

# The Baptist CHALLENGE

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WHOLE NO. 481

## *Faith Functioning In Christian Life*

*By J. B. Gambrell*

There are many analogies between natural and spiritual things. Paul thought of Christian work in terms of agriculture when he wrote, "Paul may plant, Apollos waters, but God giveth the increase." The truth is the seed and hearts the ground, good or bad, into which the seed is cast. The Holy Scriptures abound in like expressions, making the spiritual plain to us by

means of things visible. We must always think of Christianity as a living thing, like natural objects, corn, wheat, etc. It has form, but the life is before the form and vastly more important than form. The form does not create life and never can.

It is at this vital point that Baptismal regeneration, as a dogma, has enthralled a large part of the world.

The Romish and Greek churches, with their vast millions, are subjugated by that human error and the Protestant world is struck through with its deadly virus. Pronouncedly unscriptural, a reversion of the processes of both nature and grace, a flat, universal failure in practice, it yet holds great ecclesiastical systems and stagnates the religious life of the world.

In the divine, as well as in the natural, order of things life must precede action and development. God is the eternal fountain of life, and He is the fountain of eternal life. This fountain and this eternal life have been made accessible to a world, dead in trespasses and sins, by the incarnation of Christ. God

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## *Holiness: A Doctrine In Disrepute*

**By Chester E. Tulga**

"Offer the world religion that it can take along with its sinful pleasures and the following will be many; but when you ask men to die to sin and surrender their wills, to give up their own plans and their own ambitions and their own philosophy of life and take Jesus Christ and what He has to offer you, you begin a battle that determines the outcome and destiny of souls. The

religion that demands self-denial has never been popular and it never can be popular. A religion that comes into conflict with custom, ethics, and the pleasures of the human heart will immediately meet opposition" (T.T. Williams).

Religious leaders of today often feel that if we will be similar enough to the world so as not to embarrass it, the world will want to come in and add to

our numbers. And so it will, only it will want to bring into our midst its heathen gods and customs, and compromise our allegiance to God. This is what has happened in the modern church. The result is that we have had to build a religious program that will please the world mind, but minus the power of God. This will be more apparent as we continue" (Buell H. Kazee).

We are living in unholy times, times in which there seems to be, on the part of the world, a deep degeneration of moral principle; and, on the part of the churches, an almost loss of interest in personal holiness. This loss of interest in personal holiness in the churches is closely related to the loss of interest in high morality in

(See **TULGA** on page 7)

**Quiz The Pastor -- #33****Who Are the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11?****By the late Nick Michalinos**

**Question:** We've been reading the book of Revelation. Who are the two witnesses in Revelation 11?

**Answer:** I can't give you a specific answer as to the identity of these two witnesses. They are referred to as "My (God's) witnesses" (Rev. 11:3). As to who they are, there has been much speculation on the part of both scholars and preachers. Some of their views are very interesting, and worthy of consideration, while others are not worthy of a second thought.

There is no doubt that these two witnesses are men, though some deny they are real persons. They are called "the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth" (Rev. 11:4).

Zechariah the prophet

had a vision where he saw "two olive trees," and they represented two men, Joshua and Zerubbabel (Zech. 4). Thus, there is good reason to believe the "two olive trees" in Revelation 11:3-4 are also men. They "prophecy," they are dressed in "sackcloth," they give "testimony," they "smite the earth with plagues," and when their ministry is finished, they are "killed." After 3 1/2 days, they are resurrected (Rev. 11:3, 6-7, 11). The reason for two men is that certain matters under the law, and in the New Testament are established by at least the testimonies of two witnesses (Dt. 17:6; Mt. 11:2-3; 18:16; 21:1).

On the Mount of Transfiguration, there were two men with Christ. Moses and Elijah (Lk. 9:30-31). At our Lord's

resurrection, there were two men at the empty tomb (Lk. 24:4). At the ascension into heaven, there were again, two men (Acts 1:10). When the Lord sent out His twelve Apostles, He did it two by two (Mk. 6:7), and in the same manner He sent out the twenty, two by two (Lk. 10:1).

These two witnesses are seen wearing "sackcloth" which is a sign of sorrow and great mourning, for this is a time of intense trial and evil for Israel. This is the time of the Great Tribulation Period.

Notice also that for 42 months, or 1,260 days, or for 3 1/2 years, these two witnesses of God will be protected from injury and death by the power of God (Rev. 11:3, 5). They are invincible during this time until their earthly ministry has run its course.

Can you imagine what kind of preaching they did for those 1,260 days, as they warned of judgment and the mercy of God through Christ? The Beast is then allowed to "overcome them, and kill them." Then to show their contempt for these two faithful witnesses of God, their bodies are not allowed to be buried, and the whole population of earth viewed (by satellite TV) their corpses as they "lie in the street of the great city" of Jerusalem (Rev. 11:7, 9). Their murderers so rejoiced at their deaths that they sent "gifts to one another"

(Rev. 11:10).

Why were the dwellers on earth so happy to see them dead? "Because these two prophets tormented them" with their preaching (Rev. 11:10; Heb. 4:12; Acts 5:33; 7:54). Their resurrection and ascension into heaven in a cloud occurred 3 1/2 days later in full view of their evil murderers (Rev. 11:11-12).

For what it's worth, my opinion is that these two witnesses could be Moses and Elijah. Notice, "My two witnesses ... have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days (1,260) of their prophecy (Elijah did this, 1 Ki. 17:1), and have power over waters to turn them to blood ... and plagues (Moses did this, Ex. 7:19-20). Only Moses and Elijah are named in the four accounts of the two witnesses I have mentioned before. Also, it is prophesied that God will send to earth Elijah before the Second Coming of Christ to earth (Mal. 4:5).

Remember, he went to heaven without dying (2 Ki. 2:11). □ □

### Wisconsin City To Teach Creationism

The school board of Grantsburg, WI has changed its science curriculum to allow the teaching of creationism, arguing that advancing only the theory

(See CITY on page 24)

#### THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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Preached March 25, 1979 -- Message #12

## The Seven Churches of Asia

By M. L. Moser, Editor

*“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 1:20-2:1).*

By way of review, last Sunday evening we talked to you about the subject of

the church. Here we are reading about churches. It says “the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” For us to understand what the Lord is talking about, we must know the meaning of the word church, and we pointed out to you that it comes from a Greek word *ecclesia* which comes from two Greek words, the word *ek* and the word *kaleo*. *Ek* means “out of,” *kaleo* means “to call” and combined means “to call out” and “to call together.” We see then that the word *ecclesia* or church means “an assembly” or “congregation”. It was used by the

Greeks to denote their assemblies of free citizens who convened for the purposes of conducting the public affairs of their city similar to what our city council or our state legislature would be in which you have a House of Representatives and a Senate.

Unless they are assembled you do not have a House of Representatives. Unless they are assembled you do not have a Senate. They must be assembled in order for them to function. In fact, I read this week in the paper about some action the City Directors took relative to Cable TV, and it was ruled that legally they could not take action because they were not all assembled together. There was supposed to be a quorum out of the seven and there weren’t, and therefore they said that any action they took was an invalid action.

It is the same with the church. There must be an assembly. Unless you have an assembly you do not have a church. The word church is used in just two senses. One is the institutional sense in which the word is used in a generic or general sense, and the other in its concrete sense. We pointed out to you that in Ephesians 5 that the Lord compared the church with a husband and wife. He said, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23).

Now there are those who attempt to use the word church in Ephesians 5 as though it was a universal, invisible body, called the universal, invisible church. But we pointed out that this cannot be true, or else you have a big universal, invisible husband, and a big universal, invisible wife, because they are used in the identical same fashion and the church is analogous or similar to the relationship with her Lord as it is between a wife and her husband. What we find then is that there is no such universal, invisible church taught in the Word of God. The universal, invisible church idea is a derivation and corruption of the universal, visible church of the Roman Catholic church. It was invented by Protestantism in order that they might find some way to call themselves a church, since they had come out of what they had previously taught was the church.

When you find the word church in the Bible, it always refers to a local, visible assembly. It may be, using it in the generic sense as we find in Ephesians 5, where the word “church” does not refer to any particular church. The word church always refers to a local assembly.

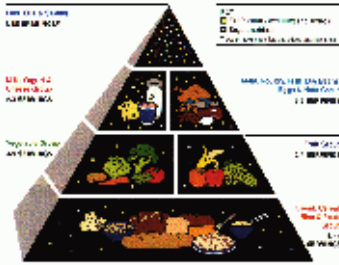
In this passage we find that there are “churches” in Asia. You note that He does not say “the church in

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## God's Masterpiece — The Human Body — #22

# What Happens To Food

By Arthur I. Brown



I am trying to explain to you what happens to food when it is taken into our bodies, that is, we are studying the process of digestion. There are approximately thirty billion little people or cells which must be fed regularly on the right sort of food. These cells are very small — about one-eight-thousandth of an inch in diameter — and naturally unable to swallow anything but tiny molecules. Consequently the large molecules which make up the different kinds of nutritious substances must be broken down into much smaller portions.

Obviously, the foods must contain the things which make up the tissues, the components of which include three organic substances: proteins, carbohydrates or sugars and starches, and fats, along with the inorganic materials, mineral salts and water.

Proteins are found in all tissues, in blood, in muscles, in all the organs, — heart, lungs, etc., — and in milk. Carbohydrates are found in blood, as dextrose; in liver and muscle, as glycogen, which is an animal starch; in milk, as lactose. Fats are found in milk, in brain and nerves, lymph, blood cells,

marrow of bones, in the skin and around organs. Mineral salts are found in all tissues and fluids of the body, as lime salts of bones and teeth, the potassium salts of nerves and blood, sodium salts throughout the tissues, and iron of red blood cells.

The body needs food for tissue building and for energy production. Tissues must have protein, which is the chief constituent of living cells. Protein foods contain nitrogen, and the possession of this element is the main difference between these and other foods.

For energy production, starches and sugars must be burned up and so they are known as fuel foods which are changed into glucose, and manifest themselves as heat and motion. Fat is also an important fuel food. These foods combine with oxygen largely in the muscles, carbon and hydrogen and oxygen being brought together with the aid of the blood stream, which transports the oxygen tied up to the hemoglobin in the red cells. So, carbon dioxide and water are formed, the former passing out in the expired air from the lungs along with watery vapor, in

sweat, and other liquids from the body.

Vitamins are necessary to a normal diet. They do not build tissue nor yield energy but are mysteriously necessary for the proper functioning of the body. It is easy to see that for good health there must be a balanced diet, proper proportion of all kinds of food along with the needed vitamins.

