

The Baptist CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

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WHOLE NO. 490

Some Baptist Whys and Wherefores

By John Jeter Hurt

WHY JOIN THE CHURCH?

“The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

1. It is Christ’s Organization. — Men may establish useless organizations, but He does not. Christ thought men needed the church. When He

speaks, debate ought to end. Human opinion must not carry itself against God’s knowledge. The church is Christ’s:

(1) Because He founded it: “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18).

(2) Because He is the head of it: “And he is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18).

(3) Because He loved

it: “Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:26).

(4) Because He exalts it: “If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church” (Mt. 18:17).

(5) Because He prophesies its triumph: “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18).

(6) Because He increases its membership: “And the Lord added to the

church daily” (Acts 2:47).

2. Fellowship is natural and inspiring. —

Men have always sought fellowship. They always will. Evil associates with evil, and thereby multiplies harm. Good must link itself with good to better learn and promote goodness. Good men must not be slackers, while evil men

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The Independence of the Local Church

By Chester E. Tulga

1. The New Testament presents only one type of local church: an independent, local assembly under the direction of the Spirit of God and under the authority of Christ, the Head of the Church. Its relationships are purely voluntary, but a deep sense of kinship with other New Testament assemblies is felt and manifested. There is no earthly authority over a

New Testament church.

2. The doctrine of the independence of the local church is rooted in the competency of the individual Christian to ascertain the will of God for himself, the necessity for freedom to accept responsibility, and the accountability which individuals and groups have to God for their policies and actions.

3. The New Testament

church has the right to own its property free from all outside entanglements, denominational or other-wise; to select its own pastoral leadership; to ordain those called into its ministry; to select its own objects of benevolence; to choose for itself its own religious fellowships; to safeguard its faith; to reject error and to discipline the unruly. It must be free in order that

it may give its primary loyalty to Jesus Christ and the Word of God, instead of ecclesiastical authority and the programs of men.

4. Individual local churches should voluntarily associate themselves together in Christian fellowship and in Christian tasks whenever such cooperation is desirable or

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Quiz The Pastor -- #39

Does the Bible Forbid the Wearing of Jewelry?

By the late Nick Michalinos

Question: Does God forbid the wearing of any kind of jewelry?

Answer: ☐ I have heard some well-meaning preachers condemn both men and women who wear jewelry. I have personally met a few folks who think it is wrong and sinful to wear expensive jewelry. I didn't get their opinions on whether wearing inexpensive, paste jewelry was forbidden by their teachings. However, we're not primarily interested in the opinions of men or women with regard to morals and doctrine. The Bible rightly divided is good enough for us.

One of the verses used by those that preach against the wearing of jewelry is found in First Peter 3:3-4, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of

putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, *which is in the sight of God of great price.*"

The two verses (Vs. 1-2) just before the above quoted verses, commands the Christian wives with unsaved husbands who will not obey the Word of God, to seek to win those husbands to Christ as they behold their godly living. If the lost husband would not hear sermons, they would be able to behold those sermons lived out in the holy lives of the wives.

Thus, the verses we have quoted above forbids these same wives to depend upon outward adornment in their effort to get their husbands saved. The idea that some wives had was that their husbands

might be physically attracted to them, and thereby be influenced to be saved. However, the whole point of their Christian living was to point their lost husbands to Christ, and not to themselves. This was to be done by allowing the hidden inward man of the heart to shine forth through their lives which they had surrendered to Christ. They were to seek to put the hidden man of the heart on display. Their outward lives were to be a true expression of a yielded Christian's heart, "even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." It may not mean much to some folks, but it "is in the sight of God of great price." God doesn't use the fashions and styles of this world to attract the lost to Christ.

Notice that verse 3 mentions "putting on of apparel." This does not forbid a woman's putting on clothes. Of course, women ought to wear clothes, but the clothes are not to be her real adornment.

In the same way, it is not wrong for a woman to plait her hair, but her plaited hair is not to be her true beauty. A woman can wear nice apparel, and plait her hair, and also have a "meek and quiet spirit."

The same is also true concerning jewelry. The wearing of jewelry is often mentioned in the Bible without being taboo. For example, Abraham's servant took earrings as a gift for Rebekah (Gen. 24:22).

The prodigal son got a ring from his gracious father (Lk. 15:22). The high priest in the Old Testament wore golden ornaments with God's approval. So you can see the wearing of clothes or plaiting of hair or wearing of jewelry is not forbidden in First Peter 3:3, but the true adornment and beauty should be from within, from the Spirit-controlled heart.

Also in First Timothy 2:9-10, we have the same thought. The Bible forbids immodest and extravagant dress. Vanity in dress is wrong and sinful. That which is lavish and gaudy may draw the attention of the unsaved to us, but not to the Savior. When we dress like the world, and act like the world, our message of salvation will fall on deaf ears. We become a hindrance rather than a help.

We are not to be "conformed to the world" and its fashions (Rom. 12:2). God certainly doesn't want us to appear shabby and unattractive in our public appearances, but we must not resort to ridiculous extravagance of apparel or of hair or wearing of jewelry. However, the wearing of jewelry is not forbidden. ☐

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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We mutter and sputter,
 We fume and we spurt;
 We mumble and grumble,
 Our feelings are hurt.
 We can't understand things
 Our vision grows dim
 When all that we need is
 A moment with Him.

What Is An “Ultra-Conservative”?

By M. L. Moser, Editor

(Reprinted from The Baptist Challenge, August 1984)

A Religious News Service article reporting the recent meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention began the article by saying:

“The Southern Baptist Convention, the nation’s largest Protestant denomination, continued its strong swing towards ultra-conservatism at its national conference here.”

This raises the question as to what is a “liberal,” “moderate,” “conservative” or an “ultra-conservative.”

A short definition of a “conservative” is: “One who believes the Bible is verbally inspired, inerrant, and that God said what He meant, and meant what He said.” A “liberal” is one who does not believe that the Bible is verbally inspired, inerrant, and he is not sure whether God said anything at all, and if so, we can never know for sure what He said, and if He did say something, we can never know for sure that He meant what He said. The liberal is no better off than an unbeliever (which he is) or an infidel.

A “moderate” is one who tries to have it both ways, a fence-straddler, one who tries to be both an unbeliever and a believer at the same time, which means

that *there is no moderate*. You are either a believer or an unbeliever, you can’t be both. You either believe the Bible or you don’t believe the Bible. It stands or falls as a unit, and one cannot believe only a part of the Bible. It is either all God’s Word or none of it can ever be declared with certainty to be God’s Word. After all, who is qualified to tell us what part is and what part is not. What man is there who considers himself to be able to tell us, without doubt and without being subject to error, just what portions of the Bible are given to us by God and what portions are given to us by man? There is no such man. If it is not all God’s Word, then we are forever in the position of never knowing.

The word “ultra” is nearly always inserted in front of the word conservative and is to be understood in a derogatory fashion. It is always “ultra-conservative” as though one who is an “ultra-conservative” should be avoided as one with the plague. Isn’t it strange that you never read of the “ultra-moderate” or the “ultra-liberal” but only the “ultra-conservative”?

We need to eliminate all of these so-called classifications and get back to the only two classifications

that there are. You are either a believer or an unbeliever. There is no middle ground. Both the liberals and the moderates are unbelievers, both of whom deny the verbal inspiration of the Word of God or the inerrancy of the Scripture. The conservative, (nearly always called ultra-conservative), is one who believes in the inerrancy of Scripture. This is the historic position of Baptists.

Liberals and moderates are not true Baptists but are false apostles parading under the name Baptist, and

no true Baptist can have any fellowship with them since they are unbelievers and therefore we should never be associated with them in any way according to the Apostle Paul who tells us:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:14-17). This admonition of Paul not only applies to

(See **ULTRA** on page 6)

There Always Will be God

“They cannot shell His temple,
Nor dynamite His throne;
They cannot bomb His city,
Nor rob Him of His own.

“They cannot take Him captive,
Nor strike Him deaf and blind,
Nor starve Him to surrender,
Nor make Him change His mind.

“They cannot cause Him panic,
Nor cut off His supplies;
They cannot take His kingdom,
Nor hurt Him with their lies.

“Though all the world be shattered,
His truth remains the same,
His righteous laws still potent,
And ‘Father’ still His name.

“Though we face war and struggle
And feel their goad and rod,
We know above confusion
There always will be God.”

The Security of the Believer

By C. D. Cole

In this article there are three expressions which we shall use interchangeably: "The security of the Saints, The Preservation of the Saints, and the Perseverance of the Saints." While these are not identical statements, they do affirm the same thing of saved people, namely, their eternal safety. The preserving power of God accounts for the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness: "For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever" (Psa. 37:28).

There are two doctrines which are mutually exclusive, antagonistic, and destructive. There is no compromise between them. They neither give nor ask quarter. One is true, the other is false! One is the doctrine popularly called apostasy which means that a saved person, a saint, one born of God, made a partaker of the divine nature, justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may through sin forfeit his saintship, become a child of the devil, and be finally and forever lost. The other is known as the perseverance of the saints, which means that one born of God, made a saint by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, justified

by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may do that which is wrong, grieve the Holy Spirit, lose the joy of salvation, and bring upon himself the corrective chastisement of the Lord; nevertheless, shall persevere in faith and shall not be lost in the end.

Apostasy is based upon salvation by works in the whole or in part; security is based upon salvation by the grace of God. The one makes salvation a human project; the other makes salvation a divine undertaking. If salvation is of man, failure is not only possible, but certain; if salvation is of the Lord, it must be a success.

One of these doctrines is established by Scripture, the other is denied by Scripture. So all arguments pro and con must be based upon Scripture. Unaided human reason and human experience and observation have no place in the discussion. "What saith the scripture" (Rom. 4:1ff), must be our guiding star!

