

The Baptist

CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

VOL. XLVII, No. 1

January 2007

WHOLE NO. 506

A Critique of the Theory of Evolution

If evolution is true, then why do we need to go back nearly 2,000 years to find the one perfect Man? The one perfect Man is the God-Man, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I challenge the evolutionist to produce a better man than the Lord Jesus Christ, if you can! Listen to what He says: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). He is the great proof against this godless doctrine. Someone may ask: "What difference does it make if I believe in evolution? Does it do me any harm?" Yes, it does harm. It is atheistic in tendency. Let us ask a few pertinent questions.

1. Did man fall downward or upward?
2. Can man save himself by climbing up, or must God save him by coming down?
3. Is evolution the way to the glory of Heaven, or

By Charles George Bauer

The Final Challenge to the Evolutionist!

is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the way to glory? What is the chief end of man? "To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever" (Westminster Catechism).

It is said: "Man's sinful

tendencies and acts are the remains of brute instincts inherited from his beastly ancestors. Give him sufficient time, and by education and civilization and the Law of Progress, he will

improve morally and spiritually, and finally reach the goal of his glory, a perfect man." You may ask, "What about the prehistoric man, the cave man?" The Word of God gives the infallible answer. It is found in the following Scriptures: Psalm 14; Psalm 53; Romans 1:19-32; 5:12-14. "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). What harm does it do?

The Rev. A. P. Gouthy inquired the results of the teaching evolution in five colleges. At the end of the first year, 40% of the students became agnostics; at the end of the second year, 60% became infidels; at the end of the third year, 80% became atheists.

What is the Verdict From the Supreme Court of Heaven?

Evolution is not true

(See **BAUER** on page 5)

47 Years and Counting

By M. L. Moser, Editor

It was January 1960 that I began publishing **The Baptist Challenge**. It began as a quarterly publication with four issues in 1960, and then we increased it to a monthly. Since that time it has been published, using a newspaper format, then a tabloid, and finally into a magazine format. We have published every month except for a couple of months when we

were not able to publish it for reasons which I do not wish to mention.

For a time we had a small subscription price, but soon made it available free to all who wanted it. To my knowledge, it was the largest independent Baptist newsmagazine being published, as our circulation was over 7,000 copies per

(See **47 YEARS** on page 24)

Quiz The Pastor

Is There Really Such A Thing As Reincarnation?

By the late Nick Michalinos

Question: Is there such a thing as reincarnation?

Answer: Absolutely not. There is no such thing as reincarnation, that is, coming back after death to live in a different body. Reincarnation is a popular teaching among some today, even among those of reputation.


The Bible states: "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgement" (Heb. 9:27). God has ordained man's appointment with death and judgment occurs only "once," though the Word of God states that some have died and have been resurrected, but not in a different body, but in the same body, and they faced death again in that body.

Even our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrected body was said to be His same

body though it consisted of a different composition, for He stated, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see" (Lk. 24:39).

When the Bible speaks of a rebirth or new-birth, it is not speaking of reincarnation. It means a spiritual rebirth, of becoming a member of a family of God by being born-again (Jn. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:23). When we receive Christ as Savior, we become children of God (Jn. 1:12-13; Gal. 3:26). This new birth occurs in this life, and it is spiritual in nature, not affecting the body in any way.

However, there will be a future resurrection of all the dead, and Christians will be raised up in perfect bodies fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Savior (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Jn. 3:2). Christians who are



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Dr. Ron Tottingham

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417 S. Hawthorne Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Dr. Ron Tottingham, Pastor
Telephone: (605) 339-2038
EBT@EmpireBaptistMinistries.org

alive at Christ's coming will be changed in a moment from mortality to immortality (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

But the spirit of each Christian who dies will return to its own body, and the bodies will be raised to a perfect, incorruptible, deathless state. The very fact of resurrection shows that man's spirit will once again indwell his same body. Why resurrect the same body if man is to occupy a totally different body?

Those who believe in reincarnation ignore the truth of resurrection, and by so doing, hope to escape God's judgment. But this is vain thinking, for "The Lord knoweth how ... to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished"

(1 Pet. 2:9). There will be no escape (Rev. 20:11-15).