Remember, then, that digestion is the method by which the nutritious parts of food are so changed that they may be absorbed into the blood stream and by this fluid conducted to the millions of cells which select what they need from the moving cafeteria passing constantly before them as the blood moves slowly in the very small blood vessels known as capillaries. In these tiny pipes, the rate of flow is only about one inch a minute, which gives ample time for the hungry cells to make their selection from the molecular lumps of food laid out in orderly and digestible fashion.

I have drawn attention to the beginning of the process in the mouth where the food-mill, the teeth, tear, cut and grind into small

portions what is taken in; then the saliva, poured out from the three sets of salivary glands, moistens the food, and begins the digestive process through the action of what are known as enzymes contained in the saliva.

Enzymes are organic substances of undetermined composition causing changes in certain other substances without undergoing any change themselves. In this way a very small quantity of enzyme is able to bring about changes in a large amount of material. There are two enzymes in saliva, known as ptyalin and maltase, most of the work being done by the former, which changes the starch molecule first into dextrin and then into maltose and a slight amount of dextrose. Of course not all of the starch digestion is performed in the mouth for the very good reason that the food is speedily swallowed. Saliva is alkaline and ptyalin cannot act in acid fluids.

Let us follow the food closely. It has been taken into the mouth after the eyes and nose have given the “go” signal. The salivary

(See **BODY** on page 5)

**BODY . . .**

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juice has moistened and softened it and partly digested it while the teeth are attending to the mastication. Then comes the act of swallowing which has been described as a complex muscular act, so that the bolus of food is forced down into the esophagus, the ten-inch long tube, and into the stomach. The stomach is the bag into which the food is pushed and has a capacity of about five pints, when distended, and about two pints when moderately filled.

For some time, varying from a quarter of an hour to an hour or more, the greater part of the meal lies at the top of the stomach, as if in a reservoir. From time to time small portions are passed along to the more active area of the stomach, subjected to a kind of churning process, and thoroughly saturated with the gastric juice until it becomes a pale yellowish fluid known as chyme. Certainly, you would not recognize your meal if you could see it now. Little by little the gateman at the lower end of the stomach, known as the pyloric valve, opens up and permits the digested portions to escape into the first part of the small intestine, called the duodenum, where intestinal juices, along with pancreatic juice and bile, are being discharged in order to complete digestion.

In the stomach, protein foods are converted into peptones and proteoses by another mysterious pair of enzymes known as pepsin and rennin, which require an acid medium in which to work. This is supplied by the hydrochloric acid of the gastric juice which is secreted from about five million glands in the inner wall of the stomach in the amount of about three quarts daily, or in the course of a lifetime approximately 100,000 quarts of this very concentrated fluid.

So then, the pepsin digests the proteins, and the rennin acts as a special ferment for the digestion of milk. This is absolutely necessary for the infant depending for its life on the milk from mother's breast. This ferment, rennin, actually seems to have a double action on milk, one of which consists in combining the calcium of the milk to form a calcium protein compound, which we call cheese. When an infant regurgitates, it brings up, not milk, but cheese. The other constituent of rennin acts on the fat of the milk and digests it, although milk-fat is the only kind of fat the stomach can deal with.

Every one knows how the emotions can affect digestion and the secretion of the digestive juices. Thoughts seem to have more effect on digestion than the food itself; so try to be happy when you sit down to eat, and give

yourself sufficient time for all the necessary processes to be carried out. The wrong mental attitude while eating, and the hurried bolting of food, are potent factors in bringing about many digestive disturbances. Do not read the newspaper while taking your soup, and forget the things with which you will be occupied during the afternoon. And when the time for the evening meal arrives, it should be an hour of forgetting the unpleasant things and enjoying the good things which are provided for us to appreciate to the full.

The Creator planned that His creatures must have proper food in order to live. Accordingly He placed on earth, and easily accessible to man and animals, a great variety of nutritious substances, delightful to the eye and to the taste. These foods must have been planned, because we discover that they contain everything necessary to keep the body in perfect health and repair. We have seen what the tissues are composed of. These materials are found in foods, needing only to be taken into the body where a very remarkable system operates, so as to alter what is consumed by a combined mechanical and chemical process, without which the countless millions of hungry cells could never assimilate their required nourishment.

As we proceed with our

investigation we shall be impressed with the complexity of all these arrangements, all operations being largely outside of the will of the individual and working automatically. The only thing we are required to do is to get the food into the stomach — all the other operations proceeding in orderly fashion controlled by mysterious powers of which we know little.

If it be thought that this digestive plan was gradually evolved as the need for it developed with the taking of food, it requires little intelligence to know that would be quite impossible; for without a digestive apparatus, there would be no life. The first creatures — the first man and woman — when they appeared on the scene found themselves in possession of everything needed. I have no doubt that Adam walked among the fruit trees, picking what he admired and putting it just where it was planned he should put it — into his mouth. When the food reached his mouth, he discovered he could distinguish the various tastes, although he may have known nothing of taste buds on the tongue.

Most of us pay much attention to the feeding of the body, and neglect the vastly more important nourishment of the spiritual. In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel there is a remarkable story of Jesus

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**FAITH . . .**

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is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. This He is doing through faith, which is both human and divine. It is a grace inwrought into the human heart by the Spirit, and is then freely exercised by the quickened, enlightened, responsible human soul.

It is through faith that we have access to the infinite bounties provided for us in Christ. Faith is the appropriating principle in Christianity. It connects the human soul with the living, divine Savior. By it we are filled with His fullness. By it we are grafted into Christ and partake of His divine nature.

It has just been said that faith is the appropriating grace or principle in religion. It roots itself in the deep, rich, warm soil of Gospel truth and draws the strength of the divine into the human life, transforming and growing it into the image of Him from whom it draws its life and nourishment. By processes too deep and mysterious for human research to explore, the lily, for instance, strikes its roots into the soil and feeds itself out of the earth. It transmutes the elements of the soil into stalk, leaf, and into the beautiful flower. It is provided with an apparatus. In like manner the Christ life of the believer employs faith to nourish itself, that growth and activity, with

usefulness, may result. It is a wonderful study, the place the Scriptures give to faith. But we must limit our studies in this article.

There are some outstanding truths arising out of the subject like mountains on a wide plain, to which we will do well to give heed. One is: Whatever people genuinely believe will determine their character and conduct, because faith transmutes the qualities of its object into the soul. This explains the heathen world in its darkness, coarseness, and deadness. No man rises above the object of his worship.

There is a universal law governing the race, which law is that people assimilate the qualities of the object of their worship. Religions make people. The Turks are the victims of their religion, sensual, blood-thirsty, devilish. The way to change nations is to give them the true faith. Religion is the deepest, strongest, thing in the heart of humanity. It can never be eradicated. Education cannot civilize, as the world-war proves. It can polish and make efficient, but it cannot impart new life, nor make men good.

Another great truth stares us in the face. The strength of Christian character and the force of Christian life will depend on a knowledge of and belief in the deep things of God. We here encounter many shallow conceits floating on

the cross currents of public thought. First of all, no one is, or ever can be, a Christian till his faith roots itself in the central postulate of the Gospel, the Deity of Jesus Christ. This is the profoundest mystery of revelation, yet entirely believable on overwhelming evidence, such as the Scriptures afford. Believing this, we begin to live. But we live as babes in Christ first. At once we are confronted with vital questions of food and growth. Paul tells in simple words that babes must be fed with milk, not meat. This means that the very important matter of adaptability must be studied. All along food convenient must be provided, and all along growth must be contemplated. The babes of today must be nurtured, so as to become the strong men of after awhile. It is here that pastors have failed most.

Nothing can be more silly than the notion, often affirmed, with all the vigor and infallibility of stupidity and ignorance, that it does not matter what people believe just so they do right. What people do will depend on what they are, and what they are will depend on what they believe. Sound conduct will depend on sound sentiments and sound sentiments on faith rooted in sound doctrines. Herbert Spencer well said, "It is impossible to get golden conduct out of leaden sentiments." And the Scriptures teach that the

way to get good fruit is to have good trees. Everybody knows these simple truths. Nobody has yet gathered figs of thistles, and nobody expects to do such a thing.

We are considering a structural principle in theology, and in all human life, one needing, in these days of flux and instability, a new statement, with many applications. Whatever faith roots itself in, will determine human character and action. "I believed, therefore have I spoken," said one long ago, and we may be sure he spoke what he believed. If faith roots itself in the truth, the believer will walk in the truth. It is deeply significant that Paul, over and over, based his exhortations to lofty, heroic conduct on great doctrinal foundations. In Romans 12:1 he exhorts to consecration, connecting his exhortation back to the great doctrinal statements going before. And in the last verse of the 15th chapter of First Corinthians He appeals for steadfastness and fullness of service on the ground of the resurrection of Christ and all believers in their time.

There is a vital connection between strong doctrine and strong Christian character, with the logical strong service. When faith roots itself in the covenant of grace, in the sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love of God, revealed in the Salvation of

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**TULGA . . .**

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the world.

This loss of interest in personal holiness is seen in theological liberalism, which has subtly weakened the concept of the holiness of God, exalted a sentimentalism which it falsely calls love, substituting reverence and worth of personality as the foundation for human ethics rather than the holiness of God. Liberalism today is vainly endeavoring to stimulate devoutness after destroying the foundation for the truly devout life — an overwhelming version of the holiness of God.

1. *The natural man does not want to be holy, neither does he like holy people.* God made man free, but he chooses to go his way instead of God's way. Man was created to glorify God, but instead, he glorifies himself. He was created to do the will of God, but he prefers to do his own will. Man dislikes law, divine and human, and seeks to be a law unto himself — a rebel against God and man. Often he wants forgiveness but without regeneration (Forgiveness without regeneration is the most popular religion in America). Man likes the idea of God's love, but he doesn't like the idea that God is holy and hates sin. He likes saints who go about doing good to man, but he dislikes them if their saintliness leads them to

rebuke human sin. The world likes saints who serve the material needs of the world, but it dislikes saints who bring it under the judgment of the holiness of God.

The entire biblical record reveals man as indifferent or rebellious against God's holy law, God's holy prophets, God's holy Son, and God's holy Word. This dislike often becomes hate which in turn has produced persecution of the holy people, or even the murder of holy persons. Holiness is a doctrine which will always be in disrepute with the natural man, for he has a native dislike of holiness and holy people, as the records of history attest.