What The Doctrine Is

The doctrine we subscribe to is rarely, if ever, correctly stated by those who reject and oppose it. It is dressed up in a false and ugly garb, then ridiculed

and held to scorn. The opponents build up a man of straw and then proceed to tear it to pieces. They never deal with the doctrine as it is believed and preached by its friends!

1. It is no part of the doctrine that all church members are secure and certain to go to heaven. All church members ought to be saints, but alas, many of them are not. To those who have no other ground for thinking they are saved than church membership, this doctrine offers no hope or grounds of rejoicing. Security is predicated of saints, born again people, who are justified by faith in Christ. These are preserved by God and persevere in their attachment to Christ as Lord and Savior. Persevering faith in Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes saints from superficial professors.

"We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). One who has been made a partaker of Christ by faith will persevere in faith until the end of his days.

"Then said Jesus unto those Jews which believed on him; if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (Jn. 8:31). There is a faith that is temporal, where the root of the matter is not in the professor, where there has really been no experience of grace. This is the faith of the stony ground hearer.

But real disciples have a divinely given faith and continue in the Word of Christ.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 Jn. 2:19). These were superficial professors, not real professors of the grace of God, and the departure from the fellowship of the saints made manifest that true character. John plainly says that if they had been real saints they would have continued in the fellowship of the saints. This verse unmistakably supports our doctrine. Judas furnishes an apt illustration of the apostasy of false professors. Judas was never a real believer, although associated with real believers. "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him" (Jn. 6:64).

2. It is no part of the doctrine that all who are active in religious work shall be saved forever. Many religious workers are not saved now. They are not saints. They have not been born again. They have not partaken of the divine nature. The Savior says: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast

(See COLE on page 6)



“Pagans May Be Saved”

By Dave Hunt

Pastor of 30,000 to Larry King Live viewers: “I don’t know.” On his live television show June 20, Larry King introduced Joel Osteen as “evangelism’s hottest rising star, pastor of the biggest congregation in the United States.” Osteen heads up Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, where he reports attendance of more than 30,000 per weekend. Mr. Osteen is the author of the number one New York Times bestseller, *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential*, which includes chapters titled “Enlarge Your Vision,” “Develop a Healthy Self-Image,” and “Discover the Power of Your Thoughts and Words.” Excerpted below, a full transcript is available at: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/050620/lk1.01.html>. [Initials TBC stand for “The Berean Call” publication.]

KING: Have you always believed?

OSTEEN: I have always believed. I grew up, you know, my parents were a good Christian people.

They showed us love in the home. My parents were the same in the pulpit as they were at home. I think that’s where a lot of preacher’s kids get off base sometimes. Because they don’t see the same things at both places. But I’ve always believed. I saw it through my parents. And I just grew up believing.

[TBC: Believing what?]

KING: But you’re not fire and brimstone, right? You’re not pound the decks and hell and damnation?

OSTEEN: No. That’s not me. It’s never been me. I’ve always been an encourager at heart. And when I took over from my father he came from the Southern Baptist background and back 40, 50 years ago there was a lot more of that. But, you know, I just I don’t believe in that. I don’t believe — maybe it was for a time. But I don’t have it in my heart to condemn people. I’m there to encourage them. I see myself more as a coach, as a motivator to help them experience the life God has for us.

KING: But don’t you think if people don’t believe

as you believe, they’re somehow condemned?

OSTEEN: You know, I think that happens in our society. But I try not to do that. I tell people all the time, preached a couple Sundays about it. I’m for everybody. You may not agree with me, but to me it’s not my job to try to straighten everybody out. The Gospel is called the good news. My message is a message of hope, that’s God’s [message] for you. You can live a good life no matter what’s happened to you. And so I don’t know. I know there is condemnation but I don’t find that’s my place.

KING: You’ve been criticized for that, haven’t you?

OSTEEN: I have. I have. Because I don’t know.

KING: Good news guy, right?

OSTEEN: Yeah. But you know what? It’s just in me.

KING: So it’s self-fulfilling. Billy Graham was here last Thursday.

OSTEEN: I saw.

KING: Might have been his last interview. Is he a hero to the evangelists?

OSTEEN: He is a hero to us all. His life of integrity. Somebody that can stick with it for that long and just stick with his message. What I love about Dr. Graham is he stayed on course. He didn’t get sidetracked. That’s what happens to so many people

today. It’s a good lesson for me, a good example for me to say, you know what, Joel, you may have a lot now but I want to be here 40 years from now sitting with you.

KING: Do you share Billy’s beliefs of life after death in a sense of going somewhere?

OSTEEN: I do. I do. We probably agree on 99 percent. I do. I believe there’s a heaven you know. Afterwards, there’s you know, a place called hell. And I believe it’s when we have a relationship with God and his son Jesus and that’s what the Bible teaches us. I believe it.

[TBC: So that’s the gospel?]

KING: Is it hard to lead a Christian life?

OSTEEN: I don’t think it’s that hard. To me it’s fun. We have joy and happiness. Our family, I don’t feel like that at all. I’m not trying to follow a set of rules and stuff. I’m just living my life.

KING: But you have rules, don’t you?

OSTEEN: We have rules. But the main rule to me is to honor God with your life. To live a life of integrity. Not be selfish. You know, help others. But that’s really the essence of the Christian faith.

KING: That we live in deeds?

OSTEEN: I don’t know. What do you mean by that?

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OSTEEN . . .

(Continued from page 5)

KING: Because we've had ministers on who said, your record don't count. You either believe in Christ or you don't. If you believe in Christ, you are, you are going to heaven. And if you don't no matter what you've done in your life, you ain't.

OSTEEN: Yeah. I don't know. There's probably a balance between. I believe you have to know Christ. But I think that if you know Christ, if you're a believer in God, you're going to have some good works. I think it's a cop-out to say I'm a Christian but I don't ever do anything ...

KING: What if you're Jewish or Muslim, you don't accept Christ at all?

OSTEEN: You know, I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to heaven. I don't know. ...

KING: If you believe you have to believe in Christ? They're wrong, aren't they?

OSTEEN: well, I don't know if I believe they're wrong. I believe here's what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. But I just think that only God will judge a person's heart. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. I don't know all about their religion. But I know they love God. And I don't know. I've seen their sincerity. So I

don't know. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.

[TBC: Hindus love Jehovah God (Yahweh), and worship Him as Scripture commands? All sincere souls go to heaven? What about Christ's claim that "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6?) One thing is clear from Mr. Osteen's interview. He revealed more about what he doesn't know than about what he claims to know. Mr. Osteen joins a growing company of celebrity "evangelicals" who have appeared on Larry King Live and have failed "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..." (1 Peter 3:15). As evidenced by this transcript, Osteen seems a great deal less certain about the Gospel than the following New Testament saints:

Paul declared, "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded ..." (2 Timothy 1:12); he prayed, "that ye may know what is the hope of [Christ's] calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18); and wrote, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world my become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19); "that

I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings ..." (Philippians 3:10; "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6); John declared, "These things have I written unto you ... that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:13, 19-20).

And of course, the Old Testament also repeatedly states, "that ye may know..." God certainly has conveyed the impression that He wants us to be certain! — July *Berean Call*, copied from *Christian News*, July 18, 2005. ■ ■

ULTRA . . .

(Continued from page 3)

preachers in the Southern Baptist Convention, but this applies to anyone who may either have membership in a Southern Baptist Convention church or who is in attendance of a Southern Baptist Convention church. God's Word says, "Get out." "Touch not the unclean thing." ■

COLE . . .

(Continued from page 4)

out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity" (Mt. 7:22-23). The Flagellants were a religious sect of Italy in the 13th Century. they were active as long as they could parade in the streets and publicly scourge themselves. But when their public processions were prohibited, the sect died out. They could not survive in obscurity. In the time of Christ there were many who did things to be seen of men for human praise. And there is reason to believe that the race of those who love the sound of human praise has not perished from the earth. All saints should show their faith by their works, but their works should be works of love to Christ, and not works of love for human acclaim. May this truth probe the hearts of both writer and reader!

3. It is no part of the doctrine that saints may not fall! Saints have fallen and been sorely bruised by the fall. But every fall does not mean a broken neck either physically or spiritually. Many have fallen into sin, and who among us dares to deny that he has ever fallen into sin? Where is the sinless person? The sinner was not saved by

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Preach the Word

By Claude King, Sr.

2 Timothy 3:13 — 4:1-11

The Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to write two letters of instructions to Timothy, his son in the ministry, as to how he was to conduct himself in the “house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15). These instructions are found in the epistles bearing Timothy’s name. Of course, we realize these epistles were written primarily for the purpose of instructing ministers or pastors of New Testament churches. However, we must never diminish the value of their message to all Christians. But, pastors, as teachers of the Word, must be well-grounded in it that they in turn may be able to rightly instruct those whom the Holy Spirit has placed them over as under-shepherds or “overseers” (Acts 20:28).

Timothy was instructed to “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Surely the preacher of today cannot hope to be less studious in the Word of God than Timothy was admonished to be, and at the same time hope to have the Lord’s approval of his ministry! God-called ministers are to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor.

4:1-2), and it is the responsibility of New Testament churches to see that they are — for they are said to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). With these few thoughts in mind let us think together of some reasons that make it imperative that the Word of God be preached.

I. Because It Is Inspired.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16a). The meaning of the phrase “given by inspiration” is “God-breathed.” The thought is the same as we find in Genesis 2:7: “The Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” God breathed into Adam’s nostrils and he became a living soul. The Bible is “God-breathed.” It is neither the thoughts of mere men, nor words of their choosing. God, in infinite wisdom and grace, chose a number of different men to write His word, and they wrote as they were moved and influenced by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). Therefore the Bible is not the book of men, but the

Book of God.

