

The Baptist CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

VOL. XXXIX, No. 5

December 2001

WHOLE NO. 446

Joseph and Mary

By Alexander Whyte

Saint Matthew and St. Luke, the first and third Evangelists, tell us all that we are told of Mary. They tell us that she was the espoused wife of Joseph a carpenter of Nazareth, and that the Divine Call came to her after her espousal to Joseph and before her marriage.

What a call it was, and what a prospect it opened up! No sooner was Mary left alone of the angel than she began to realize something of what had been appointed her, and what she must now prepare herself to pass through. The sharp sword that the aged Simeon afterwards spoke of with such passion was already whetted, and was fast approaching her devoted and exposed heart. On a thousand sacred canvasses throughout Christendom we are shown the angel of the annunciation presenting Mary with a branch of lily as an emblem of her beauty and as a seal of her purity.

But why has no spiri-

tual artist stained the whiteness of the lily with the red blood of a broken heart? For no sooner had the transfiguring light of the angel's presence faded from her sight than a deep and awful darkness began to fall upon Joseph's espoused wife. Surely if ever a suffering soul had to seek all its righteousness and all its strength in God alone, it was the soul of the

Virgin Mary in those terrible days that followed the annunciation. Blessed among women as all the time she was; unblemished in soul and in body like the paschal lamb as she was; like the paschal lamb also she was set apart to be a divine sacrifice, and to have a sword thrust through her heart.

Mary must have passed through many dark and

dreadful days when all she had given her to lean upon would seem like a broken reed. Hail, thou are highly favored of the Lord, the angel had said to her. But all that would seem but so many mocking words to her as she saw nothing before her but an open shame, and, it might well be, an outcast's death. And, so fearfully and wonderfully are we made, and so fearful and wonderful was the way in which the Word was made flesh, that who can tell how all this may have borne on Him who was bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; to whom Mary was in all things a mother, as He was in all things to her a son.

For, hers was the face that unto Christ had most resemblance. Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. These are the beginnings of sor-

The Vagaries of Atheism

By Roy Mason

Atheism is the denial of God. The atheist claims that there is no need for God as an explanation of things. It is probably true that there have been atheists all along down through the centuries. Certainly there were such back in Bible times for we have the atheist characterized in Psalm 14:1. God there characterizes the atheist as a fool, and says that back behind this atheism is a wicked life.

There is a definite organization of atheists in America — "The American Association For The Advancement Of Atheism." Atheists circulated around our church building one Sunday evening, throwing their circulars in cars, and leaving a blasphemous book on the church steps for the pastor.

Communism Is Atheistic

(See **MASON** on page 21)

(See **MARY** on page 22)

Quiz The Pastor -- #5

What Does The Old Testament Say About the Birth of Christ?

By the late Nick Michalinos

Question: “What does the Old Testament have to say about the birth of Christ?”

Answer: Since we have come to that time of the year when most professing Christians around the world observe the birth of Christ, it is good for us to know as much as we can about His birth. After Adam sinned, and God had placed a curse on both man and planet earth (Gen. 2:17; 3:17-19), it was then that God gave the first promise concerning the coming of Christ.

It is written: “The seed of the woman” shall bruise the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15). Thus, the Christ, who will defeat Satan in the end, would be, not of man’s seed (biologically, all humans are normally of the seed of the male) but of the woman’s seed, thus “made of woman” (Gal. 4:4).

Here we have the first mention of the virgin birth of the Christ. We are further enlightened on this prophecy by reading another prophecy found in Isaiah: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14).

Note that it is “*the* virgin shall conceive” (Heb.), speaking of a specific virgin, no doubt speaking of the “woman” in Genesis 3:15.

Please notice that this conception and birth was to be a “sign” from “the Lord himself.” God Himself would be the source, not man. If the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ was to be an ordinary birth that occurs in similar cases millions of times daily, then what is the significance in

(See **BIRTH** on page 24)

It Was Pretty Realistic

We hope you will read — if you haven’t already done so — the article we are printing today on Joseph and Mary by that profound and powerful Scotch preacher, Alexander Whyte. One reason we are printing it is because Mary has for these ages been the innocent victim of Roman Catholic idolatry on the one hand, and Baptist and Protestant indifference, ignorance, and cowardice on the other. And Joseph has never been understood and appreciated as his character demands that he should be.

We would like to emphasize, in connection with what Dr. Whyte says, that the conception and birth of our Lord was not, for Joseph and Mary, the romantic and sentimental event that the sentimentalists have pictured it — in art and in literature.

It was very realistic.

It was so for Mary. How could she ever convince even so good and understanding and sympathetic a man as Joseph that her condition was due to the Holy Spirit? How could she expect him to believe her?

And if Joseph did believe her, how could they expect anybody to believe *them*?

And Mary faced a terrible reality, as did Joseph. What was the Jewish penalty for adultery? Here it is in Leviticus 20:10:

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

Where have you ever seen in all of history a man and woman in such sensitive, helpless, and potentially terrifying circumstances?

What did these circumstances demand? They demanded that God should reveal the truth, first, to Mary, and then to Joseph. And that is exactly what happened.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

(See **SMITH** on page 22)

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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Articles carrying the author's byline do not necessarily reflect the Editorial policy of the paper.

What Is An Independent Fundamental Baptist Church?

By M. L. Moser, Editor

[The following was written by M. L. Moser, Jr. in the late 1950s as a tract to inform visitors to the church, the nature of Central Baptist Church of Little Rock, and to explain why it was an independent Baptist church. It was later modified for other independent Baptist churches and printed in tract form and made available to other independent Baptist churches for their use and was used by churches all over the country, some printing it under their own name.]

To many an independent Baptist church is a strange phenomenon. Being accustomed to the various Baptist groups such as Southern Baptist Convention, the Associations, or one of the organized Fellowships (Baptist Bible Fellowship or World Baptist Fellowship) and others, they cannot comprehend the nature of a church that is not affiliated with any of these. For that reason an independent Baptist church is looked upon with some suspicion. Surely a church that stand "all by itself" must be very odd.

Actually independent Baptist churches have existed since apostolic times. Long before the Protestant Reformation began there

were independent Baptist churches in both Europe and Asia. An independent Baptist church, therefore, is nothing new or novel. It has an ancient and glorious heritage. Though in various periods of church history members of independent Baptist churches have been persecuted and even slain for the faith, such churches continue until the present day. There are many thousands of independent Baptist churches in all parts of the world.

"What are the distinctives of an independent Baptist church?" you may ask. They could concisely be set forth under four major headings.

I. A Church That Is Self-governing.

The churches established by the Apostles of Christ were all independent churches, that is, they were free from any outside membership or control in any kind of an organization. The New Testament does not reveal the existence of any synod, conference, association, convention, organized fellowship, or other form of human organization exercising control over the local congregation or even existing apart from a local independent church. Each local church was viewed as a self-governing body.

An aggregation of local churches was never looked upon organizationally as a "church," but always as "churches," emphasizing the individual prerogatives of each congregation (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 11:16). Each local church chose its own officers (Acts 6:1-6). Each exercised its own discipline (1 Cor. 5:13). Churches were not responsible to any higher ecclesiastical body (since there were none), but were subject only to God (Rev. 2:4-5). Internal problems were handled by the individual congregation (1 Cor. 6:1-5). The maintenance of pure doctrine was the responsibility of the local assembly (1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 2:14-16).

The Holy Spirit directs each local group of believers (Acts 13:1-2). Such a church cannot be politically pressured because it owns its own property (in contrast to many denominational churches whose property is owned or in some measure controlled by the denomination).

In the important matter of calling a pastor, an independent Baptist church is cast upon the Lord for guidance. While they may seek counsel from neighboring pastors or Christian schools, no one can force them to accept a man they do not want. The congregation must prayerfully consider the merits of a candidate and decide whether or not he is God's man for them.

Another important characteristic is the liberty enjoyed in the matter of

missionary support. While pressure is exerted upon organized Baptist churches to support their own denominational missions, independent Baptist churches may seek the will and direction of God regarding this.

The Central Baptist Church of Little Rock has been led by the Lord to establish its own mission work in Cárdenas, Tabasco in the country of Old Mexico where we operate a five-year Bible school, Latin America Baptist Theological Seminary, support national churches and national preachers, and through the publication in the Spanish language of books, tracts, and pamphlets, extend the work into all Spanish speaking countries. The position of independent Baptist churches may be summed up thus: they are absolutely free to obey God as they see His direction and are under no obligation to any other church or group of churches. In each phase of their service for the Lord they must exercise spiritual discernment.

Actually, therefore, the independence of a church simply enhances its dependence upon the Lord. This tends to develop prayer and faith and to cultivate spirituality among the members.

II. A Church That Is Sound In Doctrine.

A fundamental Baptist church is one that stands

(See **WHAT** on page 18)



Understanding Islam

Former missionary to the Middle East shares Christian attitudes toward Muslims

By W. Trueman Moore

[Trueman Moore spent 15 years as a Southern Baptist missionary in Pakistan and Bangladesh doing evangelistic work among Muslims. He has studied Islam for more than 40 years and has read the Koran several times, including once since the Sept. 11 terrorism attacks. This article was printed in the October 11, 2001 issue of *The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.]

The unparalleled terrorist attack on the United States has struck at the deepest bases of our economy, freedom and security. What motivates such terrorism and how should Christians respond?

America is considered the world's premiere super power. Such a position of preeminence provides our citizens with untold economic and social privileges and responsibilities. Our preeminence also causes jealousy and envy.

Osama bin Laden, believed to be the mastermind behind many terrorist attacks including the ones on Sept. 11, has often stated his intentions to kill Americans without any consideration of their guilt or innocence. How does any one man come to be so angry

and evil? What sort of motivation breeds that hate?

Ultimately, this is a religious struggle.

Bin Laden's story is like that of many other Muslim extremists. There's the fanatical religiosity and the radical interpretation of Islam; the outrage over the dominance, particularly in the Arab world, of a secular, decadent U.S.; the in-

Some are saying "Islam is peace. Islam is a peaceful religion." The facts simply do not support that assertion.

dignation over U.S. support for Israel; the sense of grievance over the perceived humiliations of the Arab people at the hands of the West.

Bin Laden decided to take on the United States, funded by a fortune inherited from his contractor father, by an empire of business enterprises and by income from supporting Muslims in the United States, in Saudi Arabia and all over the world.

Bin Laden, like many Saudis, is a member of the puritanical Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam. Their war cry is to kill all infidels who

suggest Allah has companions. In the view of Muslims, Christians, by virtue of believing in the Trinity, make Jesus a companion of God. Therefore, many Muslims consider Christians to be idolaters and enemies of Allah.