2. *The religious world has never had any enthusiasm for holiness or holy people.* It has always condoned salvation without sanctification; conversion without regeneration; forgiveness without obedience; loyalty without rebuke; and heaven without hell. From the beginning the religious Cains have had little use for the faithful Abels. They have exalted a ministry, that, like Balaam, prophesied to please men, while they ignore or even discipline holy men who rebuked the sins of the churches.

The whole history of Israel is a history of antagonism to divine holiness and its demands upon human life. The history of New Testament

Israel continues the same vicious tendency, culminating in the murder of Incarnate Holiness by the religious leaders of the day. Paul predicts that in the latter days this dislike of holiness will express itself in "lovers of their own selves," "boasters," "proud," "unholy," and "despisers of those that are good" (2 Tim. 3:2-3). For nineteen hundred years the church has stoned its prophets while they lived and glorified them after they were safely dead. It can be said with all the evidence of history that the religious world has never had any enthusiasm for personal holiness, and the present day ministry has little interest in personal holiness. The doctrine of holiness is in disrepute in religious circles.

3. *The demands of holiness are too radical, too decisive, too separating to suit the average person, layman, or minister.* Holiness in a minister would revamp his life in a way not to his liking. A holy minister would not be called to certain desirable pulpits; he would be barred from certain offices which his ambition secretly covets. Holiness would be fatal to anyone with the idea of becoming a prominent religious leader. It would set him apart too sharply from other men and those genial examples of carnality so often seen in religious circles. A holy minister would have to depend upon

God alone, with little human assistance — a situation which appalls a time-serving minister.

Holiness in the average man would set him a part from the world too sharply for his comfort or happiness. It might force him to quit a lucrative position. It might hurt his business. It might lose him friends. It might thwart his ambitions. Holiness in a woman would destroy at one blow much of the feminine vanity and extravagance so apparent in our world. Holiness in the ecclesiastical world would destroy the politics by which so many organizations are held together, man's cheap substitute for the unity of the Spirit. The demands of holiness are too radical, so holiness is in disrepute in the ministry and in the churches. There is little desire for personal holiness in the religious world today.

4. *The influence of liberal theology, with its emphasis upon love rather than holiness, has contributed to the neglect of the doctrine of holiness.* A careful reading of many liberal books reveals scarcely any mention of holiness in a vital sense. The theology of liberalism, which makes love instead of holiness the central dominating attribute of God, has majored on love rather than holiness, leading to sheer sentimentalism, non-biblical mysticism, and

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**OK To Legislate Morality?** — When moral Americans ask for laws to outlaw abortion, drugs, alcohol, gambling, or pornography, liberals cry: “You can’t legislate morality”! But most legislation relates to morality. When we make it illegal to murder, steal, or rape, we are imposing our morality on murderers, thieves, and rapists to prevent them from imposing their immorality on their victims. The same is true for assault, fraud, prostitution, tax evasion, etc. Liberals don’t want *biblical* morality legislated, but they want to legislate their secular-humanist morality instead. It is often a question of *whose* morality is being legislated. — CC

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**When Rights Collide.** — When the permissible exercise of one person’s right leads to the impermissible denial of another’s, the conflict is resolved by “rule of law.” Most laws forbid or restrict the exercise of a basic right. Freedom of move-

## World News Roundup

ment is a basic right, but traffic laws forbid driving on the left side of a two-way street. Traffic lights and signs often restrict desired movement. Prohibition is at times necessary to maximize freedom. A smoker’s right to smoke ends where a non-smoker’s right to breathe unpolluted air (by cancer-causing toxins) begins. A baby’s right to life trumps a woman’s right to an abortion. — CC

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**Islam: America’s No. 1 Enemy.** — Pastor Marc Monte in a 69-page syllabus compares the Koran with the Bible, and concludes that the “religion of Islam as presented in the Koran is a religion of hate. The Koran itself is the single most significant piece of hate literature the world has ever known. The teachings of Mohammed are responsible for the deaths of more people than Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini combined.” — CC

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**Media Bias Against Guns.** — People are surprised to learn that survey data show that guns are used defensively by private citizens in the U.S. from 1.5 to 3.4 million times a year, at least three times more

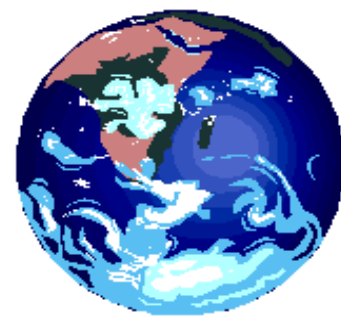
frequently than guns are used to commit crimes. Guns do make it easier to commit crimes, but they also often make it easier for people to defend themselves. So, it’s: “More guns, less crime.” — CC

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**America Becoming a Gay Nation?** — Gay activists want much more than legalized gay marriage, says an article in the October *Charisma*. Many areas of our nation are becoming homosexual havens. And it’s not just San Francisco or Key West. A few years ago we were looking forward to seeing “beautiful Cape Cod.” But alas, we were told that a part of the Cape is now a homosexual hangout. Popular actors and musicians are celebrating all things homosexual. Two female singers recently kissed on TV. We have gay marriages, gay adoptions, gay politics, gay cruises, Gay Days at Disney World, and gay churches. To our shame, we now applaud what was once considered perverse. — CC

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**TBN Crouch Deny Allegations.** — Paul and Jan Crouch started the Trinity Broadcasting Network in 1973. Paul, in 1998,



reached a \$425,000 settlement for an alleged sexual encounter of eight years ago with a male former employee. TBN has programs by charismatic “faith healers” and by some new evangelicals. Benny Hinn is quoted as saying salvation and healing should never be separate. — CC

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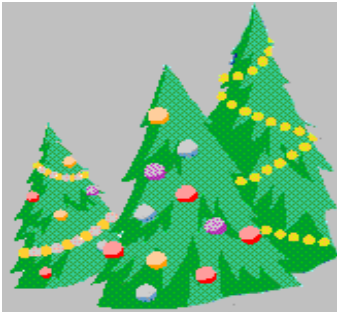
**Cornerstone Drops Its Ban On Dancing.** — After 63 years the prohibition against social dancing at Cornerstone University (long a GARBC school) has been lifted. Its student handbook had banned social dancing, saying it could cause “personal spiritual harm” or “insensitivity to others.” A school-sponsored dance might be held later this year. Wheaton College dropped its ban on on-campus dancing almost a year ago, and allows its faculty and staff to drink alcohol and smoke off campus. — CC

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**Warren Court’s Activist Legacy.** — Since the

(See WNR on page 11)

# La Voz Del Desierto



## ¿Es Cristiana la Celebración de la Navidad?

Por Félix M. González Bulgalá

La palabra Navidad proviene de la palabra “Natividad,” que viene del Latin “Nativitatem,” que significa “nacimiento.” El mundo religioso la aplica propiamente al nacimiento de Jesucristo, pero cuando la gente se fijan en el jolgorio que tiene lugar alrededor de diciembre 25, tienen la incómoda sensación de que algo no está

del todo bien. Si hablamos contra la comercialización de la Navidad, la mayoría de la gente estaría de acuerdo enseguida. La gente es muy consciente de lo que ellos consideran que son los excesos materialistas de la celebración de la Navidad, y les encantan los sermones sobre el “verdadero” significado de la Navidad. Pero ¿cuál

es el *verdadero* significado de la Navidad? ¿De dónde vino? ¿Cómo se originó? ¿Fueron sus principios cristianos o paganos?

En el Nuevo Testamento no hay en absoluto ninguna indicación de que los primeros cristianos observaran la Navidad. Puede demostrarse en la historia de la iglesia que, probablemente durante los

primeros 300 años después del nacimiento de Cristo, los cristianos no superaron nada de la celebración de la Navidad. ¿Cómo entonces, recibimos nuestros días festivos con sus costumbres y tradiciones, la Navidad, así como la Pascua, Semana Santa, y los “días a los santos?”

(Vea **NAVIDAD** en la pág. 10)

## Noticias Alrededor Del Mundo

**Hindúes Adoran En La Capilla “María.”** — El pasado 5 de mayo, un grupo de 60 hindúes conducidos por un sacerdote adoraron en la capilla católica María en Fátima, Portugal (Front page En línea, Periódico en inglés de Portugal del fin de semana, 22 de mayo). El sacerdote hizo rezos en el altar de la Capilla de las Apariciones. Los hindúes encendieron velas, bailaron fuera de la Capilla y recibieron un saludo personal de parte del obispo católico y del rector local. El Obispo Ferreira e Silva

dijo, “No seseamos ser fundamentalistas, sino sinceros y honestos.” Fátima es el sitio de la alegada “aparición de María” en 1917, prometiendo paz a los hombres si éstos se dedicaban a ella. El 13 de mayo de 1982, el Papa Juan Pablo II hizo un peregrinaje a Fátima para dedicar el mundo entero al “corazón inmaculado de María.” El Papa dijo, “Al confiarte, o Madre, el mundo y todo individuo y la gente, también confiamos esta consagración del mundo, colocándola en tu corazón maternal.” En su

visita durante el 1982 el Papa también le agradeció a María por sobrevivir su reciente intento de asesinato del año anterior, y regresó a Fátima en el 1991 para repetir sus rezos de gratitud en el 10mo aniversario del atentado. En 1994, Juan Pablo II dijo a unos 230 obispos italianos en Roma, “una mano maternal dirigió la bala y el Papa fue sacado del umbral de la muerte” (Tiempos Evangélicos, Julio 1994). Una bala extraída del Papa fue colocada en la corona de oro y diamantes usada por la estatua de María en

Fátima, y el *sash* pontifical que fue perforado por una de las balas fue donado a la capilla Jasna Gora María, en Polonia.