Many passages of the Scriptures tell us that the very words of the Bible were chosen by God Himself. “For David himself said by the Holy Ghost. ...” (Mk. 12:36. See also Acts 1:16; Ex. 4:15; 28; 30:17-14; 20:1; 32:16; 2 Sam. 23:20, and there are many more.) The Word is “living and active” and a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). It is eternal (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:22-25). It is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Yes, the Bible is indeed, the most important book that will ever come into our lives. We can never over-emphasize the momentousness of God’s inspired Word.

II. Because From the Word of God We Learn the True Condition of Man.

The Bible is the only source of information that man can rely upon to reveal to him his true condition and standing before a Just and Holy God. It is from God’s Word that we learn the depraved condition of the natural man — he is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 3:19-23; Isa. 53:6). The horrible disease of sin has corrupted the whole human race — without exception every natural man is concluded to be a condemned sinner in

God’s sight (Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:22; Jn. 3:18). In this corrupted, depraved condition man is capable of committing every sin in the “catalogue of sins.” Man is corrupt on the inside (Mk. 7:15-23). The issues of life come from the heart (Prov. 4:23). The natural man is lost or separated from God regardless of how good his conduct may be, and he will be eternally separated from Him if he persists in this state (Ezk. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15).

III. Because the Word Of God Tells Us How To Be Saved.

The Bible is the only source of information that the sinner can rely upon to tell him how to be saved (2 Tim. 3:15; Jn. 20:30-31). From this source we learn of God’s mercy, love, and grace in providing His Son to die the death that we as sinners deserved to die (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8-11; Tit. 3:4-6). Christ became all that lost, deluded, doomed, depraved sinners are, that those who trust Him as their personal Savior might be “made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

The Word is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). He uses the Word, in the hands of a witness, to convict the sinner and reveal Christ unto him. God chose this means of saving lost sinners

(See KING on page 14)



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Deletes “Jesus Christ” from Its Constitution. — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), an alliance of 1,800 congregations that oppose conservative leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention, removed mention of Jesus Christ from its constitution at an annual meeting, Baptist media reported. Previously, the fellowship’s stated purpose was to bring Baptists together “in order that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be spread throughout the world in glad obedience to the Great Commission.” The new language says the purpose is “to serve Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.” The 2,300 voters defeated two bids from the floor to refer the change to a committee. The fellowship approved the Rev. Joy Yee, pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in San Francisco, Calif., as its new moderator. She is the first female senior pastor to serve in that post. Retired Atlanta-area pastor Emmanuel McCall was approved as moderator-elect, the first African-

World News Roundup

American to be chosen for the position. — AP

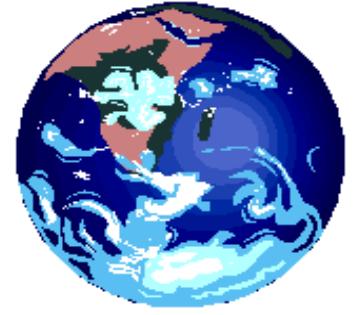
Controversial Lincoln Memorial Video Still in Limbo -- After two and a half years of discussion and almost \$20,000 devoted to revising a video shown to tourists at the Lincoln Memorial, the National Park Service has yet to satisfy either conservative or liberal critics. The eight-minute video currently being shown to tourists in a continuous loop implies that President Abraham Lincoln would have supported modern-day, leftist political causes such as homosexual and abortion rights, as well as the Equal Rights Amendment.

Arkansas “Christian” Governor. — An article by David Broder appearing Monday, July 25, 2005 in the Arkansas Democrat/Gazette says the following concerning Gov. Mike Huckabee. “Now 49, he is part of a bewildering variety of networks. A preacher for 12 years, he headed the Arkansas Baptist State Convention before being elected lieutenant governor and succeeding the scandal-tainted Jim Guy Tucker as governor in 1996. But at 1

a.m. last Sunday, he could be found wearing a Hawaiian shirt, playing bass guitar and leading his rock band of fellow Arkansans, called Capitol Offense, at the NGA staff party in Raccoon River Brewing Co., a downtown beer hall.”

FDA Issues Health Warning After Reports of Abortion Pill Deaths. — The maker of an abortion pill has reported the deaths of five American women after taking the drug. This is the same pill that the U.N.’s key health agency recently added to its list of “essential medicines.” The news prompted the Food and Drug Administration to issue a public health advisory and pro-lifers to renew their calls for authorities to outlaw mifepristone, the drug marketed in America as Mifeprex, and also known as RU-486.

Planned Parenthood’s Records On Trial. — Judge Kenneth Johnson ruled yesterday that Planned Parenthood of Indiana must comply with the state’s request for the medical records of 84 patients under the age of 14. “Under Indiana law,



anyone under 14 who is sexually active is considered a victim of sexual abuse, and health providers are required to report such cases to the state authorities.” — CT

Education Via Sin Tax? — Nearly 80% of Pennsylvania school districts have rejected a plan to use gambling revenues to fund education. — BP

Prisoner of Conscience. — Bad news. Niels-Aage Bjerre, the Danish pizzeria proprietor who first drew international attention in February 2003 for his refusal to serve French and German tourists — on account of how they’re all “disloyal” and “anti-American” — is headed for the slammer. Again. Bjerre’s initial “no dogs, no French, no Germans” policy earned him a heap of trouble: His shop was vandalized; lost business cost him thousands; and he was pro-

(See WNR on page 11)

La Voz Del Desierto

Los Grados de Castigo en el Infierno

Por M. A. Curet



Hay sectas religiosas que no creen en el castigo eterno, ni creen que exista un infierno ardiente para los perdidos. Pero la Santa Palabra habla bien claro al respecto (Mateo 25:46; Lucas 12:4-5). Algunos dicen que cuando una persona muere el alma deja de existir y la memoria queda en el olvido, y que por lo tanto el alma no va a ningún sitio. Otros dicen que el infierno no existe, otros que el infierno es aquí en la tierra, refiriéndose a la vida que estamos viviendo. Otros dicen que Dios no va a castigar a nadie, porque Dios es un Dios de amor y misericordia, y que en el día del juicio cuando ellos lleguen delante de Él, les tendrá pena y no los castigará. Estamos consciente de que Dios es un Dios de infinito amor, lo cual demostró sacrificando a su único Hijo Jesucristo para que nosotros pudiéramos obtener la vida eterna (Juan 3:16; Romanos 5:8). Pero también es importante saber que Dios es fuego consumidor y que no puede ser

burlado (Gálatas 6:7; Hebreos 10:26-31; 12:29).

Pese a todos los argumentos que las personas utilicen para evadir el infierno ardiente y el castigo eterno, la Biblia demuestra todo lo contrario, que existe un infierno ardiente, y que habrá grados de castigo para los perdidos. Si la persona antes de morir, aceptó a Jesucristo como unico Salvador personal, va al cielo; pero si muere en sus pecados, sin haberse reconciliado con Dios, se condena y va al infierno. En ambos casos, la persona va al cielo o al infierno con su memoria clara, recordando todas las cosas (Lucas 16:22-31; Apocalipsis 6:9-11).

Debemos saber que no todos los que murieron en sus pecados y se condenaron, recibirán el mismo grado de castigo. ¡Hasta en esto se manifiesta la justicia de Dios! La Biblia dice que cada uno recibirá el castigo según sus obras (Apocalipsis 20:11-13). Como vimos, los perdidos será juzgados según lo que

hicieron mientras estuvieron aquí en la tierra, según sus pecados; habrá distintos grados de tormento (Mateo 10:11-15). Como un ejemplo de los grados de castigo, el Señor dice que será más tolerable el castigo para Tiro y Sidón que para Corazin y Betsaida (Mateo 11:20-24). Capernaum será castigada grandemente porque recibió mucho, allí vivió el Señor durante todo el tiempo de su ministerio público en Galilea. El que conoce mucho y no cumple será castigado más; porque el que se le ha dado mucho, se le exigirá mucho.

En la Biblia se habla mucho de los escribas y de los fariseos, ellos conocían mucho de la Palabra de Dios, pero actuaban contrario a ella. Se dice de ellos que recibirán mayor castigo (Mateo 23:13-15, 28, 33). Por todos estos pasajes que hemos visto en la Biblia, podemos concluir, que hay grados de tormento en el infierno, y que los grados de castigo serán distintos de una persona condenada a otra. En lo que no habrá diferencia será en

el tiempo de duración del castigo, porque será eterno. De allí no hay quien salga dice nuestro Señor (Mateo 25:44-46; Apocalipsis 20:7-10). El castigo será eterno y no podrá salir de allí, pero sí habrá diferencias notables en el castigo entre las personas que conocieron de las cosas del Señor, y las que no conocieron. Aquél a quien se le dio mucho, mucho se le demandará; y al que mucho se le confió, más se le pedirá (Lucas 12:47-48).

Esta es la triste realidad de aquellos que rechazan la gracia de Dios, que ha sido manifestada por medio de Jesucristo. El que rechaza la oportunidad de salvación, dada por Dios a través de Jesucristo, se condena eternamente (Juan 3:17-19). Pero es importante que sepamos que Dios *no* quiere la muerte del impio, sino que se vuelva de su camino, y viva. El deseo de Dios *no* es que los hombres se condenen, sino que sean salvos y vengan al cono-

(Vea CURET en la pág. 10)

Noticias Alrededor Del Mundo

Legislador Confuso Ofrece \$5,000 Por Prueba Bíblica Que el Matrimonio Deba Ser Solamente Entre Un Hombre Y Una Mujer.

— El Representante del Estado de Alabama, Alvin Holmes, un Demócrata, ofreció otorgar un premio de \$5,000 a cualquier persona que pudiera comprobar, usando la Biblia, que el matrimonio debe ser entre un hombre y una mujer. Pero cuando las llamadas inundaron al cuadro telefónico de la Cámara de Representantes dando tal prueba (que comienza en el segundo capítulo de la Biblia), el representante reclamó que las pruebas expuestas eran simplemente un asunto de interpretación y rechazó recibir la evidencia. Por ejemplo, con relación a Primera de Corintios capítulo 7 versículo 2, dice: “cada uno tenga su propia mujer, y cada una tenga su propio marido.” Holmes

contestó, “OK, pero lo que esto dice es que ... si dos personas consiguen casarse y son del mismo sexo, entonces una se convierte en esposa y la otra persona en marido.” ¡El método de interpretación bíblica de Alvin Holmes, honestamente pone a cualquiera de cabeza!

