fearful burden, and gives it to Herodias, have been most vividly described by Miss Lucy Hooper, one of our own sweetest poets, in the following lines

“Mother! I bring thy gift:
Take from my hand the dreadful boon---I pray,
Take it; the still, pale sorrow of the face
Hath left upon my soul its living trace,
Never to pass away.
Since from these lips, the word of idle breath,

Blanched that calm face---Oh! mother, this is death!

“What is that I see
From all the pure and settled features gleaming?
Reproach! Reproach! My dreams are strange and wild.
Mother! Hast thou no pity on thy child?
See, a celestial smile seems softly beaming
On the hushed lips; my mother, canst thou brook
Longer upon thy victim’s face to look?

“Alas! at yester morn
My heart was light, and to the viol’s sound
I gaily danced, while crowned with summer flowers
And swiftly by me sped the flying hours;
And all was joy around---
Not death. O, mother! Could I say thee nay?
Take from thy daughter’s hand thy boon away.

“Take it; my heart is sad,
And the pure forehead hath an icy chill.
I dare not touch it, for avenging Heaven
Hath shuddering visions to my fancy given;
And the pale face appalls me, cold and still,
With the closed lips. Oh! tell me, could I know
That the pale features of the dead were so?

“I may not turn away
From the charmed brow; and I have heard his name
Even as a prophet, by his people spoken;
And that high brow in death bears seal and token
Of one whose words were flame.
Oh! holy teacher, couldst thou rise and live,
Would not those hushed lips whisper ‘I forgive?’

“Away with lute and harp---
With the glad heart for ever, and the dance!
Never again shall timbrel sound for me.
Oh, fearful mother! I have brought to thee
The silent death, with his rebuking glance,
And the crushed heart of one to whom are given
Wild dreams of judgment and offended Heaven!”

The nearest approximation to this dastardly murder I have found in history is that which a Roman historian records of Agrippina, the mother of Nero, who, to satiate her vengeance on Lollia Paulina, a hated rival, ordered an officer to bring to her Lollia’s head in a dish. It was brought; and the historian says that Agrippina closely examined it, and exulted over this horrid gratification of her revenge.

Thus John and Herod met their crisis-hour. The headless body of the former was consigned by his disciples to its humble resting-place; the carousal of the latter was interrupted only for a few moments, and the banqueting proceeded as if nothing had transpired. But unseen by the sensual eyes of his guests, around that proud form gathered clouds surcharged with wrath. Unheard amid their hilarious mirth, conscience within him muttered the echoed thunders of violated moral law. Unknown to them, his guilty imagination pictured awful portents of trouble in the future. But “judgment is not often executed speedily,” and time rolls on.

♦ (Continued in the next issue)



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

SUPREME COURT TO DECIDE IF CAMPAIGN LAWS LIMIT FREE SPEECH

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments April 25 in a case that pits a pro-life group against a 2002 campaign finance reform law.

The McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 prevents groups from running ads that mention a federal candidate within 30 days of a primary or 60 days of a general election. Wisconsin Right to Life (WRTL) filed suit seeking to run ads during the blackout periods.

Jim Bopp, lead counsel for WRTL, said the First Amendment protects the right of citizens to criticize their government. "During these blackout periods -- when it's a federal crime to mention the name of a candidate in a broadcast -- Congress is in session and they're voting on extremely important matters," he said. "Incumbent members of Congress are trying to get a 'twofer.' They passed this law, which prohibits election-related ads, and now they would like to see it apply to grassroots lobbying." Bopp said that's contrary to assurances that McCain-Feingold would not affect the grassroots.

Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said McCain-Feingold intrudes heavily upon the right of grassroots groups to comment on issues before Congress.

"Even assuming, for the moment, that the law has a legitimate purpose -- which is arguable at best -- it goes way beyond anything reasonable," Hausknecht said. "It tramples on the free-speech rights of grassroots organizations, preventing citizens from getting valuable information they need to know at the critical moment when Congress is debating an issue." He said he hopes the Court takes the necessary action to restore the pre-eminence of political speech in the public square.

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, called on the Court to restore fairness and freedom. "By banning issue advertisements by grassroots lobbying organizations in the days leading up to an election, there is a significant bias in place," he said. "[It] puts these organizations at a distinct disadvantage in speaking out on the cultural and political issues that matter most."

Bopp said the case will demonstrate how "judges matter."

"It's really important," he said, "to have judges that are willing to give full meaning

to the constitutional protections that we enjoy as citizens."

The cases are McCain-Feingold v. Wisconsin Right to Life and FEC (Federal Elections Commission) v. Wisconsin Right to Life.

INDIANAPOLIS AD CAMPAIGN CLAIMS THE BIBLE AFFIRMS HOMOSEXUALITY

(EPNews)--Apro-gay billboard campaign in Indiana attempts to use the Bible as a basis for supporting homosexuality.

The 22 signs in Indianapolis are sponsored by Jesus Metropolitan Community Church and Faith in America. Pastor Jeff Miner described one of the billboards that proclaims, "Ruth Loved Naomi as Adam Loved Eve."

