

# The Baptist CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

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## *Proposed Mosques Dubbed “Terrorist Hideouts”*

Summerville, Tenn. — Muslims planned to turn an old sod farm near Memphis into a cemetery, but angry neighbors protested, complaining the burial ground could become a staging ground for terrorists or spread disease from unembalmed bodies.

It was not the first time a group faced opposition when trying to build a cemetery or a mosque, but the dispute stood out for the clarity of its anti-Muslim rhetoric.

“We know for a fact that Muslim mosques have been used as terrorist hideouts and centers for terrorist activities,” farmer John Wilson told members of a planning commission last month.

Similar disputes have arisen elsewhere when Muslim groups sought to develop mosques or cemeteries, which are often the first Islamic institutions to some communities.

Opponents of a proposal to open a mosque in Voorhees, N.J. distributed an anonymous flier warning that Islamic worshippers might include “extremists and radicals.” Arguments over a proposed Muslim cemetery near Atlanta persisted for more than a

### **Muslim Camps Train Children To Kill**

Extremist Islamic camps in the Middle East train more than 10,000 Arab children each year how to commit suicide bombings, perpetrate other acts of violence and develop hatred toward Jews, according to “The New Barbarians,” a documentary film produced by filmmaker, Caryl Matrisciana. The documentary also contends that a significant number of the 1.6 million Muslims in the U.S. financially support the Middle Eastern camps.

year before officials approved preliminary plans.

Critics of the projects generally complain about potential damage to the environment, reduced property values and traffic congestion, but many also associate Islam with

terrorism.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you may think this is farfetched, but that is what the Jewish people thought when the Nazis started taking a small foothold, a little at a time, in their community,” John Wilson said.

In a telephone interview later, Wilson said he and his neighbors are primarily worried about their property values, but, he added, news reports cannot be ignored.

“I don’t think anyone who has read the newspaper or seen what investigations have gone on about other mosques would not have those kinds of concerns,” he said.

Critics also complained that the cemetery could be a health hazard because Muslims traditionally do not embalm their dead. -- Arkansas Democrat/Gazette, December 26, 2004

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Matrisciana, who has more than 20 years experience as a filmmaker, produced “the New Barbarians” by compiling footage from Arab television, news reports, and other documentaries. This footage shows the graphic aftermath of terrorist bombings and details how Islamic camps are training Arab children as young as 5 years-old to use machine guns, slit human throats, hijack cars and strap explosives to themselves. — The Baptist Watchman

**Quiz The Pastor -- #34****Who Are the Woman and Child of Revelation 12?****By the late Nick Michalinos**

**Question:** Who is the “woman” mentioned in Revelation 12 and who is her “child”?

**Answer:** ☐ The “woman” is the nation of Israel and the “child” can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. It was from Israel that Jesus Christ came as pertaining to His human lineage. In the book of Hebrews we are told that “He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16). In Isaiah 7:14 we have reference to the manner of His conception, His birth, and His identity. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you (Israel) a sign; Behold, a virgin (Mary) shall conceive, and bear a son (Jesus), and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us).” He is of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:8-10; Mt. 2:4-5; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5), and the royal family of David (Lk. 1:32-33; Jn. 7:42).

In Revelation 12:5 we are told that “she (the “woman” of Vs. 1, Israel) brought forth a man child (Jesus), who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15): and her child (Jesus) was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” This text shows a time lapse from our Lord’s birth and His brief 33 years of life, and then His ascension into heaven or being “caught up unto God” the Father in heaven (Mk. 16:19; Acts 1:9-10). Then, in Revelation 12:6, there is another lapse of time that brings us to the last half of that period of time known as the Tribulation Period which lasts for seven years in its full span, but here only 3 1/2 years, the second half, are

**Play All the Notes Or  
“New Evangelical Chopsticks”****By Buddy Smith**

mentioned. Notice: “And the woman (Israel) fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” This time is 1260 days (Rev. 11:3), or 42 months (Rev. 11:2), or 3 1/2 years which is the second half of the seven years of Tribulation. From this verse we can see that those Israelites, dwelling in the land of Israel at the beginning of the Great Tribulation Period when the Anti-Christ reveals himself (Mt. 24:15), are to “flee unto the mountains” (Mt. 24:16) for safety (Rev. 12:13-16). Satan’s persecution of Israel will intensify beyond words during time but God will intervene in their behalf. If you will notice that the “great dragon” mentioned here in Revelation 12 is the same personality known as “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (Rev. 12:; 20:2). His hatred of Christ and Israel knows no bounds. ☐

I read the other day that there is a new piano on the market. It is manufactured by Stuart and Sons in Newcastle. It is an excellent example of Aussie innovation. Wayne Stuart has invented a revolutionary new way of attaching piano strings so that they vibrate in a vertical plane. The improvement in tonal quality is such that the manufacturer has been able to add several keys to each end of the keyboard. Musicians, recording technicians, and critics are outspoken in their praise of Wayne Stuart’s new pianos. Needless to say, Steinway and Yamaha are not impressed.

Extra keys, clearer notes, better music? Who is to say it can’t be done?

At the other end of the scale, we all remember those toy pianos we loved in our childhood. They had, I think, an octave of white keys, with the black keys painted on. For many of us they were our introduction to musical instruments. Very simple, very basic, and very enjoyable.

So we have additional notes on one piano, and we have fewer notes on another. It is all a matter

(See **PIANO** on page 4)

**THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE**

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Preached April 1, 1979 — Message #13

# The Church In Ephesus

By M. L. Moser, Editor

*“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; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an*

*ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” — (Rev. 2:1-7)*

There are some characteristics that are true or common of all these seven letters. As we go through the study of each of these letters, we will notice that each letter follows a certain pattern. First, it will be preceded by a command in exactly the same form telling the writer that he should write unto the angel of the church. In addition, we will find one or more titles which Christ claims for Himself, and is used in the opening of each address to add weight and authority to the message. These titles have been drawn from the attributes we find ascribed to Him in chapter 1:4-20. We also see that Christ claims to have intimate knowledge of the situation in each one of these churches. In every case, He always says: “I

know.” This is repeated some seven times, each time applying it to each one of these individual churches. Then each one of the letters concludes with a promise.

We also note that the weaknesses and the sins that beset these churches of the first century are also very common in our own time today. As we begin to look at these specific churches, and as we look now at this church at Ephesus, we should look at our church and compare it with the church at Ephesus, and we should be able to find some parallels. Parallels maybe in some of the good points, and I am afraid, parallels also in some of the bad points.

Now He says, “*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write.*” This first letter is representative of that time in church history noted for its doctrinal purity. It is the time that is closest to the times of the Apostles; the time closest to the closing of the New Testament

dispensation. It corresponds to that period of time around 76 A.D. to 170 A.D.

We’ll just mention a few things about the city of Ephesus. Ephesus was the chief city of the province of Ionia. The name Ephesus means “desirable.” To a great extent you will find that the meaning of these names also will have something to do with the characteristics of each one of these churches. As you read about this church in Ephesus, you’ll find that there are many things that would make it desirable.

It was a very large city; a very cultured city, but also a very religious city. You remember a woman by the name of Diana, a goddess. In the Book of Acts she is referred to as “Diana of the Ephesians (Acts 19:28). The city of Ephesus was the seat of Diana worship and her temple was at Ephesus and was considered one of the

(See **REV** on page 20)



**President John Tyler**

In President Tyler's inaugural address following his assumption of the office of President after the death of William Henry Harrison on April 4, 1841, he said:

"While standing at the threshold of this great work he has by the dispensation of an all-wise Providence been removed from amongst us, and by the provisions of the Constitution the efforts to be directed to the accomplishing of this vitally important task have devolved upon myself. This same occurrence has subjected the wisdom and sufficiency of our institutions to a new test. For the first time in our history the person elected to the Vice-Presidency of the United States, by the happening of a contingency provided for in the Constitution, has had devolved upon him the Presidential office. The spirit of faction, which is directly opposed to the spirit of a lofty patriotism, may find in this occasion for assaults upon my Ad-

# God In Our Government

ministration; and in succeeding, under circumstances so sudden and unexpected and to responsibilities so greatly augmented, to the administration of public affairs I shall place in the intelligence and patriotism of the people my only sure reliance. My earnest prayer shall be constantly addressed to the all-wise and all-power Being who made me, and by whose dispensation I am called to the high office of President of this Confederacy, understandingly to carry out the principles of that Constitution which I have sworn 'to protect, preserve, and defend' . . .

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of personal taste. A piano for lovers of classical music and a piano for little children. To each his own.

We offer no objection to this when it is a piano, but what about when it is the preaching of the Word of God that is in view?

There is a glorious breadth of music to be found in the Bible! In Job

38 the morning stars sing together and the sons of God shout for joy. In Isaiah 6 the seraphim chant the Holiness of God. In Exodus 15 Moses leads Israel in singing the first psalm recorded in the Bible. And the Spirit exhorts us to "teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs" in Col. 3:16. Almost everywhere we turn in our Bibles we hear the symphony of Truth, our hearts ascend to the heavenlies, and we join in the song of souls set free.

In the Bible we hear the deep bass notes of Judgment and the Fear of God. There are the recurrent themes of Grace and Mercy. There are the sweet melodies of Joy and Peace. And we need them all.

Have you also heard the bold chords that warn against adding any notes or taking any away? Oh, yes, most people have read the verses in Revelation 22 that prohibit "innovations" or "improvements". But have you also read Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32? And have you read Proverbs 30:6 and Jeremiah 26:2?

This simple truth, that we must not add to nor take away from God's Words, has been for all time a safeguard from error. There is a set number of notes, so to speak, there is a body of divinity, a definite set of doctrines in God's Word, and we are to preach them every one.