Otra Broma Sobre La Teoría de La Evolución Destapada.

— Reiner Protsch, un científico alemán influyente, supuesto experto en el Carbono-14 (Carbón radiactivo para fechar objetos), ha sido expuesto como falsificador y plagiador en fechar “el hombre Neanderthals del norte de Europa. Durante un cotejo rutinario de los trabajos de Protsch el año pasado, se encontró que un esqueleto que había fechado en tener unos 27,400 años era realmente el de un hombre que murió

hace solamente unos 250 años. Otro esqueleto, que Perotsch había fechado en 21,300 años, tiene unos 3,300 años “Antropólogo Renuncia Ante Desastre de Fechas.” Chris Tringer del Museo de Historia Natural de Londres dijo: “Lo que se consideraba como una pieza clave de evidencia, demostrando que el Neanderthal vivió una vez en el Norte de Europa, se ha ido por el borde. Hemos tenido que reescribir la prehistoria.” Rudolf Steinberg, presidente de la Universidad de Frankfurt se disculpó por la falla de parte de la universidad en detener la interpretación errónea de Protsch por décadas, admitiendo, “muchas gente miró hacia el otro lado en este asunto.” La “ciencia no engaña al creyente de la Biblia en supuestos datos científicos falsos (1ra Timoteo 6:20).

Biblia Engañosa Promocionada.

— Zondervan está anunciando la Nueva Versión Internacional Hoy en Día (TNIV) como “Verdad sin tiempo; Lenguaje de hoy.” En incontables lugares la TNIV cambia de “él” a “ellos” y “hermanos” a “hermanos y

hermanas,” y de “padre” a “padres” etc. Este puede ser el lenguaje de hoy en día, pero no es la verdad y no es una traducción exacta. Ningún hombre tiene la autoridad para cambiar las palabras de las Escrituras, porque Dios ha expresado sus pensamientos en palabras específicas y el cambiar las palabras es cambiar el significado. Por ejemplo, en Apocalipsis 3:20 el Señor Jesús dice, “... Yo estoy a la puerta y llamo; si alguno oye mi voz y abre la puerta, entraré a él, y cenaré con él, y él conmigo.” Es una invitación encantadora a los individuos. Pero el TNIV cambia esto a, “Aquí estoy, me paro a la puerta y tocaré, Si cualquiera oye mi voz y abre la puerta, entraré y comeré con ellos y ellos conmigo.” ¿Quién dio a traductores de TNIV el derecho a cambiar los pronombres? ¿Qué audacia! ¿Nunca han leído Apocalipsis 22:18-19? □

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cimiento de la verdad (Ezequiel 33:11; 1ra Timoteo 2:3-6).

Por tanto: “Si oyereis hoy su voz, no endurezcáis vuestros corazones” (Hebreos 4:7). □

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secuted and jailed for violating Denmark's anti-discrimination laws. But he remains proud — and undeterred. Last July, having hired on as a counter man at the Napoli Pizzeria in Klaksvik, Denmark, Bjerre was fired for waving off a group of German tourists. And that same incident was apparently at issue last Tuesday when yet another Danish court sentenced Bjerre to yet another eight-day term in the lock-up. He might have paid a \$900 fine instead. But he refused -- on principle. "I'm doing it to show my sympathy with the United States," he told the Associated Press. "Eight days is a small price to pay when American soldiers go to Iraq and risk their limbs and lives." Bjerre plans to hang an American flag and a photograph of President and Mrs. Bush in his cell. "I think that will brighten up the room."

* * *

IRS Investigating Organization of Faith Healer Benny Hinn.

— A yearlong inquiry by the Internal Revenue Service has focused on the ministry of flamboyant faith healer Benny Hinn and questions about his organization's operations and finances, according to a newspaper report. The issues at the center of the IRS review

underlie the tax-exempt status of Hinn's organization as a church. The Dallas Morning News reported Wednesday (July 6). The IRS declined to discuss the case, and the newspaper report said it's unclear whether the agency's concerns about the ministry, which is estimated to raise *more than \$100 million annually*, are close to being resolved or will open an audit. —RNS

* * *

Billy Graham's Eldest Daughter Charged In Alleged Domestic Violence.

— The oldest daughter of Billy Graham has been charged with battery after an alleged July 1 incident of domestic violence in Florida. Virginia "Gigi" Graham Foreman, 59, was charged after a dispute with her husband on a New Smyrna Beach, Fla., roadway, according to a report published on the Web site of "The Smoking Gun," which finds and posts public documents about celebrities. In the affidavit provided by the site, the arresting officer said Foreman "intentionally struck" Chad Foreman. The battery charge is a misdemeanor. — RNS

* * *

Seventh-day Adventists Elect First Woman Vice President. — For the first time, Seventh-day

Adventists have elected a woman as one of the top 10 leaders of their worldwide church. Ella Simmons, a well-known educator among Seventh-day Adventists, was elected Sunday (July 3) as one of the nine vice presidents who will work with re-elected President Jan Paulsen to lead the international church, whose headquarters are in Silver Spring, Md. ... Simmons, who is African-American, most recently served as provost and vice president for academic administration at La Sierra University in Riverside, Calif., and previously as vice president for academic affairs at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala. Both institutions are affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. — RNS

* * *

List of Persecutors.

— Open Doors USA released its annual list of the top 50 countries where Christians are most persecuted. The communist nation of North Korea remained at the top of the "World Watch List." The list ranks countries according to the intensity of persecution Christians face for actively pursuing their faith. Saudi Arabia retained the second spot on the list, followed by Laos, the Central Highlands of Vietnam and Iran.

* * *

City Harasses Church.

— The city of Sacramento has decreed that no more than 120 members will be allowed to attend Sunday services at the independent Baptist Church. This decision comes despite the fact that the fire department has set the church's maximum occupancy at over 500 persons. The city's decision was apparently based upon the size of the church's parking lot, even though the church sought and was denied permission to build a larger lot on its property. The church then offered to use a shuttle system and shuttle people in, but the city once again said no. The church, which is made up of Russian immigrants who fled Communist Russia years ago, sought legal assistance from the Pacific Justice Institute, which filed a federal lawsuit challenging the city of Sacramento's decision. In an attempt to meet the city's requirements, the church has been forced to split the congregation into separate groups which meet in two locations with different pastors. "Is America no longer the land of religious freedom these immigrants thought they were coming to?" said Brad Dacus, PJI president. — Pastor's Weekly Briefing.

* * *

Teacher Sues School

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District. — A fifth-grade Cupertino, Calif. public school teacher, Stephen Williams, is suing his principal and school district because they banned him from using handouts containing excerpts from historical documents (such as the Declaration of Independence and George Washington's Prayer Journal, as well as writings by John Adams, William Penn, and others) because of their references to God and Christianity. Williams explained that the controversy began in the classroom when he responded to a question from a student as to why the words "under God" were included in the Pledge of Allegiance. According to Williams, the topic was only discussed for three or four minutes, but later in the day, the school received a complaint from a parent. As a result, the principal started requesting his lesson plans and handouts in advance. "It's like being asked to teach architecture without being allowed to talk about cathedrals," said Williams' attorney Terry Thompson of the Alliance Defense Fund. "It's hard to teach American history when you expunge Christianity. After all, this country was not founded by the Boston Agnostics Club," he said. — Pastor's Weekly Briefing.

Abortion Used as Birth Control. — Teenage abortions are now less than one-fifth (19%) of the total number, according to a recent study of the Beverly LaHaye Institute. Women over age 20 get 80% of all abortions, with nearly half (48%) by women age 25 and older, increasingly as a method of birth control. Repeat abortions have also increased steadily over the years, now representing more than 45% of those performed. —FOF

Victory For Pornography. — The porn industry won a major victory in a federal court in Pittsburgh when a judge ruled that no restrictions should be placed on the distribution of pornography. Since it is legal to possess the porn, its distribution channels are also beyond the government's reach, ruled the judge. The pornography in question was the worst of the worst — depicting rape and extremely sexual violence. Pro-family groups are calling the decision "stunning." — FOF

California Still For Gays. — California's highest court ruled Monday that country clubs must offer gay members who register as domestic partners the same discounts

given to married ones — a decision that could apply to other businesses such as insurance companies and mortgage lenders.

Law Requiring Recited Pledge Stands. — An appeals court on Wednesday upheld a Virginia law that requires public schools to lead a daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The court rejected a claim that the pledge's reference to God was an unconstitutional promotion of religion. A suit filed by Edward Myers of Sterling, Va, a father of three, objected to the phrase "one nation under God." A three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that the pledge is a patriotic exercise, not an affirmation of religion like a prayer.

Q: Why do some people think the Apostle Paul, who is considered the greatest missionary of all time, was unsuccessful at evangelism?
A: In Acts 17, Paul preached the message of the Cross to the Greeks in Athens. At first, they all mocked him. They had no understanding in their culture of the Creator God ... or of sin. They also believed in evolutionary ideas. Paul had to teach them about the true history

of the world and the origin of sin *before* they understood the gospel. As a result of Paul explaining the gospel from the beginning, some Greeks *were* eventually converted. Because only a few of them trusted the Lord, some people think that Paul was not very successful. After all, in Acts 2, Peter saw *thousands* come to the Lord after he preached. But Paul was *very* successful. He was dealing with a totally different culture — one that had absolutely no foundation for the Christian message. He was teaching outright pagans. Peter, on the other hand, was teaching people who *already believed* in the true God. This should be a lesson for us. Because our own society today is more like the Greeks, don't expect massive conversions as in generations past.