"Most people probably have no idea that the Bible does contain a number of powerfully affirming passages toward gay people," he said. Another billboard recasts the story of the Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant and claims "Jesus Affirmed a Gay Couple." Miner said that "the [Greek] word that the Roman centurion uses to describe this sick person is 'pais,' which is precisely the word that was used in ancient Greek to refer to one's same-sex partner."

Joe Dallas, author of The Gay Gospel, a book debunking such twisting of Scripture, took issue with the claims. "You really have to do mental gymnastics to do this," he said. Dallas said there's nothing in the Bible that suggests the relationship between Ruth and Naomi was anything other than a deep friendship. And Greek lexicons render the word "pais" as simply a servant or a child, not a same-sex partner.

"It shows a certain mindset," Dallas said, "when someone cannot read about two people loving each other without assuming that the love was sexual."

DAY OF TRUTH DRAWS RECORD PARTICIPATION, BACKLASH

(EP News)--Nearly 7,000 students participated in the Alliance Defense Fund's (ADF) third-annual Day of Truth. That's nearly double the year before. Mike Johnson, senior legal counsel for ADF, said the event gives students the opportunity to present a different viewpoint than the Day of Silence, when students offer support of homosexuality.

In addition to promoting the event, the ADF provided legal assistance to several students who faced opposition from school

administrators for participating in the event.

A 15-year-old Michigan student was among that number. His expression of mild opposition to the pro-homosexual event at his school got him sent home for the day. Now he's arguing for his right to free speech.

David Gardner didn't agree with Oakridge High School's observance of the Day of Silence, during which proponents of homosexuality place tape over their mouths or refuse to speak, even in class. As part of the event, participants pass out pro-gay literature to students.

David grabbed a piece of tape, wrote "I'm straight" on it and stuck it to his shirt as his personal protest.

"Something just clicked," he said. "I was like, you know, this is wrong, and somebody's got to stand up, so I did." Some of David's friends expressed their support by printing Bible verses on T-shirts and wearing them to school. Two were asked to go home because of the shirts.

Gardner said his courage comes from the messages his father, John Gardner, preaches. "When is the church of Jesus Christ going to come out of its closet and take its place in society the way it's supposed to be?" his father asked. "If we don't stand up sooner or later, we're going to run into more trouble than we're going to know what to do with." David said the trampling of his First Amendment rights "scares him."

"The church isn't standing up," he said, "so I figured I'd be the first one to start."

LANDMARK SURVEY DOCUMENTS LATINO RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

(EP News)--Hispanics are transforming the nation's religious landscape, especially the Roman Catholic Church, not only because of their growing numbers but also because they are practicing a distinctive form of Christianity.

A study released in late April by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and the Pew Hispanic Center explores the distinctive characteristics of Hispanics' religious beliefs and practices, and examines how these are related to the political views of Latinos of all faiths.

"The major findings in this study leave little doubt that a detailed understanding of religious faith among Latinos is essential to fully appreciating the evolving nature of religion in the United States and of the role Latinos will likely play in the country's politics and public life," said Luis Lugo, director of the Pew Forum.

The study documents, for example, how Latinos have distinctive religious practices. Religious expressions associated with the Pentecostal and charismatic movements are a key attribute of worship for many Hispanics in all the major religious traditions -- far more so than among non-Latinos. Renewalist Christianity, which places special emphasis on God's ongoing, day-to-day intervention in human affairs through the person of the Holy Spirit, appears to

be much more prevalent among Hispanics than among their non-Latino counterparts.

The study found that Latinos see religion as a moral compass to guide their political thinking: Two-thirds of Hispanics say that their religious beliefs are an important influence on their political thinking. More than half say churches and other houses of worship should address the social and political questions of the day. By nearly a two-to-one margin, Latinos say there has been too little expression of religious faith by political leaders rather than too much.

The study also sheds new light on the role religious affiliation plays on party identification among Hispanics. Latinos who are evangelicals are twice as likely as those who are Catholics to identify with the Republican Party. Latino Catholics, on the other hand, are much more likely than Latino evangelicals to identify with the Democratic Party. These differences rival, and may even exceed, those found in the general population.

FLORIDA FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL SUES HARASSING POLICE OFFICER

(EP News)--Last year, the Florida Family Policy Council (FFPC) rented a tent at a Promise Keepers conference to hand out information on the state's marriage protection amendment and to collect petitions.

But some Sunrise, Fla., police officers would have none of it. They shut down the petitioners. Then, Sgt. Stephen Allen took it upon himself to lecture the family advocates on homosexuality and the Bible. He went so far as to mockingly kiss another officer.

Now FFPC is fighting back. It filed suit April 24 in federal district court, charging that Broward County and Allen violated the civil rights of its staff and volunteers.

"We have the highest regard for law enforcement officers in this state who lay down their lives to protect us every day," John Stemberger, president of the Florida Family Policy Council, said in a statement. "This was a blatant violation of the First Amendment."

"The officer in charge appeared to have a personal agenda and displayed a lack of professionalism, as well as an utter disregard for our constitutional rights," said Stemberger, who was threatened with arrest.

Pro-family activists are following the story because some believe it offers a glimpse into the future if the U.S. Congress passes "hate-crimes" legislation. They fear that Christian believers could find traditional Christian moral teaching, such as the definition of marriage as "one-man, one-woman marriage" punished as "hate speech."