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**Actor de la “Pasión de Cristo” Nominado Para Un Premio Por MTV.** — El canal MTV ha nominado a Jim Caviezel para un premio de mejor actor por la película “La Pasión de Cristo.” “La Pasión de Cristo” ha ganado más de \$39,000,000

(Vea **NOTICIAS** en la pág. 10)

**NAVIDAD . . .**

(Viene de la pág. 9)

Cada uno de estos días festivos nos ha llegado desde la antigua Babilonia, por medio de Roma, a través de la Iglesia Católica Romana. Tómese, por ejemplo, la fecha misma de la Navidad, diciembre 25. Como usted probablemente sabe, nadie conoce realmente la fecha del nacimiento de Cristo, y diciembre 25 es una fecha altamente improbable. Entonces, ¿Por qué se escogió diciembre 25? Bien, los babilonios celebraban la victoria de su dios sol en el momento del año en que los días comenzaban a alargarse nuevamente. A la copia romana de esta costumbre babilónica se la llamaba saturnalia, la fiesta del dios sol. Por siglos fue una abominación para los cristianos. Era tiempo de orgías, borracheras y grandes fiestas, igual que se celebra hoy en día. Para atraer a los paganos al “cristianismo” la Iglesia Católica Romano ordenó en el siglo V, la observación de la Navidad el 25 de diciembre, para sustituir la antigua fiesta pagan romana del nacimiento del dios sol (*Enciclopedia Británica, Enciclopedia Americana, Enciclopedia de Religión Católica,*

*Enciclopedia Quillet).*

En la lengua inglesa a esta fiesta se le llama “*Christmas.*” Mucha gente ni siquiera sabe que la misma palabra *Christmas* es una combinación de *Christ* y *mass* que quiere decir “*Misa de Cristo.*” *Christmas* es la celebración católica romana de una misa particular en honor del nacimiento de Cristo. ¿Cuál es el significado de la misa? En esencia, la misa católica romana es una negación de la suficiencia de la expiación de Cristo. Profesa ser una representación del sacrificio de Cristo por los pecados. Es una negación del evangelio (Heb. 9:12, 24-26; 10:10, 12, 14). La Iglesia Católica tiene muchas otras misas, como la de Miguel, pero es su *Christmas*, la que los protestantes y hasta algunas iglesias bautistas han elegido para observar.

El argumento favorito para defender esta fecha por algunos cristianos es: “Todo lo que yo hago es celebrar el nacimiento de mi Salvador, y aprovechar la ocasión para testificar a otros.” Si lo que quiere es celebrar el nacimiento de Cristo (aunque en ninguna parte de la Biblia se manda eso), ¿por qué no celebrarlo en marzo, o en julio, o mejor aún, en *septiembre*, como algunos estudiosos de la

Biblia aseguran que es más probablemente que sea el mes en que Cristo nació? Además el cristiano debe reconocer que al celebrar la Navidad está siguiendo una práctica católica, pues fue la Iglesia Católica quien fijó la fecha y ordenó la celebración de la Navidad el 25 de diciembre. ¿Qué sucede con las fiestas y el jologorio y el libertinaje que tienen lugar en esta época del año, supuestamente en relación con el nacimiento de Cristo? ¿Por qué el licor fluye más libremente en esta época del año que en cualquier otra? ¿Por qué hay más accidentes automovilísticos durante la “época de las fiestas” que en cualquier otra? Podemos utilizar sobre los orígenes del árbol de Navidad y la escena del nacimiento, pero una cosa es cierta: Si usted usa la encarnación de nuestro Señor como excusa para el jologorio y el libertinaje, puede estar seguro de que cosechará el juicio de Dios.

La Navidad es el único momento en que una persona impía puede ser religiosa sin peligro. A la mayoría de la gente le gusta hacer algo religioso de vez en cuando para acallar su conciencia y convencerse de que son realmente buenas personas después de todo; y la Navidad les proporciona la oportunidad perfecta para hacerlo. Es completamente seguro participar y tener el espíritu de la Navidad sin tener el Espíritu Santo, sin tener la

mente de Cristo.

Muchas iglesias cristianas, aun bautistas fundamentales, tienen su programa y cena de Navidad sin excesos, ni borracheras, en sustitución de las mundanas posadas. ¡*Qué bonito!* Sea como sea que se practique, no deja de ser una participación de una fiesta de origen pagano. Se podrán ofrecer muchas excusas para esta celebración, pero no podremos eludir la sentencia de Romanos 2:1: “Por lo cual eres inexcusable, oh hombre, quienquiera que seas tú que juzgas; ... te condenas a tí mismo; porque tú que juzgas haces lo mismo.” Porque critican a los católicos por sus tradiciones, pero muy convenientemente, siguen una de ellas: la de la Navidad. □ □

**NOTICIAS . . .**

(Viene de la pág. 9)

en los Estados Unidos solamente. También nominaron a cuatro otras estrellas del cine de Hollywood, incluyendo Johnny Depp (“Piratas del Caribe”) y a Tim Cruise (“El Último Samurai”). Si Caviezel fuera un cristiano bíblico (él es católico), y si “La Pasión de Cristo” fuera fiel a la Palabra de Dios, MTV no la tocaría con “un poste de diez pies.” Jesús advirtió, “Si el mundo os aborrece, sabed que a mí me ha aborrecido antes que a vosotros” (Juan 15:18). □

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**Central Lafayette #17, Arroyo, PR 00714**  
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**Marcos A. Curet, Pastor**

WNR . . .

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late 1950s, the Warren Court “dictatorship of nine judges” de-Christianized our public schools: Prayer and Bible readings were abolished and a radically secularist relentless war to remove all expressions and symbols of Christianity from our public square was launched. A few more examples of judicial activism (“legislating from the bench”): Judges have declared pornography, nude dancing in beer halls, and burning the American flag to be constitutionally-protected speech; created new rights for criminals; declared abortion a constitutional right of all women, declared homosexuality a protected right; and outlawed the death penalty for a generation. — CC.

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**Conservatives Charge ACLU “Has No Moral Compass.”** — The American Civil Liberties Union Friday came under attack for challenging a Virginia law that prohibits juveniles from walking around naked at nudist camps without the presence of a parent or guardian. That case is pending, but the ACLU also attracted attention this week for settling a lawsuit against the Pentagon, the conditions of which mean that U.S. military bases will no longer be able to publicly sponsor Boy

## AFA Calls For Boycott Of P&G

In its lead story in the November/December 2004 issue of the *American Family Association Journal*, the publishing organization has called for a boycott of three Procter & Gamble (P&G) products: **Tide** laundry detergent, **Crest** toothpaste and **Pampers** diapers. The move is in response to Procter & Gamble’s recent actions in support of homosexual activists who are heading a drive to overthrow a Cincinnati, Ohio law that bans special rights to homosexuals, a move that passed in 1962 elections by a 62% majority.

The article states: “It appears that P&G is determined to help activists accomplish their goal. The company recently wrote to their Cincinnati employees urging them to support the repeal of Article 12. P&G has also donated \$40,000 toward that goal.

“Citizens to Restore Fairness, the group pushing for special rights for homosexuals, is chaired by Gary Wright, and employee of P&G who was given a leave of absence to head the campaign. Wright is a leader of P&G’s corporate homosexual group GABLE/P&G.”

The major homosexual organizations have set a goal of obtaining “minority” status as have Blacks and Hispanics. They apparently want special treatments such as that afforded Blacks through affirmative action. Their contention is they are genetically predisposed to the homosexual lifestyle. The real truth is that no credible scientific evidence exists to support the idea that homosexuals are born such. There is a preponderance of evidence to prove that homosexuality is a conscious lifestyle choice that may be influenced by environmental factors.

Should Christians support the homosexual agenda by buying products of those companies such as P&G that support it? Shouldn’t it cause us to think twice before we buy or even use those products? P&G calls Cincinnati “out of step with doing what’s right.” There should be no special rights on the basis of sexual orientation, except those enshrined in the biblical concept of marriage, between one man and one woman.

Our readers are encouraged to join AFA in the boycott of P&G. A special website has been set up to encourage people to join their effort:

[www.pgboycott.com](http://www.pgboycott.com).

Scout troops. Juxta-posed, the two cases show that the ACLU “has no moral compass,” according to the conservative legal group, Liberty Counsel.

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**Bases Face Warning On Scouts.** — The Pentagon has agreed to warn military bases worldwide that they should not directly sponsor Boy Scout troops, partially resolving claims that the government has improperly supported a group that requires members to believe in God. The settlement, announced yesterday, came in a 1999 lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, which says American military units have sponsored hundreds of Boy Scout troops. “If our Constitution’s promise of religious liberty is to be a reality, the government should not be administering religious oaths or discriminating based on religious beliefs,” said ACLU lawyer Adam Schwartz. The Pentagon said it has long had a rule against sponsorship of nonfederal organizations and denied the rule had been violated. But it agreed to send a message to posts worldwide warning them not to sponsor Boy Scout troops or other such groups. The rule does not prevent service members from leading Scout troops un-

(See WNR on page 18)

## Fundamental Baptist Information Service

By David W. Cloud

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**Graham Crusade Promises Not To Proselytize Catholics.** — The Billy Graham organization preparing for the November crusade in Los Angeles has promised the Roman Catholic archdiocese that Catholics will not be “proselytized.” A letter from Cardinal Roger Mahony, dated October 6, 2004, and posted at the archdiocese web site, states: “When the Crusade was held in other locations, many Catholics responded to Dr. Graham’s message and came forward for Christ. Crusade officials expect the same for the Los Angeles area. *These officials have assured me that, in keeping with Graham’s belief and policy, there will be no proselytizing, and that anyone identifying him or herself as Catholic will be referred to us* for re-integration into the life of the Catholic Church. We must be ready to welcome them.” Indeed, this has been Graham’s working policy since the 1950s. The names of tens of thousands of Catholics have been turned over to Catholic Churches for “follow-up.” What could be more damnable, to turn seekers

over to wolves in sheep’s clothing?

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**Graham Accepts Prince of Peace Award, Said He Wanted To Kneel Down Before Mother Teresa.** — On November 14 Billy Graham accepted the Prince of Peace Award from the Prince of Peace Foundation. He donated the \$500,000 prize to the Los Angeles evangelistic crusade that ran from Nov. 18-21. Graham is the fourth recipient, after Anwar Sadat of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan, and Mother Teresa. The award was presented by Harald Bredesen, founder and chairman of the foundation. In his acceptance speech, Graham said: “I remember we were in Calcutta ... we went to see Mother Teresa and when we got there at her House of Charity, she was holding a dying man in her arm and she could[n’t] see us right then but about 15 or 20 minutes later she came in and she was so gracious and so spiritual that I felt like kneeling down in her presence. I was so overwhelmed” (“Billy Graham Is Honored

with the Prince of Peace Prize,” Assist News Service, Nov. 18). Mother Teresa preached a false gospel and did not even make an effort to win Hindus to Catholicism, merely encouraging them, instead, to trust in their Hindu gods. It is so very sad to see a Gospel preacher so deceived about true Christianity. The fact that the Southern Baptist Convention in its most conservative aspects supports Billy Graham without hesitation is incontrovertible proof of its spiritual blindness.

