

# The Baptist CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

VOL. XLII, No. 4

April 2004

WHOLE NO. 474

## *Christ Versus Traditions*

*By B. H. Carroll*

[B. H. Carroll, who in his life was one of the world's greatest Baptists, and Founder of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary.]

In the letter to the Colossians Paul calls their attention to the *commandments of men*, as to days and seasons, and festivals

and new moons and old moons, and says to them, "Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using." It is will-worship. It comes from men; it does not come from God.

### **Easter Day**

Take a solitary in-

stance: On such a day as today my heart always swells with gratitude that I am a Baptist. I mean on a day that is called by men "Easter" day.

I look back to its origin. I know that the word does *not* even occur in the Bible. It is true in what is called the common version, in the twelfth chapter of Acts, it

says that Herod imprisoned Peter, intending *after Easter* to bring him forth, but I know that the word which they translate Easter is *pascha* and means "Passover," and that it is so translated in every other place throughout the Word of God; that he intended

(See **EASTER** on page 2)

*"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

**Message #4 -- Preached January 28, 1979**

## **"Greetings and Salutations"**

**By M. L. Moser, Editor**

*Amen*" (Rev. 1:4-6).

We pointed out to you previously that God the Father gave this message to the Lord Jesus Christ. He in turn gave this message to an angel, who in turn gave this message to John. John is now giving this message to the churches. Beginning with verse 4 we see that John is

writing this to seven specific churches. He says: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia."

We find in chapters two and three that a specific letter was written to each one of the churches. This does not mean that these were the only seven churches in existence. There are seven churches listed: Ephesus,

Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. There were also churches at Jerusalem, Antioch of Pysidia, the other Antioch, Colossee, Thessalonica, Rome, etc. These specific churches were selected because they represent all Christendom, all kinds of churches and because of their proximity to one central location. Looking at a map you see that the locations of these churches roughly make a circle.

The churches addressed were all in the

(See **REV** on page 14)

**Quiz The Pastor -- #26****Does The Bible Prohibit The Eating of Meat?****By the late Nick Michalinos**

**Question:** I have a friend that warns me about the eating of meat. Is there a Bible command against the eating of meat for the believer today?

**Answer:** No, there is not a specific command found in the epistles of the New Testament that strictly forbids the eating of meat for the believer. As the teachings of many eastern religions find their ways into our western culture, there is the tendency on the part of some to avoid meat eating, and to embrace the lifestyle of the vegetarian.

The New Age movement encourages the shunning of meat for its followers. We must realize that some folks should not eat some meats because of health problems, but your question deals with the

religious aspect of meat eating.

This is not a new question, for Christianity in the first century had to cope with the same problem of “touch not, taste not, handle not” (Col. 2:21) that came about as the result of man-made rules influencing the lives of Christians.


The nation of Israel had their dietary law within the Law of Moses where such meats as pork, catfish, etc. were plainly and strictly forbidden by commandment from God (Lev. 11). However, the New Testament instructed Christian is convinced he is not under that ceremonial aspect of the Law of Moses because our Lord Jesus Christ took it out of the way by nailing it to His cross (Col. 2:14), and therefore we are

instructed to “Let no man therefore judge you in respect to meat ...” (Col. 2:16).

The Apostle Paul by inspiration wrote: “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils (demons)” and they will teach “Forbidding to marry and ... to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving ... for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” (Read 1 Tim. 4:1-5).

There should be some flexibility on our part in matters dealing with eating certain foods, observance of days, etc. (Rom. 14:1-6). If a man wants to eat only herbs or vegetables, that’s his business, but please, don’t demand the same kind of lifestyle for me.

Paul refers to the vegetarian as one who is “weak” (Rom. 14:2), but for love’s sake, he would stop his own meat-eating if it offended the weaker saint (Rom. 14:2; 1 Cor. 8:9, 13).

In all the midst of controversy over the question of meat, we as saints must remember that “the kingdom of God is *not meat and drink*” (Rom. 14:17). They all perish with the using. 

**EASTER . . .**

(Continued from page 1)

after the Jewish Passover had gone by to bring out Peter and slay him.

There is not even a hint, not even a faint shadow of a hint in the New Testament of any Easter service whatever. *It is a tradition of men.* It is taught as if it were a doctrine of God.

**What It Really Is**

Practically here is just what it is: It is keeping up the old Jewish Passover service, and it is simply equivalent to saying that Christ has not come, for the whole Passover service was typical. That was the shadow that was to stay until Christ came, and after Christ came then the shadow was to be done away.

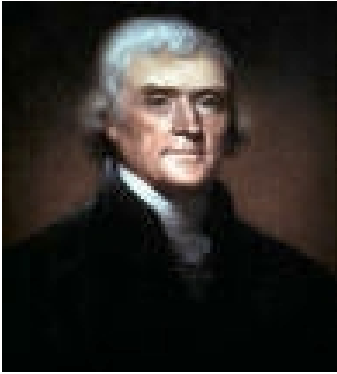
And it was with reference to this that the apostle discusses the subject in his first letter to the Corinthians, where the Christian people, some of them following old habits, were desirous of going back into the realm and shadow of Old Testament ceremonies, and keep that *fete*. He says to them, “*Christ our Passover* has been sacrificed for us, and you do not keep that feast that way, but the New Testament meaning is to keep it with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

(See **EASTER** on page 4)**THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE**

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**The price of shining  
for Christ is burning**



Thomas Jefferson

## God In Our Government

### The Death Of An Infidel

Recently Mr. Maury Maverick died. he was a Marine in WW II, a lawyer, a politician, as a member of the diabolical ACLU, defended draft dodgers and civil rights cases. He wrote for the *San Antonio Express-News* attacking fundamental Christians and our Founding Fathers. Said that America was never a Christian nation and accused Jews of stealing the Holy Land from Palestinians. He promoted abortion, pornography, and evolution. He opposed prayer, Bible reading and creationism in schools; accused the U.S. of starving Iraqi children and was a terrible influence on younger reporters.

#### Strip-Tease At A Funeral?

After the grave-side service, unknown to all, including his family, he secretly hired a stripteaser woman who casually walked up to the casket and began taking off all her clothes but a g-string and

shoes. As the crowd looked on in astonishment and horror, she did a seductive dance. One woman covered the eyes of her little girl and with her other hand covered her father's eyes. Apparently Maverick wanted to make one last effort to show his utter contempt for God, the Bible, and morality. But he certainly was not laughing where he was. He was begging for mercy like the rich man in Luke 16. He didn't believe in Hell, but he does now!

#### A Deist Like Jefferson?

He boasted that he was a Deist like Jefferson and not one reporter knew enough history about Jefferson to challenge Maverick. President Thomas Jefferson, our third president, has been slandered so much by dishonest liberals that many people actually think he was an unbeliever. But facts show that Maverick was nothing like Jefferson and his ignorance of Jefferson was

inexcusable!

#### Jefferson's Record

Jefferson came from an aristocratic family and was highly educated in law, government, philosophy, and the Bible. Unfortunately, in early life he was influenced by French Deism, the belief that the Creator was unknowable and that our Lord Jesus was just a good man. Because of his early belief he is gleefully quoted by Bible-haters today who claim that American Founding Fathers were not Bible believers. However in later life Jefferson gave up Deism and had a spiritual experience, but left very few details of it.

He was an officer in the War For Independence and served in many political offices. He is known today as a president and, with the help of others, drafting the Declaration of Independence.

#### President Of Washington's School Board

As our third president, Jefferson was the second to live in the new Capitol of Washington, which was still under construction. As president, he established the board of education in conjunction with the churches and required that the Bible and hymnal of Isaac Watts be taught daily in the schools. He even published an edited edition of the life of Christ for the

schools. I have a copy.

#### Established Christian Services In House of Representatives

Since the churches were slow to build in Washington, Jefferson directed that Christian services should be held every Sunday in the large chamber of the House of Representatives, using visiting pastors, which he attended regularly when he was in town. This practice continued after his presidency and was the largest Christian congregation in America for nearly a hundred years.

#### Attended Church Regularly

While in Philadelphia, he attended Christ Church (Presbyterian), along with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, Alexander Hamilton, Francis Hopkins, and Betsy Ross. In Virginia, Jefferson attended Bruton Parish Church (Episcopal) where George and Martha Washington were members. He read the Bible regularly in Latin, Greek, as well as English. His own Bible was in four volumes and well worn with countless passages and underlined and notes in the margins. No Deist would do such things!

#### The Wall of Separation?

(See **JEFF** on page 7)

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. And the fish were hungry. Week after week, month after month, and year after year those who called themselves fishermen met to talk about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing.

Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen. Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. They sponsored costly nationwide and world-wide congresses to discuss fishing, promote fishing, and hear about all the ways of fishing such as the new fishing equipment, the fish calls, and any new bait.



## Are We Fishermen?

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. All the fishermen seemed to agree that what was needed was a board which could challenge fisherman to be faithful to fishing. Large training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years,

courses were offered on the needs of fish, the nature of fish, where to find fish, and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology. But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. And those who were sent out did exactly as those who sent them. They formed groups and held special meetings to define fishing, to defend

fishing, and to declare how important fishing was. They talked about the great need for fishing. They prayed much that many fish might be caught. They analyzed the fish and discussed what is necessary in order to catch fish. But one thing they did not do, they did not fish.

Many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen, yet never fished. Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don't catch fish are not really fishermen.

Is a person a fisherman if he never catches fish?

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt. 4:19). □

### EASTER . . .

(Continued from page 2)

*You throw off that bondage now.”*

From the time that it was formally based upon a forged decree of a bishop at Rome in the second century, down through the hundreds of years of quarrels about it between Eastern and Western Catholics, until the decision of the Council of Nice, four hundred years after Christ, and until it got over into Germany and borrowed the

name of a heathen goddess and became Easter, until now, it has been an overshadowing superstition that has dried up the purity and simplicity and power of the worship of the true and living God.

### “I Have Never”

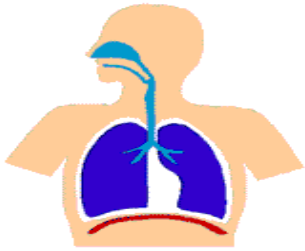
Since my conversion I have never attended a circus, an opera, a theatre, nor an Easter service. Honestly, I do believe it to be a sin. Honestly, I believe that it makes void the Word

of God. Honestly, I believe it to be a sin for any Baptist to countenance it by attendance, or by example in any way, and if you will re-read carefully the letter to the *Corinthians*, the letter to the *Ephesians* and the letter to the *Galatians* you will find that the war that was pressed home upon the apostolic heart was this very war — the war of *tradition* against what *Christ had commanded*. He exhorts His people to stand fast in the liberty wherewith God had made

them free, and not to be entangled again with any yoke of bondage.