When the Soviet Union attempted to occupy Afghanistan, bin Laden fought alongside many of the mujahedin (freedom fight-

ers) there. In 1989, as the exhausted Soviets finally pulled out of Afghanistan, bin Laden went home to Saudi Arabia where he became embroiled in a dispute and criticism of the royal family. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the Saudis invited in U.S. troops for the first time ever.

Like many other Muslims, bin Laden was offended by the Army's presence, with its Christian and Jewish soldiers, its rock music, its liquor, its women who drove vehicles and wore pants. To radical Muslims, a non-Muslim in-

fringement on Islamic territory goes beyond the political sin of oppression, it is an offense to Allah that must be corrected at all costs. The Saudis canceled bin Laden's citizenship, and he fled first to Sudan and then back to Afghanistan. He began to gather other former freedom fighters and organized a terrorist network now called Al Qaeda. Since then, he has been involved in many terrorist acts, the latest apparently being the horrific destruction and loss of life in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

In 1998 bin Laden said, "In today's wars, there are no morals. We believe the worst thieves in the world today and the worst terrorists are the Americans. We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets."

The struggles between Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, have continued with increasing ferocity since Bible times. Arabs, most of whom are Muslim, claim to be the descendants of Ishmael and the Jews claim to be the descendants of Isaac.

(See **ISLAM** on page 5)

ISLAM . . .

(Continued from page 4)

Middle East turbulence always revivals around the Jewish-Muslim conflicts. Muslims follow the life and teachings of Mohammed who was born about A.D. 570 in Saudi Arabia. Muslims believe the Koran was revealed by God to Mohammed. They reject the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the crucifixion, justification, grace, mercy, salvation, sanctification, heaven and hell. Jesus is considered a great prophet, but Mohammed is greater to Muslims since he is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the Comforter would come after Jesus.

While Mohammed recorded many good teachings in the Koran, his own and his followers' attitudes toward war and peace must be judged by their actions and by the following verses from the Koran:

"Believers, retaliation is decreed for you in bloodshed."

"Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme."

"Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed." (Muslims believe Christians are idolaters because we believe in the Trinity and that Jesus is the Son of God.)

"The only true faith in God's sight is Islam."

"Believers, do not make friends with any but your own people."

"Prophet, make war on

the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with them."

These references and many more may help us to understand the terrorists.

In the 1300s, Tamerlane, a Muslim ruler, killed 35 million Christians, according to Baptist researcher David Barrett (*The Inner Circle*, July 1989, p. 8).

Consider the Muslim persecution of Christians in the world today in Nigeria, Indonesia, Sudan, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and others.

The father of Saeed Hotari, the Jordanian suicide killer of 21 people in Tel Aviv, proudly praised his son's decision. "He has become a hero! What more could a father ask?" he said. "There is no better way to show God you love him" (*Reader's Digest*, October 2001).

Some are saying, "Islam is peace. Islam is a peaceful religion." The facts simply do not support that assertion. The militants select those parts of Mohammed's life and example that support their own views on how Muslims should live and think. Right or wrong, that is the source of Osama bin Laden's and the other terrorists' actions.

Islam is being redefined to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Many Muslims have come to reject the sword. These

"moderate" Muslims want to live in peace. but the warlike fundamentalist Muslims intimidate their fellow peaceloving Muslims and others by terrorism.

I have personally seen their violent nature exhibited in the destruction of entire villages. In one blood-letting, they killed so many Hindus in Dhaka that 5,000 bodies were buried in a ditch.

It is impossible to understand Islam as a religion only. Islam embraces all of life. It controls, among others, how the Muslim greets people, the language he speaks, what he says, what he eats, what he wears, how he bathes, how he does business, how he marries, relates to his family and divides his estate.

The United States has absorbed untold millions of Muslims who wanted to leave their homelands and come to this land of plenty. Some of them have been outstanding in their fields: sports, medicine, media and education. Some have been converted and have become fine Christian citizens. Many, while remaining Muslims, deplore violence and terrorism. But the extremists have turned on this country with a vitriolic hatred that is beyond imagination.

God has not forsaken His children in these trying times. He knows the grief we feel, and He cares. Here are two approaches believers should take as we consider our

alternatives.

First, separate the national problem from your personal response. Nationally, it is right that the country's leaders and military act to end terrorism and stop further attacks on the United States.

Second, as individuals we are not to take matters into our own hands. Our attitudes and actions as individual Christians are clearly spelled out in Luke 6:27-28, 35-36. We are to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. Read Romans 12:14-21 also.

Mourn with those that mourn.

Pray for our leaders and enemies.

Love our enemies.


Refuse to let anger and vengeance dominate your thinking.

Defend the persecuted, those who are stereotyped but innocent of wrong doing.

Make peace with Muslims or others with whom you come in contact.

Share the good news of Jesus.

Pray our leaders will have wisdom to know what to do and how to do it. Pray for our missionaries who serve in Muslim nations. Pray for our military who will bear the brunt of the attacks.

Remember: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God." 

Conveniently Forgotten Facts

By Paul Harvey

[The following was sent over the internet and was received October 24.]

Back in 1969 a group of Black Panthers decided that a fellow black panther named ... Alex Rackley needed to die. Rackley was suspected of disloyalty.

Rackley was first tied to a chair. Once safely immobilized, his friends tortured him for hours by, among other things, pouring boiling water on him.

When they got tired of torturing Rackley, Black Panther member, Warren Kimbo took Rackley outside and put a bullet in his head.

Rackley's body was later found floating in a river about 25 miles north of New Haven, Connecticut.

Only In America!

Perhaps at this point you're curious as to what happened to these Black Panthers. In 1977, that's only eight years later, only one of the killers was still in jail. The shooter, Warren Kimbro, managed to get a scholarship to Harvard, and became good friends with none other than Al Gore. He later became an assistant dean at an Eastern Connecticut State College. Isn't that something?

As a '60s radical you can pump a bullet into someone's head, and a few years later, in the same state, you can become an assistant college dean!

Erica Huggins was the lady who served the Panthers by boiling the water for Mr. Rackley's torture. Some years later Ms. Huggins was elected to a California School Board.

How in the world do you think these killers got off so easy? Maybe it was in some part due to the efforts of two people who came to the defense of the Panthers.

These two people actually went so far as to shut down Yale University with demonstrations in defense of the accused Black Panthers during their trial.

One of these people was none other than Bill Lan Lee. Mr. Lee, or Mr. Lan Lee, as the case may be, isn't a college dean. He isn't a member of a California School Board. He is now head of the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, appointed by none other than Bill Clinton.

O.K., so who was the other Panther defender? Is this other Panther apologist now an assistant college dean? No, neither!

The other Panther defender was, like Lee, a radical law student at Yale

Speak About Islam Clearly & Without Fear

By Michael Foust

Extremists may kill innocent people in the name of Allah, but that is not the ultimate danger of the Islamic faith, says R. Albert Mohler Jr. The biggest danger, Mohler says, is that Islam presents a false gospel, a false god and a false salvation. Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke about Islam, Judaism and the Christian faith during a chapel message titled "Theology Matters" Oct. 17 on the Louisville, Ky, campus.

Preaching from Isaiah 44, Mohler noted that in recent days theologians, media members and the general public have been debating whether Islam itself is to be blamed for the attacks of Sept. 11. Mohler, though, said Christians should be focused on a different issue — the eternal consequences of the Muslim faith.

"I'm no specialist in Islamic theology," he said. "I'll let those who are debate whether or not there

University at the time. She is now known as The "smartest woman in the world." She is none other than the Democratic Senator from the State of New York — our former First Lady, the incredible Hillary Rodham Clinton.

And now as Paul Harvey said, "You know the rest of the story!"

is that kind of militancy and warrior culture within Islamic theology. But I want to say as a Christian theologian, the biggest problem with Islamic theology is that it kills the soul.

"The bigger problem with Islam is not that there are those who will kill the body in its name, but that it lies about God [and] presents a false gospel, an un-gospel," Mohler said, acknowledging, "These are difficult things to say. This is not polite."

If the God of the Bible is to be believed, Mohler argued, then Christians have no choice but to speak the truth about other religions, including Islam and Judaism. Mohler pointed to Matthew 10:28, where Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Mohler also quoted John 14:9, where Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."

"It is often said — in fact it is now routinely claimed — that Muslims worship the same God as the Jews and the Christians," Mohler said. But, Mohler said, Christians do not serve the same God as that of Jews and Muslims,

(See **MUSLIM** on page 7)

BUSH — A Man of Prayer

James Merritt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of the Atlanta-area First Baptist Church, Snellville, was one of six ministers invited to join President Bush for a closed-door meeting just hours before the president addressed a joint session of Congress on Sept. 20.

"I think I can speak for the entire group when I say that without question, we all came away impressed with where he is right now as a leader and where he is spiritually," Merritt told Baptist Press. "I was very elated and came away from the meeting encouraged."

Merritt said the six religious leaders spent 30 minutes with the president talking about the importance of Americans to come together spiritually and the importance of faith.

"Those were the things on his heart and mind," Merritt said. "He shared with us that he is being very deliberate and he is going to uphold his responsibility to defend this nation.

"This meeting was a signal that this is a president who understands the foundation of this nation is not financial, economical or military," Merritt said. "The foundation of this nation is spiritual."

At times, Merritt said, the president became emotional. "He is a man of deep faith," he said. "The president is without question a compassionate conserva-

tive. His heart is broken over what has happened."

Merritt said the president requested prayer from the group of leaders.

"He wanted to share with us his need for prayer and his need for wisdom during these days," Merritt said. "Physically, he is doing well. Emotionally, he is totally at peace. He knows where he wants to lead the nation."

Merritt said the religious leaders stood in a circle with the president, clasped hands, and prayed.

"For a president to take 30 minutes to spend with religious leaders tells you where his priorities are," Merritt said. "The fact that we were able to interact with him in that type of setting is remarkable. He listened more than he spoke."

While some ministers offered counsel to the president, Merritt said he simply offered a word of encouragement.

"As fellow believers we believe in the sovereignty of God. On the one hand, God knew what was going to happen on Sept. 11, but he also knew who would be sitting in the White House. I believe that President Bush is God's man for this hour. God's hand is on him.

"I encouraged him to humble himself to the Lord and God will lead him in a divine, providential way," Merritt said.

After the meeting,

Merritt asked the president how Christians could pray for him.

"First, he said to pray for wisdom; second, strength; third for clarity of thought; and he asked us to say a special prayer for his wife, daughters and family that God would protect them and he would be a godly husband and godly father," Merritt said.