Wayne Stuart can add as many notes as he likes to his pianos, and the makers of toy pianos can leave off as many as they like. But Christians do not have that option. Our preachers must preach the whole counsel of God!

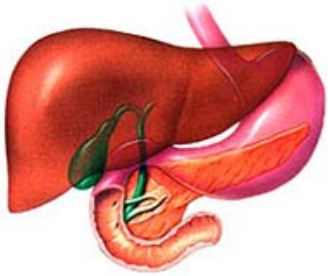
We must play all the notes!

Say, have you noticed how small the keyboard has gotten? The preaching in many churches consists of a handful of carefully selected verses, preached again and again, almost a Baptist Chopsticks. And Heaven help the pastor or the visiting evangelist or missionary who would dare to play any but the approved doctrinal chords! This very simple act of faithfulness to God's Word on their part is the major reason for the persecution of God's children. They "made the mistake" of playing all the notes on the keyboard and the hearers whose musical tastes to Do-Re-Fa found it to be discordant. Our dear Lord struck chords of truth that had lain silent for four hundred years and was hated for it.

This is the great tragedy of the missing notes. Let me give an example.

The doctrines of fundamentalists are not new doctrines. They are the orthodox teachings of the Old Testament and the New. They are the apos-

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God's Masterpiece Man's Body — #23

## Your Liver and Pancreas

The complicated business of digestion goes on so quietly and without any apparent assistance on our part that we are apt to consider it relatively unimportant. But, actually, it consists in a whole series of intricate operations whereby the tissue building and energy foods are made available for the countless millions of tiny cells which exhibit very precise requirements.

We have followed the meal through the mouth, down the esophagus and into the stomach. In this five-pint-capacity bag it has been churned and acted upon by the digestive juice. Portions of the resultant mass, known as chyme, have been released from time to time and permitted by the little gatekeeper, the pyloric valve, which stands at the lower end of the stomach, to pass into the first part of the small intestine, the duodenum, which is twelve inches in length.

What changes have been effected in the ingested food? In the mouth the mechanical process of mastication has been conducted by the teeth-mill, and the food has been divided, crushed and ground,

while simultaneously being softened by saliva, which comes chiefly from the parotid or mumps gland on the side of the face and near the ear. Its little tube enters the mouth just outside the upper second molar tooth. This liquid is very watery, while the saliva from the submaxillary and sublingual glands contains much more mucin and so lubricates, as well as softens the food.

The chemical change which takes place in the mouth is the conversion of some of the starch into sugar by the two enzymes, ptyalin and maltase. In the stomach, protein foods are converted into peptones and proteoses by the gastric juice, the enzymes, pepsin and rennin, being responsible for this change.

So, the stomach contents, ready to leave on the next stage of the journey, are made up of partially digested starch and protein, with sugars, peptones, fats, water and mineral salts, gastric juice and some mucus. There is a very fine adjustment which controls the action of the pyloric valve and the secretion of acid in the stomach. This mechanism is disturbed in various

diseases, such as ulcer of the stomach or duodenum, cancer of the stomach, gall bladder disease, appendicitis, etc., resulting in what is commonly called "indigestion."

In the intestine, the mechanical process is a continuation of the churning or peristaltic movement of the stomach. The circular muscle fibers, by frequent constrictions of the tube, divide the mass and force it along, at the same time preventing a too rapid passage. The longitudinal fibers assist the onward progress by a series of wave-like contractions.

The chemical process consists in the further digestion of proteins, sugars, starches, and fats. The intestinal fluid is a mixture of juices, secreted from glands in the wall of the intestine, a fluid formed in the pancreas called pancreatic juice, and bile from the liver. This wonderful combination performs miracles of digestion in the twelve-inch stretch of tube, the duodenum, and the succeeding portions of the small intestine — the jejunum and ileum — extending for about twenty-two feet to the beginning

of the large intestine.

About four inches from the pylorus — the lower end of the stomach — the common bile and pancreatic duct opens into the duodenum, and from this opening is poured the combined secretions of pancreas and liver. The secreting glands of the small intestine are embedded in the inner wall and are found in every part. They are called the intestinal glands, or Glands of Lieberkuhn. They secrete an alkaline fluid containing various ferments, erepsin, invertase, maltase, lactase, and entero-kinase.

At this point, I think I ought to tell you something about these two wonderful organs, the liver and the pancreas, which come actively into the picture here. The liver is the largest abdominal organ, weighing between three and four pounds. It lies just beneath the diaphragm in the upper right portion of the abdomen, and is wedge-shaped, much thicker at the right than the left. Its large size is necessary, because not only does it manufacture digestive juices, as do the stomach and salivary

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glands, but acts as a remarkable filter for all the food, except fat, coming to it from the intestine. This filter exerts a most important chemical action, putting the finishing touches to the food before it enters the heart and lungs. The big portal vein carrying the food substances in the blood vessels, causing the liver to be almost as full of blood as the lungs. It is a sponge filled with blood carrying the digested food.

The cells which constitute the liver are surely among the most astonishing bits of material in the world. They are so small that 100,000 of them could be accommodated in a space no larger than a bread crumb, and yet they are continually performing the most amazing series of life-preserving operations. Removing various substances from the blood, they manufacture bile, breaking down and reconstructing carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, removing poisons, arresting and destroying bacilli and blood cells and manufacturing highly active extracts and hormones.

Bile is not a ferment and is the only digestive juice of that kind. When in the liver it is golden-yellow in color, but when exposed to the air, it turns a dark green. It is bitter to the taste, and contains two pigments, bilirubin, or bile red, and biliverdin, or bile

green, prepared from blood coloring matter. In addition, it has two blue acids, exhibiting three distinct and interesting properties.

1. They affect the preliminary stage of the fat-splitting ferment, changing it from the inactive form to the active. This is similar to the action of hydrochloric acid in the gastric juice which makes active the pepsin, awaiting this stimulus before getting to work.

2. They break up the large drops of fat in the mixture of digested foods into very small droplets, or to put it another way, butter is changed back into milk, so that fat can be absorbed by the body.

3. They make sticky the fat droplets, so that the fat adheres to the moist intestinal wall.

The liver, as I have just mentioned, takes old blood cells, breaks them up, and proceeds to make bile. In this organ, food is reconstructed so that foreign protein is made over into human protein. Without this change, these protein substances would cause shock, collapse and death. Various poisons, such as nicotine, caffeine, morphine, etc., are seized and changed into harmless compounds. The liver acts as a fluid reservoir, so that excessive ingestion of fluids results in a swollen liver, ultimately becoming a sick liver, especially if the liquid has been alcoholic and one which poisons and damages

liver cells.

The pancreas at first glance seems a very modest organ indeed. It weighs only about one-twentieth as much as the liver, is about seven inches long and resembles a hammer in shape. It nestles between the back wall of the stomach and the spinal column. And yet, this small gland is more active and important than all the other digestive glands, producing three very active ferments.

The first of these is amylopsin, which acts on starch, splitting it into glycogen, dextrin, and malt sugar. The second ferment is trypsin and changes protein into peptones and amino acids. The third is lipase, which splits fats emulsified by the bile into fatty acids and glycerin.

All these digestive glands receive their orders from the brain, the latter organ sending out its commands in response to messages relayed from various parts. Thus, when the acid mixture from the stomach strikes the inner wall of the twelve-inch duodenum, the glands in the wall of the duodenum immediately secrete a hormone, known as secretin. Now, these hormones may be thought of as messenger boys which do nothing but carry orders to G.H.Q. The tiny secretin messengers jump right into the blood stream and are at the brain destination in a few seconds. Their message

runs something like this: "The boss has just finished a big meal; everything is arriving in rather large quantities; pancreatic juice is needed immediately." And G.H.Q. issues a prompt demand for plenty of secretion, the pancreas obeys, and through that little opening in the duodenum pours plenty of digestive juice, ready to carry out its predestined job.

While I am speaking of the pancreas, doubtless your mind may be on insulin, and diabetes. Just a word of explanation here: There are thousands of tiny masses of tissue in the pancreas called islands. They are not connected in any way with the duct of the gland, and thus their secretion cannot flow into the intestine, but passes into the blood vessels surrounding the islands, and is carried away by the blood stream. This is one of many similar gland products known as endocrine or internal secretions, really hormones, or chemical messengers to stimulate distant organs. Insulin is carried by the blood to the muscles and liver, making it possible for these organs to utilize the sugar in the blood and to store it in the form of glycogen. Lack of insulin produces diabetes.

The organs I am describing along with their marvelous processes have been designed by the Creator in order to facilitate

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**PIANO . . .**

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gles' doctrines. They are the teachings of Christ. They are the whole counsel of God. They are the whole keyboard for the preacher to play in his preaching.

I hesitate to quote Kirsopp Lake on any subject, but his words on Fundamentalism give an insight into our doctrinal heritage. He said,

"It is a mistake often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind; it is the partial and uneducated survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. How many were there, for instance, in Christian churches in the 18th century who doubted the inspiration of all Scripture? A few, perhaps, but very few. No, the fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the corpus theologicum of the Church is on the fundamentalist side."

We fundamentalists hold that our piano has all the old notes yet and no new ones added. (We may

often feel that we are "clumsy pianists" and "poor musicians", but our piano has all the notes.) This is the heritage of doctrinal orthodoxy, the whole counsel of God.