Did you ever think about this, that the expression of one thing is the prohibition of another in the law? That when we are to observe as a religious service what Jesus Christ has commanded, it means that we are not to observe as a religious service something which Jesus Christ has not commanded. And in the closing

(See **EASTER** on page 7)

**God's Masterpiece Man's Body #14**

## Why We Must Breathe

By Arthur I. Brown

At the bottom of an ocean of air — immense and surrounding the earth — man lives like a deep-sea fish in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean. This ocean of air is composed of a mixture of various gases, approximately 79% nitrogen, 20% oxygen, 1% of a few rare gases such as argon, helium, and neon, and .03 percent carbon dioxide, with traces of ammonia and other impurities.

It is significant that both the main gases are colorless and tasteless. Nitrogen, which makes up such a large part of the air we breathe, is an inert element which does not enter freely into combination with other elements or compounds. And yet man needs eight grams of nitrogen every day; so protein, which we have studied, is a nitrogen compound, and the body uses up daily about fifty grams of protein which must be replaced. No creature can live without nitrogen, since it is essential in the building of protoplasm. An animal fed lavishly on foods lacking nitrogen, such as fats, sugars, and starches, will die unless it gets proteins.

But this same animal can be kept alive on a diet of amino-acids exclusively, because these can be changed into fats and carbohydrates. Amino-acids, as we have seen, are the building blocks of proteins, and yet with such a vast mass of nitrogen all around us, and inhaling about 1,000 quarts of nitrogen daily, man cannot utilize a grain of it in this form. Neither plants, animals, nor men can use atmospheric nitrogen to supply the needs of the body; and this, surely, is a strange phenomenon.

How then does man get the necessary nitrogen? The plant is the ultimate source of nitrogen for all animals. Animals feed on plants; man kills the animals and eats them. Stock-farming and agriculture are nitrogen-producing industries. Each wheat grain is simply a little box filled with nitrogenous food, each tiny pea is a sac filled with nitrogen, and every fruit contains sugar and nitrogenous protein in its juice.

Naturally, we ask where the plant gets its nitrogen, and when we discover the answer, we exclaim with wonder that

only God could have devised such a plan. A plant set out in earth, and deprived of this gas, will die. The plant obtains its nitrogen from the soil in the form of nitrates, removing enormous quantities of nitrogen every year. It has been estimated that a wheat field of only two and a half acres removes from 2,000 to 6,000 pounds of nitrogen annually from the earth. Now, obviously the soil must replenish its supply. Not only do plants take it away but water in rains, springs, and rivers does the same. Rivers, for instance, carry more than seventy-five billion pounds of nitrogen annually into the oceans. And yet nature maintains this nitrogen balance, so necessary, in a most mysterious way.

Every farmer knows that the fertility of the soil can be increased by the growth of almost any leguminous crop, such as peas or beans. Why is this? It is due to the presence on the roots of small nodules, which consist, really, of masses of bacteria, living as parasites on the roots, and having the miraculous power of binding and assimilating the free nitrogen of the atmosphere. The plant absorbs nitrogen compounds through the roots, gives some to the plant, and the excess goes into the soil.

Nitrogen bacilli are found also in the ocean, where they split up the nitrates of the water,

liberating the nitrogen which is returned to the atmosphere. These bacteria in the ocean are eaten by the creatures of the oceanic plankton, and the latter, in turn, are eaten by small crabs, snails, and worms. Fish feed on these animals and the fish are caught and eaten by man for food. And so our very lives depend on the existence of a microscopic group of bacteria that keep us supplied with this essential nitrogen. What a plan! — a plan that must be of divine origin and maintenance.

The other principal ingredient of the air, unlike nitrogen, is very active chemically. All compounds in the earth's crust contain oxygen. It makes up eight-ninth's of the weight of water, more than fifty percent of the weight of the crust of the earth, and the same proportion in a human being. The process by which oxygen attacks other compounds, smashing molecules and combining with the fragments, is called oxidation. Any oxidation process, characterized by the production of light and heat, is known as combustion. Fire is produced by the union of oxygen atoms with the molecules of a fuel substance.

The act of breathing is simply the act of taking in oxygen, which unites with the fuel or food consumed, the process of oxidation, with production of heat.

(See **BODY** on page 6)

**BODY . . .**

(Continued from page 5)

This heat makes human life possible. The intake of oxygen is called respiration; the intake of fuel, nutrition. This combustion maintains a body heat of 98.6 Fahrenheit. We might think of a human being as a sort of furnace where the fuel is a food, consumed slowly by the oxygen of the air.

When we speak of respiration, we actually mean the interchange of gases between the blood and the surrounding tissues, the gases being oxygen and carbon dioxide. Also, a considerable amount of watery vapor is discharged from the body in the expired air. The term, external respiration, is applied to the process of taking the oxygen into the lungs where it meets the red blood cells, which grab all they can hold and transfer it quickly to the waiting cells throughout the body. The second process is called internal respiration. Inspiration is the act of drawing air into the lungs; expiration is the act of expelling it; the two together constitute a pulmonary respiration. The function of this respiratory action is to accomplish an interchange in the lungs and tissues between the oxygen of the air and the carbon dioxide of the blood; in other words, to bring oxygen to the blood and to remove from it carbon dioxide, ammonia, water vapor, and waste matter.

The respiratory organs are the nose, pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchial tubes, and lungs, with the thorax or chest and its muscles, including the diaphragm and the pulmonary or lung vessels. The external nose is a framework of bone, cartilage, and skin. The upper portion of the nose is hard and firm because here the nasal bones on each side come together forming the bridge of the nose. Each lateral surface terminates below in what is known as the wing of the nose — one on each side. These “wings” are flexible and movable. The nostrils are the expanded portions, containing no bones, but instead, small plates of cartilage which are moved by little muscles, and so may be expanded or contracted. Notice the design here; upper part firm and bony, lower part flexible and soft, and yet fairly firm and with no danger of collapsing and resulting interference with the intake of air.

Another clever and simple device is found in the nostrils in that they are provided internally with stiff hairs to arrest particles of dust and bacteria-laden air. The tip of the nose, which contains these hairs, can be grasped and squeezed without any possibility of breaking, which would have been a real danger had fragile bones continued right to the end of the nose.

The cavity of the nose is divided into right and left

cavities by a partition called the septum, the openings on the face being known as the anterior nares. The nose opens behind into the back of the nasopharynx, the place where nose and throat come together. In this post-nasal space there is lymphoid tissue, commonly known as the post-nasal adenoid. When this tissue is enlarged children, as it frequently is, the nose is blocked behind, causing mouth-breathing and a group of symptoms which are well known. Along with the open mouth, there is commonly noticed a full facial expression, pinched nose, and a dead toneless voice. These children are restless in their sleep, snore, and wake up frequently. They become tired and listless and do poorly at school, because their memories are bad and they cannot progress in their studies. They have poor appetites and are undernourished. This condition is quickly relieved by the simple operation of removing the offending adenoid tissue.

On the side wall of each nasal cavity are three curious bones, called turbinates or shells, and directly underneath each of them, as they are attached one above the other, are three spaces or passages. The upper part of each space or fossa is the olfactory or smelling portion which I shall describe later. The lower portion of each space is the respiratory

part. In the next article I shall have more to say about several unique devices placed here, which you have probably overlooked.

At whatever point we touch the human body, we discover these various and obviously designed contraptions, cleverly placed just where they can function to the best advantage and all concerned with the comfort and health of the individual. We see constantly the truth of the Psalmist's words — “fearfully and wonderfully made.” The word “fearfully,” of course, indicates that the construction is such as to excite admiration and awe in our minds as we contemplate the meaning of a multitude of what, at first glance, may seem to be unimportant devices but in the aggregate show remarkably the skill and wisdom of the Creator.

Our intelligent meditation on these things which I am bringing to your attention ought certainly to lead us to the firm conviction of the love of God. We never discover anything in the body calculated to produce pain or disease. Everything is designed to avoid irritation and discomfort; nothing is found which is there to annoy or torment. And more than this, there is nothing useless in our bodies, although the conceit of some observers has led

(See **BODY** on page 7)

**JEFFERSON . . .**

(Continued from page 3)

His famous statement “a wall of separation” between church and state was in answer to a letter from Connecticut Baptists who heard a rumor that the Federal Government was planning to establish a National Church like Europe which would require all to be members and pay taxes to support it. President Jefferson assured them that the wall was *against the government not against the churches*, and that the First Amendment was to protect the churches from government interference and encroachment! But today dishonest lawyers and judges have reversed the First Amendment and made it against the churches and the rascals blame Jefferson for it, and they refuse to quote his entire letter!

If Jefferson could see the disaster caused by a small minority of satanic lawyers and judges by removing prayer and Bible reading from the schools, he would condemn them as demonic anti-American Bible haters, liars, hypocrites, and traitors to him and America!

The Pilgrims and other Forefathers came to America to establish a new Christian nation in obedience to the Great Commission. They also came to escape religious persecution by minority rulers and establish religious freedom

based on the Bible and majority rule.

**No More Majority Rule!**

Nearly 90% of Americans want prayer and Bible reading restored to the schools, but a satanic minority (less than 10%) of radicals have prevented it! The majority's rights are sacrificed to pacify a radical, anti-Bible few! This is not democracy, but the tyranny of a minority, the very thing that our Forefathers left Europe for. Jefferson and our Forefathers would denounce us.

The Supreme Court ruled against student-led prayer at football games at Santa Fe, Texas. Only two families objected, a Mormon and a Catholic and the rights of hundreds of other families and students were denied. This is not democracy, but anti-God tyranny and dictatorship. After serving as President, Jefferson led in establishing the University of Virginia and directed that all students attend chapel *daily* to pray and hear the Bible read and preached!

**President Thomas Jefferson's Prayer**


On March 4, 1805, President Jefferson issued the following National Prayer for Peace: “Almighty God, Who has given us this good land for our heritage, We humbly

(See **JEFF** on page 12)**EASTER . . .**

(Continued from page 4)

of the book of Revelation it is expressly stated that whoever adds to or takes from what is in this Book, God will add to him the plagues that are written in the Book, and God will take away from him his part in the Book of Life.

I want to impress this thought on you today. If I can make it emphatic, I wish to make it emphatic, that a peculiar obligation rests upon you as a Baptist. A golden heritage has come down to you through all the ages, that as a people you have stood upon the simple “Thus saith the Lord.”