MUSLIMS BELIEVE U.S. SEEKS TO UNDERMINE ISLAM

(EP News)--An in-depth poll of four major Muslim countries has found that

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in all of them large majorities believe that undermining Islam is a key goal of U.S. foreign policy. Most want US military forces out of the Middle East and many approve of attacks on US troops there.

Most respondents have mixed feelings about al Qaeda. Large majorities agree with many of its goals, but believe that terrorist attacks on civilians are contrary to Islam.

There is strong support for enhancing the role of Islam in all of the countries polled, through such measures as the imposition of sharia (Islamic law). This does not mean that they want to isolate their societies from outside influences: Most view globalization positively and favor democracy and freedom of religion.

These findings are from surveys in Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, and Indonesia conducted from December 2006 to February 2007 by WorldPublicOpinion.org with support from the START Consortium at the University of Maryland.

Large majorities across all four countries believe the United States seeks to “weaken and divide the Islamic world.” On average 79 percent say they perceive this as a US goal, ranging from 73 percent in Indonesia and Pakistan to 92 percent in Egypt. Equally large numbers perceive that the United States is trying to maintain “control over the oil resources of the Middle East” (average 79 percent). Strong majorities (average 64 percent) even believe it is a US goal to “spread Christianity in the region.”

“While U.S. leaders may frame the conflict as a war on terrorism,” said Steven Kull, editor of WorldPublicOpinion.org, “people in the Islamic world clearly perceive the U.S. as being at war with Islam.”

Large majorities in all countries (average 74 average) support the goal of getting the United States to “remove its bases and military forces from all Islamic countries,” ranging from 64 percent in Indonesia to 92 percent in Egypt. Substantial numbers also favor attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the Persian Gulf.

However, respondents reject attacks on civilians. Asked about politically motivated attacks on civilians, majorities in all countries - usually overwhelming majorities - say such violence cannot be justified at all.

MISSOURI PASSES PRO-LIFE BILL

(EP News)--Pro-life attempts to restrict abortion facilities took another step forward this week when the Missouri state House passed a bill April 23 that would tighten regulations for abortion clinics. The legislation, which passed 101-48, would require clinics that perform late-term abortions and those that do more than five first-trimester abortions a month to become ambulatory surgical centers. That would subject the clinics to increased regulation from the Department of Health and Senior Services. It's likely that the bill, if signed into

law, would force the shut-down of many of Missouri's abortion facilities.

WASHINGTON GOVERNOR SIGNS DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BILL

(EP News)--Same-sex couples will be able to register as domestic partners in Washington state starting this summer, after Gov. Chris Gregoire on Saturday signed a measure into law that will grant some of the rights of marriage. The law, which takes effect in July, comes nearly a year after the state Supreme Court upheld Washington's ban on same-sex marriage in a 5-4 decision, ruling that state lawmakers were justified in passing the 1998 Defense of Marriage Act, which restricts marriage to unions between a man and woman. “I think it's an unfortunate step backward, not knowing where it will lead us culturally,” Joseph Fuiten, a pastor who is the leader of Positive Christian Agenda, told The Associated Press.

SC LEGISLATURE KILLS HPV BILL

(EP News)--Here's proof that grass-roots activism works. The South Carolina House of Representatives killed legislation on April 18 that would have required seventh-grade girls in South Carolina to be vaccinated against human papilloma virus (HPV), a sexually transmitted infection that causes cervical cancer. As conservative groups campaigned heavily against the bill over the past week, many of the dozens of co-sponsors started removing their names. In fact, Rep. Joan Brady, R-Columbia, made the motion to kill her own bill.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST BAPTISMS DROP FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

(EP News)--The number of baptisms in Southern Baptist churches has fallen for the second consecutive year despite a push by top leaders to evangelize. Baptisms dropped from 371,850 to 364,826, or 1.89 percent, last year, the lowest annual total since 1993, according to Baptist Press. In 2005, baptisms decreased by 4.15 percent. National membership reached 16,306,246, up by nearly 36,000 in 2005. The number of churches across the country increased by 524, or 1.2 percent, to a total of 44,223. The Southern Baptist Convention is the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

U.S. SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS BAN ON PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION

(EP News)--Advocates of a law banning partial-birth abortion are celebrating what one of the law's co-sponsors is calling “first true judicial victory for the unborn since Roe v. Wade.” South Carolina Republican Jim DeMint said, “It upholds the will of the American people.” He made the statement on April 18, just hours after the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act -- which Congress passed and President Bush signed into law in 2003 -- does not violate a woman's right to an

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abortion, as several federal courts had ruled. The ban takes effect immediately. Along with Bush appointees Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Samuel Alito, other justices voting to uphold the ban were Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia.

LAWMAKERS HEAR TESTIMONY ON POST-ABORTION TRAUMA

(EP News)--Congressman Joe Pitts, R-Pa., used a hearing on postpartum depression to highlight the pain some women feel after having an abortion. His Post-Abortion Depression Research bill has been blocked by liberal leadership in the House, but on May 1, Pitts forced some of them to face a crude reality they desperately want to bury.