Half a century has passed since Harold Ockenga spoke at Fuller Seminary, promoting a new religious movement called "New Evangelicalism". It was to be a replacement for Old Evangelicalism, (which is just another name for Fundamentalism.) New Evangelicalism's key doctrinal deviation was the repudiation of separation from error. No longer would evangelicals feel that they should "mark and avoid" modernists (Romans 16:17.) They had grown weary of the din of battle. Armour could now be exchanged for pajamas, and no one had to feel guilty about it. The stern visage of the prophet was to be transformed into the gentle countenance of the negotiator. Dialogue would be entered into with the modernists. And it was. The New Evangelicals soon proved that it was possible to compose entire sermonic symphonies without striking that particular note. Pulpit vocalists could be (and have been) trained to "sing" with passion and never strike that one note, the note of separation from error. Whole denominational choirs and theological conservatoriums have learned to sing a seven note octave, and their audiences

have applauded, whistled and stamped their feet, never knowing that middle C was now an empty space on the keyboard

So, what difference did it make for Ockenga (and his peers) to remove that one note from the keyboard of Scripture? What difference did it make for them to reject the biblical doctrine of separation from error? In fifty years has it made any difference?

It has made a tragic difference. The very seminaries that embraced the seven note octave have gone on to discard many of the cardinal doctrines of the

(See **PIANO** on page 11)

**BODY . . .**

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the building up of our bodies. And yet there are many undernourished individuals. It may be from lack of food or from some interference with the digestive apparatus. Without food it is impossible to grow or develop — in fact, physical death soon results if all food is withheld. Starvation stalks like a ghostly specter across the world, taking its thousand and tens of thousands. We are moved with compassion and horror when we see starving and dying people. But, do you know, there are multitudes of people suffering from spiritual starvation? There are many Christians who have not got beyond the milk stage of

feeding and have never left the state of infantile weakness.

The Bible speaks of this kind of carnal Christian. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 3:1-3: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. I fed you with milk, not with meat, for ye were not yet able to bear it; nay, not even now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal."

No one would think of giving a baby a piece of beefsteak to eat. And there is surely something wrong with an adult who cannot take anything but milk. We need milk when we are young — in Christ — "the sincere milk of the word," and as we grow in grace and knowledge — if we do so grow — we require stronger food. What kind of a Christian are *you*, my friend? Do you recognize real growth since you became a Christian, or has the world come into your life and almost crowded out your desire for God's food? A person who has reached adult age and yet has the body of a very young child is a pitiable object. Do you not think we ought to give our Lord a chance to develop us? How much time are you giving to His Word daily? You who do not know Christ, of course you are not interested in the Bible, but will you not think about it and about Him seriously? **HE'S WONDERFUL!**

[Next month: "More About Vitamins.] □



**Coverage of Military Tsunami Response Betrays Media Bias.** — The establishment media have so far done a pretty good job of reporting on the humanitarian efforts of the American military in response to the disaster caused by the Asian tsunami. But it's too bad the liberal media haven't provided the same coverage of the on-going humanitarian efforts of our troops in Iraq.

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**Only In America.** — Only in America do drug-stores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front..

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**Arkansas Judge Rules For Gays.** — A state regulation banning the placement of foster children in homes with gay adults is unconstitutional, a Pulaski County Circuit Judge declared. Judge Tim Fox ruled that testimony in the case did not show that gay foster parents posed a

## World News Roundup

### Editor's House Burns

On Sunday January 16 while we were at church, a fire broke out in my house and burned about one-third of the house. The adjusters estimate it will take between four to six months to make the repairs, so we will be staying at the mission quarters of Central Baptist Church here in Little Rock until the house is repaired. (The insurance company will pay the church rent for the time we are in the house.)

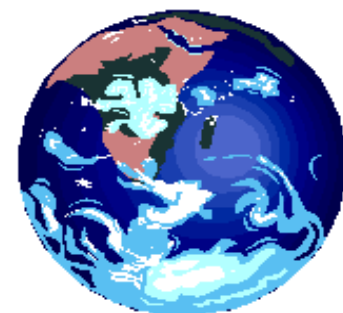
Because of this, this issue of The Baptist Challenge is late, and the February issue will probably be late also.

Please remember us in your prayers. Although we do not as yet know the cost for repairs, I believe that our insurance will cover most, if not all the cost, other than our deductible.

threat to the health, safety or welfare of children. Therefore, the judge concluded, the state Child Welfare Agency Review Board improperly created the regulation out of a sense of "public morality" — an authority the Legislature didn't give the board. The judge issued an injunction banning enforcement of the regulation. Julie Munsell, spokesman for the state Department of Human Services, said the agency will appeal the decision. — 12/30 Ark/Gazette, pg. 1.

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**Q: How can extinct fossil creatures still be living?** A: It all started in Australia, at the Riversleigh fossil deposits in North



West Queensland. Scientists found some fossils of turtles that they thought had become extinct during the so-called Pleistocene period. This was about 50,000 years ago, according to the evolutionary time scale. Then about 90 kilometers, or 56 miles away, they found a new species of a living turtle. It turns out that this turtle appears to be the same as the fossils they found! The remarkable thing was that the *living* turtles showed absolutely *no* signs of any evolutionary changes over the supposedly 50,000 years since the fossils were formed. This turtle is just *another* example of a *living* specimen that appears to be *identical* to the fossils that supposedly formed many thousands, or sometimes millions, of years ago according to evolution. We call these "living fossils." If most of the fossils we find today are the result of a worldwide flood that occurred in the days of Noah, then you *would* expect to find many of the same animals alive today. And this is what we *do* see — which fits with Genesis.

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**Can Marriage Be Saved?** — Marriage is in trouble in the U.S. assaulted by a fearful divorce rate, soaring cohabitation, sex and childbearing increasingly detached from wedlock, and now, thanks to "gay" activists, a re-defining. In Scandinavia, marriage has become virtually a minority option. In African American society, children are more likely to be born outside of marriage than not. Consider: (1) Lifelong healthy marriage is good (2) Divorce is extremely bad for children, as its angry parental conflict (3) Hostile, "get-it-all-out" communication de-

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WNR . . .

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stroys marriages (4) Living together before marriage leads to increased divorce. — CC

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**Islam Is Most Violent.** — Alvin J. Schmidt, a U.S. sociologist and theologian, in a new book, describes Islam as “the most violent religion the world has ever known.” It’s not a religion of peace, as the trendy mantra goes. — CC

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**Sick Babies Killed.** — A hospital in the Netherlands that is seeking government guidelines for euthanizing sick new-borns has revealed that it has already begun ending the lives of some babies in its care. In 2000 the Netherlands legalized euthanasia, thinking it was for those who could choose it for themselves. However, the focus has turned to those who cannot choose. The Health Ministry in the Netherlands is said to be preparing a response to the proposed euthanasia guidelines.

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**Hymn-Singing Christians Charged.** — “Eleven Christians facing prison time for singing at a Philadelphia gay pride

event are fighting back with a federal lawsuit challenging the charges against them,” said Focus On The Family Correspondent Stuart Shepard in a recent report. “Members of ‘The Philadelphia 11,’ as the group has been dubbed, face up to 47 years in prison. “Their ordeal began in October at a pro-homosexual event called OutFest where ... Michael Marcavage and 10 others peacefully delivered a gospel message. But the event’s volunteer homosexual security team, the Pink Angels, corralled the group with large sheets of Styrofoam while blowing whistles to drown out their voice. ... Although these people with the pink signs (were) blocking our message and impeding our ways, we (were) the ones being put under arrest,” Marcavage said. “We were doing nothing more than being very peaceful, very loving, just concerned about the well-being and salvation of those in attendance at the event.” Charges included five misdemeanors and three felonies, which included ethnic intimidation, criminal conspiracy and inciting a riot. However, the American Family Association Center for Law and Policy (CLP) is filing suit in federal court to stop the case in the state courts — not a common practice. CLP Staff Attorney Joe Murray especially objects to the charge of ethnic intimidation, saying the city

is using the legal system to muzzle a constitutionally protected message..

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**Religious Hatred Bill In England.** — A bill before the British House of Commons extends laws that ban incitement to racial hatred to also cover religious hatred. Barnabas Fund, which assists persecuted Christian minorities, is seriously concerned that far from achieving this laudable aim, the law will instead effectively end up banning all legitimate criticism of another’s religion. It is feared that those who speak out on behalf of people who suffer as a result of particular religious teachings, such as Muslims who convert to another faith (who, according to Islamic law, should be executed) or Dalits (who are treated as ‘untouchables’ in the traditional Hindu caste system), could be silenced. The clauses on incitement to religious hatred were apparently included in an otherwise unrelated bill to help the government get this controversial issue through Parliament.

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**Majority Believe in Virgin Birth.** — A majority of Americans — and a larger percentage of Christians — believe Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary and did not

have a human father, a new *Newsweek* poll shows. Seventy-nine percent of Americans and 87 percent of Christians said that was their belief. Fifteen percent of Americans and 8 percent of Christians said they did not share that belief. Results of the poll on beliefs about Jesus are included in a Dec. 13 *Newsweek* cover story on “The Birth of Jesus.” Researchers with Princeton Survey Research Associates found that 93 percent of Americans think Jesus Christ actually lived and 82 percent think he was God or the Son of God. Fifty-two percent of respondents said they believe Jesus will return to Earth in the next millennium, and 15 percent said they believe he will return in their lifetime. Pollsters also found that 55 percent of Americans believe the Bible is literally accurate, while 38 percent said they did not believe that, and 7 percent said they didn’t know. — RNS

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**France OKs Euthanasia.** — France’s National Assembly overwhelmingly adopted legislation Nov.30 legalizing passive euthanasia. But the bill falls far short of more daring right-to-die laws elsewhere in Europe. With 548 out of 551 lawmakers voting in favor of the bill, which permits withholding

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life-sustaining care, support crossed party lines, even though lawmakers voted for it for starkly different reasons. Three lawmakers abstained from voting. Anti-euthanasia lawmakers said they hope the legislation will set the boundaries of what is legally permissible in medicine. But other politicians and right-to-die associations hope the legislation marks the first step toward more far-reaching reforms, including legalizing active euthanasia, sometimes called “mercy killing.” — RNS

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### Church Leaves Convention Over Lotz.