You have said, “Here are the commandments. the record is closed. There are no new ones. There are no new *isms* and *ologies* to be imposed. Just what Jesus said do I will do. And if you lift up the ninth part of a hair in weight more than Jesus said to do and try to put it upon my conscience, I will revolt. I stand upon the simplicity of the commandments of Jesus Christ.” 


**BODY . . .**

(Continued from page 6)

them to make this observation regarding certain tissues of whose function they knew nothing. Always when further knowledge comes, we are surprised to find — unless we have become convinced of the economy and Omniscience

of God — that even the smallest tissues have their proper place and use. And more than this, the tiniest organs are sometimes found to be not only necessary but of supreme importance in the physiological working of the body.

If the Creator never makes the slightest mistake in the products of His skill, and especially in the structure of this body organism, it seems to me we ought to pay attention to every command issued by Him. That would appear to be just plain common sense. So, when I read in 2 Cor. 5:20: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” I am going to pay attention. I ask myself, “How may I be reconciled to God — I who was an enemy to Him?” And the next verse tells me the solution: “For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

I have taken God at His word. I have taken Christ as my Savior, and I know I am reconciled to my Heavenly Father through His Son and as a child of God have eternal life at the present moment. Can you say as much? Why not take Him NOW?” He's Wonderful! [Next month: “Your nose Is A Vacuum Cleaner.”] 



**WalMart To Sell Packaged Liquor.** — The *Arkansas Times* for March 26 says: “WalMart seems intent on getting into the booze business by applying to sell packaged goods next to its Springdale (AR) Sam’s Club. Surely other outlets will follow.

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**WCC Wants Broader Ecumenical Movement.** — The World Council of Churches has extended an invitation to Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and Evangelicals to meet and consider new ways in which they might better work together in the future. According to an Ecumenical News International report, leaders from several WCC member churches and agencies issued a report on November 24, 2003, calling for representatives from the RCC as well as Pentecostal and Evangelical churches to meet prior to November 2004 “to discuss forming a new network of relationships.” The WCC is looking for new ways to “reconfigure the ecumenical movement” in order to create a broader

## World News Roundup

umbrella of ecumenism with churches and agencies not currently affiliated with the WCC. [Jan-Feb 2004 *Foundation.*] — CC

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**Lawsuit Against AT&T** — A Denver man is suing AT&T Broadband after he was fired for refusing to sign off on “tolerance” portions of the company’s employee handbook that he felt violated his religious beliefs. The handbook contained a provision that “each person at AT&T Broadband is charged with the responsibility to fully recognize, respect and value the differences among all of us,” including “sexual orientation.” Albert Buonanno said his religious beliefs prevented him from condoning or approving of homosexuality. Attorneys for the Rutherford Institute are presenting testimony in federal court in Washington on behalf of Buonanno, who worked as a quota specialist. His lawyers are seeking back pay and punitive damages. — CNS

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**Preachers to Be Muzzled?** — The Pennsylvania Governor recently signed legislation giving homosexuals statewide legal protection from verbal harassment and hate

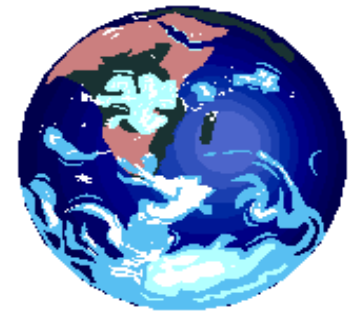
crimes. Critics argue it targets church leaders who preach against the homosexual lifestyle. Critics also fear that too liberal enforcement of the law could include pastors, preachers, evangelists and other religious teachers who quote Bible passages denouncing homosexual behavior and sermons and lessons. As a result they see the law possibly violating their free speech rights and religious liberty. — *Washington Times.*

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**Judicial Activism Is The Real Threat.** — “We already see the [judiciary] power, installed for life, responsible to no authority (for impeachment is not even a scare-crow), advancing with a noiseless and steady pace to the great object of consolidation. The foundations are already deeply laid by their decisions for the annihilation of constitutional State rights and the removal of every check, every counterpoise to the engulfing power of which themselves are to make a sovereign part.” — Thomas Jefferson

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**Indonesia Mulls Law That Would Ban Conversion, Restrict Church Building.** — A draft religion law under con-



sideration in Indonesia has prompted concerns from some activists and observers who worry how it may affect the country’s often beleaguered Christian minority. Although the title of the Religious Tolerance Bill sounds innocuous, the proposed provisions will restrict the building of new churches and effectively prohibit Muslims from converting to other faiths. Critics see it as part of a wider campaign by fundamentalists to prod the world’s largest Muslim country towards becoming a full-fledged Islamic state, under shari’a law. — CNS

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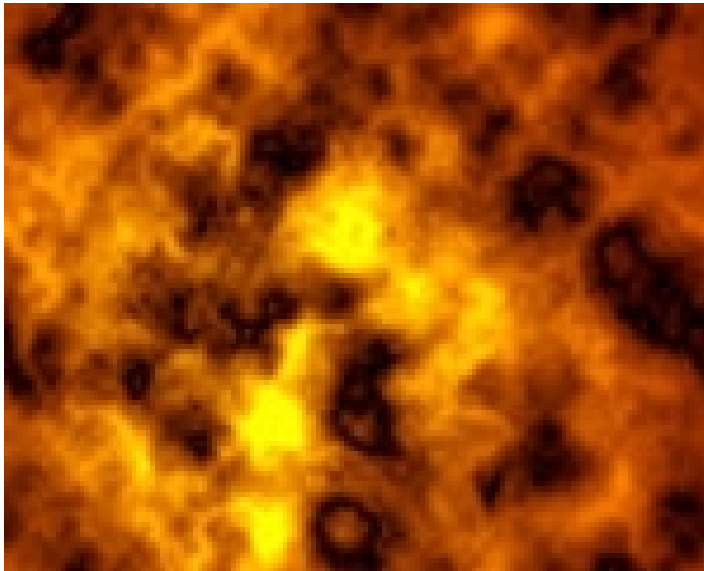
**Question:** The Bible tells us that all the land animals that God sent to Noah stayed on the Ark for a whole year. How could they have survived “cooped up” for that long? **ANSWER:** This is a good question. If Noah had all of these land animals on board, including dinosaurs, how could he feed and take care of them? In fact, many skeptics challenge

(See WNR on page 11)

# La Voz Del Desierto

## El Bautismo De Fuego

Por Félix M. González B.



El famoso evangelista carismático Benny Hinn, dijo en cierta ocasión a su audiencia y congregación que vendría tiempo en que el fuego de la presencia de Dios aparecerá visiblemente en sus reuniones públicas. Que muchos han escuchado y conocido lo que es el bautismo del Espíritu Santo, pero que aún no han conocido el fuego que se menciona en Mateo 3:11 y por eso es que la “Iglesia” está falta y deficiente de poder por la ausencia de este “fuego” ungido en nuestras vidas.

Este llamado fuego “ungido” de Dios, es una de las tantas manifestaciones extrañas que experimentan el carismático y el pentecostal al sentir un calor intenso en todo o en alguna parte de sus cuerpos. Se les ha visto gritando en sus cultos:

“¡Fuego-Fuego-Fuego-Fuego!” Y hasta han llegado al punto de criticar y ridiculizar a aquellas iglesias, incluyendo la Iglesia Bautista, tildándolas de muertas y frías por no querer participar de este “avivamiento del bautismo de fuego.”

Alguien debería informarle a estas personas que el bautismo de fuego en Mateo 3:11-12, trata claramente del eterno juicio de Dios y del fuego del infierno. El pueblo de Dios no quiere, ni verá ese fuego. Es cierto que nosotros podemos sentir un ardor en nuestro interior en el sentido de que queremos agrandar y trabajar para la obra de Dios, pero el fuego que se menciona en la Biblia no es algo muy bueno que digamos.

La palabra “fuego” aparece en la Biblia por

primera vez en Génesis 19:24 donde nos dice que Dios destruyó a Sodoma y Gomorra con fuego y azufre como señal de juicio. Hemos escuchado de cómo Elías hizo descender fuego para quemar a los falsos profetas. También sabemos lo que le pasó a los hijos de Aarón cuando le ofrecieron fuego extraño a Jehová. Ellos murieron porque salió el fuego de Jehová y los consumió. En Apocalipsis 19:11-13 se habla de Jesús y se nos dice que sus ojos eran como llama de fuego y que viene para luchar y hacer juicio contra sus enemigos. La Biblia enseña que la tierra va ser destruída con fuego y que los que no estén inscritos en el libro de la vida serán lanzados en el lago de fuego ( Apocalipsis 20:11-15).

En cuanto a Mateo 3:11, si se lee en su contexto podremos ver que ahí el “fuego” también se refiere a la ira de Dios quemando a los pecadores en su segunda venida. En los versículos 7-11 podemos ver que Juan el Bautista le

habla a los fariseos y saduceos diciéndoles que el árbol que no da buen fruto será cortado y echado en el fuego. En el versículo 12 se nos habla del trigo y la paja y se nos enseña que la paja será separada del trigo y quemada en el fuego que nunca se apagará. Por lo tanto, por medio de estos versículos vemos que Juan el Bautista está hablando de dos cosas diferentes. Del bautismo del Espíritu Santo y del bautismo en fuego. En otras palabras que los que creen y reciban a Jesucristo, van a ser bautizados en el Espíritu Santo, mientras que los que no creen, ni reciban a Jesucristo, como estaban haciendo los fariseos y los saduceos, van a ser bautizados no con el Espíritu Santo, sino con fuego. Aquí lo que se está hablando es de la separación del justo para vida eterna y del injusto para condenación (compárelo también con Malaquías 4:1, 3; Mateo 13:30, 39-43, 48-50; 25:41; (Vea **INFIERNO** en la pág. 10)

**INFIERNO . . .**

((Viene de la pág. 9)

2 Tesalonisenses 1:8).

También citan Hechos 2:1-4 como intento de “probar” que los discípulos sintieron y recibieron el bautismo de fuego. Sin embargo, aquí no dice que los discípulos sintieron un fuego que les quemaba. ¿Por qué? Porque si se lee cuidadosamente esta escritura, dice que “se les aparecieron lenguas repartidas *como* de fuego, asentándose sobre cada uno de ellos” (Vs. 3). No dice que eran lenguas de fuego porque si hubiese sido fuego de verdad pues lo hubiesen sentido y se hubiesen quemado. Además aquí las lenguas como de fuego eran mas bien una señal de juicio para el pueblo de Israel, por eso fue que Pedro dirigió su mensaje a los judíos por la crucifixión de Jesucristo, como también lo demuestra Isaías 28:11-12. Esta profecía se cumplió en el día de Pentecostés. [Nota del Editor: Creemos que el bautismo del Espíritu Santo en el Día de Pentecostés era para la iglesia que Cristo había establecido en Su ministerio personal antes del Día de Pentecostés y no por individuos].