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**Baptist Seminary Has First Woman President.** — Women were appointed to top positions at seminaries this month in Kansas and California. Neither seminary has ever had a female president before. Molly Marshall was elected president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas, on Nov. 12, becoming the first female president of an accredited Baptist seminary. Marshall, 54, succeeds Thomas Clifton, who retired at the end of 2003 after 10 years as president. For the past nine years, Marshall has been professor of theology and spiritual formation at Central and currently serves as acting academic dean. Central Seminary, founded in 1901, is affiliated with the American

Baptist Churches U.S.A. and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

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**California City Adds “In God We Trust” to City Seal.** — Oceanside City, just outside one of the U.S. Marine Corps largest bases, Camp Pendleton, voted unanimously to add “in God we trust” to their city seal. More than 120 people, mostly supporters, packed the council chambers with standing room only for the vote. When the council announced their plan to add the phrase the audience greeted the move with applause, cheers and whistles.

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**International Baptist Network Holds Inaugural Meeting.** — The International Baptist Network (IBN) held its inaugural public meeting September 27-29 at Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, the home of Tennessee Temple University. The new organization has the objective of “networking” fundamental Baptist churches. The main participants at this point are the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, Southwide Baptist Fellowship, and World Baptist Fellowship; but these were joined by representatives of the

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Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC). Speakers and organizers include John Rawlings, Lee Roberson, Jerry Vines (SBC), Randy Ray, Rick Austin, Tim Lee, Bill Monroe (president of the BBFI), David Boulter, Jerry Prevo, David Bryant, Bo Moore, Dino Pedrone, and Wayne Martin. Paul Dixon, Chancellor of Cedarville College, which recently was approved by the SBC, attended and announced the meeting at Cedarville's web site. The new organization calls itself the "Face of 21st Century Baptists." One thing that unites most of the participants of the International Baptist Network is the shared conviction that things such as music, Bible versions, associations, and dress standards are largely non-issues that should not divide. They further hold the conviction that those who make issues of such things are hurtful to the cause of Christ today. Many of the men at the forefront of this new movement pastor contemporary or "progressive" churches. The lines are being drawn ever more sharply on both sides between independent Baptists who want to hold to the old paths and those who are casting their lot in the contemporary direction.

**Christians Persecuted In America For Protesting The "Gay Agenda."**

— The following by Lee Guigon is excerpted from the Culture and Family Institute web site: "In July the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corp. launched a multimillion-dollar ad campaign on cable TV to attract homosexual tourists to the city. In August the Philadelphia Phillies featured 'Gay Day' at the Citizens Bank Park. When Christians protested peacefully by displaying banners, they were ejected. On October 10, Philadelphia police arrested 11 Christians for committing the 'hate crime' and 'riot' of singing hymns near a homosexual 'Outfest.' The Christians have been charged with a laundry list of felonies, some of which carry prison penalties. Described by Philadelphia authorities as members of a 'criminal conspiracy,' the Christians sang the hymns to protest — peacefully, nonviolently — a city-sanctioned 'Coming Out Day' for homosexuals. Someday, sooner than you think, the whole country will have to choose. Biblical Christianity and Gay-topia cannot live under the same roof. If the one is right, the other must be wrong. Each of these worldviews excludes the other. These events in Philadelphia give us a foretaste of what that choice will look like — Christians carted off in paddy wagons, punished for

expressing their faith in public — if America chooses to support the homosexual movement."

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**Home Schooling Fathers Thrown In Jail In Germany.**

— The following is from WorldNetDaily, Oct. 28: "Seven home schooling fathers in Germany spent several days in jail for refusing to pay fines that were imposed on them for failing to send their children to government schools. The fathers, who are part of the Twelve Tribes Community in Klosterzimmern, Germany, were forced to spend between six and 16 days in what the group's website translates as 'coercive jail.' ... Said the released home schooling dad: 'The prison sentence wasn't easy but it did nothing to change our convictions. Wrong will always remain wrong. To act according to the dictates of our conscience is right. Conscientious objectors are also granted the freedom of conscience. The "wrong" of the members of the resistance in the Third Reich is being praised today, the members are being esteemed as heroes. Our conscience resists the one-sided education of the state with the values of a consumption and achievement-oriented society. How far have we fallen, if any kind of perverse way of life is being applauded, but a sincere education accord-

ing to the Bible is being punished? Where are the citizens of this country who will stand up against injustice?"

\* \* \*

**More Evolutionary Nonsense.**

— The front page of the Sydney Morning Herald for October 28 featured "an artist's impression" of "a previously unknown species of miniature human barely a metre tall." The drawing depicts a small man walking erect with a slightly ape-like head. (The artist's impression of "homo floresiensis" is no more accurate than that of "Jesus" in Mel Gibson's misguided movie.) Evolutionists claim this is a different "species" and they are calling it "homo floresiensis." The remains were discovered in a cave on the remote Indonesian island of Flores. An accompanying photo from Nature magazine shows the small skull of "homo floresiensis" alongside that of a "modern man." The skulls have identical characteristics; the only difference is the size. If not viewed through the thick glasses of evolution, it is a simple matter to understand that "homo floresiensis" was not another species at all, but was a tribe of small people who became isolated on Flores. There are small people alive to-

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day. I have seen full-grown women in Nepal who are only about four and a half feet tall. The females of some groups of Mbutsi pygmies of Zaire average only 4.1 feet in height.

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**Episcopalians Worship Queen of Heaven.**

— The Episcopal Church USA's Office of Women's Ministries is promoting worship of the Old Testament idol, the Queen of Heaven. The "Women's Eucharist: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine" is based on a rite from Tuatha de Brighid, "a clan of modern Druids ... who believe in interconnectedness of all faiths" ("Episcopal Church Officially Promotes Idol Worship," Christianity Today weblog, week of October 25). The Women's Eucharist proclaims: "Mother God, our ancient sisters called you Queen of Heaven and baked these cakes in your honor in defiance of their brothers and husbands who would not see your feminine face. ... We offer these cakes and enjoy them too. ... May we also be signs of your love and abundance." See Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:15-19. This is not new. In 1984 the World Council of Churches (of which the Episcopal Church is a member) published a liturgy

titled "No Longer Strangers," which called God by the following names: Lady of peace, Lady of wisdom, Lady of love, Lady of birth, Mother, Baker-woman, Presence, Essence, Simplicity.

\* \* \*

**Most Australians Believe Science Over Bible.**

— According to a new survey, Australians, by a wide margin, prefer science to the Bible in explaining the origins of life. The poll by UMR Research found that only 28% of Australians believe the Bible holds the answer. Further, only 3% polled thought they would go to hell when they died, while 27% thought they would go neither to heaven nor to hell. In contrast, polls in America have found that 50% believe the Bible and only 15% believe in evolution.

\* \* \*

**Catholic Bishops Vote Against Urging People To Read Bible.**

— At their fall meeting, the U.S. Catholic bishops voted on Nov. 17 against a proposal to urge Catholics to read their Bibles. The only thing surprising about this, of course, is that such a proposal was made. The reason Catholic bishops don't want to encourage their people to read the Bible is for the simple reason that the Bible

condemns the Catholic Church. If they read the Bible they might come across something like this: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:7-9). Or this, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Or this, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13).

\* \* \*

**Catholic Bishops Vote To Join New Ecumenical Venture.**

— Meeting at their fall gathering, the Conference of Catholic Bishops in the U.S. voted to join the new ecumenical group Christian Churches Together in the USA. The goal of the organization is to have the broadest ecumenical umbrella to date, bringing together Catholics, liberal and evangelical Protestants, Baptists, Orthodox, Pentecostals, and Charismatics. The members of the steering committee of Christian Churches To-

gether include a Catholic Bishop and Cardinal. Other members include John Busby of the Salvation Army; Wesley Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America; Leonid Kishkovsky of the Orthodox Church in America; Pentecostal Bishop George McKinney; Judy Reimer, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren; and officers representing the Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church. World Vision is also a member. Dr. Bob Edgar, NCC General Secretary, said, "This is an important moment for coming together, and for talking about a new something that would be broader and deeper." Yes, broader and deeper end-time apostasy.

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**Falwell Calls Radical Ecumenists And Charismatics "Courageous and Brilliant."**

— In a fundraising letter of Nov. 16 for The Faith and Values Coalition, "a 21st Century Moral Majority," Jerry Falwell called radical ecumenists and charismatics "courageous and brilliant evangelical megaleaders." He listed 18, including Franklin Graham, Pat Robertson, and Rod Parsley. Franklin Graham has said that his father's ecumenical alliance with the

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(Continued from page 14)

Catholic Church and all other denominations "was one of the smartest things his father ever did" ("Keeping it simple, safe keeps Graham on high," The Indianapolis Star, Thurs., June 3, 1999, p. H2). Pat Robertson, founder of the 700 Club and Regent University, is an ardent ecumenicist who has long worked and fellowshiped with Romanists and exemplifies the deep compromise and disobedience that is rampant in evangelical-charismatic circles today. In 1985, Robertson revealed that during 25 years of broadcasting, he has "worked for harmony and reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics" and "refrained from airing major theological differences" (Christian News, July 22, 1985). Rod Parsley, television preacher and pastor of World Harvest church in Columbus, Ohio, is a dangerous false teacher who preaches the unscriptural Word-Faith message. He teaches that believers can have whatsoever they desire by faith and confession with their mouths, promises healing as a part of salvation, etc. Those who are backing the new Independent Baptist Network are backing men like Falwell, because they are rampant in the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, and the other

fellowships coming together in this venture.

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**Taliban Baptists.** —

The following is reprinted from the May 24, 2002 issue of Friday Church News Notes: Recently I read a report by a preacher who attended a Baptist Bible Fellowship (BBF) meeting in Salem, New Hampshire. He observed that many of the speakers mentioned "new winds" that are blowing among fundamental Baptists. They warned of those who worry about such things as the way women dress, long hair on men, rock music, and contemporary praise. Those who still preach against such things (and they are few indeed) were called "Taliban Baptists." I wonder if Paul was a Taliban Baptist? He wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 that long hair on men is a shame and that long hair on women is a glory. If hair and such things don't matter, why is that in the Bible? My friends, there are indeed new winds blowing among fundamental Baptists, and they are the winds of error spoken of in Ephesians 4. They are the winds of compromise and worldliness. They are being stirred up by the hot air blowing from the mouths of preachers who have traded the good fight of faith for a comfortable, popular ministry. I regularly hear from men and women who are

brokenhearted because they cannot find a strong church in their area. They have visited church after church, and all they can find are compromising pastors who do not want to rock the boat. These families want to raise their children in the paths of righteousness and biblical separation, but the churches undermine their teaching and woo the children toward the world.