— Parker’s Chapel Missionary Baptist Church voted Nov. 7 to withdraw from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) and the Blue Ridge Baptist Association after learning that a woman had been slated to preach the annual sermon at the state convention. Author and speaker Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham, delivered the convention message during the Nov. 15-17 meeting in Winston-Salem. “It is impossible for us, as Bible-believing Christians, to support the BSCNC in this out-right affront to the Word of God,” wrote Larry Brown, pastor. “Our congregation held an emer-

gency meeting ... and we determined, by a vote of 47 to 0 that we cannot and will not be part of an organization that blatantly ignores one of the most basic guidelines for church leadership, as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.” The Timothy passage discusses qualifications for pastors and deacons. Brown said Lotz is “a fine Christian woman” and “a good teacher and speaker” but “she cannot fulfill the role of preacher.” —ABP

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### Court Lets Stand Mass. Gay Marriage.

— The U.S. Supreme Court refused Nov. 29 to review the decision by the Massachusetts high court that legalized same-sex marriage in that state. Without comment, the high court turned down an appeal from 11 Massachusetts state legislators and Robert Largess, Catholic Action League vice president. The group had argued that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court violated the U.S. Constitution when it forced the state to legalize same-sex marriage. — BP

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### ACLU Files Lawsuit.

— The American Civil Liberties Union says it’s filing a federal lawsuit against a school district that requires students to learn alternatives to the theory of evolution. Pennsylvania’s

Dover Area School District voted in October to mandate the teaching of “intelligent design,” which holds that the universe and living organisms are too complex to have evolved by accident. The ACLU maintains that intelligent design theory is a more secular form of biblical creationism, and may violate separation of church and state. John West of the Discovery Institute says intelligent design is science rather than religion, but calls the school district’s mandatory policy unconstitutional and contradictory in that it also bans teaching about the origins of life. [AP]

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### U.S. A Christian Country.

— A conservative writer and history professor says historical documents from America’s founding fathers clearly indicate they intended for the country to be a Christian nation. Dr. Thomas E. Woods is the author of the recently published *Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*. He says revisionists have done a good job of hiding the vision that the nation’s founders truly had for America. “It was just absolutely taken for granted that this is, by and large, a Christian people,” Woods says. “And as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Joseph Storey said in the early 19th century, it was understood from the beginning that

Christianity was to be in effect the religion of the people and would be looked upon benignly — and even directly and indirectly promoted — by the federal government.” He points out that the Northwest Ordinance, which dealt with territories beyond the Ohio River, actually pledged federal funds for the Christian education of the Indians. In addition, Woods notes that John Jay, the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, actually celebrated the fact that the country was not particularly diverse. Jay, he says, wrote in the Federalist Papers that Divine Providence had bestowed on the nation a people who speak the same language and, by and large, share the same religion — Christianity. “He thought that was good, because that conduces to social comity,” says Woods. [*Chad Groening*] The Agape News Press.

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### Pastors Found Guilty of Religious Vilification.

— The Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (VCAT) ruled this morning that both Pastor Danny Nalliah and Pastor Daniel Scot were guilty of racial vilification of Muslims under the state’s Racial and Religious Vilification laws. The complaint was brought by the Islamic Council of

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**PIANO . . .**

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faith once for all delivered to the saints. In some, Open Theism is taught, in others, evolution is propagated, in others, Mormon professors hold forth, helping to train the pastors for the twenty-first century churches. Promise Keepers holds rallies to help syncretise truth and error into a one world church. In Australia, we hear of Uniting churches that are inviting Muslims on to their church boards. New Evangelical Anglicans around the world man the pumps in desperation while homosexuals, greenies, feminists, and Druids drill holes in the bottom of the ship.

You may ask how the omission of one simple Bible truth could have such a dreadful effect.

To find the answer, we only have to consider one of the passages that speaks of separation from error, 2 Cor.6:14-7:1.

*“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and*

*walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

A simple overview of this passage reveals the following:

A. There are four commands in the text:

1. Avoid unequal yokes with unbelievers (6:14).
2. Come out from among unbelievers (6:17).
3. Be separate from unbelievers (6:17).
4. Touch not the unclean thing (6:17).

B. There is one overwhelming reason for separation from error, and that is that godliness is totally incompatible with ungodliness:

1. Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness (vs. 14).
2. Light has no communion with darkness (vs. 14).
3. Christ has no concord with Belial (vs. 15).
4. The believer has no part with an infidel (vs. 15).
5. The temple of God has no agreement with idols (vs. 16 ).

C. There are seven promises in the text for those who separate from error:

1. God will dwell in us (6:16).
2. God will walk in us (6:16).
3. He will be our God (6:16).
4. We shall be His people (6:16).
5. He will receive us (6:17).
6. He will be a Father to us (6:18).
7. We will be His sons and daughters (6:18 ).

D. There is one exhortation in the text: “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (7:1).

1. We do this by separating from doctrinal error (breaking off any yoke with unbelievers)
2. We do this by separating from moral error (cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh)
3. We do this by separating from ecclesiastical error (Christ has no concord with Belial).

E. Obedience to God in separation is described as the “perfecting of holiness” (7:1).

1. Holiness is a present tense, progressive work done by the Holy Spirit in us (7:1).
2. This work of sanctification results in separation from doctrinal, moral, and ecclesiastical error (6:14-17; 7:1).
3. The work of sanctification involves action on our part. We must refuse

unequal yokes (6:14), we must come out, separate ourselves, and touch not the unclean thing (6:17), and we must cleanse ourselves from all defilement (7:1).

4. These actions on our part are the outworkings, the fruit of practical holiness (“Be ye holy”), and are mature responses to the holiness of God (“for I am holy”) 1 Peter 1:16.

5. To repudiate separation from error, as New Evangelicalism has done, is to reject the “perfecting of holiness.” Further, it is to resist the working of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. It is the pruning of the fruit of holiness before it can mature into separation from error. It is a hardhearted disdain for the holiness of God. Worst of all, it brings into question the very nature of God. Theologians often say that the Holiness of God is His first attribute. He is the thrice Holy One. He is self affirmingly pure. He is without blemish and without spot. He is separate from sinners. He is “altogether other” than we are. In the perfections of His nature He is unique! So how serious is it to repudiate separation from error? How serious is it to remove this one key from the keyboard of truth? How serious is it for men to take away the “middle C” from God’s Word?

It is as serious an assault on the Bible as ever

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**PIANO . . .**

(Continued from page 11)

was conceived in the counsels of Hell. It is a devious, subtle, flanking manoeuvre of the Enemy to attack the Unity of Theology. New Evangelicals have made the mistake of thinking that they could proudly disobey one of the commands of God without affecting any other truths. They should have known that all of the truths of the Scripture are interrelated. Noel Smith used to say, "God has the only perfectly integrated personality in the universe. Every attribute of God is in perfect agreement with every other attribute. He never contradicts Himself." And the same is true with the Word of God. Every truth in Scripture is inter-related and integrated with every other truth. No matter how sophisticated and erudite and scholarly a man may be, if he tampers with one of the doctrines of the Bible, he ultimately does injury to all the rest.

Fundamentalists should be grieved by the harm being done by New Evangelicals. But we need not be discouraged. We need only to preach the Word. We have apostolic authority for our preaching of the whole Bible. We must preach as Paul did to the Ephesians. He said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

New Evangelicals have

stripped the Scriptures of many precious truths, but we know what we must do. We must simply continue playing all the notes. □

**WNR . . .**

(Continued from page 11)

Victoria after Pastor Daniel Scot presented a seminar on Islam in Melbourne in March 2002. The seminar was organized by Catch the Fire Ministries, headed by Pastor Danny Nallich. The complaint deals with many issues, such as the nature of jihad, goals of Muslims in the west, and the connection between the laws of jihad and the treatment of non-Muslims under Islam. The case against both pastors is one of the first to be tested under the new legislation. Ironically Daniel Scot was forced to flee with his family seventeen years ago from Pakistan after being charged with blasphemy against Mohammed. The punishment of the death penalty was only prevented by political pressure. Now, in the country in which he found refuge, three white converts to Islam are being used to persecute a Pakistani Christian. After stating that the seminar was not limited to academic study of what the Koran teaches about jihad, Judge Higgins ordered the defendants to attend court early next year when the penalty the two pastors would face would be

handed down. Danny Nallich said in a statement released earlier this year that, "When Pearl Harbor was bombed in WWII the Japanese Emperor was reported as saying, "This is the greatest victory in our history, or we have just woken a sleeping giant."

This legal action has had a significant influence in the awakening of the sleeping giant – God's people in the churches throughout Australia. Shadow Attorney General Ms Nicola Roxon of the ALP spoke at the National Marriage Forum held in Parliament, Canberra on October 4 and said that if ALP won the federal election the Racial and Religious Vilification state laws would be made national. Peter Costello has said, "I do not think we should resolve differences about religious views in our community with lawsuits between the different religions. Nor do I think the object of religious harmony will be promoted by organizing witnesses to go along to the meetings of other religions to collect evidence for the purpose of later litigation." Executive Chairman of the Australian Christian Lobby, Jim Wallace AM, said, "If the

intent in passing this law was to stop people voicing contrary opinions, it could not have been better crafted, given the interpretation of the Judge. 'Free speech is dead, killed by legal fees and bad law.'"