En Hechos 1:5 Jesucristo le habla a sus discípulos diciéndoles que

van a ser bautizados Su iglesia en el Espíritu Santo pero no incluye el fuego. Hasta el mismo apóstol Pedro deja claro que ninguno de los discípulos fueron bautizados con fuego en el día de Pentecostés: “Entonces me acordé del dicho del Señor, como dijo: Juan ciertamente bautizó en agua; mas vosotros seréis bautizados en Espíritu Santo” (Hechos 11:16). ¿Dónde está el fuego? En ninguna parte, por lo tanto estos hermanos carismáticos están sintiendo algo que los primeros y verdaderos cristianos nunca sintieron.

Alguien dirá: “Pero y ¿qué hay de la zarza ardiente que presenció Moisés? ¿Acaso eso no era la presencia de Dios? Y cuando los israelitas iban por el camino del desierto donde Jehová iba delante de ellos de noche en una columna de fuego. ¿Acaso eso tampoco era la presencia de Dios? Al igual que en el monte Sináí donde Moisés subió y hubo fuego, humo y relámpagos. Es cierto que eso era una característica de la presencia de Dios pero hay que recordarles que el fuego también simbolizaba algo más.

Cuando Jesús fue bautizado, ¿en qué forma descendió el poder del Espíritu Santo sobre Él?

Descendió en forma de paloma. ¿Por qué no descendió en forma de fuego? Porque en la Biblia el fuego no simboliza el poder o la presencia de Dios sino el castigo, el juicio y la ira de Dios (Isaías 34:8-10; 66:15-16, 24; Salmos 18:12-14; 21:8-9; Job 1:16; Deuteronomio 32:22).

También creen que este “fuego” ungido que ellos sienten es para quemar la maldad y la impureza del pecado del hombre. Sin embargo, la Biblia no enseña que nosotros tenemos que sentir un calor que nos quema para quitar nuestros pecados sino que declara que sólo la sangre de Cristo nos limpia de todo pecado y de toda maldad (Juan 1:7, 9; 1 Pedro 1:18-19).

Hinn y sus seguidores simplemente no están satisfechos y conformes con la promesa del Espíritu. Es triste ver cómo Benny Hinn y otros líderes carismáticos infectan y engañan a sus seguidores a beber de su “fuego” ungido. Pero su “fuego” y su clamor de superioridad sobrenatural pronto se desvanecerá al suelo. ¿Qué habrá para la próxima en la Iglesia Carismática? Sólo el tiempo dirá. Pero sin duda el mañana traerá algo nuevo, algo más poderoso, algo nunca antes visto, algo que el otro no tiene, algo más importante para sus seguidores quienes llenan auditorios a lo largo del país y del mundo para sus

cruzadas milagrosas.

Pero nosotros no queremos lo que ellos ofrecen, no sólo porque sabemos que no hay ninguna verdadera unción en este movimiento, sino porque toda la plenitud, todo lo que el cristiano necesita para ser un cristiano completo se encuentra en una sola persona: *Jesucristo* (Colosenses 1:19; 2:10). □

## La Paz De Acuerdo Al Islam

Para los musulmanes el mundo está dividido entre lugares controlados por los no-musulmanes (territorio de guerra) y la tierra donde prevalece la ley Islámica. Esto es un estado permanente de guerra aunque pueden haber treguas temporeras para el Islam. Las treguas no duran mas de 10 años, ya que los infieles no deben descansar en sus laureles. Cualquier tierra que los infieles posean es una posesión ilegal. Por lo tanto, para los musulmanes, el “jihad” no es agresión, sino tomar lo que es de ellos legítimamente. La guerra sagrada (JIHAD) es un deber religioso, debido al universalismo de la misión (Musulmana) y la obligación de convertir todos al Islam mediante la persuasión o por la fuerza. □

Porque la paga del pecado es muerte: mas la dádiva de Dios es vida eterna en Cristo Jesús Señor nuestro. (Rom. 6:23)

**Iglesia Bautista El Redentor**  
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**Marcos A. Curet, Pastor**

**WNR . . .**

(Continued from page 8)

Christians with this question to discredit the truth of this account. The Bible doesn't reveal all the details about what happened on the Ark, but we do know that God was in total control of the situation. In fact, there's a verse in Genesis that states, 'And God remembered Noah.' There's no doubt that God supernaturally looked after the Ark and its precious cargo. Having observed the behavior of animals, we can offer some suggestions. Biologists know that most animals seem to have the ability to hibernate. It's possible that for some animals God supernaturally intensified this ability during the time of the Flood so that the animals' body functions were at a minimum and their food requirements would have been very small. They probably would have slept most of the time. And there may have been other techniques. Whatever the question, it's vital to believe the book of Genesis! — AIG

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**What's A Day In A Life?** — "Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano Friday vetoed a bill requiring a 24-hour waiting period for abortions less than a half-hour after it hit her desk. Miss Napolitano, a Democrat who supports abortion rights, issued the veto

Thursday in spite of more than 2,000 calls, Emails and faxes to her office urging her to sign the legislation and make it law." The legislation would have required abortion facilities to provide women considering abortion with information about its risks and dangers, alternatives and information on fetal development.

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**A Very Simple Ball Game.** — "The Bush side, with the Democratic nominee chosen, will spend the next 8 months and millions of dollars exposing Kerry for what he is: a flip-flopping liberal who is soft on terrorism, and someone who wants to turn our military over to the UN to protect us. John Kerry thinks terrorism is a law enforcement problem and George Bush views them as an enemy that must be destroyed. It's no more complicated than that."

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**Boycott Called For Magic Springs.** — Despite aggressive action by area Baptists and other Christian groups in recent years, Magic Springs amusement park in Hot Springs has been granted a permit to sell beer and wine in the park. Arkansas' Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC Board) unanimously approved the permit in mid-February. In

response to the decision by park officials to sell alcohol, Baptists joined other conservative groups in calling for a boycott, urging church youth groups, children's groups and Christian families to stay away from the park.

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**Three Abortion Clinics Close In Little Rock.** — A news release was released from Arkansas Right To Life, stating that two abortion clinics in Little Rock had permanently closed their doors. Both Little Rock facilities were owned by a doctor and were operated by an out-of-state corporation. Another Little Rock abortion clinic has also been closed, leaving only two in the state — one in Little Rock and another in Fayetteville. "We don't know exactly how or why this has happened," said ARTL Executive Director Rose Mimms, "but we celebrate the fact that it has! I am confident that over the years God has heard our prayers ... the tide is turning." — *Baptist Trumpet*.

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**Student Editorial Prompts Baylor Rebuke.** — "A Baylor University (Tex.) student newspaper editorial supporting gay marriage has been condemned by university

president Robert Sloan and ruled a violation of school policy by the university's Student Publications Board," said ABP correspondent Mary Knox in a recent report. The editorial appeared in the Feb. 27 issue of the *Baylor Lariat*.

\*\*\*

**Evangelists Beaten By Police.** — March 2, at the Ho Chi Minh City home of Nguyen Hong Quang, an official in the Mennonite Church, he and evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach discovered two undercover security police spying on them. The policemen attacked Quang and several other Christians before retreating and calling in a number of officers from different groups. Armed with guns and electric cattle prods, they surrounded the Quang home and ordered the 12 Christian workers to remain inside the house. Police then tried to incite neighbors to attack the Christians. A church elder was taken to the police station. When three young evangelists went to inquire about him, they were viciously beaten.

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**Stalking Lonely Heiresses.** — "If Bush can't talk to Kerry about the horrors of war, then Kerry sure can't talk to anyone about the plight of

(See **WNR** on page 12)

WNR . . .

(Continued from page 11)

the middle class. Kerry's life experience consists of living off other men's money by marrying their wives and daughters. For over 30 years, Kerry's primary occupation has been stalking lonely heiresses. Not to get back to his combat experience, but Kerry sees a room full of wealthy widows as 'a target-rich environment.' This is a guy whose experience dealing with tax problems is based on spending his entire adult life being supported by rich women. What does a kept man know about taxes?" — Columnist Ann Coulter

\* \* \*

**Defending The Sanctity of Kerry's First Marriage.** — "One important issue in John Kerry's past has been studiously avoided this election season. It's the annulment of his first marriage to Julia Thorne. The Catholic Church declared the marriage void — despite the fact that it lasted 18 years, produced two children, and the annulment was fiercely contested by his first wife. "... Of course, there may not be anything untoward about Mr. Kerry's annulment. They are increasingly common among Catholics. In the early 1960s, there were about 300 a year in the United

States. Now there are around 60,000 — around 10 percent, by some estimates, of all Catholic marriages! Eighty percent of the world's Catholic annulments occur in America. All that's worth remembering when you hear Catholic bishops speak of the sanctity of marriage and the impermissibility of divorce. There's an escape clause. Mr. Kerry strolled right through it." — Columnist Andrew Sullivan

\* \* \*

**No exports Please.** — Hundreds of religious leaders from former Soviet republics held a meeting earlier this month intended to increase religious tolerance, but the session excluded faiths regarded as nontraditional. Participants came only from what Russia recognizes as "traditional religions": Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. The absent faiths were "exported to us" in later times, said Metropolitan Kirill, head of Russian Orthodoxy's external relations department. Since the Soviet Union fell, the predominant religions in the region have complained that other faith groups are poaching for converts on their territory. — AP

\* \* \*

**Gays Can Marry, Quebec Court Says.** — Homosexuals have the right

to wed, Quebec's top court in Toronto said, making it the third Canadian province to allow same-sex marriages. The Quebec Court of Appeal upheld a lower-court ruling that the traditional definition of marriage is discriminatory and unjustified. Same-sex marriages have been declared legal by provincial courts in Ontario and British Columbia, and together the three provinces represent more than half of Canada's 32 million people. Canada's Supreme Court has been asked to clarify the constitutionality of gay marriage in a nonbinding ruling due next year, and Prime Minister Paul Martin has promised to introduce a bill to legalize it.

\* \* \*

**Nigerian Christians Axed To Death In Church.** — According to a report by Michael Ireland, ASSIST News Service, 48 people were hacked to death Feb. 24 in Yelwa, Nigeria during an early morning prayer service. Armed Muslims invaded the service, ordered the congregation to lie face down and proceeded "to machete and axe them to death. One source said as many as 400 heavily armed Muslims participated in the execution, shouting "Allah u Akhbar" (God is great). They apparently wore red and black uniforms and moved with military precision. □

JEFFERSON . . .