At the end of the meeting, Merritt said he shook the president's hand and told him that "I loved him."

"That's when he looked at me and said, 'James, tell all my Southern Baptist friends how much I love them as well.'"

While Merritt said he never dreamed he would be in the Oval Office, he said the most impressive memory of the prayer time was the president.

"Again, what I will remember is that we have a president who has a genuine love for Christ," Merritt said.

Prior to the Oval Office gathering, Merritt attended a noontime meeting


at the White House with ministers from 30 other denominations including evangelist Franklin Graham and Christian author Max Lucado. -- BP 

MUSLIM . . .

(Continued from page 6)

for the Jews have rejected Christ and the Muslims have replaced the God of the Bible with Allah.

"That's a very difficult statement," he said. "We believe that there is one God who has revealed Himself in the Old Testament and the New Testament. We must be very clear that to reject Jesus Christ is to reject the Father. [That] is so politically incorrect. It breaks all the rules of American etiquette. . . . But if the Christian church will not be clear about the Christian gospel, who will?"

The Christian God, Mohler said, is the only God, and he is known savingly through Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone. (BP) 

Pass It On!

We would appreciate it if our readers would pass the information on to others that **The Baptist Challenge** is now available on the Internet. A mention in your church bulletin or paper giving the Internet address would be appreciated and if you can send out Emails, please notify those on your mailing list about TBC being available. Thanks.

—The Editor

World News Roundup

Singer Says It May Be OK To Kill An Infant.

— Princeton University's animal rights radical Peter Singer believes parents should be able to euthanize severely disabled infants less than a month old. He said "Killing a defective infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Sometimes it is not wrong at all." — CC

Cronkite Explodes Over Falwell Remark.

— Walter Cronkite unleashed a very harsh attack on religious broadcasters Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, terming Falwell's remarks on the 700 Club about the Sept. 11 terror attack "abominable." He implied their God and the bombers' might be the same (TV Guide). Even though Falwell apologized (mainly for not stressing the terrorists' blame) for blaming the devastation on pagans, abortionists, homosexuals, ACLU, etc., the "tolerant" liberal free speech lobby could not tolerate this and came down very hard on him. Actually, in divine "retribution" God has even allowed more-evil enemy nations to chasten His erring people (see Habakkuk). Cronkite in a 1998 fundraising letter for The Interfaith Alliance (its national board has Unitarian,

Catholic, NCC, and other liberals), revealed his extreme left-wing bias against Falwell, the Christian Coalition, etc. This "most trusted man in America" said: "I work very hard at being a Christian." — CC

Legacy Of Homosexuality.

— The homosexual lifestyle is an unhealthy, unnatural, and unwise choice. It has cost the Roman Catholic Church hundreds of millions of dollars in lawsuits against homosexual priests. It is a danger to schools, and is a public health hazard. AIDS is more prevalent among homosexuals than for heterosexuals in the U.S. The life expectancy of "gay" and bisexual men is as much as 20 years less than for all men (10/1 Chr. News). Homosexuality is a life of pain, is unnatural (homosexuals won't have children), and is something parents don't want for their kids. — CC

Abortions Continue.

— Children murdered through abortions in Russia now exceed live births (10/1 CN). Women in China, South Korea, and wealthy parts of India increasingly abort female fetuses. Over 40 million babies have been

aborted in the U.S. since 1973. A mother's womb has become the most dangerous place on earth. — CC

Name One Muslim Nation With Freedom!

— Most of the following are excerpts from the 10/6 World. What country of the world is the "beautiful religion" of Islam practiced in a way that might prompt one to want to move there for the rest of one's life? Muslim nations have severe restrictions, especially on women. Islam and Christianity are mutually exclusive — both claim to be the only right way to God. Shiite Muslims are more radical than the Sunnis, but in all Islamic nations, none welcome people of other faiths in the way our nation welcomes Muslims. It seems unwise to enlist terrorist-sponsoring nations as "allies" in the war on terrorism. We grieve when our president visits a mosque and praises Islam. We are a nation "under God," not "gods." Pray that our president will trust the only true and living God for guidance and protection during these uncertain days. — CC

Taliban Arrests 35

More Afghans In Alleged Missionary Probe.

— The following is from Compass Direct: "Taliban authorities arrested 35 more Afghan aid workers, bringing the total to more than 50 Afghans jailed by the strict Islamist regime since early August on suspicion of aiding covert Christian missionary work. The 35 Afghans were employed by the recently banned International Assistance Mission (IAM). Eight Western relief workers are also being held."

Saudis Arrest Ten Christians For Discussing Their Faith.

— In a crackdown against non-Muslim activity in Jiddah, police in Saudi Arabia have arrested as many as ten Christians who discussed their religion at a party, according to a humanitarian group. "The first person to be arrested had been in Saudi Arabia for a long time and his contract had ended," Daniel Hoffman of Middle East Concern told Reuters news agency. "His friends organized a farewell party for him, told people to bring friends along and invited an Indian evangelist." Public display of any faith other than Islam is forbidden in Saudi Arabia.

(See **WNR** on page 13)

La Voz Del Desierto

La Gran Tragedia Del Pueblo Norteamericano

El martes 11 de septiembre de 2001 se cometió el atentado terrorista contra las Torres Gemelas del World Trade Center (Centro de Comercio Mundial) en Manhattan, Nueva York y contra el Pentágono, en Washington D.C. Este ha sido el acto de agresión más violento contra los Estados Unidos de Norte América desde el ataque a Pearl Harbor hace seis décadas (7 de diciembre de 1941), donde perdieron la vida más de 2,000 americanos.

Estados Unidos ha recibido el peor ataque en su historia, al ser impactadas las Torres Gemelas del World Trade Center en Nueva York (edificios de 110 pisos), y el Pentágono en Washington, por tres aviones comerciales de vuelos nacionales, secuestrados por una organización terrorista.

El impacto provocó que las tres estructuras se incendiaran, haciendo que las Torres Gemelas de Nueva York, se desplomaran, provocando que otros edificios aledaños sucumbieran. También las llamas destruyeron parte del Pentágono, quedando la entrada del helipuerto destruida. Este funesto martes 11 de septiembre

será recordado por muchos como el día en que se cometió el atentado más devastador en toda la historia de los Estados Unidos. Miles de personas bajo una angustia terrible, se esparcían por las calles colindantes al lugar del suceso, corriendo, llorando y gritando. El horror era indescriptible.

Normalmente, cincuenta mil (50,000) personas trabajaban en oficinas en estas Torres Gemelas de la Isla de Manhattan, aunque por la hora relativamente temprana del ataque, poco antes de las 9:00 a.m., pudiera ser que entre 10,000 a 20,000 personas se encontraran en los edificios en ese momento. En el Pentágono trabajan más de veintitres mil (23,000) personas, entre militares y civiles.

Hasta este momento las autoridades de Nueva York han rescatado e identificado sólo 209 cuerpos, y sólo cinco personas han sido recuperadas con vida por los servicios de rescate. El número de personas desaparecidas y presumiblemente muertas, hasta ahora, se estima en 6,398.

Lo que se considera el peor acto terrorista registrado en la historia de los Estados Unidos, representa la falla más

grande del sistema de inteligencia y seguridad, ya que no logró detectar a tiempo un complot que ha costado miles de vidas, millones de dólares en pérdidas y una herida difícil de sanar en el orgullo del país autodenominado como la mayor potencia mundial.

La horrible pesadilla experimentada en World Trade Center y en el Pentágono ponen punto final a la idea de la "inquebrantable" red de protección de las agencias de seguridad nacional norteamericana. Sin duda alguna, la trágica experiencia ha conmocionado a una nación que nunca imaginó su vulnerabilidad. Esta gran tragedia ha tocado el corazón de la nación norteamericana, pues las tres estructuras afectadas (las dos Torres Gemelas y el Pentágono), representan el poder económico, militar y de inteligencia de este país, considerado la primera potencia a nivel mundial.

Ante la gran tragedia, el presidente de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, George W. Bush se dirigió a la nación indicándole a los ciudadanos que habían sido víctima de un ataque terrorista y advirtió que los culpables serían capturados, enjuiciados y castigados.

Días posteriores a la tragedia, el sábado 15 de septiembre de 2001, el presidente Bush prometió que las tropas norteamericanas sacarían a los terroristas de sus "agujeros" en una larga e implacable respuesta a los espantosos ataques y resaltó simplemente: "estamos en guerra." Por primera vez, Bush identificó a Osama Bin Laden (fundamentalista islámico, cabecilla del grupo Al Qaeda, identificados como responsables de distintos atentados terroristas contra Estados Unidos, Israel y otros países, desde principios de los 90), como el principal sospechoso en los ataques terrorista de Washington y Nueva York, además de la caída de un avión en Pensilvania.

Según Osama Bin Laden la guerra entre cristianos y musulmanes es inevitable. Para Bin Laden el mundo está dividido en dos partes mutuamente contrarias: el mundo cristiano aliados con los judíos y los musulmanes que luchan en contra de éstos.

La visión de Bin Laden es, pues, exclusivamente religiosa. No combate a los americanos porque sea marxista o porque ame a

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TRAGEDIA . . .

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los oprimidos de la tierra; lo hace porque Estados Unidos es aliado de Israel, la nación enemiga, y porque ese país mantiene una presencia militar en Arabia Saudita, que es para los musulmanes, “la tierra de los dos lugares santos”, *la Meca*, el principal lugar de culto para los musulmanes, y *Medina*, la ciudad donde se refugió el profeta Mahoma.

¿Qué significado tiene todo esto para los cristianos y cuál debe ser nuestra posición al respecto?

Como creyentes en Cristo, tenemos que analizar todo a la luz de la Biblia. La Biblia nos enseña: “*Y oiréis de guerras y rumores de guerra; mirad que no os conturbeis porque es necesario que todo esto acontezca; pero aún no es el fin. Porque se levantará nación contra nación, y reino contra reino; y habrá pestes, y hambres, y terremotos en diferentes lugares. Y todo esto será principio de dolores*” (Mateo 24:6-8).

El cristiano no tiene que temer por las cosas que están pasando en el mundo, el Señor está con nosotros y es él, el que controla todo. Todas estas señales nos indican que el *arrebata* miento de los salvos está próximo. En algún momento, el Señor viene a encontrarse con todos los “*verdaderos creyentes*” en el aire, y así estaremos

siempre con el Señor (1ra Tesalonicenses 4:13-17).