Workers Murdered. — Two men employed with Christian Life Bangladesh, a partner agency of Campus Crusade for Christ, were killed July 29 in Faridpur, Bangladesh. Lipial Marandi, 21, and Tapan Kumar Roy, 27, had spent the last eight months providing health awareness programs to locals and showing the "Jesus" film. The men had received threats that they would be killed if they continued their

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work. Local police say the men were sleeping when intruders entered their rented house at 2 a.m. and stabbed them to death, according to a report from Campus Crusade. Police have arrested two men in connection with the killings. This is the second murder of Christian Life Bangladesh workers. In April 2003, Heidoy Roy was killed in a similar incident. The perpetrators of Hridoy's murder were never convicted.

* * *

64% Favor Teaching Both Creationism, Evolution.

— The idea is liked not only by conservatives, but also by liberals, secular Americans. In a finding that is likely to intensify the debate over what to teach students about the origins of life, a poll released Tuesday found that nearly two-thirds of Americans say that creationism should be taught alongside evolution in public schools. The poll found that 42 percent of respondents hold strict creationist views, agreeing that “living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time.” In contrast, 48 percent said they believed that humans had evolved over time; but of those, 18 percent said that evolution was “guided by a supreme being,” and 26 percent said

that evolution occurred through natural selection. In all, 64 percent said they were open to the idea of teaching creationism in addition to evolution, while 38 percent favored replacing evolution with creationism. The poll was conducted July 7 to 17 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. The questions about evolution were asked of 2,000 people, and the margin of error is 2.5 percentage points.

COLE . . .

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becoming sinless, and he is not kept saved by living a sinless life. The sinner was saved by trusting Christ as Savior, and he is kept saved by the same power of God through faith. He continues as he began; a poor, helpless sinner trusting a mighty Savior. The born-again person can never be lost, because he will never renounce his faith in Christ and go about looking for another Savior or give up in despair. Harken to the Scriptures: “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me” (Mic. 7:8). “A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again” (Prov. 24:16). “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand” (Psa. 37:23-24).

Proof That The Doctrine Is True

Arguments from Scripture are so abundant that one hardly knows where and how to begin in arranging them. A saint is one who has been elected by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son, and regenerated by God the Holy Spirit.

1. The saint is secure because all the attributes of God are for him. The *will* of God is for him. “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (Jn. 6:39). The *power* of God is for him: Christ said, “My Father is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (Jn. 10:29). “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:5). The *love* of God is for the saint. There is nothing able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38-39). God’s *mercy* is for the saint. God is rich in mercy: “But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us” (Eph. 2:4). It was mercy that made us alive when we were dead, and

mercy will not destroy that which she saves. The holiness of God is for the saint: “Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me” (Psa. 89:35-36). God’s word and His oath are given to one who has fled to Christ for refuge that he may have strong consolation.

God’s *justice* is for the saint. Justice put Christ to death for the believer’s sins, and justice will not punish two persons for the same offense. If one died as a substitute for all, then it follows all died. The sin Christ died to was our sin imputed to Him, therefore, His death to sin was our death to sin, and this led Paul to say: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11).

2. The saint is secure because he is not under the moral law as the way of life. One under law would have to keep the law perfectly or be condemned. If he only broke the law one time in one point, he would be a law-breaker, and condemned. The only possible way of escaping condemnation and judgment is to get out from under the law. And the only way to get out from under the law is to trust Christ, who is the end of the law

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and I have no right to question or alter it; therefore I am honor bound to preach the Word!

IV. Because the Spiritual Growth of the Redeemed Comes From the Word.

Peter, writing God's inspired Word, admonished those to whom he wrote, "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). Our physical growth and strength comes from the food we eat — God designed it that way. In like manner, He designed our spiritual growth by His Word. Our eternal life is dependent on Christ, of course, but God designed that we, as His children, have a God-like character.

We, who are saved, are new creatures in Christ — we are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10). God never intended that we should remain spiritual babes (Heb. 5:11-14). He gave the gift of preaching and teaching to different individuals that His children might grow in grace and spiritual understanding, and not be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:11-16). Therefore realizing this great and important truth I am compelled to preach the Word as a God-called

minister.

V. Because We Are To Be Sanctified by the Word.

The Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, prayed for our sanctification through the Word (Jn. 17:17-20). The primary meaning of the word "sanctify" is "set apart for a holy purpose." We are "set apart" by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit as an eternal act of God; this is never done but once! But sanctification of the Word is progressive and comes as we study the Word and the Holy Spirit applies it to our hearts, and enables us to live it out through out characters. The Word tells us what God wants us to do, and how He wants us to act — that we may be in accord with His will — and that by so doing and acting we may reveal to the world, and also to other Christians that we are His (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Sanctification of the believer by the Word is manifest in Christ-like conduct in his every day life.

Our obedience to the Word of God should be done from the standpoint of love — we should be obedient because we want to be in His will. This is not in order to keep us saved — our salvation is an eternal act of God wholly dependent on the finished work of Christ — but it is in order to keep us godly! The Bible is an

infallible Book and can therefore be safely used by every child of God as his guide of faith and practice. No creed or confession of faith should be followed that conflicts in any way with the divine Word. The mere traditions of men should not be tolerated in our lives — we should be "sanctified by the word of truth." The carnal thoughts, traditions, and opinions of men will pass away as the grass, "but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:25).

VI. Because of God's Solemn Warning To the Lost.

Because of certain judgment; God has warned, yea, He has "commanded all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30-31), and assured them that they will perish if they fail to do so (Lk. 13:1-5). This is a solemn warning! Dear reader, have you repented as a sinner before God, placed yourself at His mercy and grace, and trusted Jesus Christ His Son as your Savior? If you have not you are lost at this very moment (Jn. 3:18, 36), and you will be eternally lost if you persist in this condition.

But if you will repent and believe the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4) you will be eternally saved the moment you do so (Acts 20:20-21; 16:30-31; Jn. 5:24; 10:27-29). Wonderful promises of God, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall

never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." We trust that God will use these few words to lead you to repentance toward Him, and faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior if He hasn't already done so. □

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for every believer (Rom. 10:4). One cannot get out from under the law by obeying it. Obedience, if possible, would prevent condemnation, but it would not remove from under the law. And, of course, one cannot get out from under the law by breaking it; he only gets in the toils of it and is punished by it. Nor can one get out from under the law by mourning. Mourning does not satisfy law. Neither can the law be set aside; it must be satisfied. The only way to get out from under the moral law of God is through faith in Christ, who met its penalty and satisfied its claims against the sinner by His death on the cross.

3. The saint is eternally safe from the danger of Hell because he is dead to sin. This is death in the judicial sense and is on the ground of the substitutionary death of Christ. The believer is not yet dead to sin subjectively, but only objectively. He is not yet dead to sin as an

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Eight Kinds of Baptists

I. Bat Baptists. The bat draws in his wings and becomes an animal when with animals, then when it is with birds or other bats it spreads its wings and flies and is a bird. We have Baptists that can associate with the worldly crowd or the church-going crowd with equal ease — which ever crowd they happen to be with. God said, “Beware of a man when all men speak well of him.”

II. Buzzard Baptists. The buzzard never comes down, only when there is a

death of some animal. There are Baptists who never go to church except for funerals.

III. Crayfish Baptists. When you touch a crayfish he starts going backward. There’s a lot of Baptists that will go to church as long as they can just sit and “take” or absorb all the good things, but when it comes time to work or when trouble comes, then they start backing up or cray-fishing.

IV. Bear Baptists. All summer all Mr. bear does is eat. He stuffs himself until he is slick and fat and then at the first sign of winter he dens up somewhere and is not seen until spring. Some Baptists, after enjoying all the good summer revivals, den up at the first sign of frost and are not seen again until spring. Or maybe they do come out for Christmas and

Easter.

V. Skunk Baptists. The skunk only stirs up a stink. Enough said!

VI. Frog Baptists. A frog spends his time croaking. There are Baptists that could be a blessing to others — could win souls — but all they ever do is croak.

VII. Peckerwood Baptists. Always knocking someone or something.

VIII. Donkey Baptists. A donkey does a lot of braying, but is allergic to work. About the time you think you have him going good he balks and no amount of coaxing or talking will get him to move. Some Baptists make a lot of noise, but when asked to do something they balk and you could set the bench afire and they would only move out of reach of the fire and let the bench burn down. □

Light Shining Out of Darkness

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm;

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-rafting skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sov’ reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding ev’ry hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow’r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, ([Joh 13:7](#))
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

This is My Church

It is composed of people like me. We make it what it is.

I want it to be a church that is a lamp to the path of pilgrims, leading them of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. It will be, **if I am.**

It will be friendly, **if I am.**

Its pews will be filled, **if I help to fill them.**

It will do great work; **if I work.**

It will make generous gifts to many causes, **if I am a generous giver.**

It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, **if I bring them.**

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit — **if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these.**

Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all of the things that I want my church to be.

Fundamental Baptist Information Service

By David W. Cloud

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Harry Potter Foolishness. — The world has gone crazy over the Harry Potter novels. The Bangkok Post for July 17 featured two separate stories accompanied by two large color photos on the release of the newest book in the Potter series. Fans were expected to purchase 10 million copies in the first 24 hours. The photos showed smiling customers in London and Bangkok who lined up in the wee hours of the morning to purchase copies of the book. It is all depicted as mere innocent fun. The first five books have sold 270 million copies and the three Potter movies have grossed more than \$2.5 billion. The hero of the story is a young wizard named Harry Potter, who uses alleged good magic to make his way in the world and to overcome his enemies. Biblically speaking, there is no such thing as good magic or a good wizard, witch, or sorcerer. All of these are condemned in the strongest terms. “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee” (Deut. 18:9-12). God warns His people in the clearest terms, “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11), and, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils” (1 Cor. 10:21). That the Potter books have been praised by the New Evangelical crowd (e.g., Christianity Today, Chuck Colson, to name a few) is further evidence of their spiritual blindness.