(Continued from page 7)

beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable ministry, sound learning, and our manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitude brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues.

"Endow with Thy spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth.

"In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail, all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Oh, how we need Jefferson's prayer today! — The Missionary Challenge. □

Too many fundamentalists are sound — but sound asleep!

Our theology needs to be saturated with doxology. We have the facts; we need the fire. We preach a dynamic gospel with firecracker zeal!

## Little Baptist Church Gave Jefferson His Model

(Reprinted from the Richmond, Va. Times-Dispatch)

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, it contained some revolutionary ideas for that time. The views that all men were created equal, and that every man had the right to be heard, were new and strange indeed, to have come from the pen of a man who belonged to the higher social order in the colony. Young Jefferson belonged to the wealthy land-holding class. To his close friends, the document he turned out came as no surprise, but to many of the older and more conservative colonists it must have been a matter of great wonder, as to where young Jefferson acquired these radical new ideas.

There is a tradition in Albemarle, Jefferson's home county, that it was the system of government used by a little Baptist church, the first of that sect in Albemarle, which gave Jefferson his ideas on representative government. the same congregation which Jefferson studied close at hand is still going strong. It is not only the oldest Baptist congregation in Albemarle, but is the mother church of the Albemarle Association, which at one time covered a good part of central Virginia. It is at present

known as Chestnut Grove Church, and is located about one mile west of Eearlysville, Va. In 180 years of its career it has undergone a number of changes in name and locations, but the congregation remained intact, and the record books have been continuous, as it moved from place to place.

Jefferson became associated with this church from the time it was formed in 1773 though there is no indication that he ever joined it. The members met in a small building known as Lewis Meeting House, which was said to be either on, or near the University of Virginia grounds. Historians do not agree on the exact location.

From the first, Jefferson became much interested in the Baptist form of church government. He was much impressed, it seems by the fact that every member was given a fair hearing, however serious the charge brought against him. Wealth, station or class had nothing to do with the justice handed out by the Baptists. In the eyes of the church, slaves were the equal of their masters, and were given as fair a hearing as any white member. A number of slaves were members of this first Baptist Church in Albemarle.



### “Purest Form of Democracy”

The Baptists were very strict at that time, and any member who failed to live up to the tenets and church rules were “churched” — that is, called before the church to answer for their errors. A common charge was that of working on Sunday, or selling on Sunday. One man was charged with “rolling” his tobacco to market on Sunday, and pleaded guilty, but said he did not know he was doing wrong. Another member confessed he had done the same thing but also did not realize he was doing anything wrong. Both men confessed and promised not to sin again, and were forgiven.

To young Jefferson, whose mind was trained in legal matters, this form of pure justice had great appeal, and another idea practiced by the Baptists which he liked was the fact that no member was ever excluded from a meeting.

Nor did the church ever hold secret meetings. All church business was conducted in the open, before all who wished to attend business sessions.

The first pastor of the Albemarle Baptists, as they became known, the Rev. Andrew Tribble, said many years later, that when Jefferson was asked what he thought of the Baptist church government, he said it was the purest form of democracy to be found in the world at that time, and that it would make a good model for a republic.

So it was not surprising that, when Jefferson was given the task of writing the Declaration of Independence, setting down on paper the embryonic ideals of which the American Republic is founded, those practices which had so impressed him in the little Baptist church should influence that historic document.

Even without its con-

(See **MODEL** on page 23)

**REVELATION . . .**

(Continued from page 1)

western half of Asia Minor and were all real, actual churches and are representative churches both as to history and as to spiritual state. When we get into the specific letters to each church in chapters two and three, we will find that they are of churches representing a period of time in history, and are representative of the spiritual state of the churches.

The number seven is symbolical of their completeness and indicates that this book was to be written to all churches. It was not just for these seven churches alone, but it is to be for all New Testament churches. It is for the Central Baptist Church in Little Rock. Though we find in chapters two and three a specific letter of six to eight verses written to each of these churches, each letter was a circular letter to be distributed among all the churches. Thus, whatever events were similar, when circumstances were identical, then the message would be identical. All of Paul's letters were considered as circular letters, to be read, discussed and obeyed by all the other churches as well.

We face today a problem that they did not face in that day and time. Today there are those who believe that this church we are reading about is a universal, invisible church. They say

that when John or Paul or others were writing, they were not writing just to specific churches, but to what they term is a universal, invisible church. We will go more into detail about that when we get into chapters two and three, but I do want to look at it for just a moment.

In Ephesians, chapter 5, we find a passage of Scripture that is used by Protestants (and regrettably some Baptists) in an attempt to teach that the church is a universal, invisible body. Many of them teach that all the churches, or all Christians combined, become this one, great, mystical body of Christ. Their teaching is that all churches combined make up the one great big church, and one of the Scriptures they use as proof is this passage we find here in Ephesians, chapter 5.

Notice now, as we begin reading in the middle of this verse, which is what they do. They say "even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body." Now they are quick to point out that the word "church" here is in the singular and therefore it means all the saved. It is said that the meaning of the word church means all the saved, all those that have been born again. In an attempt to prove this, they find some passages of scripture, particularly the one in Ephesians, where it says that Christ is the head of the church. But they

usually stop right there and do not read the entire passage. The passage says: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23).

Now the advocates of the universal, invisible church theory state that Christ is the head of the church. He is not the head of several churches, but the head of the church, thus showing, they say, that the word must mean all the saved, and therefore a universal, invisible church. The one who takes that position does not read the entire passage, for the passage also says that the husband is the head of the wife in exactly the same sense that Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, logic says that if the church is a big universal, invisible church, then you must have a big universal, invisible wife, but nobody believes that. Nobody believes that all the little wives combined make up one great big wife. One should never take the position that all the local, visible churches combined make up one great big universal church any more than all the local, visible wives combined make up one great big universal wife.

Now we see how silly it is to follow their reasoning. To be logical and consistent, if the word "church" in Ephesians 5:23 refers to a universal, invisible church because it

is singular, since the church is as a wife, then the word "wife," also being in the singular, is a universal, invisible wife. We know this is not true. We know that the wife is always local and visible, and we know that the church is always local and visible.

When we remember that the word "church" always means an assembly, always means a congregation, then our minds will be straight and we will think straight concerning the word "church." If you will simply remember that the word "church" always means an assembly, then you can see that it is impossible to have anything such as a universal, invisible assembly, just as you cannot have a universal, invisible wife. Both of them are to be considered as local and visible.

When we say the lion is the king of the beasts, we don't mean all lions put together are the king of the beasts, but we mean that each, individual, separate lion is a king of the beasts. When we say the eagle is the king of birds, we don't mean all eagles combined make up one great big eagle. So when we talk about the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not talking about a huge monstrosity composed of all the churches or all believers. Just as you say the lion is the king of beasts, when you bring it down to particulars, you mean that

(See **REV** on page 15)

**REVELATION . . .**

(Continued from page 14)

lion there, or this one here, and the same is true as far as churches are concerned. Each church is an individual, separate body, separate, distinct, and independent from all others.

If we are to use Scriptural nomenclature or language when we talk about all believers, all the saved combined in one body, then we should use the phrase "family of God." We are then Scriptural, because all believers, all saved people, are members of the family of God. We are born into the family of God. Those who are not members of a New Testament church, though they may be saved and in the family of God, are not in the church until they have followed Him in Scriptural baptism and church membership. So the family of God and the church are not identical. They are not synonymous. They are different terms, referring to different people.

There is, of course, overlapping between them, because all of those that are members of the Lord's churches are supposed to be saved. You cannot scripturally be a member of a church unless you are saved. All of those that are members of the church are considered to be in the family of God because they are saved, but all of those in the family of God are not

members of the church until they have been scripturally baptized for these are the two requirements for church membership: you must be saved and you must also be scripturally baptized. So, when John writes these letters, he is writing to seven specific churches, seven particular church bodies that are both visible and local.

The next thing he says is: "*Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come.*" Now grace and peace are two of the great possessions of these churches. Grace and peace always appear in this order. You never find them in the reverse order, and the reason is that grace must precede peace. No one can have the peace of God until they have experienced the grace of God. Now grace is that redemptive, unmerited work that the Lord Jesus Christ performs; it is a work of God that He performs in man's heart. Grace is usually defined as "unmerited favor," but in reality that does not even touch the hem of the garment, so to speak. Grace goes far beyond this. Grace is "unmerited favor" but it is God's unmerited favor. Not toward His friends, nor toward those who love Him, but grace is unmerited favor that God bestows upon those who do not love Him. They are His enemies as Paul tells us (Rom.

5:10), that is, they are diametrically opposed to God, yet God gives His grace to these kind of individuals, people like you and me.

The grace of God is unmerited favor. By unmerited it means you do not deserve it. You do not earn it. You do not merit it in any degree at all. God freely gives it out of His own free will, even though we don't deserve it. God does give it, and the result of grace is peace, the peace that is beyond human understanding or comprehension (Phil. 4:7), and this peace is the result and the abiding condition that follows the work of grace. This is the peace that puts us at peace with God, so that we are no longer enemies of God. We are no longer at enmity with God. Though outer circumstances may make it appear that we have no peace, yet inwardly, deep down inside, we know we are at peace with God because this peace is the result of the grace of God. This peace is not to be confused with a worldly prosperity that seemingly is peace, but is a peace that the world never sees, and has no knowledge of, nor understands because it is an inward peace that comes as a result of the grace of God.

We now find the Trinity mentioned here. The Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses and others that deny the doctrine of the

Trinity, just simply do not read their Bibles very closely, for right here in these verses we have the doctrine of the Trinity. They say that the doctrine of the Trinity is not a Bible doctrine, since nowhere does the word "trinity" appear in the Bible. That just happens to be true, for the word "trinity" does not appear in the Bible. The word "trinity" does not appear, but that does not mean that the doctrine of the Trinity is not a Bible doctrine. We know that God said "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). We also know that the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father to carry on that work which Jesus Christ began upon this earth. We do know that there are three members of the Godhead family. When the time came for the creation of man, the Bible says: "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image" (Gen. 1:26). That shows the doctrine of the Trinity by the use of the word "us" — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and here we find first mentioned is God the Father. "Grace be unto you, and peace from Him which is and which was and which is to come." Now this, of course, has reference to God the Father, and shows us His eternity.