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**Catholic Actor Featured At Graham Crusade.** —

Catholic actor Jim Caviezel was featured on the platform at the second night of the Billy Graham evangelistic crusade in Los Angeles, California. The crusade lasted from Nov. 18-21. Caviezel starred as "Jesus" in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. He says he prayed to St. Genesius of Arles and St. Anthony of Padua for help in his acting career. He has visited Medjugorje to witness the site where Mary allegedly appeared to six young people. Caviezel said, "This film is something that I believe was made by Mary for her Son." Caviezel prayed the Rosary to Mary every day during the filming. Is it that Graham believes Caviezel's gospel, or is it that Caviezel believes Graham's gospel, or is it that the biblical truth that two must be agreed before they walk together

is no longer in force today? What confusion and open disobedience!

\* \* \*

**Church Pulls Out of SBC Over Female Preachers.** —

Parker's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, North Carolina, pulled out of the Baptist State Convention in protest to the annual "convention message" being delivered by a woman. The message was preached by Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham. Pastor Larry Brown called the message an "outright affront to the Word of God" and said that though Lotz is "a fine Christian woman" and "a good teacher and speaker," she "cannot fulfill the role of preacher, whether this refers to the pulpit of a church or the podium of a convention." He said further, "We just feel like if this is OK this time, what's it going to lead to next?" Amen. Does the Word of God not warn, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"? Two things are forbidden to the Christian women in 1 Timothy 2:12. She cannot teach men and she cannot usurp authority over men. Lotz was featured as a preacher at a Sunday morning worship service June 15, 2003, sponsored by the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists (Ohio Baptist Messenger, July 2003). □ □



# The Glory of Sickness

By George Wells Arms

*“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” — John 11:4.*

Louis E. Bisch, M.D., wrote an article entitled, “Turn Your Sickness Into an Asset.” “Any serious illness,” says Dr. Bisch, “should be regarded as an opportunity to gather dividends and generate energies that mere health cannot possibly bestow.” He goes on to tell of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, Eugene O’Neill, Florence Nightingale, and others whose sickness became a distinct turning point and blessing in their lives.

Our Lord, who takes us much more into the mystery of suffering, goes far deeper and declares that sickness may be for the glory of God. When they sent and told Him that His friend Lazarus was sick, what strange sympathy He gave! How unlike the kind of “get well” card *we* would send. I wonder if Lazarus did not receive so much out of that experience, which thus enriched him, that he would not have given it up for anything in the world. At all events, this is the word for you who are smitten with serious illness and temporarily laid aside, or enfolded in the sheepcote of shut-ins. These things may abound to His glory.

Further, they may be both for your enrichment of life and your joy.

In saying this, may I assure you that I am not speaking merely from theory, but out of a very personal experience that confirms to me the words of the Book. I have spent some 30 weeks, on different occasions, in hospitals as a patient with great suffering having my life despaired of more than once. The longest period during which I was unable to carry on was ten months. It was a very bitter disappointment to be struck down in the prime of life and usefulness, with a family of little children, but it has become one of the richest experiences of my life. I would not now exchange it for a year of travel, nor anything else of which I can think. Like Jacob, I have suffered ever since from a physical handicap as a result, yet the most fruitful years of my ministry have been those since I was “touched in the hollow of the thigh.”

May I mention, then, seven “Gloryings” that come to us through sickness, and that also abound to the glory of God.

## The Glory of Chastening

First of all, there is a distinct glory just in being chastened. “*Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*” (Heb. 12:6). And if we are not chastened then we are “*bastards, and not sons*” (Heb. 12:8). Neither is any chastening for the present joyous — whether from the hand of our earthly father or from the hand of our Heavenly Father.

We do well therefore to remember that chastening need not be punishment. Chastening is to refine and make better, punishment is to condemn and restrain. Moreover, sickness is not necessarily a result of our wrong doing. Concerning the blind man, it was our Lord Himself who said, “*Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him*” (Jn. 9:3). The Psalmist learned this and said, “*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes*” (Psa. 119:71).

## The Glory of Abandonment

Then there is the glory

of abandonment — we have to “let go” in order to “let God.” With every under-pinning taken away there is naught else that we can do. Yes, and that is what perfect trust is — just relaxing as a helpless babe upon Another and leaving it all to Him. No one likes to be sick, no one chooses it. And here is born in one’s heart that flower of humility — hidden, sweet and fragrant like the arbutus, trailing along the ground until it bursts forth from out of the snows of winter into the warmth of His love — humility which can never be imitated, but is born of God. And whoever truly walks this path never poses as a martyr nor covers himself with self-pity.

## The Glory of Meditation

Then in sickness we enter into the chamber of the glory of meditation. At last there is time to think whether we will or not! Here is where so many find God. It is a good thing to be brought to the very gates of death. We all have to pass through them

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some day. Now if by being brought to these gates we can be made ready to pass through and find the victory that is in Him, then all the rest of our days we are going to live more than conquerors!

### The Glory of Strength

Here, too, strange to say, one finds the glory of strength; for, as Paul says, "*When I am weak, then am I strong*" (2 Cor. 12:10) Strange paradox! The secret is, of course, that we can do more in God's strength than we can in our own. Abandoned to Him, we let Him do. Paul could say, I "*glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me ... for when I am weak, then am I strong*" (2 Cor. 12:9-10). It may be that we need what he needed.

### The Glory of Discipline

This lost self-power, in order that we might put on God-power, brings strength because it brings us into the glory of discipline. Someone has said, "You never live to grow old until you have been turned down by an insurance company," because then you go into training and discipline yourself, and you do only those things that make and keep you fit. We need discipline and more of it.

Self-indulgence never made true manhood or womahood. To go on a diet for the rest of one's days brings much more ultimate satisfaction out of life than to live as an epicurean. Editors and athletes have to keep on a diet to play their game, and they enjoy it. Why should not we "keep the body under" who seek the full abundance of life?

### The Glory of Fellowship

But we must not omit the fragrance of the glory of fellowship that comes with all sickness and suffering. To have to be cared for with the intimate tenderness demanded by a weakened body knits a cord between those who do the waiting and those who are waited upon that cannot be broken. Nursing cannot be done by a machine. There comes a glory from sickness that likewise blesses the well — also disciplining and chastening them. "*I was sick, and ye visited me*" (Mt. 25:36), says our Master. And there in the sickroom the Friend of friends is found again and again, making new friends. Of course, all sickness is not just sickness in a comfortable home with loving hands to wait on you. Sickness often means a large financial outlay, where there are no means from which to make this outlay. Often it is the bread-winner who is stricken, which means that in all these

things there is only a deeper pruning being done, and the deeper pruning means "more fruit." In this we have to trust Him with our financial end as well as our bodily end.

### The Glory of Answered Prayer and the Healing Christ

Finally, we come to the glory of answered prayer and of the healing Christ. Here we often take our first lessons in the School of Prayer, to come out of our illness with the glorious testimony, "*I cried unto the Lord ... and he heard me*" (Psa. 3:4). We learn here that there is a healing hand above all the science and means that men can employ. This does not mean we are to disregard

the means of healing. Thank God for Christian physicians and nurses! We are expected to use all the offices men and medicine can offer, but to use them only as a means, and as a means in His hands who as the Great Physician is greater than His means. His very presence brings healing. How many can testify, "The Lord hath healed me!"

Whether, then, this be the first sickness or the last (so little do we know), let us resolve we are going to get all the glory and blessing out of it there is. Then we can say with much assurance and joy:

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (Jn. 11:4). □ □

### Have You Heard?

"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us?" — Rom. 5:8

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" — John 3:16

### Do You Understand?

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him?" — John 3:36

### Do You Realize?

"He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God?" — John 3:18

As many as received him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." — John 1:12

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officially on their own time, and Scouts will still be able to hold meetings on areas of military bases where civilian organizations are allowed to hold events. The settlement does not resolve other ACLU claims involving government spending that benefits the Boy Scouts, such as money used to prepare a Virginia military base for the Boy Scout Jamboree and grants used by state and local governments to benefit the Boy Scouts, Schwartz said. A Justice Department spokesman said the message that will be sent to bases represents "a clarification of an existing rule that DOD personnel cannot be involved in an official capacity. □

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universalism. Its interest in the devotional books runs to a saintliness of good works, rather than sanctification by faith. Its present preoccupation is symbolized by the popularity of the writings of E. Stanley Jones where the victorious life is set forth in the terms and techniques of the new psychology rather than the dominance of the Holy Spirit. Present day liberalism has no interest in the biblical doctrine of holiness, for the simple reason that it would destroy the theological system which

has been built upon a disproportionate emphasis upon love.

Neo-orthodoxy is little better, for it tends to identify God as the "wholly Other" rather than as the Holy One. His holiness seems to stem from His separateness from creation and creatures, rather than from His moral nature. It seems to be God's arbitrary will which makes holiness rather than God's nature. So Emil Brunner, misinterpreting Isaiah 6 says, "Before God's majesty man sees himself as nothing." The facts are that Isaiah was not so much impressed by his nothingness as he was by his saintfulness. He was not simply impressed with the fact that he was a creature but also by the fact that he was a sinner. He was not simply disturbed by the majesty of God but also by the holiness of God, for this was the message of the angel chant. Neo-orthodoxy has no adequate doctrine of holiness.

The loss of interest in personal holiness on the part of the ministry has led to many evil consequences.

Under the teachings of modern liberalism, many ministers, unknowingly, have lost the truth of the absolute holiness of God, and its demands upon the life of men. The sharp impact of the divine holiness upon the mind of religious man is seen in the older religious books, but only lightly in present

day religious literature. Very few men in the ministry are reputed as being saints. Not many are known for being mighty men of prayer and faith. This has resulted in shallow preaching and teaching which hardly informs the mind and does not stir the soul. Forgetting that the divine holiness is the primary basis for morality and ethics, the ministers of today have largely accepted a basis of morality on a lower level and a concept of ethics based upon the same premise. Many conservatives have unwittingly imbibed the same idea, so that reverence for per-

sonality seems to be more important than the holiness of God as a basis for judgment.

The absence of any emphasis upon holiness in liberal theology, the extreme emphasis upon positional sanctification rather than experiential sanctification in fundamentalism, the prosperity and abundance of our country (never an aid to holiness) — all these things and others have contributed to the manifest lack of interest in personal holiness in the ministry. Holiness is a doctrine in disrepute in the church of today, although it occupies a primary place in the Scriptures. □ □

## God's Invitation

There is a time, we know not when,  
A place we know not where,  
Which marks the destiny of men  
To glory or despair.

There is a line to us unseen,  
Which crosses every path:  
The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and His wrath.

How long may men go on in sin,  
How long will God forbear?  
Where does hope end, and where begin  
The confines of despair?