Colorado Congresswoman Dianna DeGette, a Democrat, could hardly restrain her fury in a futile effort to silence Pitts. But she couldn't stop Michaelene Fredenburg from sharing her heartrending story.

“I was completely unprepared for the emotional fallout after the abortion,” she testified. “I thought that the abortion would erase my pregnancy. I thought I could move on with my life, but I wasn't able to.”

Fredenburg told how she alternated between anger and sadness, how she developed an eating disorder and then began having suicidal thoughts. She finally realized she was experiencing a debilitating case of post-abortion trauma.

DeGette remained unconvinced.

“This so-called post-abortion syndrome is recognized by none of the established professional medical associations,” DeGette testified.

Georgette Forney of Silent No More said the reason for that has nothing to do with the validity of the condition. Studies have been denied publication in leading journals, and medical professionals who lean pro-abortion continue to sweep any suggestion of the trauma under the rug.

“There's a precedent that's been set already that we can deny something for a period of time when it's politically correct to,” Forney told *Family News in Focus*.

A recent study out of New Zealand found that almost 80 percent of 15- to 18-year-old girls who have abortions display symptoms of major depression.

Pitts' bill calls for, among other things, \$15 million for the National Institutes of Health to research post-abortion trauma. The measure was introduced March 9 and

is sitting in committee.

ACLU, OTHERS CHALLENGE ABSTINENCE EDUCATION

(EP News)--Abstinence education is again under fire from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and two organizations that want the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) if it doesn't rescind federal grants to certain abstinence curricula. The lawsuit could impact thousands of abstinence programs across the country.

In a letter to the HHS, the ACLU, Advocates for Youth and the SIECUS are demanding the HHS cut ties with three programs that they say provide incomplete and outdated information.

“Basically they're fabricating stories about programs,” said Angela Griffiths, executive director of Await & Find, an abstinence education advocate. “They're not even expressly stating what they're against.”

Lesley Scarce, executive director of Why Know, said the challenge is based on an inaccurate and outdated report. “The Santelli report is over a year old and has been refuted by medical experts, not to mention the fact that the report uses outdated information on Why Know.” She said. “It's no coincidence that the re-release of these claims comes during Congressional debate of abstinence funding.”

Scarce said abstinence education would be of little interest to SIECUS and the ACLU if it were not working. “Once again their agenda has overshadowed the facts,” she said. “We need to keep our focus on the primary concern – the health and futures of our young people, not a political agenda.”

Linda Klepacki, analyst for sexual health at Focus on the Family Action, said the opponents are throwing out undefined terms to discredit the abstinence movement. “There is no way to have ‘complete’ information on health in a classroom setting,” she said. “You'd have to teach 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Jordan Lorence, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, said the threat of a lawsuit rings hollow. “Under federal court procedures, you can't just march into court and say, ‘I think the federal government is spending money in the wrong way, and you, court, have to order them to stop doing that,’” he said.

But if it's a legal battle they want, Klepacki is glad to give it to them. “They better be careful what they ask for,” she said. “Abstinence education is willing to be held accountable. Are they?”

PENNSYLVANIA COURT AWARDS PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THREE ADULTS

(EP News)--A former lesbian couple and the man who donated sperm all have parental rights, according to a Pennsylvania Superior Court ruling April 30. Jennifer Shultz and Jodilynn Jacob lived together for about six years, according to the court

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opinion. Jacob adopted two young nephews and gave birth to two children. The father is Carl Frampton, a friend of Schultz.

After the lesbian couple split, lower courts found Jacob and Frampton to be biological parents, and Schultz to be a de facto parent with visitation rights. The Superior Court ruled that both Frampton and Schultz are required to pay child support.

“Those of us who believe that marriage and family are under assault had better hang on to our hats because, thanks to the courts, multiple parenthood is on its way,” said Carrie Gordon Earll, senior director of issues analysis for Focus on the Family Action. “This case represents the legal equivalent of ‘parental polygamy’ — yet another social experiment being promoted by the courts.

“No longer content with demands for legalizing same-sex unions, homosexual activists now want to redefine parenthood, as well as marriage,” she said. “Once courts begin to recognize group parenting, group marriage can’t be far behind.”

YOUNG AMERICANS FEAR FAMILY BREAK-UP

(EP News)--What do 16- to 22-year-olds fear most? The breakdown of the family tops the list, according to a new study.

In the first survey conducted by cell phone, New America Media asked 16- to 22-year-olds what are the biggest challenges facing their generation. Topping the list was breakdown of the traditional family, followed by violence and poverty.

Sandy Close, executive director of New America Media, said teens desire what they don’t have: stable families. “I think what you see in this poll is a yearning for connection and I don’t mean technology,” she said. “I mean by high-touch interaction, conversation, dinner at home, reliability, proximity and predictability.”

Ninety percent of those surveyed expect to be married and have families despite their fears. “They assume they’re going to be married,” Close said. “They assume they’re going to be parents. They assume they’re going to own homes, and they express a wonderful confidence.”

Laura Buddenberg with the Center for Adolescent and Family Spirituality at Girls and Boys Town said teens want “Till death do us part.”

“The thing that’s frustrating for them and what comes through when we work with kids is that’s what they want, but they think it’s impossible to get,” she said. “Here’s the deepest desire of your heart, but everywhere you look it doesn’t seem to be coming true. You want it, but you have no idea how to get it. It’s very frustrating.”