When Moses was at

(See **REV** on page 21)

## Fundamental Baptist Information Service

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@

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### **The Battle For Homosexual "Marriage" Spreads in America.**

The anarchy that began (appropriately enough) in San Francisco on February 12 has spread to a few other cities across America. That was the day that San Francisco mayor Gavin Newson began flaunting the state's law and issuing marriage certificates to same-sex couples. As the liberal courts have thus far refused to stop the rebellion in California, thousands of homosexuals have received marriage licenses. It is yet to be seen if they will be recognized as legal. The county clerk in Bernalillo, New Mexico, followed Newson's lead a few days later. The mayor of New Paltz, New York, began issuing such licenses on Feb. 27, though the state's attorney general has ordered him to desist. Multnomah County in Oregon followed suit in early March. Asbury Park, New Jersey, issued a marriage license to two men on March 8, though two days later the town voted to desist with this practice after being threatened by the state's attorney general. Chicago's mayor Richard

Daley has publicly advocated homosexual marriages, though the city has not yet granted such licenses. This solemn moral issue will eventually be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, and that is a frightening thought, as that august body has a history of pulling "rights" out of thin air. The situation calls for earnest prayer that God will have mercy upon our land for the sake of those who love Him (1 Tim. 2:1-6).

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### **Reincarnation Row In Denmark.**

— In 1994, Steen Ribers, a church official, was expelled from Denmark's Lutheran state church because he believes in reincarnation. He has sued for reinstatement and is awaiting a judgment by the nation's high court. It would seem that the expulsion was a good move on the part of the denomination, but a closer examination shows it to be a nearly meaningless act. Some 84% of the Danish population are members of the state church (largely by means of infant baptism), and a survey has shown that 25% of women and

10% of men believe in reincarnation (ENI, March 5). There are no plans to expel them. Further, Bishop Karsten Nissen, who instigated the action against Ribers, says, "People who cannot be members of the church should not be shut out of the congregation or from communion. It would be un-Danish." This kind of nonsensical doublespeak arises from state-churchism, under which it is impossible to have a pure New Testament assembly, which is composed only of scripturally baptized believers who give evidence of personal regeneration.

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### **Iraq's Interim Constitution Embraces Islam, Promises Freedom Of Religion But Only In Part.**

— Iraq's new interim constitution, signed March 8, embraces Islam and also promises a measure of freedom of religion. Article 7 says, "Islam is the official religion of the State and is to be considered a source of legislation. No law that contradicts the universally agreed tenets of Islam, the principles of democracy, or the rights cited in Chapter Two of this Law may be enacted during the transitional period." Article 12 says: "All Iraqis are equal in their rights without regard to gender, sect, opinion, belief, nationality, religion, or origin, and they are equal before the law. Discrimination against an Iraqi

citizen on the basis of his gender, nationality, religion, or origin is prohibited..." Yet Christians in Iraq are worried that they may enjoy less religious freedom in the future than under Saddam Hussein. "They are concerned that the interim constitution does not give sufficient protection for individual religious expression and does not allow a change of religion" (Assist News Service, March 8). Humanly speaking, it will be impossible to please the Islamic leaders in Iraq while at the same time giving true freedom to churches to preach Jesus Christ, yet the Lord has instructed us to pray for those in authority "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-2). That should be our prayer for Iraq at this juncture.

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### **Bono's Foul Mouth Investigated By the FCC.**

— Appearing on the Golden Globe Awards broadcast by NBC television in 2003, U2 rock singer Bono shouted a vile curse word. The incident was investigated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which deemed his language "profane" but decided not to fine the stations. The FCC can levy fines up to

(See **FBIS** on page 17)

**FBIS . . .**

(Continued from page 16)

\$27,500. U2 is frequently mentioned in CCM Magazine in a positive light. For example, the December 1998 issue said: "...U2 has epitomized the question, 'Is this a Christian band or are its members Christians playing in a band?'" In fact, there is very little, if any, evidence in the band member's lives, music, or performances that they honor the Word of God. They have been at the heart of the wicked rock & roll scene for almost three decades. They are one of the most popular rock & roll groups alive today and this certainly would not be the case if they were striving to obey the Bible in all things. The Lord Jesus said that if the world hates Him (and it does) it will hate His disciples, too. In 1992 "Bono was named premier male sextop" (U2: The Rolling Stone Files, p. xxxvi). I have read dozens of U2 interviews, but I have never heard any of the band members give a clear, scriptural testimony of the new birth. Bono says that he would like to be able to go to a Catholic church or a Protestant one (Ibid., p. 20). They are "not rabid Bible thumpers" (Ibid., p. 14). The lives of the U2 rock stars illustrate their no-rules philosophy. Bill Flanagan, a U2 friend who has traveled extensively with the group, in his book

U2 at the End of the World describes them as heavy drinkers and constant visitors to bars, brothels, and night clubs. Those who see little danger in rock music and who are not lifting a loud voice of warning against it are the blind leading the blind (Rom. 12:9; Eph. 5:11; Psalm 119:128).

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**Gibson Jesus Movie And Soundtrack Are Blockbusters.** — "The Passion of the Christ" was the top box office draw for the second weekend in a row and has already made \$212 million in the U.S. and Canada alone. It has become the fifth highest-grossing R-rated film ever and has already broken into the top 50 films of all time. "The Passion propelled Hollywood to a second straight weekend of rising revenues after a prolonged slump" (Fox News, March 8). The movie's soundtrack is also selling like hotcakes. Fifty thousand CDs sold in the first week, which is huge for soundtracks. Only the John Williams soundtracks for Star Wars I and II sold more in the first week.

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**Reformed Presbyterians Oppose Gibson's Jesus Film.** — Some Reformed Presbyterian Churches in the U.S. and Ireland are speaking out

against Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland warns that the movie is "wrong in its source, message and method." They said "the message of the film is that of Roman Catholicism, not biblical Christianity" and that they believe "the method is also wrong" — as using an actor to portray Christ is "idolatry" (Belfast Telegraph, March 6). A dozen Protestant Reformed Churches took out a large newspaper ad in Grand Rapids, Michigan, criticizing the movie for violating the Second Commandment. Pastor Jim Slopsema, First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, says, "It's a distortion. The Bible focuses our attention on the mental anguish that Jesus endured as he suffered the wrath of God for the sins of the church."

\* \* \*

**Fundamental Baptist Churches Showing The Gibson Movie.** — It is sad for me to report that a number of independent Baptist churches are actually showing the Mel Gibson movie "The Passion of the Christ." Cornerstone Baptist Church in my hometown of Lakeland, Florida, rented a movie theater for two showings of the film. Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, also bought out a movie theater for showings. When I

attended Tennessee Temple in the mid-1970s, Highland Park Baptist Church preached against this type of thing and Temple students were forbidden to attend movie theaters. John R. Rice preached at Highland Park each year and he warned boldly against such worldliness. So did many other fundamental Baptist preachers who spoke there in those days.

\* \* \*

**What Will Result From Mel Gibson's Jesus Film?** — The following is from Buddy Smith, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Malanda, Queensland: (1) There may be a handful of people genuinely converted to Christ. God does turn the follies of men to His own ends. (2) There will be many who will be influenced toward Roman Catholicism, especially Mel Gibson's form of traditional (Latin mass) brand. (3) The ecumenical movement will receive a great boost as undiscerning Christians miss the subtle Catholic innuendoes of the film, and are motivated to participate in more and more ecumenical meetings. (4) We will see and hear more and more of the New Evangelical spokesmen (Focus on the Family, Campus Crusade, Billy Graham, and friends) encouraging interfaith dia-

(See **FBIS** on page 18)

**FBIS . . .**

(Continued from page 17)

logue with Rome. (5) And last, I believe that those who are 'converted' through the film will suffer the 'birth defects' of compromise with Rome and Hollywood through their exposure to both in the 'film evangelism' used by the churches to win them."

\* \* \*

**Have You Gotten Your Official "Jesus Nail" Yet?**

— Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ" is not only raking in multiplied millions of dollars through ticket sales but also through the sale of merchandise that has been licensed by Gibson's company. These items include the official "Passion of Christ" coffee table picture book, which is selling by the tens of thousands, key chains, coffee mugs, T-shirts, pins, you name it. And don't forget the replicas of the nails used to hang Jesus on the cross. These have become the red-hot items. We wonder when the pope will jump on the bandwagon and start selling Passion of Christ indulgences?

\* \* \*

**Gibson Set To Become One of the Wealthiest Movie Producers.** — The Wall Street Journal reports that Mel Gibson is set to

become one of Hollywood's wealthiest movie producers through the proceeds from The Passion of the Christ. The paper estimates that he will personally pocket \$350-\$400 million, and that is a very conservative estimate. The movie has already taken in \$264 million at the U.S. box office, and that does not include future income from foreign ticket sales, DVD and video, television rights, soundtrack CDs, and licensing of merchandise such as books, mugs, T-shirts, and "Jesus nails." With Gibson's Jesus movie being treated as a mega evangelistic tool by Roman Catholics and the majority of Protestants and Baptists, the sale of DVDs and videos will doubtless be massive, and one would assume that income will be explosive from the heavily Catholicized parts of the world such as South America, Italy, Slovakia, Ireland, and the Philippines, and from Greek Orthodox strongholds such as Russia. The current all-time record in U.S. ticket sales is held by the immoral 1997 romance movie Titanic, with \$600 million.

\* \* \*

**California Supreme Court Orders End To Homosexual Marriages — For Now.** — On March 11 the California Supreme Court voted unanimously to order Mayor Gavin Newsom of San Francisco to stop selling marriage

licenses to homosexuals. While this is a temporary victory, it is certainly not the end of the matter either for California or for America. It is significant that the California court stated that it is not dealing at this time with the constitutional arguments of same-sex "marriage." It is merely ruling on whether Mayor Newsom had the authority to issue licenses based on his own interpretation of the constitution. In other words, it is a turf war! The court said that the current stay does "not preclude the filing" of a separate lawsuit in lower courts challenging existing marriage laws (Baptist Press, March 12). This appears to be a warm invitation for lawyers representing homosexuals to file just such a suit. We must not forget that this is the court that ruled in favor of an atheist who is opposed to the word "God" in the American Pledge of Allegiance. On the broader national level, actions in Massachusetts and Oregon are clearly running toward the legalization of homosexual marriage. See the next two articles.