Las cosas que están pasando preparan la escena para el período de la Gran Tribulación (Mateo 24:21), un período de siete años, donde se desatará la ira de Dios en juicios sobre los incrédulos de esta tierra. Los creyentes en Cristo serán llevados de la tierra antes que el período la Gran Tribulación comience. Este período será uno de horrible pestilencia, derramamiento de sangre y hambre, como nunca lo ha habido en la tierra, ni lo habrá. Todas estas cosas que están sucediendo son principio de dolores, todo va caminando hacia el período de la Gran Tribulación.

Sin duda alguna, la nación de Israel juega un papel muy importante en los acontecimientos de estos últimos tiempos, que tienen que ver con el cumplimiento de la profecías bíblicas. Los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica ha sido la nación que Dios ha utilizado como instrumento para ayudar a Su pueblo (Israel), en estos últimos tiempos. Pero esto no será así siempre. Está claro que Estados Unidos no será el país dirigente del hemisferio occidental en el tiempo futuro, cuando el anticristo esté gobernando sobre la tierra. En un futuro, Israel pasará por una gran tribulación, donde estará sola como nación, y en su angustia clamará a Dios y recibirá ayuda directamente de Él (Zacarías 14:1-3, 12-16). El que Estados Unidos le esté brindando ayuda a Israel le

ha ganado el repudio y el odio de los árabes, pues ellos consideran a Israel su enemigo.

Cuando los judíos reestablecieron su nación en Palestina, crearon un problema: desplazaron a los árabes que han vivido en Palestina por varios siglos. Todos los diálogos y discusiones lógicas que puedan adelantarse, no podrán cambiar nunca el estado de hostilidad existente entre judíos y árabes. Los judíos nunca podrán convencerse de que deben abandonar la tierra que Dios le dio a sus padres (Abraham, Isaac y Jacob), (Gén. 13:14-17). Ellos están convencidos de que los romanos les arrebataron su derecho inalienable a la tierra de Palestina. La permanencia de su nación en Palestina es un asunto que tiene que ver con la supervivencia de la raza israelita. Israel cree que esa es su única esperanza en este mundo hostil.

Los árabes, por otra parte, son igualmente implacables en su determinación de que los israelitas no deben ocupar la tierra que ellos han poseído durante generaciones y que consideran suya. Sacar a los judíos de Palestina es, para ellos, una cuestión de honor de la raza y un sagrado deber religioso.

Según la Palabra de Dios, la crisis del Medio Oriente seguirá creciendo hasta que amenace la paz del mundo entero. Todas las naciones concentrarán su

atención en el problema complejo e insoluble, que las está encaminando a un holocausto termonuclear, la permanencia en la tierra de Palestina, por parte de los judíos y los árabes.

¿Ahora, a quién pertenece la tierra de Palestina? ¿a los judíos o a los árabes? Es importante que sepamos que cuando Jehová llamó a Abraham le dio una promesa. Esta promesa contenía bendiciones personales, nacionales y universales (Gén. 12:1-3). Cuando Abraham recibió esta promesa de parte de Dios, todavía se hallaba bajo la dirección y mandato de su padre Taré. Salió de Ur y se dirigió a la frontera norte de la tierra de Palestina, que Jehová le iba a dar. Le acompañaban su esposa Sara, su padre Taré y su sobrino Lot.

Jehová los detuvo en la frontera de la tierra de Canaán, porque Jehová había dicho a Abraham que se emancipase de su padre idólatra, así como de su lugar de residencia. Después de la muerte de su padre, Abraham reanudó su marcha, salió de Harán y entró en la tierra de Palestina (Gén. 11:31-32; 12:4-5). Allí se le apareció Jehová y le dijo que daría la tierra de Palestina a su descendencia (Gén. 12:6-7).

La misma promesa de la posesión de la tierra de Palestina, fue confirmada en los tratos de Jehová con Abraham (Gén. 13:14-17).

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How Many Faces Has Africa?

By Donald M. Taylor

Like to take a little quiz on Africa?

Here's a good question: How many faces has the greatest continent? I mean, how many different kinds of people? Before you answer I want to confess that if you had asked me a short time ago I probably would have answered: "Well, there are quite a few tribes, but they are really all much alike. An African is an African. Africa is the original home of the colored race."

That's a sample of what I knew about Africa. But now since running through a special issue of **Life** Magazine devoted to Africa, I can tell you there are two races — Negroid and Caucasoid — and many, many faces. Within those two races is a bewildering mixture of tribes, cultures and languages.

In **Life** a beautiful colored map pictures in their characteristic costumes and setting some of the principal tribes and nationalities among the hundreds of different ethnic groups. You could almost make a song out of the

names.

Across the north are the Berbers, Tauregs, Arabs, Egyptians. Across the broad belt immediately south are: Americo-Liberian, Ashante, Yoruba, Ido, Hausa, Shilluk, and Ethiopian. Further south: Mangbeta, Tusi, Masa, Kikuyu, the Mau Mau tribe of Kenya) and Indian. In the deep south around the cape: Herero, Bushman, Mdebele, Afrikaner, and Cape Colored. On the island of Madagascar: Malagasy.

Did you know there were all those people and many more? It is strange, is it not, that in America we know so little about the vast, richly endowed land of Africa.

But then aren't we rather ignorant even about our own country? For example, suppose I ask you, "Are you a Christian?" If you are an average American you probably will answer, "Of course, I am. Wasn't I born here?" But really an answer like that is as foolish as a Berber saying, "Sure, I'm a Kikuyu. Wasn't I born in Africa?" The Berbers

and Kikuyus are almost a continent apart. It is the difference between being born once and being born twice. Being born in America doesn't make one a Christian.

You ask then "What is a Christian?" A Christian is one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian is one who has by faith seen Jesus Christ dying for his sins and raised again for his justification. A Christian is one who has been born into the family of God.


We are all born sinners, whether we are Americans or Africans. To be Christians we must be born again. Our first birth was of the flesh. To be Christians we must be born of the spirit. You ask, "How can that be? How can one be born of the spirit?"

I'll answer you in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, spoken to a man who asked the same question: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the Son of man. In the wilderness the Israelites were bitten by fiery poisonous serpents and many of them died of the bites. When they cried for help, God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole, and that whosoever looked at the serpent would be made well. And all who looked lived. They took God at His

Word. They believed Him. They lived.

So, too, you can have eternal life — become a Christian — simply by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

"As many as received him (the Lord Jesus Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:12-13). 

How To Enjoy A "Dull" Sermon

In order to have dull sermons from the pulpit there must also be dull listeners in the pews.

After all, a sermon is a relationship. It is a relationship between the preacher and the church attendant. In order to gain from that relationship both parties must contribute something to it.

But if the sermon is to be meaningful and interesting, it also requires some input on the part of the listener. It's a two-way aisle, so to speak, and if the sermon turns out to be a dud, it's not entirely the fault of that man up front.

Let's see, therefore, what we can all do to make even the most insipid ser-

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World view

Tomorrow's Changes!?

By James R. Love

Who said, "There are those who argue that the right to privacy is a higher order than the right to life. It is the privacy right of the woman to choose. That was the premise of slavery. You could not protest the existence or the treatment of slaves on the plantation because that was private, and therefore outside of your right to be concerned."?

The same person also said, "Don't let the pro-choicers convince you that a fetus isn't a human being. That's how the Whites dehumanized us by calling us niggers. The first step was to distort the image of us as human beings in order to justify that which they wanted to do -- and not even feel they'd done anything wrong."?

Give up? It was Reverend Jesse Jackson. When did his view of abortion change? When he ran for president! I think you'll find a very similar history with another person who had political ambitions, named Al Gore.

Allow me to introduce to you another name -- Derek Humphrey. He is the founder of the Hemlock Society! The Hemlock Society is a quietly growing organization that advocates assisted suicide, "death with dignity," and many of their

members are for euthanasia -- even if enforced.

Mr. Humphrey was having a hard time getting his ideas of death and dying accepted by the general public, and having real difficulty getting the media give him any attention. Until ... "a wonderful thing happened. It opened all the doors for me."

What was that wonderful thing that happened? Could it be the attention towards the subject by Dr. Jack Kevorkian? Could it be the euthanasia allowances given by some European countries? No, it was a decision right here on the home front. "*Roe v. Wade*"!

I have always claimed that the same philosophical arguments that are used to justify abortion can be used to justify euthanasia. The difficulty is that the elderly are people that we have known and see, so we do not have the convenience of murder before having a visual image.

We have already seen that men will change moral positions for aspirations or the love of money. We are facing economic situations and great days of crisis. Who will change for aspirations or the dollar in the days ahead?

With that in mind, who said, "We cannot diminish


The Butterfly

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day, a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then, it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it could, and it could go no further.

So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.


The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the

the value of one category of human life, the unborn, without diminishing the value of all human life. ... there is no cause more important? President Ronald Reagan. 



tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. *We could never fly!* —The Christian Baptist. 

True Or False?

"Myriads of professing Christians nowadays seem utterly unable to distinguish things that differ. Like people afflicted with color-blindness, they are incapable of discerning what is true and what is false, what is sound and what is unsound. If a preacher of religion is only clever and eloquent and earnest, they appear to think he is all right, however strange and heterogeneous his sermons may be. They are destitute of spiritual sense, apparently, and cannot detect errors."

— J. C. Ryle

WNR . . .

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Conversions are punishable by death. — RNS

Pope Says Unbelievers Will Be Saved.

— Tempering a controversial Vatican declaration on salvation, Pope John Paul II said that all who live a just life will be saved even if they do not believe in Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. The pontiff, addressing some 30,000 pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square for his weekly general audience, strongly re-asserted the liberal interpretation of the Bible's teaching on salvation that emerged from the Second Vatican Council. "The gospel teaches us that those who live in accordance with the Beatitudes — the poor in spirit, the pure of heart, those who bear lovingly the sufferings of life — will enter God's kingdom," John Paul said. "All who seek God with a sincere heart, including those who do not know Christ and his church, contribute under the influence of grace to the building of his kingdom," he said. The pope appeared to take a far more inclusive approach to salvation than the declaration "Dominus Iesus" issued September 5 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which serves as the Vatican's guardian of doctrinal orthodoxy. — RNS

Christian Prisoners Tortured In Saudi Prison.