\* \* \*

**Persecution of Christians In Saudi Arabia.** — The following is from AsiaNews, Nov. 25: "Brian Savio O'Connor's case is but the latest one in a long series of arrests, torture and abductions endured by Christians in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi regime's oppression of anything that is not Wahhabi Islam is raising fears among the eight million foreigners working in the desert kingdom. Christianity is especially marked for repression. Local sources told AsiaNews that many Christians are in Saudi prisons for religious reasons. There is no religious freedom in Saudi Arabia. With the exception of Wahhabi Islam, all other religions are banned from public life. In principle, Saudi law allows members of other confessions to worship in the privacy of their home, but in practice, this is not the case. — FBIS

**A lot of church members who are  
Singing "Standing on the Promises"  
Are just sitting on the premises.**

# Singing in the Spirit

## The missing ingredient in much of today's Christian music

By James E. Wolfe

Why is it that a popular song crooner, when he sings a gospel song, sings it "straight"? And a Metropolitan Opera star sings "Holy, Holy, Holy" with devotion and simplicity?

But so-called "Christian stars" either croon or overdramatize sacred songs.

Could it be that some popular singers and opera stars are wiser than those who claim to know Jesus Christ in that they recognize a difference in music for the world and songs for the church?

A good preacher should speak the language of the people, but he does not have to gain their attention by telling a dirty story. Neither does a gospel singer have to sneak in the Word of God by means of off-color music. We are told to put a difference between holy and unholy (Lev. 10:10). Many would rather mix them to gain "communication" with people and "share" Christ.

We listen to soloists and sense, often, there is something wrong; something missing. There may be a lack of sincerity in the voice, suggesting a shallow spiritual experience. Or the singing may be overdone;

oversung. The soloist may be more anxious to have praise than to produce our spiritual response to the message.

Perhaps we hear a song sung well, and with feeling, only to have it ruined by the intensity of an unexpected high note at the end.

Then there is the lady who wants to communicate her feelings of love for the Savior; she croons breathlessly, making a song about God's love sound like an expression of uncontrolled fleshly love.

Spirituality in singing, or the lack of it, shows up in the soloist's treatment of the song. Vocal gimmicks (not techniques) often cancel the spiritual values of a song. Slides, slurs, meaningless high notes, breathiness, crooning (straight tone to a wobble) and even volume (intensity) are used to give greater appeal. Unfortunately, these gimmicks represent a lower plane of vocal purity than the singer would be willing to admit.

I heard a soloist who had a large voice — not well trained but naturally large. That was not enough for him; he (ab)used the public address system to

shock the audience. Persons in the front rows were stopping their ears because of the pain.

It is not the elements of the world that impress people; rather, it is the purity of our faith and testimony that should attract people to Christ. We should not turn again to "the weak and beggarly elements of the world," or be "in bondage" to them at all (Gal. 4:9). The Holy Spirit must not be grieved or quenched or tempted or lied to in our music.

One major problem affects much of our music. The Holy Spirit is not in control.

Singing, like praying, praising and preaching, must be done in the Spirit. Otherwise it will be fleshly in purpose, expression and effect. What we desperately need is singing to the glory of God in the power of the Spirit rather than singing for self-glory in the strength of the flesh.

Paul declared a principle in 1 Corinthians 14:15: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." In Ephesians 5:18 he admonished us not to be drunk with wine, but to be "filled with the Spirit." The

fullness of the Holy Spirit causes a person to be submissive to His power, and it will affect the singer as well as the listener. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:25-26). Humility is not worked up by the singer; it is an out-working of the Holy Spirit.

Singing in the Spirit affects the attitude of the singer toward others. The singer will be concerned for others, not caught up in his own abilities. There will be no room for jealousy. There are no such persons as "temperamental musicians"; only fleshly, sinful ones who cause problems with other people over the use of their musical talent.

Singing in the Spirit will affect the singer's attitude toward the opportunities of singing and the listen ability of the people. The singer will be concerned about singing as a spiritual ministry. The purpose will not be to impress people with ability or even spirituality. When one sings for God's glory, he leaves the results with the Lord.

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## Creation Speaks of God's Power

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

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

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

A young squid travels by jet propulsion! He swims by pumping water through a tube along his thin, streamlined body. When pursued, he can gather great speed, and he always goes backwards. When he gets going fast enough, he can set his fins at an angle

and take off into the air. He has been seen to fly as far as sixty yards with one take-off, leaving his foes far behind!

Not long ago a group of scientists were experimenting in Chicago. A female moth of a rare species was placed in a room. Four miles away a male moth of the same species was released. In spite of the din and smoke of the city; in spite of the distance; and in spite of the fact that the female was in a closed room, in a few hours the male moth was found beating its wings against the window of the room in which the female was confined. Explain such "miracles?" *God made it so!*

Tagged salmon released from Columbia River points spend four years in the Pacific, then consistently return to the spots from which they departed. Wild ducks and geese and other birds like the Golden Plover wing their way back to their

original localities unerringly after long flights to distant points hundreds, even thousands, of miles away.

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

### MUSIC . . .

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The song is the medium God uses to glorify Himself. Therefore the singer will spend much time in practice and in careful selection of repertoire, requiring Biblical truth in the text and avoiding sentimentality and vague words. He will guard against music that clouds or even covers up the text. Singing with understanding speaks of the "form of sound words" that alone give light. The Spirit-controlled singer loves God's Word and therefore wants to sing God's Word, not distortions of it. We must discern worldly voices (1 Cor. 14:10). Each believer must judge and discern his relationship to all things, including music.

Singing in the Spirit will also consider the listeners. The singer will not look down on them as poor, untalented souls. "Isn't it too bad some have it and some do not?" He will not

anxiously await the end of the service to hear their praises. He will not look upon them with disgust because they do not appreciate his hard work and fine performance.

Finally, the Holy Spirit influences the singing itself. His power will extend over the singer's technique. Spirituality and technique are not opposed to each other. As a matter of fact, they should be closely related. Doesn't God deserve our best? That means one should train to be the finest possible musician. The trained voice is a tool for the Spirit to use, not an obstacle to His work.

How, then, do we know when singing is spiritual? In John 15:26 are our Lord's words: "But when the Comforter is come ... he shall testify of me." Again, in John 16:14, "He shall glorify me." If singing is in the power of the Holy Spirit, listeners will see Christ, the Word of God or a spiritual truth being glorified, not the soloist. The spiritual soloist will be satisfied to sing to the Lord, thanking God for His Word and the musical medium for expressing it. The opportunity to sing is God-given. To God, then, be the glory.

Martin Luther said, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music." □

**People are funny,  
they want the front of  
the bus, the middle of  
the road, and the back  
of the church**

## Spurgeon Believed In Baptist Perpetuity

History has hitherto been written by our enemies, who never would have kept a single fact about us upon the record if they could have helped it, and yet it leaks out every now and then that certain poor people called Anabaptists were brought up for condemnation.

From the days of Henry II to those of Elizabeth we hear of certain unhappy heretics who were hated of all men for the truth's sake which was in them. We read of poor men and women, with their garments cut short, turned out into the fields to perish in the cold, and anon of others who were burnt at Newington for the crime of Anabaptism.

Long before your Protestants were known of, these horrible Anabaptists, as they were unjustly called, were protesting for the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." No sooner did the visible church begin to depart from the gospel than these men arose to keep fast by the good old way. The priests and monks wished for peace and slumber, but there was always a Baptist or a Lollard tickling men's ears with holy Scriptures, and calling their attention to the errors of the times. They were a poor persecuted tribe. The halter was thought to be too good for

them. At times ill-written history would have us think that they died out, so well had the wolf done his work on the sheep. Yet here we are, blessed and multiplied; and Newington sees other scenes from Sunday to Sunday.

As I think of your numbers and efforts, I can only say in wonder — what a growth! As I think of the multitudes of our brethren in America, I may well say, What hath God wrought! Our history forbids discouragements." — (Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, pg. 41) ▣

### Jesus Christ Lord and Savior

He is the First and Last, the Beginning and the End!

He is the keeper of Creation and the Creator of all!

He is the Architect of the universe and the Manager of all times.

He always was, He always is, and He always will be ... Unmoved, Unchanged, Undefeated, and never Undone!

He was bruised and brought healing! He was pierced and eased pain! He was persecuted and brought freedom! He was dead and

brought life! He is risen and brings power! He reigns and brings Peace! The world can't understand him, the armies can't defeat Him, the schools can't explain Him, and the leaders can't ignore Him. Herod couldn't kill Him, the Pharisees couldn't confuse Him, and the people couldn't hold Him! Nero couldn't crush Him, Hitler couldn't silence Him, the New Age can't replace Him, and "intellects" can't explain Him away! He is light, love, longevity, and Lord. He is goodness, kindness, gentleness, and God. He is holy, righteous, mighty, powerful, and pure. His ways are right, His word is eternal, His will is unchanging, and His mind is on me. He is my Redeemer, He is my Savior, He is my guide, and He is my peace! He is my joy, He is my comfort, He is my Lord, and He rules my life! I serve Him because His bond is love, His burden is light, and His goal for me is abundant life. I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise, the power of the powerful, the ancient of days, the ruler of rulers, the leader of leaders, the overseer of the overcomers, and the sovereign Lord of all that was and is to come.