MONTANA SENIORS REGAIN RIGHT TO SING CHRISTIAN SONGS

(EP News)--Some seniors in Bozeman,

Mont., have their voices back, after nearly losing the right to sing Christian songs before meals. A few of their peers had threatened to call in the ACLU, but administrators did their homework and the singing can be heard again at the Bozeman Senior Center. At first, administrators feared they might risk losing federal funding for a Meals on Wheels program. But Amy Smith, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), said when senior center board members contacted her group, they learned that the seniors are well within their rights. “On Good Friday, they voted to reinstate the singing of songs before meals, and they were very pleased to do so,” Smith said. Kay Owen, a spokeswoman for Crossroads Ministries USA, said seniors in such a situation often fear another joy in their lives is being taken away. She said they deserve support and defense. “Since they’ve already lost so many things in their life, like their spouse, their home, their friends,” she said, “it’s very, very difficult to continue to lose them.”

MISSOURI COURT: PARENTS CAN SUE OVER TEENS’ ABORTIONS

(EP News)--Parents in Missouri have the right to sue anyone who helps their teenagers get an abortion without their consent, the state Supreme Court ruled May 1. The court rejected claims by Planned Parenthood that the 2005 law infringes on free speech. The law says “no person shall intentionally cause, aid, or assist a minor to obtain an abortion without the consent” of a parent or court order. Under the law, parents and guardians can sue those who violate the law. A Jackson County judge upheld the law in 2005, but issued an injunction pending an appeal to the high court.

TEXAS SENATE OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSES HPV VACCINE MANDATE

(EP News) -- On April 23, the Texas Senate voted 30-1 to override Gov. Rick Perry’s order that would have required schoolgirls to be vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted infection that causes cervical cancer. The House passed the legislation last month. It now goes to the governor, who can sign it, veto it or let it become law without his signature, which would happen in 10 days. Both houses have enough votes to override his veto. In February, Perry outraged the state and nation when he issued an executive order to require the HPV vaccine for all girls entering the sixth grade.

FLORIDA SHELL STATIONS BRING BACK PORN MAGAZINES

(EP News)--The Shell Oil Co. is stocking 240 of its branded stores in Florida with pornographic magazines. The Florida Family Association (FFA) and other pro-family groups have worked for years to keep pornographic magazines out of convenience stores, but Circle K stores at Shell gas stations will soon be selling Playboy and

Penthouse. In an e-mail to FFA, Otto O. Meyers III, a spokesman for Shell, wrote, “Our investigation has concluded that these stores are not selling pornography as one would think the general public defines it, but rather ‘adult sophisticate’ magazines such as Playboy and Penthouse.” But Daniel Weiss, media and sexuality analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said the company is clearly in violation of its own policy that prohibits stores from “selling or displaying materials with themes of sex, nudity or prurient interest.” He said, “Just making up a new word doesn’t change the policy.”

OUTRAGE AWARDS HIGHLIGHT CAMPUS INTOLERANCE

(EP News)--The 10th annual Campus Outrage Awards are out, and several prestigious colleges and universities received top honors for egregious instances of intolerance and intimidation on campus. The College of William and Mary took first for secretly ordering the removal of a cross from a chapel, followed by U.C. Berkeley for handing out scholarship money to kids with drug convictions. Third place was awarded to Johns Hopkins for trying to shut down a conservative newspaper after it reported on the university-funded appearance of a porn-film director.

LARGE FAMILIES RUINING THE PLANET, ENVIRONMENTALISTS CLAIM

(EP News)--In order to stop global warming, people should recycle, drive smaller cars and limit procreation — at least according to a paper published today by Britain’s Optimum Population Trust (OPT).

“The most effective personal climate-change strategy is limiting the number of children one has,” the report states. “The most effective national and global climate-change strategy is limiting the size of the population.”

John Guillebaud, co-chairman of OPT, claimed if a couple has two children instead of three, it cuts the family’s carbon dioxide output by the equivalent of 620 return flights from London to New York each year.

“The effect on the planet of having one child less is an order of magnitude greater than all these other things we might do, such as switching off lights,” he said. “The decision to have children should be seen as a very big one and one that should take the environment into account.”

PRESIDENT VOWS TO VETO BILL THAT CALLS FOR DESTRUCTION OF LIFE

(EP News)--President Bush, in identical letters to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, wrote, “I will veto any legislation that weakens current federal policies and laws on abortion, or that encourages the destruction of human life at any stage.”

Every child, he said, deserves life and the protection of the law. “I am writing to make

sure that there is no misunderstanding of my views on these important issues.”

He affirmed that the U.S. was founded on the belief that every person has rights, dignity and matchless value. Medicine does not have to be in conflict with the ethical imperative to protect life.

“In fact, advances in science have made it possible to see life developing at earlier stages and underscore American’s obligation to protect helpless and innocent life from destruction,” Bush wrote, “whether it is in the womb or elsewhere.”

Brendan Daly, a spokesman for Pelosi, said she characterized the president’s message as a broad threat “to veto any pro-choice legislation, instead of trying to work with Congress. He’s trying to threaten Congress, and that won’t work.”