— Christian sources in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, have informed International Christian Concern (ICC) that at least three expatriate Christians have been physically tortured in prison. The three men are part of a group of at least 15 Christians arrested during the months of July, August and September for conducting religious services in their homes. Though this right is promised by the Saudi authorities in theory, it has not been upheld in practice. Ministry of Interior officials have time and again raided the homes of people suspected of leading Christian fellowships and have confiscated their personal possessions and dragged them off to prison. The tortured men are from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Nigeria — countries Saudi Arabia obviously does not think will protect the treatment of their citizens — says ICC. Though the Saudi government has pledged to U.S. officials that they will release the Christian prisoners, they have not yet fulfilled their promise. International Christian Concern continues to call for the immediate release of the Christian men, most of whose families have not been allowed visitation rights. — Religion Today

Internet Porn A Problem For Libraries.

— Many once peaceful librar-

ies have now been turned into tax-payer-funded peep shows. Clientele changed as a steady stream of new patrons — mostly male adults but also teens and young children — used library computers to access hard-core sex sites. Library staffers were forced to take on new duties: closing out computer screens left open to scenes of orgies and child sex, calming porn-addicted patrons who raged when all the unfiltered computer terminals were in use, and fielding questions from children about how to view pornography in the library. — CC

Yellow Pages Adds Gay, Lesbian Heading.

— After three years of pressure from gay-and lesbian-related service organizations, producers of the local BellSouth Yellow Pages have created a new subject cross-reference in this year's phone book. On page 572, between "Gauges" and "Gazebos," a headline announces "Gay and Lesbian Organizations" and refers customers to listings for associations, social service organizations and clubs. ... "As a company, we have a commitment to diversity, and it's important to know that we conduct ourselves as a business with that same philosophy," BellSouth spokeswoman Lynn Bress said. — The Sword of the Lord.

What To Call Doc-**tors Who Do Abortions.**

— It isn't controversial to call a doctor who deals with the nervous system a "neurologist" or a doctor who specializes in hearts a "cardiologist." But it is now unacceptable to use the similarly neutral term "abortionist" to refer to a doctor who performs abortions. "Abortion doctor" and especially "abortion provider" have become the media's acceptable descriptions of abortionists, while there are many references to "anti-abortionists," the press's favorite term for pro-lifers. The term "abortionist" is precise but raw, bringing to mind exactly what it is these doctors do for a living.

Teens Are Led To Sex.

— Cal Thomas says: "Where teens are led, they will follow. The culture is leading them — through music, music videos, TV and films — toward sexual activity. It is always presented as fun but without consequences." He says the sex industry makes money off young minds and bodies, and adds: "The industry would go broke if abstinence among youth were to become a trend." — CC

Cal State University Adopts New Alcohol Policy. — California State University adopted some of

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WNR . . .

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the nation's most sweeping restrictions on college drinking. ... The action at the USA's largest university system comes nine months after a student at the Chico campus drank himself to death. The policy includes a ban on naming events after a brand of beer. Such activities, popular among fraternities, sororities and other organizations, rely on funds provided by beer companies. ... CSU has 368,000 students at 23 campuses. Officials say Adrian Heideman, a freshman on the Chico campus, died while trying to drink a bottle of brandy at a party. He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.37%, more than four times the legal limit for driving. — USA Today

Court Allows Schools' Minute of Silence. — The Supreme Court, confronting again the vexing issue of school prayer, rejected a challenge to a state law requiring students to observe a daily minute of silence. The court did not comment in turning down an appeal from opponents who contend that Virginia's minute of silence is an unconstitutional government encouragement of classroom prayer in public schools. The state says the minute of silence does not violate the separation of church and state, because children may meditate or

stare out a window for 60 seconds if they choose, so long as they are quiet. The court's action means the daily minute of silence will continue, and opponents are left with no immediate options to challenge it. The minute-of-silence law, enacted in 2000, makes the minute of silence mandatory for Virginia's 1 million public school pupils. It specifically lists prayer as one silent activity they might choose. The law's preamble states its purpose as assuring that "free exercise of religion be guaranteed within the schools" The American Civil Liberties Union wrote: "Although the statute permits students to engage in other forms of silent or meditative activity during the time period set aside in the classroom, the statute was enacted specifically to facilitate and encourage school prayer at that fixed time." The ACLU argued that the appeals court ruling could not be reconciled with a 1985 Supreme Court case, which struck down a similar law in Alabama. In that case, the high court found that the state was placing an official imprimatur on classroom prayer. At least four other states have laws like Virginia's, which both requires the silence and links it to prayer or religious observance. The others are Nebraska, Nevada, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Several other states have laws requiring school-day silence but without mention of prayer. In Virginia, the ACLU's lawsuit on behalf

DULL . . .

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mon an exciting adventure. The advice in Luke 6:38: "*Give and it shall be given unto you,*" applies just as much to our participation in the minister's sermon as to any other aspect of life. here, then, are several ways to really enjoy the really dull sermon

Stay awake and alert.

If this suggestion sounds elementary, well, it is. It's a waste of time, of course, to sleep through anything whether it is a classroom lecture, a radio program, a football game a book or a chess match. Besides, sleeping in church is discourteous and may be indicative of the wrong activities the night before.

Find yourself in the

of seven students and their parents failed in lower federal courts. A divided three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals found the law constitutional because students may choose for themselves how to spend the silent time. Opponents also lost a last-minute attempt to block the law from being enforced this school year. The appeals court "found ample evidence that ... [the Virginia law] has a clear secular purpose, namely, to provide a moment for quiet reflection in the wake of high-profile instances of violence in our public schools," Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote in rejecting that request last month.

sermon. The best way to enjoy a novel, a magazine article or a television story is to be one of the characters — vicariously, of course. As quickly as possible try to identify with a member of the cast. See yourself as the hero or the heel, the victor or the villain.

Listen critically and analytically. Is his subject-matter appropriate to the general theme or text? Does the minister give you the impression that he is speaking only to you or is he merely performing ritualistic exercises in preaching?


Do your homework.

If you know the minister's subject in advance, read up on it. The more Biblical knowledge you can put into a sermon the more you will get out of it.

Observe the Congregation. Are they tuned in or turned off? Are they nodding, napping, yapping or clapping? An inattentive or restless audience does not necessarily mean that a sermon is uninteresting or uninspiring. Determine that as far as you are concerned you are going to take an active part in the sermon.

Summarize the sermon. Do it in a sentence you can remember and you can tell others about.

By listening carefully to a sermon you can gain new insights and you can learn how or how not to preach a sermon.

It takes two to make a sermon interesting, instructive and inspiring, you and the preacher. 

Graven Upon Jehovah's Hands

By Harry J. Simms

"Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" — Isa. 49:16.

In the book of Deuteronomy chapter six and verse eight we read "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." The children of Israel were instructed to bind the commandments upon their hands that they might ever have them before their face. The Lord is not forgetful of his dear children yet He has designed to engrave us on the palms of His hands that we might ever be the objects of His mercy and grace. This does not allude to the foolish art of palmistry nor to the tattooing of images on the hand or arm but it is the divine engraving of His blood-bought children redeemed from the pawnshop of sin and death. It is like the wearing of a signet ring or a locket-ring upon the finger in memory of a special friend or loved one. God goes as far as language can go to implant in our minds the conviction that however small and inferior we may seem to be we are ever still in His mind; He always has us in His heart. His supreme care is for us and it abides through all conceivable changes and circumstances. Oh, that we may behold the beauty and splendor of the text before

us. Let us carefully analyze every word incorporated in the passage.

"BEHOLD"

This is a word of wonder. It is intended to excite admiration and to attract attention. As you ride along the highway you may see before you a large glowing sign advertising some product of value or of no value. So when you come upon the word "Behold" in the Bible you should read carefully and slowly because the Holy Spirit wants to reveal some important truth. When John said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" he intended to excite attention and get the ear of the reader.

Have you tried to comprehend the magnitude of God's love? When Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door" He intended that we consider His position (on the outside) whether in our hearts or on the outside whether in our churches or at the door.

This is worthy of our *observation* (Use your eyes).

This is worthy of our *consideration* (Use your head).

This is worthy of our *admiration* (Use your heart).

"I"

Who is the "I" of our text? He is the Divine Artist, the designer and the creator. David admired the work of this great Artificer when he wrote "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained" (Psa. 8:3). And yet again as if he had not said enough before, he wrote "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:3). This great "I" is every thing. He is our All-in-all. Hear Him as He tells us what and who He is.

"I am the Alpha and Omega."

"I am the Messiah."

"I am the Bread of life."

"I am the Light of the world."

"I am the Eternal one."

"I am the door."

"I am the Son of God."

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

"I am the First and the Last."

When Moses was afraid to face an angry Pharaoh and the ungodly Egyptians from whom he had fled forty years before, he asked God "Whom shall I tell Pharaoh instructed me to come with the command 'Let my people go.' " God said, Tell Pharaoh that "I am that I am hath sent you." That was sufficient. Brother, that's a passport into any harbor. That ticket will admit you into any mansion, place or shack. If the great "I AM" sends

you and commissions you to go then go in spite of all the demons this side of hell who may try to stop you and thwart God's plans and purposes. The poet said, "If Jesus goes with me I'll go, anywhere." Go to Asia, go to Africa, go to Europe, go to Japan, go to India, go to the Isles of the sea. Go anywhere. Go for God has obligated Himself to go with you. Go, and you cannot fail.

"HAVE"

He didn't say "I will," nor yet "I expect to some day if you ever decide to be saved" or "There's a chance that I may" but thank God He said, "I have engraved thee." Oh, the antiquity of this engraving.

In November of '54 as we took our journey from Egypt out through the desert to Sinai, we came to a great rock where we ate our lunch. After we had eaten, our guide took us to the other side of that great rock and showed us many characters and Hebrew letters inscribed on the rock which he said was undoubtedly written by the Israelites as they passed that way more than 3,000 years ago. We had no way of certifying to the truthfulness of his statement. However, the evidence of its antiquity was plain to be seen.

As I looked upon that great rock in a weary land, marked and scarred by the chisels of ancient days, I realized that the hands that

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HANDS . . .

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had wrought the work had long since been folded in death. But I saw in my mind's eye another Rock with ancient engraving upon it. He's the Rock-of-Ages. He's the Stone cut out of the mountain without hands. He's the Stone disallowed by man, but chosen of God. Before the morning stars sang together He engraved us upon His holy hands. Jesus said, "I speak not of you all, I know whom I *have* chosen" (Jn. 13:18). Paul said, "God hath *from the beginning* chosen us in him" (2 Thess. 2:13). In Ephesians Paul said, "According as he *hath* (already) chosen us in him *before the foundation of the world.*" Aren't you glad that we are not an after-thought of God?