And if that seems impressive to you, try this for size. His goal is a relationship with ME! He will never leave me, never forsake me, never mislead me, never forget me, never

overlook me, and never cancel my appointment in His appointment book! When I fall, He lifts me up! When I fail, He forgives! When I am weak, He is strong! When I am lost, He is the way! When I am afraid, He is my courage! When I stumble, He steadies me! When I am hurt, He heals me! When I am broken, He mends me! When I am blind, He leads me! When I am hungry, He feeds me! When I face trials, He is with me! When I face persecution, He shields me! When I face problems, He comforts me! When I face loss, He provides for me! When I face death, He carries me home! He is everything for everybody everywhere, every time, and every way. He is God, He is faithful. I am His, and He is mine! My Father in heaven can whip all the fathers of this world. So, if you're wondering why I feel so secure, understand this ... He said it and that settles it. God is in control, I am on His side, and that means all is well with my soul. Everyday is a blessing for GOD Is! Now, doesn't that make you want to stand up and shout "Hallelujah." ▣

**Henry Ford would sell you a car in any color you wanted, as long as it was black, and network TV can depict terrorists of any kind, as long as they aren't -- Muslim.**

## Fundamental Baptist Information Service

By David W. Cloud

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### **Mormon Educator Disciplined For Debunking Mormon History.**

— Grant Palmer, a lifelong Mormon, was disfellowshipped on Dec. 13 for publishing a book that questions official Mormon history. “An Insider’s View of Mormon Origins” suggests that the golden plates did not exist and that Joseph Smith made up the story, leaning heavily on the King James Bible, Masonry, and personal experiences. The “disfellowship” means he will retain his membership but lose certain privileges, such as being able to go into temples. Palmer, who has a master’s degree in history from Brigham Young University and has been a Mormon director of education for more than 30 years, began doubting Mormon history 20 years ago. Palmer writes, “I, along with colleagues ... find the evidence employed to support many traditional claims about the church to be either nonexistent or problematic.” You mean Joseph Smith might have been prevaricating and that official Mormon history is bogus? Who would have thought it? Someone please tell the president of Fuller

Theological Seminary!

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### **Influential Rock Guitarist Murdered.**

— “Dimebag” Darrell Abbott, thrash metal guitarist for Pantera and Damageplan, was shot to death during a concert at a nightclub on Dec. 8 at age 38. Nathan Gale, a 6 foot 3 inch former semi-pro football player, rushed the stage yelling, “You broke up Pantera,” and held Abbott while he fired at least five shots into his head. Gale was apparently upset about the band’s breakup in 2003 to form Damageplan. Gale idolized Pantera’s lead singer, Phil Anselmo, and “memorized Pantera’s dark lyrics.” Gale’s former football coach, Mark Green, said Gale “psyched himself up before games by piping Pantera music into his headphones” (“Gunman Obsessed With Pantera,” Fox News, Dec. 10). Chimaira’s lead singer Mark Hunter said, “It’s going to be hard for people outside the metal world to understand, but this is as important as losing a president.” Pantera was formed in 1983, and Abbott’s brother and

former Pantera drummer, Vinnie Paul, said their tradition was “hell-raising.” Their song titles were along the lines of “Hell Bound,” “Slaughtered,” “Death Rattle,” “Message in Blood,” “Cemetery Gates,” “Burnnnn!” “Killers,” “Takin My Life,” and “Down Below,” with lyrics like “Avoid the light. The sun’s in sight...Grant me satan” and “By demons be driven. Beckon the call.” It’s amazing how these fellows can mock God and brazenly flaunt His laws and then pretend they were only kidding, “hey, it’s only art,” and get very heavenly-minded when they face eternity. Zakk Wylde, lead guitarist of Ozzy Osbourne’s band, said of Abbott, “He’s sitting at God’s tavern, having a cold one with Randy Rhoads and Hendrix.” Zakk needs to read his Bible a little more often. “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).

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### **New Zealand Adopts Homosexual Partnership Law.**

— The following is from Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Dec. 10: “New Zealand’s parliament has adopted controversial legislation granting legal recognition to homosexual partnerships after months of national debate. The legislature voted 65-55 to pass the Civil Union Bill after fighting off a bid by

opponents to force the issue into a national referendum. Under the law, due to come into effect in April, same-sex couples gain similar legal rights to married people, although the legislation does not change the New Zealand Marriage Act, which still applies only to men and women.”

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### **Same Sex “Weddings” On The Increase In Anglican Churches.**

— Anglican priests performed blessing ceremonies for homosexual partnerships 300 times in England last year, an increase of 10 percent over the previous year. The numbers will doubtless increase when the Civil Partnerships Act recognizing same-sex unions becomes law next year. Martin Reynolds is an Anglican priest in Wales who has lived with his homosexual “partner” for 25 years. He said he has been waiting until his relationship was legal to have it “blessed,” and that now “retired bishops are queuing up to perform the ceremony” (“Bishops turn blind eye to gay wedding ceremonies in church,” London Times, Nov. 22). Richard Chartres, the Bishop of London, endorsed a new book of prayers entitled The Naked Year, which in-

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cludes “a positive reflection on the annual Gay Pride march in London and a prayer for the blessing service of a lesbian couple.” Neil Richardson, Rector of Holy Cross, Greenford, near London, says he has done 12 such blessings. He says the favorite reading from the authorized marriage liturgy is based on 1 Corinthians 13. They must skip over verse 5, which says love “doth not behave itself unseemly, as homosexuality is called “unseemly” in Rom. 1:27.

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**Promise Keepers Conferences For 2005 Called “The Awakening.”** — Promise Keepers has announced conferences for 20 cities in 2005 and the theme is “The Awakening.” This will be the 15th year that Promise Keepers has conducted conferences. Tom Fortson, president and CEO of Promise Keepers, says, “We want to help men design a plan that will empower them to impact their world and fulfill their destiny.” In truth, the plan is in the Bible and men don’t need the help of a weak, unscriptural organization like Promise Keepers to fulfill it. Speakers lined up for 2005 include charismatics Ted Haggard and Jack Hayford. I heard

Hayford speak at St. Louis 2000, and he told how his daughter came to him and questioned whether her “tongues” were really biblical tongues. He encouraged her that “you have to start with baby tongues before you can advance to adult tongues.” Promise Keepers has seven pledges that it encourages men to follow. Number six is a pledge to promote unity between all denominations, and Promise Keepers has made it clear that this unity includes Roman Catholicism. Speaking at one of the early rallies, In an interview with the Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor*, McCartney said that full Catholic participation was his intention from the start. “Back in 1992, at our first stadium event, we very clearly stated from the podium that we eagerly welcomed the participation of Roman Catholics, and we’ve had scores of Roman Catholics attend and go back to their churches excited” (*Our Sunday Visitor*, July 20, 1997, p. 10). In 1997 Promise Keepers appointed a Roman Catholic, Mike Timmis, to its Board of Directors. It is obvious that Promise Keepers cares nothing about biblical truth and sound doctrine. This is radical, lowest-common-denominator ecumenism. Men from fundamental Baptist churches who become associated with Promise Keepers partake of the spirit of compromise

and apostasy promoted by this rebellious movement.

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**Episcopal Church Hires Muslim Cleric.** — The newest staff member at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Denver, Colorado, is a Muslim Imam. Ibrahim Kazerooni was formally installed on Nov. 14 as the director of the church’s Abrahamic Initiative, a bridge-building effort among Christians, Jews, and Muslims (“Reaching Out, church hires Muslim,” *The Denver Post*, Nov. 11). This is probably the first time in history that a Muslim cleric has become a staff member in a church. Church representative Greg Movesian said, “We hope this appeals to people who don’t look upon people of other religions as a target for conversion but rather potential partners in maintaining a civil society.” It is churches that don’t believe the Gospel that have a problem with evangelism and conversion.

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**Meteorologist Likens Fear of Global Warming To Religious Belief.** — The following is from CNSNews.com, Dec. 2: “An MIT meteorologist Wednesday dismissed alarmist fears about human induced global warming as nothing more than ‘religious beliefs.’ Massachusetts Institute of Technology

professor Richard Lindzen, in a speech to about 100 people at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., said: ‘Essentially if whatever you are told is alleged to be supported by “all scientists,” you don’t have to understand anymore. You simply go back to treating it as a matter of religious belief.’ His speech was titled, ‘Climate Alarmism: The Misuse of Science.’ Alarmist predictions of more hurricanes, the catastrophic rise in sea levels, the melting of the global poles and even the plunge into another ice age are not scientifically supported, Lindzen said. ‘It leads to a situation where advocates want us to be afraid, when there is no basis for alarm. In response to the fear, they want us to do what they want,’ Lindzen said. The climate change debate has become corrupted by politics, the media and money, according to Lindzen.’

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**Christians Standing Trial For Quoting Bible Verses To Homosexuals.**

— The following is from the American Family Association, Dec. 16: “After a federal appeals court denied an emergency appeal to stop prosecution of 11 Christians on Tuesday, Philadelphia Municipal Court Judge William Austin Meehan ordered four of the

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Christians to stand trial on three felony (criminal conspiracy, ethnic intimidation, and riot) and five misdemeanor charges. If convicted, they could face up to 47 years in prison. The Christians were arrested on October 10 for praying, singing, and reading scripture during an annual 'gay pride' event known as 'Outfest' in Philadelphia. The federal appeals court in Philadelphia denied emergency relief despite video footage Fahling calls 'undisputed evidence' that shows the Christians cooperating with police and continually being harassed by the Pink Angels, a group of homosexuals organized to impede the gospel message. Philadelphia city prosecutor in the case, Charles Ehrlich, attacked the Christians as 'hateful' and referred to preaching the Bible as 'fighting words,' the judge agreed. Charges were dropped against the remaining seven apparently because they were not seen quoting scripture on the videotape."

\* \* \*

**Christians Convicted of Hate Crime Against Muslims In Australia.** —

On Dec. 17 a state tribunal in Victoria, Australia, found two pastors guilty of inciting hatred against Muslims. The case stems from a

seminar that Daniel Nalliah and Daniel Scott of Catch the Fire Ministries conducted in March 2002. The two pastors lectured on the differences between Christianity and Islam and quoted information about Islam directly from the Quran. They were accused by the Islamic Council of inciting hatred, and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal has now sided against the Christians. Todd Nettleton of Voice of the Martyrs says the pastors are on trial for simply telling the truth, and that the situation should be a wake-up call for Christians because the two men are not accused of telling lies about Islam, but of hurting Muslims' feelings. The judge has the power to levy an unlimited amount of fines, and he will make that determination in January.