\* \* \*

**Massachusetts Legislature Proposing A Half Way Measure To Satisfy Activist Judges.** — The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled on February 4 that the state marriage law is contrary to

the constitution because it discriminates against homosexuals. The court determined that homosexual marriage will thus become legal in Massachusetts in May. In an attempt to come up with an alternative solution that would satisfy the activist supreme court, the state legislature is moving toward adopting an amendment to the constitution that would ban same-sex marriage but would also legalize "civil unions." This is only a stop gap measure and it will not plug the hole in the dam for long. In fact, there is no evidence that the Massachusetts supreme court will accept it. It is certain that activist homosexuals are not content with half-way recognition, and they will continue to push until they have full "rights" in every way and they will then turn their legal guns on anyone who is opposed to their lifestyle, including and especially churches and Christian organizations. If homosexuals are given their "full rights," Bible believers will eventually lose theirs.

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**Oregon Attorney General Gives Mixed Signals About Homosexual Marriage.** — On March 12, the Oregon attorney general issued an opinion that the state's current law "unquestionably" limits marriage to

(See **FBIS** on page 19)

**FBIS . . .**

(Continued from page 18)

one man and one woman. This was in response to Multnomah County officials who have been issuing marriage licenses to homosexuals since March 3. This county encompasses Oregon's largest city, Portland. Very significantly, though, the attorney general also said that the state's supreme court would probably find that the current marriage law violates the state constitution because it discriminates against homosexuals. That was a loud signal for Multnomah County to continue issuing the rogue marriage licenses in order to cause the matter to be moved into the courts and eventually to be taken before the supreme court, and this is exactly what they are doing. As of March 15, this Oregon county is the only place in the country still issuing marriage licenses to homosexuals. The attorney general was referring to article 1, section 20, of Oregon's constitution, which says, "No law shall be passed granting to any citizen or class of citizens privileges or immunities, which, upon the same terms, shall not equally belong to all citizens." That is a ridiculous article which cannot possibly be applied consistently. The law must discriminate in some ways between citizens. That is why children are not treated

the same as adults and law breakers are not treated the same as law abiders. The attorney general said, "If the Oregon courts conclude that the statute classifies on the basis of gender, the likelihood that they would find the limitation unconstitutional is very high." The attorney general did not tell us why homosexuality should be considered a third "gender" or why any judge in his right mind would make such a ruling. It is a simple matter to prove that one is a male or female, but how does one prove that he is homosexual? We are descending into intellectual irrationality and moral anarchy, and God has never failed to judge a people who travel this road. Believing American citizen friends, if ever there were a time to pray for America it is now. In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 God has given strong encouragement for us to pray for nations.

\* \* \*

**Vatican Defends Harry Potter.** — After a Christian school principal in Sweden banned the Harry Potter books, Vatican spokesman Peter Fleetwood defended them. Principal Irene Ivarsson said the books are unchristian and that they are affecting children in the wrong way. On the other hand, priest Peter Fleetwood said, "They are neither evil nor promoting anti-Christian ideology. I

don't think any of us grew up without fantasy worlds which sometimes were populated with wizards, fairies, angels and witches." The man carelessly fails to make a distinction between a book that talks about wizards and witches and a book that promotes and glorifies them. Fleetwood claims that the Harry Potter books help children separate good and evil. In reality, the books blur the line between the two, giving children the false impression that there is a good and spiritually safe form of witchcraft. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness..." (Isaiah 5:20).

\* \* \*

**Sexually Transmitted Disease In America.** — America has the highest rate of sexually transmitted disease (STD) of any industrialized country, and the age group with the highest rate are teens 15 and older. Two recent reports warn by Advocates for Youth and the Alan Guttmacher Institute warn that "half of all young Americans will get a sexually transmitted disease by the age of 25" (Reuters, Feb. 24). There were 18.9 million cases of STD in 2000 and almost 50% of those were among teens.

\* \* \*

**Charismatic Leader**

**Believes Prayer Movement Has Brought America Under Covenantal Protection.** — Pastor Lou Engle of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California, believes that his youth prayer movement has "helped heal the broken covenants of the past, thereby bringing our nation under a measure of covenantal protection" (Charisma News Service, Feb. 26). Three years ago he called upon young people to convene in Washington, D.C., to pray for America. He says, "My assignment was to help shift the courts of America through prayer back to righteousness. I believe we opened that door." That is pure, unadulterated charismatic nonsense. I believe in the power of scriptural prayer, but when prayer is answered it is answered plainly and unmistakably! In Engle's case, there is no answer. America and its courts have not been brought back to righteousness in any sense whatsoever. Just the opposite! Beware of the charismatic movement; it is one of the most dangerous movements in Christianity. It's healers can't heal; it's prophets can't prophecy; it's tongues are mere gibberish; it's music is worldly; it's holy laughter is foolishness; it's spirit slaying is demonic; it's spiritual warfare is phony; it's ecumenism is damnable.

(See **FBIS** on page 20)

**FBIS . . .**

(Continued from page 19)

**Muslim Warriors Butcher Christians.** —

The following is from WorthyNews, March 8: "A total of 48 people were hacked to death in Yelwa, Nigeria, by armed Muslims, many during a church meeting. A recent upsurge in violence in southern Plateau State in Nigeria has claimed at least 100 lives and in the worst single incident so far, at least 48 people were murdered, many during an early morning prayer service on February 24. Armed Muslims invaded the service, ordered the congregation to lie face down and proceeded 'to machete and axe them to death in their house of worship' according to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The victims included women and children. ... A local source told CSW the attacks were being carried out by as many as 400 heavily armed Muslims who shouted 'Allah u Akhbar' (God is great), wore red and black uniforms and moved with military precision. ... Over 10,000 people have died in religious violence since 1999 when several northern states decided to implement the Shari'ah penal code in defiance of the country's secular constitution."

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**Persecution In-**

**creases In Sri Lanka.** — Persecution by Buddhists against Christians in Sri Lanka is increasing. 146 churches have been shut down over the past four months (WEA Religious Liberty News, March 12). In December 2003 alone there were 40 violent attacks upon Christians, including firebombing church property. Buddhist monks have formed a political party called Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) and are targeting Christians as the national enemy.

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**Eritrean Police Jail 51 More Christians.** —

The following is from Religion Today, Feb. 24: "Police hauled to prison a group of 51 Protestant Christians worshipping in secret in the Eritrean capital of Asmara on Sunday, February 16. Pastor Mengse Twelmedhane of Hallelujah Church was arrested along with his congregation in the Edaga Hamuse district of Asmara at 3:30 Sunday afternoon. The 34 men and 17 women were held under arrest at the Adi-Abyto military camp until February 18, when Pastor Twelmedhane was separated from the group and locked into an underground cell. The latest arrests bring to 347 the total number of Protestant Christians known to be jailed in at least nine locations across Eritrea for attending

'illegal' worship services, possessing Bibles or witnessing about their faith. Some of them, including a number of soldiers, have been in prison for nearly two years."

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**Top Ten Persecuting Nations.** —

Open Doors' World Watch List ranks the following as the top 10 persecuting nations: North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Laos, Vietnam, Iran, Turkmenistan, Maldives, Bhutan, Myanmar, and China. Of these, four are Communist and four are Islamic. The other two are Buddhist-dominated. The World Watch List is based on evaluations and testimonies obtained by Open Doors' indigenous contacts, field workers, and from members of persecuted churches. Since the communist dictatorship came to power in North Korea, approximately 300,000 Christians have disappeared.

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**Churches Being Closed In Indonesia.** —

The following is from the Barnabas Fund, March 2004: "On 25 January seven churches were closed down in Banten Province, near Jakarta. These are part of a spate of church closures which began in late 2003 after extremists mobilised the local Muslim community to exploit a law passed the

previous year. The law allows churches in the Jakarta area to be closed down if the local community objects to them. Several churches under construction have also been blocked."

\* \* \*

**The United Nations' And WCC'S Hypocrisy Toward Israel.** —

The United Nations and the World Council of Churches are opposed to Israel's "security fence" which is aimed at blocking suicide bombers from the West Bank, and Israel is being sued in the International Court of Justice over it. At the same time, the UN and the radically liberal WCC are conveniently ignoring such things as the massive \$8 billion fence currently being built by Saudi Arabia to block entry of smugglers and terrorists from Yemen, the security fence that India is planning to build on disputed border in Kashmir, the fences erected by Botswana along its border with three other African nations, and the European Union-funded fences being built in Morocco to stem illegal immigration from Africa into Europe.

Got any rivers they say are not crossible?

Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?

We specialize in the wholly impossible;

Doing what nobody ever could do.

**REVELATION . . .**

(Continued from page 15)

the burning bush, he was concerned as to who was speaking to him from the bush, and whom he should tell Pharaoh had sent him. The Lord said: "*And God said unto Moses, I AM hath sent me unto you*" (Ex. 3:14). "I AM" shows the eternity of God. He has been before all things. He is today and He will be after all things on this earth have been done away. As it says here: "From him which is and which was and which is to come," so we find that God the Father is mentioned first. He is the one that we might term is the Administrator of this world.

The second we find is the Holy Spirit. It says "*and*

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**Are You Trying To Be Saved?**

One does not try to be a son, or child, of God any more than one tries to be a son of a certain man and a certain woman. Why can't people be as sensible about salvation as they are about fleshly relationships?

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

\* \* \*

The size of a man is determined by the depth of his convictions, the height of his ambitions, the breadth of his mercy and the reach of his love.

*from the seven spirits which are before his throne."*

Now the Holy Spirit here is referred to by the phrase "the seven spirits." We find in Isaiah that the word "seven" refers to His completeness, to His perfection and to the diversity of His activity. In Isaiah we read: "*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. This refers to the kind of activities or the diversity of activities that are carried on by the Holy Spirit of the Lord*" (Isa. 11:1-2).

Thirdly, in verse 5, "*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.*" Now Jesus Christ is referred to here as the "faithful witness." When you turn to 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 3, we read concerning him: "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, these are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness." Paul tells young Timothy that Jesus Christ is the faithful witness. We are to determine

whether a man is true or false, is from God or from Satan, by whether he follows the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. This shows that the Apostle Paul considered the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as being exactly accurate and faithful.

John writes in his Gospel: "The world cannot hate you but me it hateth because I testify of it" (Jn. 7:7). The reason the world hates the Lord Jesus Christ is because of His testimony or His words concerning the world. The reason they don't like it, is that He bares a faithful witness concerning what the world is and therefore, they hate Him. The world does not like to be described as they really are, but Jesus Christ is the faithful witness. Also, it says, "and the first begotten of the dead."

I want to look at several verses of scripture right now. Turn with me to the 89th Psalm: "*He shall cry unto me thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation*" (Psm. 89:26). This having reference here to the Lord Jesus Christ, talking about the fact that God was His father. "*Also, I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth*" (Psm. 89:27). This refers to the fact that God the Father says that Jesus Christ is to be His first born and to be made higher than the kings of the earth. "*It shall be established forever as the moon and as*

*a faithful witness in heaven*" (Psm. 89:37). So it is to be established in heaven where it cannot be destroyed.