"GRAVEN"

He didn't say I have printed thee. We might be erased. But, I have *graven* thee." He didn't say, "I have stamped thee" nor yet, "I have written thee on the surface," but I have "*cut*" permanently graven thee into my hands. The names were engraved so deeply that eternity cannot erase them. Engraving on flesh is always painful. The needle hurts and brings awful pain and suffering to the victim into whom it pierces its way. The long, rough, Roman spike made deep wounds into the precious hands of Jesus. Thomas rejoiced to see that

engraving and cried out "My Lord and my God." The Jews will rejoice some day when they see the engraving and will fall down at His feet and accept Him as their Messiah (Zech. 13:6).

Artists have painted noble pictures on canvas. Engravers have cut images of dignitaries on metal, wood and stone, but the masterpiece of engraving was done by the great Jehovah God of heaven and earth.

"THEE"

Who, me a poor depraved hopeless hell deserving sinner? The Bible paints an awful black picture of me upon its sacred pages. It says that my thinking is wrong. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Psalm 53:3 tells us where we are, "Every one of them is gone back, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Proverbs 20:9 tells me that my heart is filthy, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Isaiah tells me that I am a lost sheep by nature. "All we like sheep have gone astray (Isa. 53:6), and John says, "If we say that we have no sin we lie" (1 Jn. 1:8). Surely He didn't mean a wretch like me.

Suddenly the veil is lifted by the Holy Spirit and the heavenly light breaks through upon me and I stand face to face with the

man of Galilee. His eyes are like fire as they pierce and penetrate my very soul. All of my guilt is brought before me as I stand in the light of His holy presence. Who can tell whether He shall mete out judgment and wrath, or mercy and grace. Will I receive justice and burn in hell for ever and ever? Every fiber of my mortal body quakes and trembles as I wait for His divine verdict. Oh, the suspense and agony of the awakened soul as it waits to hear what the Judge of all the earth shall declare. His silence prolongs the agony and moments turn into hours as He searches and reveals to us our need of Him.

At length the searching is over and with a note of divine assurance He says, "Behold, I have graven *thee* upon the palms of my hands."

Suddenly my soul leaps and plunges against the walls of this tabernacle of clay looking for a way of escape, because earth is receding and heaven is in view. I immediately endeavor to place my arms around His neck and place a kiss of appreciation upon His cheek but find that I only have enough strength to fall at His holy feet. There I find a multitude (Mt. 15:30). Jairus was there, a sorrowing mother was there (Lk. 8:35). Mary was there (Lk. 10:39). A bereaved sister was there. Old Daniel was there and I was there. Yes, it was there that I met all the penitent sinners who have found grace with God. Have you

been there?

"HANDS"

We are not graven upon the *works* of His hands, for "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall thou change them ... But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Our *names are* recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life but *we* are engraved upon the palms of His *hands*. "And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel. ... And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron (the high priest) shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial." Israel's priest could only get them as high as his shoulders, but since our High Priest has designed to engrave us upon His hands He lifts us up into the very presence of God. He bears us up before the throne in heaven.

Why should we be graven in His hands? His hands first touched us. We were in the slime-pit of sin and He reached down, putting His holy hand upon us and gently lifted us from the pit while the slime and scum dripped from us. Holding us firmly

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TRAGEDIA . . .

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Esta promesa es reiterada y se confirma ahora mediante la afirmación más fuerte posible, *el pacto de la sangre* (Gén. 15:7-10, 17-18). Los términos del pacto habían sido claramente estipulado en el V. 18.

Las dimensiones de la tierra está claramente estipuladas, extendiéndose desde el río Nilo hasta el río Eufrates y desde la península de Persia hasta el Asia Menor. De ninguna otra forma más clara pudo Jehová significar a Abraham y a sus descendientes que Palestina era la posesión que les había dado para siempre.

Algunos dicen que el pacto hecho por Jehová, era un pacto condicional y que dependía de la obediencia de Israel. Pero en Génesis 17:7-8, se estableció claramente que el resultado final del pacto no estaba condicionado a una obediencia posterior. El pacto fue descrito como pacto perpetuo, y la tierra de Canaán (Palestina), fue prometida como posesión perpetua (v. 8).

Abraham nunca poseyó la tierra, salvo la pequeña porción que compró para dar sepultura a Sara. En cambio, Dios le dijo

claramente que su posteridad sería esclava en tierra ajena y que serían oprimidos 400 años (Gén. 15:13-14). El juicio de Dios hacia Israel su pueblo por la desobediencia, no era quitarle la tierra prometida (Palestina), pues Dios hizo un pacto perpetuo, sino que el juicio de Dios tendría la forma de cautividad y expulsión de la tierra prometida (Deut. 28:63-68).

El pueblo judío fue expulsado de su tierra y ha sido afligido con persecuciones de increíble severidad. Pero, el Señor Jesucristo dijo, que antes de su segunda venida, los judíos estarían en su tierra constituídos como nación (Mateo 24:32-33). Esta parábola se refiere a la restauración de los judíos en su tierra. La higuera ha sido simbolo histórico de la nación israelita.

Cuando el pueblo judío, después de casi dos mil años de destierro y persecución sin misericordia, se convirtió otra vez en nación el 14 de mayo de 1948, comenzaron a brotar las hojas de la "higuera." Durante la guerra árabe-israeli (1948-49), Israel había extendido su territorio de 13,000 a 21,000 km. cuadrados. Desde esta fecha hasta la actualidad, la historia de la

nación ha estado constituida por conflictos interminables y guerras periódicas, pero también por un gradual fortalecimiento del nuevo estado.

A Israel le corresponde la tierra de Palestina, pues Dios se la dio como herencia, y es la única nación en el mundo que tiene escritura de propiedad de su territorio, dada por Dios mismo.

¡Hermanos cuán cerca está la venida del Señor por Sus santos! Sigamos trabajando, no durmamos como los demás, sino velemos y seamos sobrios, para que aquel día no nos sorprenda como ladrón.

No se turben nuestros corazones, porque es necesario que todo esto acontezca; pero aún no es el fin, sólo es principio de dolores. Solamente en Jesucristo encontraremos la salvación y la paz que el mundo necesita.-- M. A. Curet.

**HANDS . . .**

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He plunged us beneath that fountain opened at Calvary for the cleansing of sin and washed us white as snow. Lifting us up He loved us so much He simply squeezed us into the palms of His hands and said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of *my hand*. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's *hand*" (Jn. 10:28-29).

Our eternal security rests not in the strength of mortal man but in the power of an omnipotent God. "Now to him that is of *power* to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ ... To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom. 16:25, 27).



The Nature of the Church

The following quotes are taken from the book "**History of the Baptists**" page 121 by Thomas Armitage.

"An invisible church is a purely indefinite and mythical idea"

"The only invisible church that exists is embodied in the visible, local, and self-governing church"

"The Romish figment of an impersonal and invisible church never existed until the fourth century, when it was created in order to bring local churches under the yoke of an irresponsible and arbitrary power, at the utter sacrifice of those divine rights, with which Christ, the rightful Head, had endowed the local churches. The local church was the only church known to the Apostles themselves, the only body which they ever addressed, and which they knew collectively as the 'Churches scattered abroad.'"

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The Largest Creature On Earth

“And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:21).

Many people think that the greatest of the dinosaurs were the largest creatures ever to live in earth. But while a few of the very largest dinosaurs may have been longer than the blue whale, the blue whale has the largest sheer body size of any creature that ever lived.

The blue whale can reach a length of 100 feet and weigh up to 170 tons. That’s about how much a whole town of 2,700 people weighs! The blue whale has seven stomachs. When you consider that a blue whale has to eat a million calories a day — the equivalent of 100,000 banana splits — the fact that it has seven stomachs makes sense. The tongue of a full-grown blue whale weighs more than an elephant. And its arteries are big enough for a man to swim through. Its heart, which has to pump the whale’s entire supply of

eight tons of blood, weighs 1,000 pounds. And the blue whale can live for 120 years. No dinosaur could ever boast of such statistics!

The whale is a wondrous and magnificent creature. In addition to its great size it is intelligent. Besides showing forth God’s great creative power and imagination, the whale also shows us that neither size nor other standards of human measurement give us an indication of the way in which God values things. Though we human beings are not the largest, nor the only intelligent creatures on earth, we are the only creatures who are responsible to our Creator for the way in which we live. That is why, when sin separated us from our Creator, He sent His only begotten Son to save and restore us to Himself. 

Interdenominationalism. — “When Baptists enter the scheme of union or ecumenicalism by a process of compromise and cancellation, they are negotiating for a casket and a lot in the cemetery.” — J. W. Porter (Random Remarks).

WHAT...

(Continued from page 3)

for the historic, conservative Christian faith. Many churches in recent years have moved away from the original teachings of the early Christians. They have substituted human theories for Biblical authority. Independent fundamental Baptist churches continue to uphold the Bible as the divinely-inspired authority for Christian faith and practice.

An independent fundamental Baptist church places proper importance upon correct Biblical doctrine. Among the doctrines emphasized are the following: the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth, absolute deity, sinless life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His high-priestly work in Heaven, salvation by grace through faith, the reality of Satan and his work, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the pre-millennial coming of Christ, a period of great tribulation on earth, the return of Christ to establish an earthly kingdom, the judgment and eternal doom of the lost, and the eternal reward of the saved.

Independent Baptist churches stand as a protest to the religious unbelief (often called “modernism” or “liberalism”) that has engulfed so many of the large denominations and is now invading the ranks of Baptists. Men claiming

to be ministers of Christ deny the verbal inspiration of Scripture, question the virgin birth of Christ, deny the necessity of faith in the shed blood of Christ for salvation, accept the theory of organic evolution, and in many other ways oppose the historic faith, yet such men are accepted as ministers in good standing in some church groups. In obedience to the Word regarding false teachers (2 Tim. 3:5; Eph. 5:11, etc.) independent Baptist churches refuse to cooperate with denominations and councils of churches that condone the presence of such unbelieving religious leaders.

Independent Baptist churches stand firm for the doctrines as laid down in the New Testament that have separated them from other denominations. We adhere to the New Testament doctrine of the church, thus denying the modern doctrine of an invisible, universal church which is unknown to the Scripture, and holding fast to the Biblical doctrine of the church which identifies the church as a local visible body. We hold fast to the Bible doctrine of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (the ordinances of the church) meaning that we reject “alien immersion” and receive only scriptural baptism, and practice the Bible doctrine of closed communion. We do not maintain these doctrines simply to be “different” or to hold our

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“The Most Shocking TV Season Ever”

Blaspheming God, -- Major Networks Gearing Up for All-out Attack On Traditional Values

The major TV networks are planning a full-scale attack on traditional values and sensibilities with this fall's upcoming TV season, NewsMax.com has learned.