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**The Latest In The Shroud of Turin Saga.** —

The Shroud of Turin is a piece of cloth alleged to be Christ's burial shroud. Kept in a Roman Catholic chapel in Turin, Italy, since the 14th century, it seems to bear an impression of a wounded, longhaired man. The Shroud has been the object of much veneration, speculation, and research. Radiocarbon tests by three separate laboratories in 1988 dated it to the 13th or 14th century, but this has stopped neither the adula-

tion nor the speculation. The latest twist is the theory that the samples tested were from a portion of the cloth that was repaired during the Middle Ages and thus not properly representative of the original cloth. This theory appeared in National Geographic in April 2004. For a Bible believer, it is not difficult to reject the Turin Shroud as bogus. The very fact that it is owned by the Catholic Church and is held forth as an object of "veneration" is testimony enough. This is direct disobedience to the second commandment. Second, the wrapping is wrong. The Turin Shroud is one garment that was wrapped over both the body and head of the victim, but the Bible says Jesus was wrapped in clothes, plural (Jn. 19:40) and His head was wrapped separately from the body clothes (Jn. 20:5-7). Third, the image's long hair proves that it was not the Lord Jesus Christ. Contrary to religious art and popular myth, Christ did not have long hair. The Bible says it is a shame for a man to have long hair (1 Cor. 11:14). The only Jewish men that had long hair were Nazarites such as Samson (Num. 6:2-5; Jud. 13:5-7) and rebels such as Absalom (2 Sam. 14:26); but Jesus Christ was a Nazarene (because He grew up in Nazareth), not a Nazarite. Had Jesus been a Nazarite, He would have violated His vow when He

touched dead bodies (compare Num. 6:6 and Lk. 8:54) and drank of the fruit of the vine (compare Num. 6:3 and Mat. 26:29). Further, priests were specifically forbidden to have long hair (Ezek. 44:20), and the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a priest but the great High Priest.

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**Turning The House of God Into A Comedy Club.** —

An article in the Christian Science Monitor for Dec. 16 documented the growing acceptance of comedy in church services, noting that churches are trying to "tap the nation's culture of humor to promote spiritual gain." The New England Bible Church recently used a television game show style routine during its worship service that pitted the elders against the deacons to create a "mood of levity." Church outreach ministries now include Christian comedy shows to draw a crowd. A forthcoming book, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Zondervan, 2005), "dedicates an entire chapter to humor as a homiletic device." Joseph Webb, author of *Comedy and Preaching*, says, "It is going to be impossible to preach without using humor." Where, I ask, do we see all of this humor in the Bible? The Lord Jesus Christ preached a lot about

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# *Psalm of the New Testament*

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the gospels do  
 proclaim,  
 That Jesus died — was crucified, to bear His people's  
 shame.

And these are facts as found in Acts, Christ did His  
 church empower; (Baptist)  
 To bind and loose, to preach the truth, and be a  
 mighty sower.

In Romans nine, the Word Divine, says man is saved  
 by grace;  
 And not of him that wills or runneth, in the  
 human race.

We find the First Corinthians rebukes, instructs,  
 reproveth;  
 Corinthians two in words so true, tells what the  
 Father loves.

Galatians says they of the faith are the seed of  
 Abraham;  
 Now we that be in Christ shall see, Jehovah  
 God, I AM!

Ephesians tell of the elect — the ones by grace  
 He calleth;  
 This is that truth where the uncouth arminian  
 preacher falleth

Philippians counsels of the time when men shall  
 bow the knee;  
 Confessing Jesus Christ is Lord, and will  
 forever be!

Colossians bids us live to God, forsaking  
 worldly leaven;  
 Thessalonians One declares the Son of God shall come  
 from heaven.

The Second Thessalonians doth Anti-Christ  
 foretell;  
 Who truth denies with monstrous lies — He's

ordained into hell.

In Timothy One, Paul says, My Son, through faith in  
 Christ our Lord;  
 Refuse profane and old wives tales and preach God's  
 Holy Word.

Second Timothy says in the latter days, men shall be  
 boasters, proud;  
 Having a form of godliness, but not by the spirit  
 endowed.

Titus tells of that blessed hope, and he gives us a  
 bishop's rule;  
 "For a bishop must be blameless," lest he be the  
 Devil's tool.

Philemon marks a Christian's love, as only  
 Christians know it;  
 Hebrews reveals the gospel, as the old time law  
 did show it.

James insists that without works, our faith is  
 vain and dead;  
 First Peter points us to the way the saints of  
 God are led.

Second Peter tells of times ahead — false prophets  
 are not few;  
 While in First John the theme is on, the love of  
 God so true.

In the Second and the Third of John, we learn about  
 false teachers;  
 And Jude doth tell the wrath of hell upon  
 unfaithful preachers.

The Revelation speaks to us of that great  
 judgment day;  
 When Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will have  
 the final say!  
 Glory to God, All Highest! in Jesus' name we pray.  
 Amen!

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seven wonders of the world.

In the Encyclopedias we are told that this temple of Diana was decorated with 127 marble columns, each one 60 feet high. You can begin to see then, if you have ever seen pictures of this kind of column, why this would be deemed one of the seven wonders of the world. In addition, at this huge temple to Diana, there was a large open air amphitheater that could seat over 20,000 people. That's a fairly good size arena.

In addition, there was another principle temple, a shrine to Augustus Caesar. It also was located in Ephesus and was a part of the Emperor worship that characterized the people of that day and time. This city then was a very religious city, having two of the chief temples of the world, one to Augustus Caesar, the Emperor, and the other to Diana, the great goddess of the Ephesians.

The city was generally a very wealthy city, considered to be a seat of culture, and yet their religious background was not very good at all. Ephesus was the very opposite. It was a very corrupt city that resulted from all of these things.

We see a great contrast here. The church of Ephesus had a godly beginning and had to its

ministry many of the great people of the New Testament era. In Acts 19 we find that the Apostle Paul labored there for some three years. Though we are not specifically told this, it is assumed that Paul was probably the founder of the church. In Acts 19 it speaks of this group in Ephesus, and in Acts 20, Paul says: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons" (Acts 20:17-18). Paul indicates here that he may have been the founder of that church. He says: "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:19-20). Still talking to these church members in Ephesus, Paul says: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31).

Another experience of the Apostle Paul is recorded in First Corinthians, showing how much the church of Ephesus was the recipient of his ministry, and

received the benefits of his ministry. Paul says: "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:31-32). Paul says here that he had fought with beasts in the city of Ephesus.

Besides the ministry of the Apostle Paul, the church at Ephesus also had the benefits of many others. Paul, writing to young Timothy says: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). Timothy, then, was left in Ephesus, and given the responsibility for the teaching of the church. Some have concluded from this that Timothy was ordained in the church at Ephesus, for it was Paul's custom that everywhere he went, he ordained elders and left them to preach and teach in that church, while he went on to other areas.

Turning back again to the book of Acts we find that the church at Ephesus had three others who ministered to them, Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos. We read: "And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria,

and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews" (Acts 18:18-19).

Now drop down to verse 24: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:24-26).

We see here that Ephesus had Paul as its founder, Timothy left there by the Apostle Paul in order that he might instruct them, and they also had Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos to minister among them.

Furthermore, we read that Paul sends another man there. Paul says: "For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that ye also may know my affairs, and

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*how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things*" (Eph. 6:20-21).

Take all of these men, not only the Apostle Paul who spent at least three years there on one occasion, but also include the ministry of Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos, and Tychicus. All of these contributed to the building up of this church in the city of Ephesus.

For what its worth, tradition says that Timothy was martyred there in the city of Ephesus, so that he spent much of his life there, even up until the time of his death.

From all this we can see why this church had so much going for it. They had some of the greatest preachers that a church could have. We find that the Apostle Paul, in speaking about this church, complimented them upon the fact that they had separated themselves from any connection with Judaism. He says: "*And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God*" (Acts 19:8). Then in verse 10: "*And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of*

*the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*" This church then was a highly organized church, a large church that was just bustling with activity. The result was that it says "*so much so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks*" all by the ministry and the work of this church at Ephesus.

But, it is not how a church *was*, so much as the *present* condition of the church that concerns the Lord. As we look to the Book of Revelation we find that this church, though it had a great beginning, and though He complimented the church on many things, in spite of all of that, they were no longer that great church.

Let us note the church itself. Remember this, a church to whom much is given, much is required. In verse 1 the author identifies Himself as the Lord Jesus Christ. He says: "*These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*" (Eph. 2:1). In 1:16 we see the one holding the seven stars in His right hand. This lets them know that this letter is from the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 13 of chapter one, it is the one who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. So we find two marks of identification here, showing us that this letter comes from the Lord

Jesus Christ.

Now there are things that are commendable about this church. As we mentioned earlier, the word Ephesus means "desirable," and that did fit her character, a desirable church, a church that was characterized by the greatest purity in doctrine and walk. There is not one word critical of their doctrinal position. There is not one word critical of their walk. This is a godly, orthodox, doctrinal church, sound in the faith.

In verses two and three we find there are things that are commended about this church. He says: "*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted*" (Rev. 2:2-3).

Notice these things in these two verses that were commendable about this church. First, their work. This was a working church. Secondly, their labor. Labor goes beyond work. They labored even unto weariness. Their patience and their endurance mentioned twice, once in service, and once in suffering. Their abhorrence of evil, holiness; the discipline of the ungodly; their endurance, and in verse 6 it says that

they hated the "deeds of the Nicolaitanes."