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said Pelosi is out of step with America: U.S. taxpayers do not want to fund the killing of human life.

IOWA DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE ACT CHALLENGED

(EP News)--An Iowa court is considering a challenge to the state’s Defense of Marriage law. Six gay and lesbian couples claim the law is unconstitutional. Their attorney, Dennis Johnson, made his case before District Court Judge Robert Hanson on May 4. Johnson claimed the act, which the Legislature passed in 1998, is “mean spirited” and violates the state constitution’s equal protection and due process clauses. The Dec. 13, 2005, lawsuit contends that the couples were treated unfairly when they were denied marriage licenses. Hanson said he would consider the case and rule later. Chuck Hurley, president of the Iowa Family Policy Center, said marriage is a historically accepted social structure that governments have viewed for centuries as the best way to raise children. “That’s the core function, legally, to make sure children have the best chance to do well,” he said.

CALIFORNIA PRISONERS CAN HAVE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL

(EP News)--The California prison system this week agreed to settle a two-year dispute and allow Bible study materials to be delivered to inmates. Pacific Justice Institute (PJI) filed suit on behalf of Jesus Christ Prison Ministry after officials refused to allow free material to be delivered to inmates who requested it. Federal Magistrate Dale Drozd determined the prison policy that prohibited the material from reaching inmates was inconsistent with the First Amendment and the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. As part of the settlement, prison system officials agreed to allow greater access to religious materials. Kevin Snider, chief counsel for PJI, negotiated the settlement. “We appreciate those attorneys and other representatives from the state who have understood the importance of this and have worked hard to find common ground,” he

♦ (Continued on page 119)

Bible & Newspaper

(Continued from page 118) ♦

said. “Although we are not unsympathetic to the concerns of prison officials, a core change in the spiritual condition of inmates is the most effective security and reform measure available.”

CREATION MUSEUM TO OPEN
MAY 28

(EP News)--Answers in Genesis (AiG) has raised the necessary \$27 million in donations to cover the costs associated with the design and construction of the organization’s new Creation Museum and its displays. Located in the greater Cincinnati area, the high-tech 65,000-square-foot center, which will demonstrate the Bible’s authority in all matters including science, is scheduled to open to the public on May 28.

AFTER TWO DECADES, A VICTORY
IN ABORTION PROTEST CASE

(EP News)--U.S. District Judge David Coar ruled May 8 that laws against extortion and racketeering cannot be used to keep abortion protestors from standing outside clinics – ruling that puts to rest a legal battle spanning 21 years. Joe Scheidler, head of the Pro-Life Action League in Chicago, became the center of a class action suit filed by the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW used the 1970 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act to charge Scheidler with criminal activity for picketing abortion clinics. The case hinged on the argument that activists caused clinics to lose money, therefore they were acting as extortionists, he said.

APPROVAL NUMBERS FOR
CONGRESS ARE FALLING

(EP News)--The Democrats took over Congress promising to bring change, but a Gallup poll shows the American people aren’t pleased with the changes they’re seeing. Congress’ approval rating is 29 percent, the lowest level since Democrats took control in January. During the 2006 election campaign, Republicans were tagged as leading a “do-nothing” Congress. Democrats vowed they would change the tone in Washington. Now they say gridlock prevents them from achieving their goals. Political consultant Patrick Davis said the Democrats set their sights too high. “The laundry list of reforms that they wanted to get accomplished could only have been accomplished in a vacuum,” he said.

COLORADO GOVERNOR SIGNING
CEREMONY TROUBLES PRO-
FAMILY LEADER

(EP News)--In Colorado, gay adoption is in. Abstinence-only education is out. H.B. 1330, which legalizes gay adoption, and H.B. 1292, which bans abstinence-only education, were among 26 bills Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter signed into law in a single week in mid-May. Gov. Ritter told The

(Colorado Springs) Gazette that H.B. 1330 will “strengthen families and provide children with as stable an environment as possible.” But Jim Pfaff, president and CEO of the Colorado Family Institute, said the new laws were pay-back to liberal lobbyists who made huge contributions to Ritter’s campaign.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS
THREE EVANGELICALS MURDERED
IN TURKEY

(EP News)--Three evangelical Christians were murdered in Turkey on April 18. Necati Aydin (35), Ugur Yksel (32) -- both Turks -- and the German Tilmann Geske (46) were found tied up and their throats slit in the small Zirve Publishing House in Malatya, Central Turkey. A fourth person escaped by jumping out of a window and was seriously hurt. Turkish police have arrested five 19 and 20-year-old suspects. According to press reports the Muslims have admitted the crime. The paper Hurriyet quoted one of the suspects with the words: “May this be a lesson to the enemies of the faith.” Zirve Publishing House specializes in Turkish Christian literature and distributes the Jesus Film. Geske, who was married and father of three children worked as an interpreter for Zirve. German politicians have also denounced the murders. Some are questioning the efforts to integrate Turkey into the European Union, as long as religious freedom seems to be impaired. The EU Commission also denounced the assassination but said it was too early to speculate about possible repercussions for the negotiations with Turkey.