ABC, CBS and NBC are considering dropping many of the few remaining standards on network prime-time TV programs and will likely allow expletives and four-letter words never spoken before on broadcast TV.

The *New York Times* reported over the Labor Day weekend that NBC's *The West Wing* program is planning on breaking “a long-standing network taboo” this fall. Aaron Sorkin, the executive producer of *The West Wing*, told the *Times* he is planning for “a character to curse in a way that uses [the Lord's name] in vain.”


Sorkin and his cronies at NBC are not the only ones trying to undermine civility. Other plans being touted by the networks include: ABC's *Philly* is planning on using ... words which [have] never aired before on an ABC program.

CBS executives have told the *Times* they are considering “scripts for programs that include every crude word imaginable” ...

The free-for-all attitude

on the use of expletives and shocking scenes doesn't come in a vacuum. Little by little, broadcast networks have been tackling industry standards and challenging public decency — with no complaint from the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC is charged with maintaining decency and standards on the airwaves. The airwaves are owned by the public, and networks broadcast by license and at the discretion of the public. ...

“What's really happening now is a transformation to the daily normalization of this,” Robert Thompson, professor of media at Syracuse University, told the *Times*. ...

Network executives say that several reasons are forcing them to program down-market. The success of cable shows like HBO's *The Sopranos*, which uses graphic scenes and expletives, is drawing viewers away from broadcast TV. The major networks claim they fear the loss of key advertisers who are seeking the youth market, the market that is seeking and finding more risqué material on cable networks. Still, the *Times* contends, apathy by the public is the major reason the networks are moving to lower standards. 

WHAT...

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selves “aloof” from others, but because we sincerely believe the Bible teaches these doctrines and that, as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are obligated to obey His commands in keeping (preserving or guarding) these ordinances as He has given them unto His church (Jn. 14:15).

III. A Church With A Bible-centered Program.

One of the first things many people notice about an independent Baptist church is the fact that almost everyone comes to church with their Bibles. Not only do they bring their Bibles, but they use them in the regular services of the church. The Bible is looked upon, not as an obscure religious textbook to be studied primarily by a priest or minister, but as the guide for every Christian and the source of instruction for his daily life.

Our pastor uses the Bible in his pulpit ministry. He reads from it and his congregation follows him in searching out various passages. He is not endeavoring to foist upon the people some human observations concerning “religion” but rather he is seeking to unfold the exact revelation which God has given us in the Bible. Preaching in independent Baptist churches is not simply delivering some ethical or social precepts, but is an exposition

of the written Word of God as found in the Bible.

The educational program of the church is likewise centered around the Bible. Every Sunday School teacher teaches from it. We do not study the International Sunday School Lessons as most churches do where quarterlies are studied rather than the Bible, but we study the Bible book-by-book, studying one chapter each Sunday, until we complete the study of the book. This is much better than using the typical “hop, skip and jump” method of the quarterlies, and there is the value in studying God's Word directly for yourself.

The same is true of our Doctrinal Training Union on Sunday evenings. Rather than the study of the Bible book-by-book as in our Sunday School, we study the Bible doctrine-by-doctrine, using “**Baptist Doctrine In One Year**” by M.L. Moser, Sr., so that within a year's Bible study, we study every major doctrine of the Word of God at least once. This makes for a church that knows their Bibles. The study of the quarterly system will not develop a church member with a real knowledge of the Word of God. The study of the Bible does.

The same emphasis is seen in the missionary program of the church. Both home and foreign missionary efforts are geared to one purpose — the winning

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Various Authorities On Baptism

Mosheim, Chancellor of the University of Gottingen in 1755: "In this (first) century baptism was administered in convenient places without the public assemblies and by immersing the candidates wholly in water" (**Ecclesiastical History**, Vol. I, p. 104).


Dr. Philip Schaff, of New York: "The usual form of the act was immersion, as is plain from the original meaning of the Greek words, from the analogy of John's baptism in the Jordan ... and finally, from the custom of the ancient church, which prevails in the East to this day" (**History of Ancient Christianity** (First Century), Vol. I, p. 123).

Martin Luther, on the sacrament of baptism (at the beginning): "First, the name baptism is Greek; in Latin it can be rendered immersion, when we immerse anything into water, that it may be all covered with water. And although the custom has now grown out of use with most persons ... yet they ought to be entirely immersed, and immediately drawn out, for this the etymology of the name seems to demand (**Op. Lutheri**, 1564, Vol. I, folio 319).

John Calvin: "the word baptize itself signifies immerse, and it is certain that the rite of immersing was observed by the ancient church" (**Institutes of the Christian Religion**, Book

IV, Chap. XV).

John Wesley: " 'Buried with him by baptism,' alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion" (Comment on Romans 6:4).

Westminster Assembly of Divines (Presbyterian): "In this phrase the apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip persons baptized, and, as it were, bury them under the water for a while, and then draw them out and lift them up, to represent the burial of our old man and our resurrection newness of life" (**Annotations**, published in folio, under the auspices of the Assembly: Annotations on Rom. 6:3-4). 

WHAT . . .

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of the lost to Jesus Christ. All our missionary work is simply a means to the end of bringing people to read, understand, and obey the Word of God. The primary aim of all missionary and evangelistic effort is not social betterment but spiritual regeneration — personal salvation.

IV. A Church With Distinctive Emphases.

In addition to the things already mentioned there are several other important and scriptural distinctives of independent Baptist churches.

A Regenerated Church Membership

Only those who have personally, consciously received Christ as their Lord and Savior have a right to church membership. Acts committed by a parent, priest, or minister for a child cannot and do not save the child. Children dying before they are old enough to be accountable to God go to heaven. Acts 2:47 clearly states that "the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved." In other words, a personal experience of the new birth is a pre-requisite to church membership. For this reason, independent Baptist churches require evidence of a person's salvation before they are received into the membership of the church.

Scriptural Giving

Many churches support their work by fund-raising schemes such as church suppers, raffles, and sales. Some assess each member a certain amount each year. All such practices are totally unscriptural. The local church should be supported by the free-will offerings and tithes of saved persons, not by commercial or worldly appeals (Cf. 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:6-8).

In recognition of the truth in all that has been written above, independent Baptist churches are caused to place loyalty to Christ and His Word above

loyalty to an earthly organization. Everything is tested by the Word of God, not by its relation to a denominational program.

Independent Baptist churches are seeking, as enabled by God, to perpetuate New Testament churches, remembering that the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Statement of Faith of the Central Baptist Church

We believe in the verbal inspiration of the 66 books of the Bible and that it is without error and it is the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice. We further believe that the Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the way of salvation and God's plan and purpose in the ages.

We believe there is One and only one true and living God, existing in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are co-eternal and co-equal from all eternity, each with distinct personalities but with one nature.

We believe in the Deity and Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, coexistent with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He came to the world, born of a virgin, suffered, died, was buried and rose again bodily and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

We believe in the Person and work of the Holy

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WHAT . . .

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Spirit which includes conviction of sin, regeneration of sinners, and indwelling of the believer.

We believe that salvation is “by grace”, plus nothing and minus nothing. The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith. We further believe that a soul is saved when Christ is received as personal Savior and Lord and the Holy Spirit imparts eternal life.

We believe in the perseverance and preservation of the saints and that it is the plan of God for such believer to walk after the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

We believe in the immersion of the believer in water under the authority of a New Testament church to signify His death, burial, and resurrection and the believer’s identification with Him. We do not believe that baptism saves. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. The Lord’s Supper constitutes the other of the only two ordinances of the church.

We believe that a New Testament church is a local group of baptized believers, united for His purpose and knowledge and spread of the Word of God, including world-wide missions. We believe it to be completely independent with no other person, group, or body having any authority, right of intervention or control whatsoever over or within a local church.

We believe in the visible, personal and pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead at His coming. We further believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost. 

MASON . . .

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Back years ago when the French Revolution occurred, France became officially atheistic, and the streets of Paris ran red with blood. More recently communism has triumphed in Russia such that Russia is atheistic. Communism labels religion “the opiate of the people” and is the deadly foe of religion. Communism itself might be thought of as a form of religion, in which the state — or rather the “party” is worshiped. They have on a world-wide evangelistic campaign to convert people to communism today. Should communism gain complete sway over the world, Christianity would be “liquidated” and along with it all who refuse to renounce it.

It Is Hard To Be An Atheist

There are several good reasons as to why it is hard for a person to be an atheist:

1. Because God did not make men with natural atheistic tendencies. Human beings are naturally

religious. There is an old saying that “man is incurably religious.” Human beings have a natural tendency to worship something. This is seen illustrated in all branches of the human family, for there are “gods many and lords many.” One must become an atheist, for the natural tendency, even of fallen creatures is to worship.

2. Because one must reverse the regular processes of reason in order to become an atheist. The human mind demands a cause for an effect. Atheists behold created things and deny they have any creator. A little child looked down into Grand Canyon with wonderment and exclaimed, “Who did it?” This is the natural cry of a human being who beholds the wonders of creation. The atheist answers, “No one!”

3. Because one must go against the realities of human experience in order to become an atheist. Observation and experiences tells us that things don’t happen without an adequate cause. Napoleon’s unanswerable argument to his atheistic field marshal, was to point to the starry heavens and say, “Who made all those things up there?” In this connection read Romans 1:2-23.


4. Because atheism sees design but denies a Designer. The universe is most intricately designed — the human body is a marvel of design — and the laws that govern things

are exact. It requires nothing less than mental assassination for one to be an atheist in view of all this.

5. Because atheism is completely unscientific. Scientific men observe certain phenomena and seek to ascertain the cause. Atheism denies all cause. Some of the greatest of all scientists have been devout Christians. No one should be a more earnest believer in God than the scientist who studies his laws.

6. Because atheism denies any ultimate purpose for anything. The world, according to atheism, is like a rudderless ship in uncharted seas, just floundering around. If atheism were true, there would be no reason for our being here, and we would be traveling nowhere. No chart, no compass, no guide, no destination!

7. Because atheism denies the truth of the Bible, which has been proven to be true in human experience, and through fulfilled prophecy. There can be no truthful denial concerning the fulfillment of prophecy. Just one indisputable fulfillment of one prophecy gives the lie to atheism. Likewise just one, indisputable answer to prayer, proves the existence of God.

It is interesting to note that the Bible does not argue for God’s existence — it *assumes it*. His existence is too clearly shown in this world, for intelligent denial. 

SMITH . . .

(Continued from page 2)

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. — Luke 1:26-35.