One answer from the skies is sent,  
"Ye who depart from God,  
While it is called today, Repent,  
And harden not your heart."

**CHURCH . . .**

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Asia.” The church is not composed of, or the sum of, *all* the churches, but *each* church is a separate, distinct and independent body, “and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

These seven churches are roughly arranged in a circle. These are not all of the churches in existence, but seven that were selected because of their being types or representatives of all churches. In other words, as we read these letters to these seven churches in chapters two and three, we find that there are churches today like the church at Ephesus, and there are some churches today that are like the church of Laodicea. You will find some churches like each of these seven churches. So they are representatives of seven different types of churches. Also, you will note that Christ is in the center or in the midst of His churches, showing that He is equally near each of His churches.

Now these churches have a fourfold significance. There was first of all, a local application applying to each of the churches addressed. For instance, in these first few verses of chapter two we find this letter written to the church of Ephesus and as he writes this, it applies to that particular church in the

city of Ephesus. He is writing about specific conditions in the church in Ephesus.

Secondly, it is a representative or it has a representative application to all churches every where. What He teaches, what He instructs the church in Ephesus is going to be true of every church that finds themselves within the same set of circumstances, within the same situations.

Thirdly, there is a testing application to all churches. Tests whereby each church might determine their spiritual position before God. As we study these seven churches, we of Central Baptist Church ought to compare ourselves and test ourselves by each of these churches. How much are we like the church of Ephesus? Maybe her good points, maybe her bad points. Can we find these same things within our own church? As we get to the church of Thyatira, are we very similar to that church? What things can we find within our church that will pattern or be very similar to what they are in that particular church? If there are, then we need to take the same kind of correction that was needed by that church.

Then there is a fourth, and that is a prophetic application in that they disclose a complete history of the church age, culminating with the rapture at the close of the church age. Again, we cannot go into

that in depth, but each of these churches represents a period of time beginning with the church of Jerusalem and ending with the Rapture.

These seven churches represent seven periods of time. In history, we find that the first three of these churches resulted in Roman Catholicism. The last four churches resulted in Protestantism. Both of these resulted in things that were wholly unsatisfactory and disappointing unto the Lord. The Lord is not the founder and does not approve of Roman Catholicism and it is equally true, that the Lord is not the founder and does not approve of Protestantism. The Lord started His church in the city of Jerusalem and He is not the founder of all these various denominations.

In these seven churches of Asia, we see that they are representative of periods of time. We see that as these churches began to leave the truth, they began to set up false

churches. The first was the Roman Catholic church which began under Constantine around 325 A.D. finally developing a Pope, Gregory VI around 606 A.D. Protestantism is an outgrowth of Catholicism in that they left the Roman Catholic church and in the 16th and 17th centuries we find the beginnings of Protestantism.

Baptists have never been a part of Roman Catholicism nor have Baptists ever been a part of Protestantism. Baptists have a history that is separate and apart from all of Protestantism or Catholicism. In reality, Baptists are not Protestants in the sense that we were a part of the Protestant Reformation. As far as being a “protester” certainly we have protested, but we never were a part of Protestantism. If you want to trace the history of Baptists, you have to trace them through the enemies of Baptists, and the ene-

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## Why Not Tonight?

Tomorrow's sun may never rise  
To bless thy long deluded sight;  
This is the time, O then be wise,  
Be saved, O tonight.

Our blessed Lord refuses none  
Who would to Him their souls unite;  
Believe on Him, the work is done,  
Be saved, O tonight.

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mies of Baptists have given them various names in various periods of time. These were called heretics and sects, and during the Dark Ages, were either driven under ground, killed, boiled in oil, turned loose to the lions, drawn and quartered, burned alive at the stake, etc. These were our Baptists forefathers!

Now I do not mean that every one of them was a Baptist, but the majority of them were Baptists. They were originally called by the name of some particular founder, or some particular region of Europe where they were located. For instance, you've heard of the Waldenses. They were named after a man by the name of Peter Waldo. Then you have the Petrobrusians and the Cathori. Now the Cathori came from a region of France and Petrobrussians came from Peter of Bruys, and you will find the Bogomils, you have the Albigenses who came from a town called Albige in an area of the mountains. These were names commonly given them by their enemies as a mark of reproach.

But the one name that characterized all of them was the name *Anabaptists*. It didn't matter if they were the Waldenses, or the Albigenses, or the Bogomils, or whatever, they were all called "Anabaptists" meaning "rebaptizers." The

reason they were given that name was because when somebody came to their church and requested membership, they repudiated the baptism of the Roman Catholic church, even though in those days it was by immersion. They declared it to be invalid, not scriptural, and required that they be baptized in the Baptist church rather than be received on their Roman Catholic immersion.

The same thing was true of Protestants. The Baptists [Anabaptists] would not receive baptism of the Protestants as it was mostly by sprinkling. Baptists would not receive sprinkling, yet some of the Protestants also immersed, and they would not receive immersions from the Protestants, saying their baptism was invalid, or not scriptural baptism since the churches that practiced it had come out of an apostate church, the Roman Catholic church. So they were called "Ana-baptists."

We will get into these seven periods of church history a little later, but not now. Ephesus represents the "Period of Doctrinal Purity" that extended from about 70 A.D. to about 170 A.D., the first few years immediately after Christ had ascended into heaven. The church in Smyrna represents the "Period of Severe Persecution" around 170 A.D. to around 315 A.D. The church in Pergamos represented the church that was allied or

married with the State. This is about 315 A.D. to around 606 A.D. The church in Thyratira represents the age of the Romish corruption, around 606 A.D. to about 1500 A.D. Sardis is the age of the Reformation around 1500 to 1750. Philadelphia represents the age of evangelistic fervor and missionary zeal, from 1750 to about 1900. The last one, the church in Laodicea extends from 1900 until the time of the rapture, and that is the age of indifference and the age of the apostate church. This is the period of time in which we are living today.

You will note that I said that the Laodicean Period extends from about 1900 to the time of the Rapture. Now the Rapture takes place between chapters 3 and 4, but you will also notice that I did not say "the rapture of the church." The phrase "rapture of the church" is a phrase commonly used in all literature today; books, magazines, newspaper articles, all kinds of Sunday school literature, and in many churches. The phrase "rapture of the church" is a phrase that is neither Biblical nor Scriptural because there is no such thing as "the rapture of the church."

The phrase "rapture of the church" implies a universal, invisible church composed of all believers. But the word church does not mean a universal, invisible church. All believers are not members of

the church. They are members of the family of God. Every saved person, regardless of whether they are a Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Nazarene, etc., if they have received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, are saved. They are members of the family of God, having been born into the family of God. But you are not born into the church. Nowhere do you find the phrase used in the Bible of being "born" into the church. You are born into the family of God.

Those who become members of the church must meet the requirements for membership. There are scriptural requirements for membership. These requirements are: First, one must be born again or saved, and secondly, one must have scriptural baptism. Those who have not been scripturally baptized are not members of a New Testament church. They may be a member of the family of God, they're saved, they're going to heaven, but they are not a member of a New Testament church unless they have been scripturally baptized.

Now these seven churches are extremely important. These were not the most prominent churches of that day and time as there were other churches that were more prominent. Churches such

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as the churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Corinth, or at Rome, were more prominent churches, so it is evident that these churches fitted a certain pattern, and the Lord had a certain reason why He wanted to select these seven churches. Evidently these seven churches possessed certain distinct characteristics, and each message embodies an admonition that is suitable, not only to that particular church, but for all other churches as well. This is why we need to study and read these letters to these churches.

To show you their importance, about one-eighth of the Book of Revelation is taken up with these seven letters. That shows that the Lord considered that these letters to the churches were important because He dedicated one-eighth of this book to these seven churches, a letter to each one.

One thing that is unique about man is that there is always a tendency in the human heart to become occupied with the dispensation *in which we are not*, the one in which we do not live. It is for this reason that most people, in studying the Book of Revelation, begin with chapter four which is future. That's at the close of the church age or

dispensation, and most people when they begin a study of the Book of Revelation completely forget chapters one through three. They begin with chapter four, which speaks of future events, such as the Tribulation Period, the Millennium, etc., and that's what they are interested in, while the Lord says we are to be interested in the things that apply to you and me now.

Certainly it's of interest to know what's going to happen. It's of interest to know something about the future, but we need to remember that these letters apply to this church dispensation in which we live right now. Therefore, they are more important to us today than what chapters 4 through 22 would be, because these letters apply to you and me right now.

Not only that, but these seven letters consist exclusively of the words of Christ Himself, as the Lord writes and directs these messages that were seven real messages, to seven real churches. Therefore, we need to pay heed to what the Lord has to say. Incidentally, these are the very last words that we have that have come to us directly from the Lord.

Now these letters have a character of their own. Their full meaning cannot be understood apart from the whole book. They must be understood within the context and the light of the entire book. Not only is

each individual letter an integral part of the entire book, but each individual letter also belongs to the other six, so that these become really circular letters. Though this letter was written to the church in Ephesus, that letter was to be distributed among the other churches as well. Now they have been compiled together in the Book of Revelation so that we are the custodians of not only the seven letters, but of the entire book itself. In that sense, they can be considered as letters addressed to all of the churches.

These letters then are not so much messages from an absent Lord as sentences of a present Judge who is engaged in a solemn act of inspection and decision. The Lord is there as a judge over each one of these churches. He looks within each church. He then makes a determination as to what the good points are and to what the bad points are and then He gives them instructions as to how to correct those bad points and what will occur to them if they do not make these changes.

These seven church letters to these seven churches, representatives of all New Testament churches, are Christ's judgments of churches throughout the church age. When we get into the study of these letters, we are to compare Central Baptist Church with each letter, with each

church. We are to look and see what our points are that could be complimented, and also to look and determine what things within our church the Lord would criticize. Then we should make whatever changes are needed in order to conform or to bring ourselves into line with the place where God would have us to be.

The next thing I want us to look at, as He writes these letters we note that He writes the letter to the angel of the church. Notice in Eph. 2:1 "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write." Although this letter is to be given to the church of Ephesus, the letter itself was written to the "angel of the church of Ephesus."

Notice these verses. "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna" (2:8); "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos" (2:12); "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira" (2:18); "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis" (3:1); "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia" (3:7); and finally "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans" (3:14).

Now John is commanded to write these letters to the "angel" of each individual church. What kind of an angel is this? Is this a heavenly angel? Well, what does the word "angel" mean? The word "angel" means "one sent."