MEXICO CITY LEGALIZES
ABORTION

(EP News)--Lawmakers in Mexico City voted April 25 to legalize abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy. Family advocates vowed to challenge the law before Mexico’s Supreme Court. “This is a step backward for democracy,” Armando Martinez, the leader of a Catholic lawyers’ group, told The Associated Press. His group has petitioned the leftist-dominated legislative body for a referendum on the issue. The bill, approved 46-19, is expected to be signed by the city’s leftist mayor. Nationally, Mexico allows abortion only in cases of rape, severe birth defects or if the woman’s life is at risk. Across Latin America, only Cuba and Guyana permit abortion on demand in the first trimester. Most other countries allow it only in cases of rape or when the woman’s life is at risk. Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chile ban it completely.

IRAQI CHRISTIANS FLEEING
PERSECUTION

(EP News)--Thousands of Christians are fleeing Iraq because of persecution from the conflicting factions within the war-torn country. Most are heading for the relative safety of neighboring Syria and Jordan. About half of the refugees leaving Iraq are Christians.

Many Christians there have faced torture and execution. Marshall Sana of the British-based Barnabas Fund said the persecutors are familiar to Americans. “(It’s) a number of militants -- al-Qaida in Iraq -- all expressing Islamist ideology and all acting on that, to either kill or loot or otherwise subjugate the historic Christian communities there,” he said.

There were about 1.4 million Iraqi Christians in the 1980s. Now there are less than 500,000. They are called the “original Christians,” tracing their spiritual genealogy back to within decades of Christ.

Michael Bradley, a spokesman for The Assyrian Aid Society of America, said while the times may have changed, the persecution of Christians has not.

“We’re hearing kidnapping stories, we’re hearing about businesses being taken over and closed,” he said. “Families are fleeing because of violence in the south.”

But Todd Nettleton, director of news services for *The Voice of the Martyrs*, said Christians in the midst of the persecution tell him the persecuted church remains strong.

“They said, ‘You know, the government has fallen, the Americans are here. Right now we have a window of opportunity to build the church.’”

APOSTASY BILL CALLS FOR DEATH
TO CONVERTS FROM ISLAM

(EP News)--A new apostasy draft bill has been sent before a standing committee in Pakistan’s National Assembly. If passed, the Apostasy Act 2006, adopted in first reading by the parliament and tabled by the six-party Islamic alliance, the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal or MMA, would sentence to death all Muslim men found guilty of leaving Islam. Muslim women would face life in prison for the same crime. The draft bill goes into great detail over qualifications for conviction of “offenders.” Initial rejection of Islam can be punishable by up to two years incarceration, despite recantation. The death penalty becomes mandatory if a person converts from and returns to Islam more than three times. Denounced by many in the minority religious community in Pakistan, including the Archbishop of Lahore, the bill would – if passed into law -- make Pakistan one of the world’s worst violators of fundamental rights.



Take A Stand!
By
Capt. G. Russell Evans
\$9.95

The book is a combination of many articles that Capt. Evans has written over the years. I believe the readers of “The Berea Baptist Banner” will be interested in reading this book. Capt. Evans has taken a stand on many subjects in his articles, most of which were quite challenging. Please add \$2.50 for S/H.

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER
Financial Report
4-1-2007 to 4-30-2007

Beginning Balance.....\$6,919.36

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....60.00
Berea M. B.C., Mansfield, OH.....100.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN.....150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY175.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay WV50.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL.....100.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....25.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV.....100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....100.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....100.00
Lord’s C. at Beverly Hills, Goose Creek, SC ..100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM.....500.00
Mrs. T. Jean Ruley, Hartselle, AL25.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL100.00
Ruth King, Ironton, OH20.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS.....50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Burghill, OH75.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC ...100.00
Steve Cooper, Kansas City, KS37.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA25.00
Walnut Creek M. B. C., Centerburg, OH.....50.00
Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR.....80.00
Subscriptions533.00
Anon.....230.00
Dividing Checks213.45
Sub Total\$4,453.45
TOTAL.....\$11,372.81

EXPENDITURES:

Printing.....1,219.92
Postage886.39
Wages2,000.00
FICA152.95
Dividing Checks204.00
Total Expenditures4,463.26
ENDING BALANCE\$6,909.55

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST
Financial Report
4-1-2007 to 4-30-2007

Beginning Balance.....\$10,087.93

RECEIPTS:

Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY75.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS225.00
.....450.00
TOTAL.....10,537.93
EXPENDITURES:
Radio Time410.00
Postage19.75
TOTAL EXPENDITURES429.75
.....\$10,108.18
Interest+2.68
.....\$10,110.86
Less Corbin, KY des.-1,011.52
ENDING BALANCE\$9,099.34

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance.....\$1,171.52

RECEIPTS:

TOTAL.....1,331.52
EXPENDITURES:
WCTT160.00
ENDING BALANCE\$1,011.52



WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.) - Norfolk, Virginia

Illegal Immigration On the Rampage---It Must Be Stopped!



I am a 93 year old retired Coast Guard Captain and served my country for 30 years. I love my country---but am troubled by the lack of police guards at our borders thus allowing droves of people to enter illegally. Something has to be done about this problem and the sooner the better.