In the Book of Colossians we see that Jesus Christ is the firstborn. "*Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature*" (Col. 1:15). Paul says: "*But every man in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his appearing*" (1 Cor. 15:23). So He is not only the first born, but He is also the first begotten of the dead. When it refers to the fact that Jesus Christ was the first born, that refers to the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. It refers to the fact that God was His Father; that when Mary conceived, she conceived of the Holy Spirit of God, and that child that was born of Mary was indeed the virgin born Son of God, God being His Father. Jesus then later on crucified, He died, He was buried, He came forth from the grave, and Paul tells us that He is the firstborn from the dead, or the firstfruits of the dead. So Jesus Christ then is the firstborn.

As we know, and as demonstrated for us by Esau and Jacob, there are privileges that belong to the first born. Jesus Christ is the heir of all the things that God has, and He is the only one that was raised from

(See **REV** on page 22)

**REVELATION . . .**

(Continued from page 21)

the dead like this. He is the only one that was the firstborn from the dead. It is true that there were others who were raised from the dead, Lazarus for one, etc. but all of these others that were raised from the dead simply had to die again, but not the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ arose victorious over the grave, He gained the eternal victory over death, and therefore death no longer has any hold upon Him. Therefore, He says that death does not have any hold upon us, that is, those of us who are born into His family. He's the firstfruits, meaning that there are others that are to follow, to come afterwards, and refers to those of us who know Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. We also will be victorious over death and the grave, and our victory is assured because of the fact that He was victorious. He conquered death, hell and the grave, assuring that when we know Him as our personal Lord and Savior, we will also have that victory over the grave.

Again He tells us here in the first chapter that He has made Him *"the prince of the kings of the earth."* The prince means the ruler of all the earth. Now we do not see Him that way today. It does not appear that Jesus Christ is really the King of kings and

the Lord of lords. It does not appear that He is really the prince of the kings of the earth, but that is His title. When God's time is right and when the time arrives, Jesus is going to return to this earth and is going to establish Himself as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We'll be reading and studying about it later on in this book. He indeed then will be King in reality, just not in title, but He will be the prince of the kings of the earth.

We find something else that He says in the latter part of verse 5, *"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."* John says in his Gospel: *"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"* (Jn. 13:1). As the scripture says, "We love him because he first loved us," and that's why we were saved. We were saved simply because God loved us and as a result of His love, He has washed us.

Now you will notice that the word wash is in the past tense. It refers to an action that has already been accomplished or completed. The word "washed" can also be translated by the word "loosed." It means not only has He washed us but He

has also "loosed" us from our sins. That means that He has taken the sin away by His blood. When He washed us with His blood, it loosed all the sins from us so that we were cleansed from our sins, just as when you put your clothing in a washing machine. When you put detergent in the washing machine, what it does to clean the clothing, is to "loose" all the dirt from the fabric. After the dirt has been "loosed," it all goes out in the water and it leaves the fabric "loosed" from the dirt that was there. This is what happens when we are washed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:7; Heb. 9:14; Col. 2:14). We are washed or "loosed" from our sins, and they are washed away; they are taken away, as the scripture says, "As far as the east is from the west." As deep down as the deepest sea, so that God says I will remember them no more.

When you wash your clothes, you get them dirty again and therefore you have to wash your clothes more than one time. But, what ever God does, He has only to do one time, and when He has washed us from our sins, it is done once and for all, and our soul is never dirtied by sin any longer. That's what First John means when he writes, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 Jn. 3:9). This doesn't mean your physical

body for the natural body will sin, because the natural man has not been born of God. But the new nature that is within you is born of God, and since it is born of God, it cannot sin. It only has to be "washed" one time. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Now we mention that the word "washed" is in the past tense, but the word "love" is in the present tense. It's not only that He loved us, but that word love there is a continuing love. So that though washing only needs to take place one time, and that ended it, the loving goes on forever (Rom. 8:38-39). The Lord loves us not only in the past, but He loves us now and He will always love us. That is a continuing thing that we are in need of. So the washing was done once for all, done at Calvary, but the loves goes on. What was it that God used to cleanse us? "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

Do you see why Satan hates the blood? Do you see why there is such an effort being made today to take the word blood out of our Bibles? Nearly all of these new modern translations try to eliminate the word blood. They try to substitute the word "death" instead, as if that's adequate, but it is not. It's the blood, not the death, but it

(See **REV** on page 23)


**REVELATION . . .**

(Continued from page 22)

is the blood that cleanseth us or washes us from all sins. Many of our modern hymnals put out by Protestants (and some Baptists also), are trying to get rid of the word blood in our hymn books. They ridicule and make fun of the "Old Rugged Cross" and "Nothing But the Blood." Songs like "There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood" are left out. But God loves His Son, and the fact that He shed His blood is that which God loves, because it is by His blood that our sins are washed away. We are cleansed and made righteous in the sight of God by His shed blood. "And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness and the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Not only that, it says "And has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (1:6; 5:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:9; Ex. 19:6). We have been made kings and priests. You are a priest. We have all the majesty of a prince and all the ministry of a priest. We have both power with men and power with God. As kings we are made to reign; as priests we are to serve. Are you doing your work of a priest? Well, what is the work of a priest? The priest is the one who was a go-between

between man and God. That's your job today. If you are saved, God has given you the work of a priest, and you are to be a go-between between the unsaved and the Lord. That's your job. You are to be a witness. You are to go out as the priest so you might find those who have need of a priest; those who have need of cleansing; and bring them to the Great High Priest who is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's your job. Those who are still in sin and need to be cleansed and washed from sin, that's your job. Are you doing it? Now He made you one. If you're saved, He's made you a priest, and that's your job that needs to be done.

I wonder if there are some here that have never been saved? You've never been cleansed from your sin; you're still dirty; you're still in your old rags. You still are in sin. You need to have your sins cleansed. What can cleanse your sins? "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." 


**MODEL . . .**

(Continued from page 13)

nection with Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's "model" church has a colorful history. In its 180 years of existence, it has had almost as many ups and downs, as the Republic itself. The Rev. Mr. Tribble was pastor until around 1785. He with the Rev. John Waller in 1780

ordained to the ministry one of the most colorful figures in the Revolution, Rev. William Woods, better known as "Baptist Billy." This gentleman was often in conflict with his congregation. He was once "churched" for working his slaves on Sunday, and when he was allowed to defend himself, he put his talents of speech to such good use, he was forgiven. He declared the slaves had been gathering food and material for the Virginia troops, and in time of war he "saw no difference between his religion and his patriotism."

**"Model Church"  
Marches On**

When the Revolution was over, and religious freedom came to Virginia, the established church abandoned some of its buildings, and the Albemarle Baptists took possession of one of these, the Buck Mountain Church near Earlysville. This old frame building was one of three built in the Fredericksburg parish around 1747. The Baptists used this building for 30 or more years. They were in it in 1809 when Thomas Jefferson retired from the Presidency, for this congregation wrote him a letter welcoming him home, to which he replied, commenting on their church, and expressing his pleasure at being back among friends. 

**Keep Sweet**

By W. Lee Rector

It is hard to keep sweet under grave provocations. While such is admittedly true, it is wise to keep sweet under all circumstances. Courage is a choice virtue. Bravery is not necessarily revealed in the application of brute force — it is more perfectly revealed in the subjection of brute force to charity, for charity covers a multitude of sins.

When God's children are called upon to bear affronts and smile, to bear jeers and speak kindly, we understand the better the Beatitudes of Matthew. All ever rejoice in graciousness and fineness and nobleness. With love for all and hatred for none, let's go on and on unto larger and larger things, winning battles in Christ's name and forbearing as we go.

Keep sweet — that's the way of wisdom. Keep sweet — that's the way of worth. Keep sweet — that's the way of the Lord. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before."

Some people will make a cloak out of a small piece of religion.



## Creation Speaks of God's Power

Swallows can fly 7,000 miles without chart, compass or radio beam and land at the place they left six months before.

Spiders can make a silken rope, creating materials in their own chemical laboratory, very fine but strong enough for their own transport through the air.


Beavers are engineers, constructing without aid of tools, cement or precision instruments, bridges, tunnels, roadways, canals and dams that last for years. Bees, wasps and ants solve their housing problem by building well-ventilated, weatherproof, well-designed and practical apartment houses.

A young squid travels by jet propulsion! He swims by pumping water through a tube along his thin, streamlined body. When pursued, he can gather great speed, and he always goes backwards. When he gets going fast enough, he can set his fins at an angle and take off into the air. He has been seen to fly as far as sixty yards with one take-off, leaving his foes far behind!

Not long ago a group

of scientists were experimenting in Chicago. A female moth of a rare species was placed in a room. Four miles away a male moth of the same species was released. In spite of the din and smoke of the city; in spite of the distance; and in spite of the fact that the female was in a closed room, in a few hours the male moth was found beating its wings against the window of the room in which the female was confined. Explain such "miracles?" *God made it so!*

Tagged salmon released from Columbia River points spend four years in the Pacific, then consistently return to the spots from which they departed. Wild ducks and geese and other birds like the Golden Plover wing their way back to their original localities unerringly after long flights to distant points hundreds, even thousands, of miles away.

Isn't God wonderful? His wisdom and power are revealed a million ways in the innumerable miracles of creation which were planned and executed by infinite intelligence and might. 

## Gossip Town

Have you ever heard of Gossip Town,  
On the shores of Falsehood Bay,  
Where old Dame Rumor, with rustling gown,  
Is going the livelong day?

It isn't far to Gossip Town,  
For people who want to go;  
The Idleness Train will take you down  
In just an hour or so.

The Thoughtless Road is a popular route,  
And most folk start that way,  
But it's steep down grade; if you don't watch out,  
You land in Falsehood Bay.

You glide through the Valley of Vicious Town,  
And into the Tunnel of Hate,  
Then crossing the Add-To Bridge, you walk,  
Right into the city gate.

The principal street is called "They Say," and  
"I have Heard" is the public well,  
And the breeze that blows from Falsehood Bay,  
Is laden with Don't-You-Tell.

In the midst of the Town is Tell Tale Park,  
You are never quite safe while there,  
For its owner is Madame Suspicious Remark,  
Who lives on the Street Do Not Care.

Just back of the park is Slanders Row,  
'Twas there that Good Name died,  
Pierced by a dart from Jealousy's bow,  
In the hands of Envious Pride.

From Gossip Town peace long since fled,  
But envy and strife and woe,  
And sorrow and care you'll find instead,  
If ever you chance to go.