* * *

Billy Graham Says Pope John Paul II Is Definitely In Heaven. — In an interview on June 27 with Chris Matthews on Hardball, Billy Graham said that the late Pope John Paul II is definitely in heaven. When asked, “Do you think you’ll meet him in heaven,” Graham replied, “Oh, absolutely. I’m looking forward to it.” He added:

“I’ve talked to him three separate times. I just love him. And I followed his suffering and his death. He taught us how to suffer. He taught us how to die. He taught us about Christian living. I never knew a more wonderful man than Pope Paul II.” No man has done more to further the unscriptural ecumenical movement than Billy Graham. He has wrought untold confusion and is rightly called Mr. Facing Both Ways. On the one hand he claims to believe the New Testament Gospel that salvation is by grace alone through personal faith in Jesus Christ alone, but on the other hand he exalts a man who literally worshipped Mary, who dedicated himself wholly to her, who died with her name on his lips, and who taught that salvation is by grace plus works and sacraments. The fact that the Southern Baptist Convention gives unqualified support to Billy Graham and his ecumenical evangelism is proof positive that it is not a Scriptural organization and that it is rather on the side of end time ecumenical apostasy, for “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

* * *

Possible Jail For Sunday School Teachers In Indoneisa. — “Three Christian housewives in Indonesia have been charged with endangering children and face a possible

five years in prison after teaching a kids Sunday School class, a human-rights group reports. According to International Christian Concern, which helps persecuted believers worldwide, the criminal charges stem from three Sunday School lessons the women — Rebecca Laonita Z, Rama Mala Bangun and Etty Pangesti — taught in 2003 and 2005. The activities the women led included: telling stories and teaching from the Bible, teaching Christian prayers, providing prizes like pencils for memorizing Bible verses, giving children towels with a picture of Jesus, and giving kids blue sport shirts that bore a cross and the logo of their church. “While most of the children involved went to the women’s church, the kids had invited some of their Muslim friends to the classes — and that’s when the trouble began. Indonesia has a child-protection criminal statute that states: ‘Any person who purposefully uses deception, lies or enticement to make a child choose another religion not of his own free will ... will be prosecuted by imprisonment for five years and/or a fine of Rp.100,000,000 [US \$10,200].’”

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United Bible Socie-

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ties And Rome. — In April a representative of the United Bible Societies (UBS) participated in the funeral for Pope John Paul II and in the inauguration of Pope Benedict XVI. This illustrates the radical and unscriptural ecumenism of the UBS, which is the international umbrella for 142 national societies, including the American Bible Society and the British & Foreign Bible Society. Wycliffe Bible Translators also participates closely with the UBS on many projects. The following is from the UBS web site for May 6, 2005: “Dr. Valdo Bertalot, General Secretary of the Bible Society in Italy (BSI), represented both the national Bible Society and the global UBS fellowship at the funeral of Pope John Paul II on April 9 and at the inaugural mass of Pope Benedict XVI on April 24. He also took part the following day in Pope Benedict’s first audience, for foreign and non-Catholic guests. ‘I had the opportunity to greet the Pope personally on behalf of UBS and BSI,’ said Dr. Bertalot, ‘offering him BSI’s latest ecumenical literary translation of the Gospel of Mark as an example of the UBS service to the churches.’ Mr. Wigglesworth said Dr. Bertalot’s presence at the events was ‘evidence of the standing of the UBS

in the eyes of the Vatican, and a consequence of all the work that he — and his father before him — have done to establish close ties with the Vatican on behalf of UBS’.”

* * *

Anglican Apostasy. — According to a new study, roughly three percent of Anglican clergy are not certain about the existence of God. If reflected throughout the denomination’s 9,000 clergy, the finding would mean that nearly 300 Church of England clergy are atheists or agnostics (“Clergy who don’t believe in God,” London Times, July 4). The study also found that 38% of clergy do not believe in the Virgin Birth, 35% don’t believe that Jesus actually turned water into wine, and 33% are in favour of the ordination of practicing homosexuals. The study, by Bangor University, involved 9,000 respondents.

* * *

The Cause of Islamic Terrorism. — Islamic terrorism has been blamed by the mainstream media on many things, poverty, moral corruption in western society, even the policies of George Bush, but its cause is quite simple. Its first cause is an age-old hatred of Israel and the second is the corruption produced by the Islamic religion itself. Charles Krauthammer ob-

served that terrorism “is a sickness incubated within Arab/Islamic culture, a toxic combination of repression, corruption, intolerance and fanaticism, fed by tyrannical regimes eager to deflect popular anger from themselves onto the American infidel” (“Why That’s Ridiculous,” Time, July 18, 2005).

* * *

Catholic Abuse Scandal Could Cost \$2-3 Billion. — The chairman of the Catholic lay reform group Voice of the Faithful has predicted that the priestly sexual abuse scandal will eventually cost the Roman Catholic Church in America \$2-3 billion (“Catholic Abuse Scandal,” Foxnews.com, July 9, 2005). David Castaldi was speaking at the organization’s national meeting in Indianapolis. Costs so far total more than \$1 billion, including \$85 million paid by the Diocese of Orange, California, and \$100 million by the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. The Diocese of Portland, Oregon, faces claims topping \$500 million and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is expected to pay out from \$500 to \$1.5 billion.

* * *

Winston Churchill On Islam. — The following quote by Sir Winston Churchill is from The River War, first edition,

Vol. II, pages 248-50 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899): “How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live. A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement; the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men. Individual Moslems may show splendid qualities—but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step...”

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An Episcopalian Bishop Defending The King James Bible in 1857.

— It has been my joy and privilege to have read probably 150 books and articles by men of God in the 18th and 19th centuries who defended the King James Bible on the same basis that we do today (e.g., the superiority of its Greek text, the superiority of its English, etc.). The foundational principles of this battle have not changed. The following is an excerpt from a book I recently read on this subject: *An Apology for the Common English Bible* (1857) by Arthur Cleveland Coxe, an Episcopalian bishop in America. “The care with which the Hebrews guarded every jot and tittle of their Scriptures was never reproved by our Saviour. It is our duty and interest to imitate them in the jealousy with which God’s Holy Word is kept in our own language. . . . The true believer has instincts that cry out against a compromise that destroys what is dearer to his heart than life, even the truth of God’s Word, its spirit as well as its letter” (Coxe, pp. 8, 51). In this book Coxe observed that the itch to revise the Greek New Testament and the English Bible was coming from theological rationalists. “The movement, in England, which had made some

little stir in Parliament, in behalf of a new translation, *seems to have been set on foot by parties confessedly averse to the great doctrinal truths of the gospel.* . . . Refined gold must be gilded, and the lily painted; and if possible, the very lights of heaven would be tinkered and repaired, by *the wild conceit of the times.* . . . I submit it to the judgment of devout and reasonable men, whether, at any time, the intrusion of such novelties into a standard, on mere individual responsibility, is not most dangerous. *but if, at any time, more especially at this time, when a great portion of our country is witness to the most alarming theological progress towards the rationalism of Germany.* In New England, all things denote the advance of a thoroughly unevangelical spirit, which has possessed itself of the chief seats of learning, and which is successfully contending with the few old-fashioned representatives of a superior orthodoxy, that are left among the descendants of the Puritans. *If the evil spirit has been exorcised from its German haunts, it is evident that it is seeking rest in America*” (Coxe, pp. 10, 46, 47).

* * *

Spurgeon’s Reply To Those Who Urged Him To Start a New Association. — Charles

Spurgeon, pastor of Metropolitan Church in London, England, came out of the Baptist Union in November 1887 because of doctrinal compromise and worldliness. When urged by some to start a new association or denomination he replied: “There are denominations enough. If there were a new denomination formed the thieves and robbers who have entered other ‘gardens walled round’ would climb into this also, and so nothing would be gained. Besides, the expedient is not needed among churches which are each one self-governing and self-determining: such churches can find their own affinities without difficulty, and can keep their own coasts clear of invaders. Since each vessel is seaworthy in herself, let the hampering ropes be cut clean away, and no more lines of communication be thrown out until we know that we are alongside a friend who sails under the same glorious flag. In the isolation of independency, tempered by the love of the Spirit which binds us to all the faithful in Christ Jesus, we think the lovers of the gospel will for the present find their immediate safety.”

* * *

Contemporary Praise Music Is Ecumenical Glue. — One of the glues of the ecumenical movement today is contemporary

praise music. Speaking before the International Congress of Sacred Music in Rome in February 2001, Pope John Paul II said music can be an instrument toward Christian unity. Popular CCM trumpeter Phil Discoll said in 1987, “I have felt in my heart for a long time that music was the power that God would use to transcend every denomination, every barrier that has kept God’s people apart.” Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) keeps track of the most popular praise songs among the major denominations, and it is instructive that the same contemporary songs are popular both in Baptist churches and Roman Catholic.

* * *

Poll: 64% Favor Teaching Both Creationism, Evolution. — In a finding that is likely to intensify the debate over what to teach students about the origins of life, a poll released Tuesday found that nearly two-thirds of Americans say that creationism should be taught alongside evolution in public schools. The poll found that 42 percent of respondents hold strict creationist views, agreeing that “living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time.” In contrast, 48 percent said they believed that humans

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had evolved over time; but of those, 18 percent said that evolution was “guided by a supreme being,” and 26 percent said that evolution occurred through natural selection. In all, 64 percent said they were open to the idea of teaching creationism in addition to evolution, while 38 percent favored replacing evolution with creationism. The poll was conducted July 7 to 17 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. The questions about evolution were asked of 2,000 people, and the margin of error is 2.5 percentage points.

* * *

Rush Limbaugh’s Unbiblical Position On Homosexuality.