Jerry Woodruff, editor, "Middle American News" states, "the impact of illegal immigration reaches well beyond border states. I believe every state should declare their own 'State of Emergency' to stop the rampage we are now in."

Between 10 and 12 million illegal aliens are currently living in the United States. Many are unemployed and involved in criminal activities like drug smuggling and trafficking. Because they are in the U. S. illegally, most do not pay taxes or contribute positively to our economy. They are not only a grave threat to our National Security, but the flood of illegal immigration is costing the United States Billions of dollars each year in increased welfare, high crime rates, and economic prosperity.

Given the aggressive, renewed effort by the President and the liberals who now control Congress to push forward with amnesty, protecting the states from illegal immigration has taken on a new urgency.

A number of states could follow Arizona and New Mexico in declaring a "State of Emergency" to combat crime and violence associated with illegal immigration.

These states are overwhelmed. They're reeling from the devastating impact of an increasing violent and aggressive illegal alien population flooding across their borders.

Every state is on the front lines of our nations' invasion by illegal aliens. . .and every state has been left undefended by the Bush administration and the "Open Border" do nothing Congress.

The efforts of some state lawmakers to safeguard their citizens are being hindered and even reversed by the un-American push to give illegal aliens amnesty and other benefits.

With new reports showing amnesty is now on the fast track in Congress, states must move to safeguard their residents from the devastating consequences posed by this dangerous plan.

So our last line of defense is the "State of Emergency".

It would send the critical "SOS" to Washington lawmakers that American citizens have had enough---that we are overwhelmed and overburdened by the millions of illegal aliens who continue to stream across our borders.

Frankly, every state has the right

to defend itself from lawlessness and violence---even if our Federal Government fails to enforce its own laws, and especially when our elected leaders push amnesty bills that will make this problem even worse.

While the liberal media continues to balk at giving this story the coverage it deserves, I am more committed than ever to ensuring Americans hear the truth about what a few governors and state lawmakers are trying to do to defend American citizens.

You've already heard the rumblings from citizens who are frustrated with the refusal of the Bush administration and the liberals who control the U.S. House and Senate to do something about our Nations illegal immigration crisis.

There is a growing outrage by Americans against the push for amnesty---and the willingness of more and more lawmakers to compromise the integrity of our Nation's immigration laws to cater to illegal aliens.

This State of Emergency campaign will free up essential state and federal funds to strengthen law enforcement and combat the devastating impact of illegal immigration.

As you know, no state is immune to the devastating impact of illegal immigration. Border States alone do not bear the burden of millions of illegal aliens that invade our nation each year.

With over 12 million illegal aliens finding a safe haven all over America, it's time for the states to wake up and realize the crisis that is sitting on every citizen's doorstep.

Instead of doing everything they can to defend our borders, enforce immigration law, and stand up for the rights of American citizens, some

in Washington have attacked these governors, and accused them of crass political maneuvering.

Frankly, I'm disappointed that President Bush isn't applauding those states that are trying to defend against an increasingly aggressive and numerous invaders.

As the liberals who control Congress join forces with the Bush Administration to push amnesty and other outrageous proposals catering to illegal aliens at your expense, it's becoming more urgent for states to defend their residents from the devastating impact of illegal immigration by declaring a "State of Emergency".

"The elevator of success is out of order. You'll have to use the stairs. . .one step at a time." ---Joe Girard

(Excerpts are from previous writings of Captain Evans.)



ANNOUNCEMENT

On April 23rd, 2007 Elder Gerald B. Price, age 86, went home to be with the Lord.

Elder Price began his ministry at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Hawkins County, TN. He pastored fifteen

churches in Tennessee, Virginia, Florida and Kentucky.

Please remember his wife Sister Elizabeth and their children and family.

"and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty" (1 Sam. 20:18).

The First Baptist Church of Covington, OH is seeking a pastor.

This is a Sovereign Grace, Landmark, PreMillennial, Independent Baptist Church.

Any interested God called pastor who holds to these truths may call Shane Christman before 2:00 p.m. each day at

937-778-0391 or call (cell) 937-418-6681 or Tom Lewis at 937-372-3218 or (cell) 937-672-1776.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA is hosting their 11th Annual Bible Conference on June 8th thru 10th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Tom Horn, Leroy Pack, Larry Wilson, David O'Neal, Al Horn and Keith Kennison.

There will be a light meal at 5:00 p.m. on Friday the 8th followed by services at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday morning services will be followed by a noon meal. Afternoon services will begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by an evening meal at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday morning services will also be followed by a noon meal.

All are invited to attend.

For more information contact Pastor Jerry Dodson at 225-791-4314 or email Jerrydodsonsr@wmconnect.com.

If you have been receiving "This week's Bible Devotion" from Missionary Ray Bennett and the Berachah Baptist Mission of New York and have not received them in several weeks, please contact Bro. Ray at r4b33nett@juno.com or Berachah Baptist Mission, 271 Gray Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850-8761 with your current email and address. Due to a computer error some names on the mailing list have been lost.

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, AL will hold special services June 22nd-24th in conjunction with the Area Fellowship meeting on Saturday June 23rd. Elder Garner Smith will be speaking.

For more information contact Pastor Doyle Thomas at (256) 773-1474 or Email Coraltom@Charter.net.

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