Now let's remember this, that it is no small praise to love that which Christ loves and to hate that which Christ hates. Don't ever get the idea that Christ does not hate. Here we find that it says that Christ hates the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. In the book of Proverbs we find that there are some six things, yea seven, it says, that the Lord hates. "*These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren*" (Prov. 6:16-19). We'll not take time to go into those now, but here we find this church is commended by the Lord because they love certain things and because they hate certain things. They are commended by our Lord for abhorring that which is morally bad as well as that which is theologically evil.

If you'll note in the 14th and 15th verses, here is something about the Nicolaitanes. We'll get into more of that when we study the church in Pergamos. In these verses he says: "*But I have a few things against thee, be-*

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*cause thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate*" (Rev. 2:13-14). Now these Nicolaitanes then were Balaamites, that is, they repeated the same sins of Balaam in the Old Testament and sought to overcome and to destroy the people of God by the same kind of temptations that Balaam used. That is the fleshly sins of heathenism. They caused them to eat meat that was offered to idols and then to commit fornication. You want to know more about that, read the Book of Numbers chapter 25 and read the first nine verses of that chapter.

Now what these Nicolaitanes did is that they sought to introduce worldliness or heathenism into the church. Here it is said that the Nicolaitanes were hated by the Ephesians, while in the church in Pergamos we find that they embraced the Nicolaitanes: "*So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes*" (Rev. 2:15). However, there are many things though that were commendable about

the church at Ephesus.

But now notice, "*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate*" (2:4-6).

The first thing that we find Him censuring this church for is that He says "*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left* [it does not say lost, but it says thou hast left] *thy first love.*" Indifference! Here's a church that is a working church, a church that at one time was well organized, a church that at one time was just bustling with activity, so much so, that they were actually turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6), and it is said that all Asia had heard about the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ from them. But now, just a few years later, it says "thou hast left thy first love." Their's was now a service without love. You mean it is possible to serve without love? They did! It may have been a service of just duty; a service based upon responsibility. They had to do it; but not a service based upon the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the Lord appreciates our work, our labor, our patience when we have love in our hearts for Him, but it is always a failure without this love. That's why it is possible for believers, Christians, to just work and serve the Lord and never accomplish anything. Why? No love! This was the great sin of the church at Ephesus, they had left their first love. They hadn't lost it, they just ran off and left it. Their defect was a matter of the heart not of the head. Their love had grown cold. And yet, just 30 years before, look what Paul wrote and said about this same church at Ephesus. Paul says: "*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers*" (Eph. 1:15-16). Paul writing to the church at Ephesus says the one thing I have heard about you is your love. And now, 30 years has gone by. The church is still a working church. It is still a doctrinal church, but they have left their love. *In just 30 short years.*

This is the beginning of the decline that led to the Laodicean church. That's the first step. How does Central Baptist Church test? How do we measure up? As I think about it, it reminds me of the old men of the nation Israel when they went back to the land of Israel to rebuild that

temple, and how after the walls were built, the younger people began to look at it, and they rejoiced and were glad, but the older ones who could remember the old temple wept and cried.

It may be some of our younger members, and maybe even some of our newer members do not remember what this church was 30 years ago, but brethren, we don't have the same love today that there was 30 years ago. Our church has already started that decline. Where is our love? Where is your love? Do you know what your attendance is in your Sunday School department? Or your Sunday School class? Do you know if it's on the decline, if it's going down hill? Where is your love? Have you left it, or have you lost it?

Now listen. The Lord intends for us to take these letters and apply them to ourselves. These are letters to test ourselves by. It's like a thermometer. You take your temperature. Where is your love?

Now don't look at somebody else and put the blame on somebody else. Make it personnel. Each one of us ought to ask ourselves the question, for this is the first step of developing into the Laodicean church.

In verse 5 the Lord tells them what to do. Now if you want to correct it, if

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you want to straighten it out, if you want to change matters, then here is what He says. *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works”* (2:5). Remember! They were now a fallen church. They have fallen from their first love, and He says “remember.” Think of where you ought to be and look at where you are. That’s the first thing that’s necessary, and if you want to work for the Lord, if you want to be a real servant for the Lord, the first thing you must do is to evaluate yourself. Find out where you are! Remember!

Secondly, repent. Now the word repent means a “change of mind,” but it is a change of mind that results in a change of your attitude and a turning from and a turning to. If you have been turning the wrong way, if you have let worldly things interfere in your life, maybe not sinful things, but worldly things; if you have let the activities of this world so usurp your thoughts, your time, your talents, your efforts that you have no time to demonstrate your love unto the Lord, then you need to evaluate and see where you are, and then to repent.

We have some members of our church that seemingly let anything in the world interfere with their service for the Lord.

Priorities are out of order. Any kind of an excuse comes along and we use that to absent ourselves from the house of the Lord. It may be a school activity. If so, we have to decide is school going to come first or does God come first. It may be something extra at the job, not required. We have to determine, does God come first or does that activity come first.

Where are our priorities? Have we left our first love? We ought to love the Lord first. We ought to love lost souls first. There needs to be real genuine repentance. Now repentance is preceded by godly sorrow. As the Scripture says *“Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of.”* Are you sorry for your sins? Can we reach the place that we have godly sorrow because we know that we are out of fellowship with the Lord, and we have no real love for the work of the Lord. We do the work of the Lord if it does not interfere with something else we want to do, if it is convenient. Repent!

Then He says, *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.”* We must return then to a doing of the first works. The three “Rs” are: **Remember, Repent, and Return.** To correct any departure from God, one must go back to the place of departure. If you’ve jumped the track,

you’ve got to return to the place where you got off the track and get back on the track. Now this is what God told the church at Ephesus was the solution to their problem.

Then He issues them a warning. He gives them the admonition to start with of what to do, and now He says this is what’s going to happen if you don’t. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”* (Rev. 2:7).

Without repentance He says there’s going to come judgment. The church will remain. The assembly is going to remain, but the candlestick is going to be removed. After its removal, though a church may continue to meet under the name of a church, it would no more be a church in the eyes of Christ. A shell!

What applies here to the church can also apply to the individual believer who has left their first love. I don’t mean to say that you can lose your salvation, but you can be placed upon a shelf where you can no longer be used of the Lord. God has different ways of placing people on a shelf. Sometimes He can do it by taking your health away from you. That can come through illness, it can come through accident, it can come through various ways. If no repentance,

then this church is forfeiting their right to exist as a church. Now the cure is to turn unto the Lord. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* Hear means to obey. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear.”* Not hear for the sake of knowledge, but hear for the sake of obedience, of doing what the Lord wants us to do.

He then gives them a promise. *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”* So there are those who do overcome, and there are those who are overcome. Which are you? Will you be an overcomer or will you be one that is overcome? The Apostle John says, *“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God”* (1 Jn. 5:5). Those who are the overcomers are those who are the saved, and who are those who are overcome? The Apostle Peter says, *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning”* (1 Pet. 2:20). Those who are overcome are those who are the unsaved.

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hell fire but I don't recall a lot of humor in the Gospels. The same is true for the sermons recorded in Acts and the apostolic messages to the churches. Of course, preaching hell fire doesn't get a lot of laughs and doesn't draw a big crowd; so the preachers described in 2 Tim. 4:3-4, who scratch the ears of those who want to be entertained with a new kind of Christianity, avoid it like the plague. ■

**REVELATION . . .**

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Now listen. This is a test. God has given us this letter to the church in Ephesus so that we might test ourselves. Not only test ourselves as a church, but test ourselves as individuals. *Remember! Repent! Return!* That means be an overcomer, and if you're not an overcomer, then you are going to be one of those overcome, for the world will overcome you.

This Epistle that the Lord has written to the church at Ephesus is to be read throughout the world, but there are none in Ephesus to read this Epistle tonight. None! They left their first love. They returned not to their first works, and the church in Ephesus is dead and gone. There is none in Ephesus to read this letter now. *It can happen to Central*

*Baptist Church.* It happened to the church at Ephesus in a period of just 30 years, and even this letter did not bring about the desired result. Why? I don't know, but probably the same thing occurred in Ephesus that is going to occur here in Central Baptist if we're not careful. What is the danger? We're going to forget it. We're not going to make it personal. Even though we may recognize the truth of some of these things, we're not going to change. We're going to go right on with our life just like we always have.

It may be the Lord will put you on the shelf, and you'll be useless as far as your service to the Lord. That's the way a church can end up, like the church of Laodicea. They first lose or leave their first love, and then it's down hill from then on.

Now God's request, recommendation, advice and council is — *remember, repent, return*. Will you do it? It's up to you. God is not going to compel you, God is not going to force you, but He asks you. As Paul says in Romans, I beseech you, therefore, I beg you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies unto him a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto the Lord which is your reasonable service. What are you going to do?

Do you believe I have told you the truth? God

holds me accountable and responsible for taking these Scriptures and opening them up and explaining what they mean. I am then to exhort you, and urge you, to do what it says. But I can't make you do it. God can, but He won't make you do it. It's going to be up to you, whether you want to or not.

How do you measure up? If you find that this picture fits you, doctrinally sound, working, but without love, not putting God first, but serving the Lord, working for the Lord only when it does not inconvenience your time, then it is time to remember, to repent, and to return.

Now I'm not going to give an invitation. In most churches, if one were to preach a message like this, they would urge the mem-

bers to come down to the front, and confess it, if they feel like this fits them. They would then ask them to get on their knees before God, and to cry out and pray unto the Lord in repentance under the results of godly sorrow. I'm not going to ask you to come down here to do that. But I am going to ask you to do it in your own home. Will you get before God? Search your own heart.

Maybe you don't think this fits you. If not, that's fine. That's good. But I find it fits me. I hope I'm not the only one, because if I am, then I'm having a real problem all by myself. But I feel there must be others. Have you left your first love? Put Jesus Christ first. Make Him your priority. Whatever He says, do it! ■

## Little Rock Bible Conference

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