— On August 4, 2005, nationally syndicated talk American show host Rush Limbaugh said that homosexuality is not a moral issue because homosexuality is not a choice. He said that “conservatives” do not care what people do behind closed doors. The following is from his web site: “Nobody’s against homosexuality. Well, I guess some people are against it. . . . Most conservatives I know don’t care about [homosexuality]. What they do in private is not a concern. . . . The thing about

being morally opposed to homosexuality, I don’t think that’s the right standard to apply to anybody. I don’t know too many people who think it is a choice. . . . You can’t say something that isn’t a choice [you can’t] attach moral or immoral to it. Those people who have that belief must believe that it’s a choice that has been made and so forth, and I just think it’s the wrong way to look at this.” This is a blatant denial of the Bible’s teaching both on homosexuality and morality in general. God’s laws against adultery and fornication are in effect regardless of whether the sin is public or private, and unnatural acts between women and women and men and men are clearly labeled a moral perversion in Romans 1:26-29. These acts are called “vile affections” (v. 26), “against nature” (v. 26), “unseemly” (v. 27), and “reprobate” (v. 28). When America had laws based upon biblical principles, not only was homosexuality a crime but so was adultery, and rightfully so. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

* * *

Homosexual Churches Increasing Rapidly.

— Homosexual churches are increasing rapidly in America, Canada, and in other parts of the world.

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches was founded in 1968 and today claims more than 44,000 members in 300 churches. Independent Pentecostal homosexual churches are also on the rise. The Herald-Leader of Lexington, Kentucky, recently reported on such churches in the very heart of America’s “Bible belt.” “Across America small, predominantly gay Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are forming,” we are told. The Jubilee Fellowship in Lexington, which has a lesbian female pastor, is described as a “Pentecostal-style, gay-friendly church.” The City of Refuge of Louisville, Kentucky was founded by a thrice-divorced homosexual who was defrocked by a Pentecostal church but who loves to “shout and praise the Lord.” New Life Community Church of LaPorte, Indiana, is pastored by a homosexual who was defrocked from the United Pentecostal Church and also operates the “Holy Macaroni Café.” The pastor of the aforementioned Jubilee Fellowship claims that the Bible does not condemn her “committed” lesbian lifestyle and that she “can have a productive relationship with Jesus Christ as a gay Christian.” Nothing more clearly shows the lateness and darkness of the hour than “homosexual Christianity.” It is still on the fringe of Christianity for the

moment, but it probably won’t be long before it is in the mainstream.

* * *

Church of England Approves Sexless Marriage For Homosexual Clergy.

— In late July the Church of England’s House of Bishops approved “sexless marriage” for homosexual clergy (“Church of England Compromise Has Theologian Concerned,” Agape Press, August 3). The London Telegraph reported that homosexual activists claim more than 700 clergy are “lining up to marry their same-sex partners.” Homosexual “marriage”! Sexless “marriage”! What a gross perversion of the term. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that the standard for marriage is the one that God established in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, when he joined the first man and the first woman in holy matrimony. “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:4-6).

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Church of the Dollar.

— The following is from *The Berean Call*, August 9: “With houses of worship in Atlanta, New York City, Australia, Europe, Nigeria, South Africa, and Britain, World Changers Church International is one of the largest and fastest-growing churches in the nation. Led by Pastor Creflo A. Dollar, a flamboyant African-American preacher, WCCI has some 25,000 members and an annual budget of more than \$70 million. His message, known as ‘prosperity gospel,’ implores followers to enrich themselves in every way, spiritually and financially, through the teachings of his church. Indeed, Pastor Dollar, whom critics have dubbed ‘Pass The Dollar’ and ‘Cashflow Dollar’ for his ostentatious displays of wealth, is not shy about his success. He owns two Roll-Royces and flies the country in a Gulfstream-3 private jet. WCCI members can tithe online by setting up automatic account withdrawals managed by the church. But Dollar’s message is resonating with many evangelicals, especially poor blacks drawn to the idea of pulling themselves out of poverty because the Bible willed it so. A new church in rented space in New York’s Madison Square Garden has drawn 5,000 members in the last three months. WCCI is

adding between 2,000 and 3,000 members per year. It will soon launch a Spanish-language church led by a Mexican priest, targeted at Atlanta’s booming Hispanic immigrant population (*Business Week Online*, May 23, 2005).”

* * *

Peter Ruckman, UFOs, And Daffy Duck.

— Peter Ruckman of Pensacola, Florida, has done more harm to the cause of the King James Bible than some of its enemies. That is due to his cultic beliefs and his strange, ungodly spirit. According to one of his books, “Black Is Beautiful” (1996), UFOs are real, and if you doubt it you are an unbeliever. If Ruckman says two plus two equals five, and if you don’t agree, you are an unbelieving “jack leg” and a “bloated egotist.” He believes the CIA has implanted brain transmitters in children, old people, blacks, and prisoners (p. 243) and operates underground alien breeding facilities (p. 256). He believes in blue aliens with blue blood (pp. 85, 86), black aliens with green blood (p. 244), and grey aliens with clear blood (pp. 310-11). He believes that Adam originally had water in his veins instead of blood (p. 185). He believes that the CIA flies around in space ships developed from technology gained when the government made a

deal with aliens to allow them to kidnap children and use their organs as food and to experiment on U.S. citizens (pp. 291, 295-297). Ruckman does not use facts he abuses them, and he often builds his case upon thin air, fables, and half-truths. Consider one example of his reasoning. An old Bolivian legend tells of a non-human race that had webbed feet. Old comic books about Daffy Duck and Donald Duck depict creatures with webbed feet (p. 85). Voila! The legend must be true and Donald Duck must be a secret depiction of aliens!!!! For 32 years, since I was converted, my sole authority has been the King James Bible, and the bottom line here is that the Bible says nothing about UFOs and therefore it is not something I need to concern myself with (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The verses that Ruckman cites in support of UFOs are taken out of context and grossly misused, not remotely supporting such nonsense (e.g., Gen. 6:1-5; 2 Sam. 5:24; 2 Ki. 2:11; Isa. 14:29; Ezek. 1:4; Zech. 5:1-3). Ruckman believes that the aliens are demons who are preparing to take control during the Tribulation and he cites Revelation 9:2-3, but this does not describe UFOs and it has nothing to do with events in our day. Revelation 9 describes demons who are currently imprisoned rather than appearing on earth. The

Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles did not teach God’s people to worry about UFOs or to rage against the government. They taught us to honor those in authority and submit to them (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-25), to live obedient and holy lives and to dedicate our lives to preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth until Christ returns (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). You don’t see Paul ranting against the Roman Empire and mocking its emperor. Dear friends in Christ, beware of the cultic element in the independent Baptist movement.

* * *

Evangelical Lutheran Church Rejects Homosexual Ordination, Barely.

— On August 12, representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) narrowly defeated a measure that would have allowed the ordination of homosexuals living “in a long-term relationship.” Had the new policy been approved, it would have allowed exceptions to the current policy banning “sexually active” homosexual men and lesbians from ordination. Though the measure did not pass, the process exhibited the apostasy of the ELCA. Of the 993 representatives who cast ballots, nearly half

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(490) supported the new policy. Thus, it is evident that large numbers of ELCA churches reject the Bible's clear testimony about the moral abomination of homosexuality (Lev. 18:22-28; Rom. 1:26-28). There is an entire coalition of homosexual advocates within the ELCA. G. Scott Cady of the New England Synod said rejecting homosexuals who "feel a call to the ministry was tantamount to questioning the will of God" ("Lutherans Affirm Ban on Gay Clergy," Washington Post, Aug. 13). In fact, God does not operate contrary to His own Word. Delegates to the ELCA's national meeting also voted 851 to 127 to "keep the church unified despite serious differences over homosexuality." This is the ecumenical "unity in diversity" philosophy, which is entirely unscriptural. God's people are to love the whole counsel of God and reject every false thing (Ps. 119:128) and there is no true unity where there is not one mind in the truth. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

Christianity On Steep Decline In Western Europe.

— A front page report in the August 11 issue of USA Today was entitled "Religion takes a back seat in Western Europe." It was accompanied by a photo of a sparsely attended mass in Madrid. It reminded me of the masses that we have visited in England, Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Brian Kenny of Dublin, Ireland, testified, "I don't go to church, and I don't know one person who does," adding anecdotal evidence of the fact that church attendance in Ireland has fallen from 85% in 1975 to 60% today. The percentage of Europeans who say they are non-religious has increased to 15%. The decrease in church attendance has been accompanied by an associated decrease in morality. USA Today observed that there is virtually no social stigma for unmarried parents in the Scandinavian countries, and that "more than half of the children in Sweden and Norway are born to unmarried mothers." Of course, Romanism and theological liberalism are the chief culprits of this situation.

* * *

Rick Warren Joins Hands With The Liberal Baptist World Alliance.

— Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in Southern California (The Purpose

Driven Church) was a featured speaker at the annual meeting of the liberal Baptist World Alliance in Birmingham, England, in late July. In this venture Warren joined hands with Jimmy Carter, who has stated that Mormons are Christians and should not be targeted for evangelism, and Tony Campolo, who says that homosexuality is an inborn trait and who refers to "evangelical homosexuals" (Christian News, March 4, 1991). Rick Warren is leading multitudes of churches into an unscriptural "rock & roll Christianity," but he is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the "conservatives" in the Convention do not expose his error. He is also influencing many independent Baptists who are trading the whole counsel of God for a shallow, manmade synopsi.

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Van Impe Eulogizes The Pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

— The following is from Calvary Contender, August 2005: "The death of John Paul II and the installation of his successor Pope Benedict XVI gave Jack Van Impe a chance to announce to his television audience that he was a changed man, that he had learned to embrace 'his Catholic brothers and sisters in Jesus.' Andy Foster wrote in the May-

July Canadian Revivalist: 'Dr. Van Impe uses the language of conversion to describe the "change" that occurred in his own thinking about Roman Catholicism.' He [erroneously] claims that the Church of Rome believes the fundamentals of the faith and that Protestants who separate from Roman dogma are carried away with minor issues."