To determine whether

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these are heavenly angels or not, there are three questions that we need to ask and to answer. First, would John be commanded to write a letter to a heavenly being, that is, an angel that was a heavenly being? Secondly, would the heavenly being then deliver the message to the churches? Thirdly, does God communicate with His churches by means of heavenly angels? The Lord commanded John to write “unto the angel” of the church. So whatever is written, John is writing it to this angel of the church.

Now notice one other thing. In 2:4 we find that this angel is guilty of neglect or sin, for it says “Nevertheless I have somewhat against *thee*,” so the word “thee” indicates that the message is directed to the angel who is the messenger or the pastor of the church. The pastor is the under-shepherd placed over the church by the Lord. He is not a “lord” but he is a servant. He is not to be commanded by man, but he is to be commanded by God.

We find here that John is commanded to write this letter unto this angel or the pastor of the church. The pastor is responsible to hear, to receive and to answer for the church that is placed under his care. As we previously pointed out, the pastor is to receive the

message from the Lord, and he in turn is to present it faithfully unto the church, and then he is to use his influence to have it accepted, observed, and obeyed. That’s your pastor’s job. That’s the job of every pastor. If he has been called of God, then God is to direct him. A pastor is not to receive his orders from the congregation. A pastor is not to receive his orders from a group of deacons. A pastor is not to receive his orders from a W.M.U. (which we don’t have — a group of women), but he is to receive his message from the Lord. When he receives that message from the Lord, then it is his responsibility and his duty, to deliver that message to the church. He then is to urge them with everything within his power to receive it as a message from God, then to observe that message, and to obey.

Now whenever a pastor gets his message from the Lord, you will find that he can prove it from the Word of God. It can be documented right here. Now if his message cannot be proven by the word of God, then you might check and find out whether that preacher is a real God-called preacher or not. If the pastor does not preach the things that are here in the Word of God, then you better be very careful about listening to him or following him. But as long as that pastor, as long as his

message is founded in the Word of God, as long as he is faithfully proclaiming to you what God says in this book, then you are obligated to receive it, to accept it, to observe it, and to obey it. Not because it is the word of the pastor, but because it is the Word of God. This is what the Lord wants you as a church to do.

You will notice here in this chapter and in these verses, that when the Lord writes the church, He writes to the pastor and you can see that the Lord holds a pastor responsible for all the error and the misconduct that is within that church. When the Lord is going to criticize that church at Ephesus, he criticizes the pastor because he has allowed such error to creep into that church.

God holds the pastor accountable and responsible for all error and all misconduct within the church. So we see that God has placed upon the pastor (it is his duty and responsibility placed there by the Lord), to root out all error, eliminate all misconduct and to maintain doctrinal purity within the church. If you find that, as a pastor, it is necessary for someone to be dealt with for their misconduct, it is because God has placed that responsibility there in the church, and it is the pastor’s job to see that it is done.

If there is teaching within this church that is

contrary to the Word of God, it is the pastor’s job to take care of that matter. There have been times in the past (and I am not the only one), when we have had some man teaching things that I felt were contrary to the teachings of the Word of God, contrary to the things that I teach from this pulpit, and it has been necessary for me to call that man into my office and attempt to reason with him, to show him his error, in order that he might get straight on that particular doctrine, and that there not be a teaching contrary to what the pastor believes is the teaching of the Word of God. You cannot have various doctrines being taught within a church without having your church just being split up into every kind of faction that there is.

Can you imagine what would happen if you had somebody teaching that immersion was not baptism but that sprinkling was just as good, and somebody over here saying that I think it needs to be pouring, and somebody else teaching that we do not even have water baptism today, we have Holy Spirit baptism, and somebody else says, yes and the sign of the Holy Spirit baptism is speaking in tongues, and if you don’t speak in tongues you haven’t really been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Somebody else yes, and further-

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more if you haven't been baptized by the Holy Spirit, you haven't even been saved. You're lost!

And here I am in the pulpit, and I'm trying to teach that baptism, according to the Word of God, is of a saved person who has already given a public profession of his faith and he is being baptized by immersion in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, not in order to be saved, but because he has already been saved. And yet somebody else is teaching something entirely contrary. The first thing you know you're going to have a church mixed up on everything in the word.

Now God holds a pastor responsible for all the teaching that goes on within that church. Whatever errors there may be of a doctrinal nature, of a conduct nature, or whatever they may be, it is the pastor's responsibility to make certain that these things are rooted out; that they are not allowed to corrupt the church, or to divide the church.

In fact, the Bible has several verses that we can't go into right now, but the Bible says to "mark them that cause divisions." That's means to set them aside, mark them, and if they will not straighten out, then the Bible's admonition is to exclude or expel them

from the church. That's God's command. So that whoever teaches a false doctrine and does not correct their doctrine, does not straighten out, then it is the pastor's job to bring it before a group of the men of the church, a committee to prove it, and if it is justified, to bring it before the church and the church will have to take the action. But the pastor is accountable to the Lord for all the conduct that goes on within that church.

So this is the way the Lord operates. The Lord did it this way. He has called the pastor. He has called the pastor through the church, and when a man accepts a pastorate of a church, the church by doing such, is voting that they believe that this is the man that God has called to be their pastor. And when the pastor accepts that position in the church, he is stating that he believes that this is where God wants him to be. And you will always find an agreement between church and pastor if God is in it. Now if you find that the church and the pastor are contrary to each other, you better find out what is the matter. Something is wrong.

But God is the one who has spoken to these pastors through these letters. And you will note, that when he addresses these judgments, His rebukes, and the directions for them, it comes through their pastor.

I want to show you one

verse in Luke 10. You will note that the Lord is sending out His disciples. He says, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, wither he himself would come" (Lk. 10:1). This is not just the Apostles. There were only twelve apostles. Here we find the Lord sends out seventy, thirty-five pairs. Now verse 16, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Lk 10:16). In other words, this is the place that the pastor occupies in the work of the Lord. He is being sent by the Lord. It is his job to determine through his own prayer and study what the message is that God desires for that church. Then it is his job to faithfully proclaim that message to that church and to urge them to receive it, to accept it, and to observe and obey it. And then the Lord says:

*"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me"* (Lk. 10:16).

Now I am not trying to make the office of pastor any more than what God has made it. God did not say that the pastor was going to be a perfect man, a perfect individual. You will find that there are going to be sins, failures, shortcomings in his life. That's

because none of us are perfect, and the pastor is the same clay as you are. But the office of a pastor is a unique job. God has called men to become pastors. He has put them as the pastor or the undershepherd of His churches. Central Baptist Church belongs to the Lord; it is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Shepherd of this church. But in His absence, the Lord has put an Undershepherd here in the church. And the Undershepherd works directly under the authority of the Shepherd. And his job is to faithfully listen to that Shepherd. Where does he hear Him? He hears Him right out of the Word of God. He doesn't have any divine revelation apart from the Bible. No preacher, no pastor has visions, dreams, or any other way to hear God's Word, except right here out of the Bible.

Now God, somehow, speaks to a preacher; and tells him what his message is to be. Sometimes it is difficult for a pastor to know for sure what God's message really is. Sometimes you come into the pulpit, and you're still not really certain what God's message is, but the time has come, you've got to preach, you do your best. Other times you can come into the pulpit and you don't question. You know what God wants you to preach.

(See **CHURCH** on page 24)

**FAITH . . .**

(Continued from page 6)

the Elect, the fruits will be correspondingly rich, abundant and well flavored.

On the basis of the truth just written, we face a plain duty. If the people are to stand in these shallow, noisy times, when so many voices are heard saying lo! here and lo! there, they must be rooted and grounded in the truth. And if the world is to be conquered and made subject to Christ, men must feel the eternal verities in their hearts and fight with the force of a conquering conviction and with a faith that grips the immovable foundations of the divine throne.

This means that there must be preaching and teaching that go down to the fundamentals. Shallow teaching and preaching will make shallow Christians. It is the untaught, shallow soul that is swept any way and every way by every new broom that comes along. It

**CITY . . .**

(Continued from page 2)

of evolution is too restrictive.

Joni Burgin, superintendent of the district of 1,000 students in northwest Wisconsin, said the teaching of science in school "should not be totally inclusive of just one scientific theory."

An inoffensive Gospel is also an inoperative Gospel.

is the shallow soul that withers soonest in times of spiritual drouth. The soul whose faith roots itself down into the deep things of God is like the tree planted by the river of water. Its leaf does not wither. It brings forth its fruit in season, and all because it is rooted deep in a rich well-watered soil. □

**BODY . . .**

(Continued from page 5)

feeding five thousand men, in addition to women and children, when by the display of His miraculous power, He produced from five loaves of bread and two small fishes all that was needed. As the base of supplies, He had proteins, carbohydrates and fat, and thus prepared a balanced meal for the people.

But after it was over and He saw the impression made — and how the crowd desired more physical thrills — He taught them some relative values. And we read in verse 27: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed ... the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world ... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst ... All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;

and him that cometh to me I shall in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me ... and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

My friend, are you interested in this Bread of Heaven? Or do you experience a sense of boredom when these great spiritual values are mentioned? If so, you are in a very dangerous condition. No one may with safety spurn the offer which Christ makes — an offer which will bring, if accepted, immediate and everlasting life. The universal opinion of those who have found Christ is that "HE IS WONDERFUL." □ □

**CHURCH . . .**

(Continued from page 23)

But when God gives a message to the pastor, his job is to give it to you. Your job is to evaluate it; listen to it; check it with the Word of God; find out if it conforms with this Word right here. If it does, then it's for you to obey. Not because the pastor says it, but because this is a message from God to you.

Thus the Lord directs this message to the church at Ephesus, he says, "Unto the angel of the church in Ephesus write." God intended for them to hear

because He says in the later part of each letter, He has a little phrase that He ties on to the end of each one of them and it says in verse seven "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." That's what you are to do: listen.

When you come to the Lord's house on Sunday morning, what do you do? What you should do is come with your ear and with your heart tuned in to listen to the message from God to you. Determine what God's message is for you, and then obey it. If you do, God will then be pleased with you. And it is as a church obeys the Lord, that the church obeys the Lord in every thing. The members must do it because it's not the church, but the membership of the church that obeys the Lord.

I hope that you will listen to the Word of God. As we go on through this Book. As we look at chapter two, the letter to the church in Ephesus, God has a message for you and for me. It is a message for all of us. Let's come with the attitude to listen to God. See what He says, and let's obey it. If we find we fall short, if there are failures, if there are places that need to be corrected, let's straighten them out. Let's correct them.

If there are places that we feel the Lord is pleased with, let's say Thank God for God did it through us. Let's do more. □ □