Well enough for Mary. But what about Joseph?

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now the Modernists and the Rationalists deny the miracles of the Bible. They deny that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. They deny that an angel appeared to Joseph.


What do such denials affirm? They affirm that Mary who was espoused to Joseph, was found with child whom both Mary

and Joseph knew was not fathered by Joseph. Their denials make an adulteress of Mary and surrender her to the stones of the Jewish law. Unless such people produce evidence instead of assumption for such a position as that, they are to be classed with the vilest character defamers of all history. They are scoundrels, their ministerial gowns to the contrary notwithstanding.

And if Gabriel did appear to Mary, and if an angel did appear to Joseph, and if Gabriel told Mary what Luke says he told her, and if the angel told Joseph what Matthew says he told him, you have the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

What is the antithesis to the virgin birth of Christ. It is an adulteress. It is heathen mythology. And worse than heathen mythology, for it makes a sheephead of Joseph.

Again, a man who denies the virgin birth of Jesus Christ — unless he supports his denial with evidence instead of assumption and subjective prejudice, is a scoundrel. And the pussyfooter who, in order to be popular, remains silent in the presence of the denial, is a flabby coward.

The time has come when we need less romance and sentimentality and more reality and straight talk. Modern religion needs some backbone and muscle in it. — Noel Smith. 

MARY . . .

(Continued from page 1)

rows.

Joseph's part in all this is told by Saint Matthew alone. And as we read that Evangelist's particular account of that time, we see how sharp that sword which pierced Joseph's soul also. His heart was broken with this terrible trial, but there was only one course left open to him. Conclude the marriage he could not, but neither could he consent to make Mary a public example, and there was only left to him the sad step of revoking the contract and putting her away privately.

Joseph's heart must have been torn in two. For Mary had been the woman of all women to him. She had been in his eyes the lily among thorns. And now to have to treat her like a poisonous weed — the thought of it drove him mad. Oh, why is it that who-soever comes at all near Jesus Christ has always to drink such a cup of sorrow? Truly they who are brother or sister or mother to Him must take up their cross daily. These are they who go up through great tribulation.

What a journey that must have been of Mary from Nazareth to Hebron, and occupied with what thoughts. Mary's way would lead her through Jerusalem. She may have crossed Olivet as the sun was setting. She may have knelt at even in

Gethsemane. She may have turned aside to look on the city from Calvary. What a heavy heart she must have carried through all these scenes as she went into the hill country with haste. Only two, out of God, knew the truth about Mary; an angel in heaven, and her own heart on earth.

And thus it was that she fled to the mountains of Judah, hoping to find there an aged kinswomen of hers who would receive her word and would somewhat understand her case. As she stumbled on drunk with sorrow Mary must have recalled and repeated many blessed scriptures, well known to her indeed, but till then little understood. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Thou shalt keep them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of men; thou shalt keep them in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Such a pavilion Mary sought and for a season found it in the remote and retired household of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

It is to the meeting of Mary and Elisabeth that we owe the Magnificat, the last Old Testament psalm, and the first New Testament hymn. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

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We cannot enter into all Mary's thoughts as she sang that spiritual song, any more than she could in her day enter into all our thoughts as we sing it. For, noble melody as her Magnificat is, it draws its deepest tones from a time that was still to come. The spirit of Christian prophecy moved her to utter it, but the noblest and fullest prophecy concerning Christ fell far short of the evangelistic fulfillment.

She is a happy maiden who has a mother or a motherly friend much experienced in the ways of the human heart to whom she can tell all her anxieties; a wise, tender, much-experienced counselor, such as Naomi was to Ruth, and Elisabeth to Mary. Was the Virgin an orphan, or was Mary's mother such a woman that Mary could have opened her heart to any stranger rather than to her? Be that as it may, Mary found a true mother in Elisabeth of Hebron. Many a holy hour the two women spent together sitting under the terebinths that overhung the dumb Zacharias' secluded house. And, if at any time their faith wavered and the thing seemed impossible, was not Zacharias beside them with his sealed lips and his writing table, a living witness to the goodness and severity of God? How Mary and Elisabeth would stagger and

reason and rebuke and comfort one another, now laughing like Sarah, now singing like Hannah, yet loving and confiding and pious women tell.

Sweet as it is to linger in Hebron beside Mary and Elisabeth, our hearts are always drawn back to Joseph in his unspeakable agony. The absent are dear, just as the dead are perfect. And Mary's dear image became to Joseph dearer still when he could no longer see her face or hear her voice. Nazareth was empty to Joseph; it was worse than empty, it was a city of sepulchres in which he sought for death and could not find it. Day after day, week after week, Joseph's misery increased, and when, as his wont was, he went up to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, that only made him feel his loneliness and his misery all the more. Mary's sweet presence had often made the holy place still more holy to him, and her voice in the Psalms had been to him as when an angel sings.

On one of those Sabbaths which the exiled Virgin was spending at Hebron Joseph went up again to the sanctuary in Nazareth seeking to hide his great grief with God. And this, I feel sure, was the Scripture appointed to be read in the synagogue that day.

"Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,

and they shall call his name Immanuel."

Joseph's heart was absolutely overwhelmed within him as he listened to that astounding Scripture. never had ear or heart of man heard these amazing words as Joseph heard them that day. And then, when he laid himself down to sleep that night, his pillow became like a stone under his head. Not that he was cast out; but he had cast out another, and she the best of God's creatures. Ay, and she perhaps — how shall he whisper it even to himself at midnight — the virgin-mother of Immanuel! A better mother he could not have. So speaking to himself till he was terrified at his own thoughts, weary with another week's lonely labor, and aged with many weeks' agony and despair, Joseph fell asleep.

Then a thing was secretly brought to him, and his ear received a little thereof. There was silence, and he heard a voice say to him, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Gabriel was sent to reassure Joseph's despairing heart, to demand the consummation of the broken-off marriage, and to announce the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Did Joseph arise before daybreak and set out for Hebron to bring his outcast home? There is room to believe that he did, if he did,

the two angel-chastened men must have had their own thoughts and counsels together even as the two chosen women had. And as Joseph talked with Zacharias through his writing table, he must have felt that dumbness, and even death itself, would be but a light punishment for such unbelief and such cruelty as his. But all this, and all they had passed through since the angel came to Zacharias at the altar, only made the re-betrothal of Joseph and Mary the sweeter and the holier, with the aged priest acting more than the part of a father, and Elisabeth acting more than the part of a mother.

For my own part, I do not know the gift or the grace or the virtue any woman ever had that I could safely deny to Mary. The divine congruity compels me to believe that all that could be received or attained or exercised by any woman would be granted beforehand, and all but without measure, to her who was so miraculously to bear, and so intimately and influentially to nurture and instruct, the Holy Child.

We must give Mary her promised due. We must not allow ourselves to entertain a grudge against the mother of our Lord because some enthusiasts for her have given her more than her due. There is no fear of our thinking too much either of Mary's maidenly virtues, or of her motherly

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Hiscox on "The Ordination of Deacons"

"The Seven were set apart to the discharge of their duties by prayer and the laying on of hands by the Apostles, as indicating the sacred and important duties committed to them. In our older churches this practice was carefully adhered to, as it still is by some, particularly in the South.

"But in many parts, of late, it has fallen very much into disuse, and the diaconate is regarded as little more than a committee service. The office is coming to be far too little esteemed, and the scriptural qualifications of the men chosen, too little insisted on.

"Ordination, if generally practiced, would invest both with more importance. Too much care cannot be taken to secure the right kind of men for the office, when we consider that the permanent influence of a deacon is scarcely surpassed by that of the pastor himself. A good deacon is a peculiar blessing both to the pastor and the church.

"The Seven were elected by the *church*, that is, by the multitude of the disciples; they were chosen from among their own number, but their setting apart or designation to their work was by the Apostles with prayer and the laying on of hands. This is called their *ordination*, and gave added importance and impressiveness to the office, and the work to

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calling it a "sign"?

A "sign" denotes something out of the ordinary, something unique, in this case, a biological miracle where a young virgin was made to conceive a Divine seed implanted in her womb through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35). The miracle is in the conception and not the birth itself.

It is further stated in Isaiah 7:14 that He is to be called "Immanuel," which means "God with us" (see also Mt. 1:23). Therefore "God was manifest in the flesh" in the person of the Christ (1 Tim. 3:16). He is referred to as "The Mighty God" (Isa. 9:6), "whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2). Truly, "God ... was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:1-2, 14).

It is interesting to note that not only is the manner of His birth prophesied in the Old Testament as we have shown, but also the place of His birth is also prophesied in Micah 5:2 where we are told His birthplace upon earth will be "Beth-lehem Ephratah" (see also Mt. 2:4-6; Lk. 2:4-7).

He was born in the right way at the right time, and in the right place. May all glory be given unto God. 

which they were chosen" (E. T. Hiscox, "The New Directory For Baptist Churches" pp. 113-114).

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duties and experiences. The Holy Ghost in guiding the researches of Luke, and in superintending the composition of the Third Gospel, especially signalizes the depth and the piety and the peace of Mary's mind. At the angel's salutation she did not swoon nor cry out. She did not rush into terror on the one hand or into transport on the other. But like the heavenly-minded maiden she was, she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And later on, when all who heard it were wondering at the testimony of the shepherds, it is instructively added that Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And yet again, when another twelve years have passed by, we find the same Evangelist still pointing out the same distinguishing features of Mary's saintly character, "They understood not the saying which Jesus spake unto them; but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

And again, if we are to apply this sure principle to Mary's case, "according to your faith so be it unto you," then Mary must surely wear the crown as the mother of all them who believe on her Son. If Abraham's faith has made him the father of all them who believe, surely Mary's faith entitles her to be called their mother. If the converse of our Lord's words

holds true, that no mighty work is done where there is unbelief: if we may safely reason that where there has been a mighty work done there must have been a corresponding and a cooperating faith; then I do not think we can easily overestimate the measure of Mary's faith.

If this was the greatest work ever wrought by the power and the grace of Almighty God among the children of men, and if Mary's faith entered into it at all, then how great her faith must have been! Elisabeth saw with wonder and with worship how great it was. She saw the unparalleled grace that had come to Mary, and she had humility and magnanimity enough to acknowledge it. "Blessed art thou among women: Blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." "Blessed is she that believeth," said Elisabeth, no doubt with some sad thoughts about herself and about her dumb husband sitting beside her. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," cried on another occasion a nameless but a true woman, as her speech betrayed her, "and blessed be the paps that thou hast sucked."

But our Lord answered her, and said, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that heard the word of God and keep it." And again, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." 