* * *

Disciples Of Christ Elect Female Leader.

— The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) made history in late July when it became the first major U.S. denomination to elect a female leader. The new president, Sharon Watkins, has been the senior pastor of Disciples Christian Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, for eight years. After the unanimous election, the delegates "erupted in applause" (Baptist Press, Aug. 10). In her acceptance speech, Watkins said, "God is calling us to sing a new song." In fact, God does not contradict His own Word and He has forbidden women to teach or to usurp authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12). The Lord did not choose female apostles, and the requirement for a pastor is that he be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2). Watkins also said, "We are a church whose time has

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organize to defeat them.

“The church is for the saved, and membership answers the deep need and cry for discipleship. There is no bondage like the bondage of love, so binding and compelling, so full of satisfaction and joy. When grace has wrought its work, and the heart is rejoicing in new life and hope, the person does not stop to inquire, why join the church? That was settled when he found the Lord.”

3. In Union There is Strength” for Service.

“My church . . . and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” These lines are being written at a four-story window. All day long soldiers are passing to and fro on the street down there, singly, by twos and by threes. I am happily conscious of their passing. But one day last week this great office structure began to quiver. Then I heard dull thuds below. The same soldiers were passing, but in column formations now, all keeping step, and all going the same way. Woe was to whatever tried to block their progress then. Christ set a bold enterprise for the band which He started. It was to evangelize the world. He told them to cling together, trust Him, and keep right on.

Why Not Any Church?

“We ought to obey

God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

After all that men may say, God’s Word should determine what church a person should join. And the Word of God must be interpreted by each person for himself. Sentiment is one of the noblest emotions only when kept in its proper place, but when sentiment suggests that one should join the church of his father, mother, wife or friend then sentiment is going too far. Social ties are precious in the sight of all, but the church of God is not builded upon social affinities, customs and limitations. The opinions of men and the prestige of any particular church in the community are not of worthy to determine membership. In all matters of personal religion the individual soul is competent both to consider and to conclude. And the serious part is that the individual soul will be held responsible for his ultimate decision.

Every church claims to be founded upon interpretations of the Scriptures. All Christian people believe in baptism, for instance, and the Scriptures have a doctrine of baptism. What is it? Let men go to the Scriptures to discover. The Scriptures have a teaching, also, about what should go before and what should come after baptism. What is this teaching? Various men say various things and some frankly offer substitutes for the Scriptures.

Individuals must raise and answer these questions in the light of the Scriptures alone. “We ought to obey God rather than man.”

“Is not one church as good as another?” No! And men do not say this of other organized relationships in life. When did one political party come to be good as another? When did one family seem to be as good as another? He who studies institutions and relationships comes to have convictions on their comparative worth. And only the person who has convictions concerning the distinctive worth of his organization does anything much to advance its progress.

“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” (Heb. 11:36-37).

These men thought it made some difference what a man believed, and because they believed intensely and devotedly the gospel lives and triumphs today. We who want to count for anything must believe intensely also, and be ready to “follow in their train.”

WHY THE BAPTISTS?

“Take heed unto thyself and the doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:16).

1. The Answer of Origins. — “To be well-born is to enter life with an advantage. Baptists are justly proud of their beginning — the New Testament. They have an ancient and scriptural origin. Certain characters in history are named as founders of various denominations: “The Disciples began with Alexander Campbell, the Methodists with John Wesley, the Presbyterians with John Calvin, the Lutherans with Martin Luther, and the Church of England with Henry VIII.

Not so with Baptists. There is no personality this side of Jesus Christ who is a satisfactory explanation of their origin. The New Testament churches were independent, self-governing, democratic bodies like the Baptist churches of today. We originated, not at the Reformation, nor in the Dark Ages, nor in any century after the Apostles, but our marching orders are the Commission, and the first Baptist church was the church at Jerusalem. Our principles are as old as Christianity, and we acknowledge no founder but Christ” (McDaniel).

2. The Answer of Opportunities. We have a creed that is none other

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than the New Testament. We have a baptism that does not have to be argued, or explained or defended before any people. We have a church government that exalts to a position of dignity, competency and responsibility for every individual member. It is a pure, democratic government.

WHY A REGENERATED MEMBERSHIP?

“Ye must be born again” (Jn. 3:7).

1. What is Regeneration? — “It is God’s turning the soul to Himself — conversion being the soul’s turning itself to God.” Regeneration cannot be bought by gifts to God, neither is it acquired by man’s independent efforts after righteousness. It is often difficult for seekers after salvation to recognize these facts. God first acts upon the receptive soul, and then works in us both the desire and the purpose to receive the free grace which He offers. Now, why do we insist upon a membership composed of those who have repented, turned to God and been baptized each for himself?

(1) *The Reasoning From Human Nature.* — All serious-thinking men feel that there must be a preparation for membership adequate to the dignity and

worth of the organization which they seek to join. Who that has knocked at the doors of a great fraternal order can forget the solemn moments when he stood in the vestibule, thinking on his life and conduct? But all men who think far enough soon reach the conclusion that there is no preparation which man can make unaided which is adequate for membership in the Kingdom and church of God. When man has reached this conclusion of helplessness, God comes in to render needed aid. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).

(2) *The Precedent of the First Churches.* — In their execution of the plan of Jesus the Apostles organized churches in Judea, Samaria, Galilee and afterwards throughout the Roman empire. No unregenerated person was entitled to a place in these churches even though he had Abraham for father, or other pious ancestry. “Even Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, could not share in the blessings of the new kingdom without regeneration.” Circumcision counted for nothing, and all the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical economy were abolished. John the Baptist preached repentance, and baptized the penitent for the remission of sins. The first church was formed in

Jerusalem. Additions were daily made to it, but only of such as were saved. Paul addressed his letter “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints” (Rom. 1:7).

(3) *The Plain Teaching of the Scriptures.* — Regeneration before baptism and church membership is a fundamental in the Baptist faith, and is fundamental with us because it is taught in God’s Word. What embarrassment we would have if unconverted men, women and children be admitted freely to membership in God’s church! God’s entrance requirements must determine admission to God’s organization. God says, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3). Again, “He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life” (Jn. 5:24). And again, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).

WHY IMMERSION ONLY

“And they went down both into the water ... and he baptized him” (Acts 8:38).

1. The Example of Jesus. “And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the

heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mk. 1:9-11).

2. The Teaching of Paul. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5).

3. The Interpretation of Scholars. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon. Baptizo: “An immersion in water.”

Dr. E. P. Gould (Episcopalian), in Commentary on Mark: “The preposition here coincides with the proper meaning of the verb, indicating that the form of the rite was immersion into the stream.”

John Calvin (Presbyterian), in his Institutes: “That very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse.”

John Wesley (Methodist), in Notes on the New Testament, page 379: “We are buried with him— alluding to the ancient manner of baptism by immersion.”

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Cardinal Gibbons (Catholic), in "The Faith of Our Fathers," says: "For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion: but since the twelfth century the practice of baptism by affusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than by immersion."

WHY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT?

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5)

"We hold ... that all men are created equal." So begins the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson is quoted as having said of the Baptist form of church government, "I consider it the only form of pure democracy that now exists in the world, and have concluded that it will be the best form of government for the American Colonies." He read the Gospels diligently, and often attended a country Baptist church in Virginia.

The Baptist government provides no place for pedestals, thrones, popes, priests, or ecclesiastics holding the reins of authority in religion. It "involves an equality of rights on the one hand, and

a sovereignty of duty on the other."

There is the fullest sort of equality in a Baptist church. Baptists have a common religious experience, they are associated as equals in a common cause, and the only tie that binds them is the tie of Christian love. Every church is an independent, self-governing democracy. When a matter of business is under consideration in one of our churches, every member can speak freely his views. When all discussion is ended, each member can cast his vote in accordance with his own judgment. One vote counts as much as another, and the majority of votes cast determines the will of the church. All members are received and dismissed by the action of the entire church, which expresses its desire by vote. □

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necessary for the larger work of Christ. Such fellowship must be based upon a common faith and common spiritual objectives. The local church has the right to associate itself with other churches or to refrain, and it has the right to discontinue any associations for reasons deemed sufficient by itself.

5. Organized denominationalism, depriving individual churches of their freedom or coercing free

churches to abandon their freedom, often prevents local churches from meeting their full responsibility before God for purity of faith and life and full loyalty to the program of the Word of God. Organized denominationalism invariably views the conscientious dissenter from its programs with disfavor and punishes by discrimination and sometimes ostracism in the case of the ministry. Organized denominationalism invariably produces a loyalty to human leadership which undermines the supreme loyalty to Christ which is the obligation of the church. Organized denominationalism, through the centuries, has a long record of refusing hospitality to the prophets raised up to call it back to God, often forcing them outside the camp in order to obey God. Organized denominationalism glorifies its own program as if it was inspired of God, glorifies its own leadership in disobedience to the Word of God, coerces churches into a blind unquestioning loyalty which paralyzes that spiritual discrimination enjoined by the Word of God. It thus becomes the foe of that independence of authority which is the birthright of every New Testament church.

6. God's answer to the evils of ecclesiasticism is the independent church of Christ, free to do the whole will of God, free to accept or reject human leaders,

free to support or refuse to support human programs, free to fellowship or refuse to fellowship with other groups, free to support a prophetic ministry, free to resist apostasy. God's answer to the apostasy of our day and the unity-at-any-price religious unionism of our day, is the call to return to the New Testament faith, the New Testament church, New Testament methods, and New Testament fellowships. There will be no new Reformation unless there is a return to the New Testament church. □

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come." I believe that is true, and such a "church" is described in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." □

COLE . . .

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experience, for he is more sensitive to sin as a saint than when he was a lost sinner. He is dead to the guilt and penalty of sin because Christ bore the penalty in His own body on the tree. □

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.