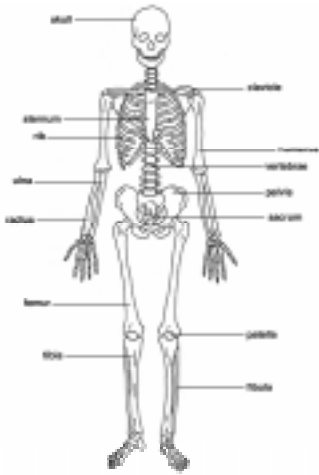
Judgment is certain. The lie of reincarnation offers no hope to the deceived. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgement" (Heb. 9:27). □

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

M. L. Moser, Editor
Pastor Emeritus
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
15601 Taylor Loop Rd.
Little Rock, Arkansas 72223
Church Phone: (501) 868-7703
Email: mlmoser1@juno.com
Editor's Phone: (501) 258-3221

Religion In the World

"There never has been a lack of religion in the world. But, for the most part, it has been the kind of religion condemned in Romans 1:23, that never pointed men to an object of worship higher than man himself, and the things of his material world."

God's Masterpiece -- Man's Body -- #44

In this chapter we come to a study of the solid framework of the body, known as the skeleton, and made up of cartilage, bones and joints. In the beginning the skeleton consists entirely of cartilage or gristle, which accounts for the early softness of the bones of the infant, permitting bending without breaking. When this cartilage changes into bone, it is accomplished by a growth of vessels into the cartilage, carrying calcium-laden blood. The calcium or lime is mixed with the amber-like gelatinous cartilage and the result is bone.

Bone consists of an earthly and an animal part, the first hard and rigid, the second tenacious and elastic. This animal portion is composed of a substance known as collagen and forms about one-third of the weight of bone, the remaining two-thirds made up largely of phosphate and carbonate of calcium.

In the human body

there are more than two hundred bones of various sizes and shapes, all beautifully adapted for their special uses. To these bones are attached more than five hundred muscles which provide the engine power for moving the body from place to place, besides making possible many other indispensable operations.

Let us examine some of these bones and groups of bones. The spinal column, made up of thirty-three vertebrae, forms the axis of the skeleton. The vertebrae at the top of the column are light in structure, because the weight they carry is not great. The lower vertebrae which must bear the weight of the body are strong and stout. These individual bones are divided into five groups at the upper end, seven cervical vertebrae, then twelve thoracic to which are attached the twelve pairs of ribs, five lumbar vertebrae lying against the back wall of the abdomen, five pelvic vertebrae combined to form the sacrum, and four small bones closely united to form the coccyx — the terminal portion of the spine. The plan on which this important column is constructed is similar in animals and

Bones

By Arthur I. Brown

humans. But look at the long neck of the giraffe, for instance, and at the little shrew mouse, we might easily suppose that the giraffe would have a much larger number of vertebrae in the neck, but strangely enough, there are just seven, and the mouse has the same number, also the elephant and practically all members of the mammalian types of life.

These vertebrae are not simple blocks of bone but are carefully shaped, like signet rings, resting one upon another, forming a hollow column within which the spinal cord is enclosed and suspended. The column forms a chain of joints with many remarkable features. Evidently this important part of the skeleton was planned to carry out many essential operations. In order to support the erect position of the body it must be firm; to permit bending of the body in all directions it must be flexible; it must form a tube for the safe conveyance from the brain of the most important part of the body, that which gives sensation and motion to the individual — the spinal cord.

In addition to protecting the spinal cord, injury to

which, if severe, is followed by paralysis and death, it must permit the passage of scores of nerve branches from the interior of the spinal canal through small openings to every part of the body. The exit of these nerves must be protected from the slightest possibility of injury, and so beautiful is the interlocking of the bones, so firm the attachments of the ligaments binding bone to bone, so smooth the grooves prepared for these small bits of nerve tissue, that the spine can assume almost every conceivable position, where pressure would seem inevitable, but this happens very seldom indeed, unless there is serious injury to the bony parts, as when a fracture occurs.

Besides all these things, the spine must serve as a fulcrum or base for the insertion of many muscles which act upon this long lever or movable column; and likewise to form an attachment and to furnish a support for the ends of the ribs to rest upon. A pad of cartilage is placed accurately between each pair of vertebrae — a device which lessens or

(See **BONES** on page 23)

The Goose That Continued To Flee

By Howard Magness

Some people fail to come to the Lord because they don't believe that He can possibly accept them the way they are. They are being deceived because it is the very way we are that made it necessary for Jesus to come for us ... to save us. In my case

In my case, I was deceived into believing that I had it all together already, had done nothing so wrong in my life and really didn't need Jesus to get along. I was doing very well on my own and reliance on anything else was weakness on my part.

I am reminded of the plight of a Canadian goose carried in the news several months ago. Someone had shot her with an arrow that penetrated in one side of her breast and protruded out the other. She seemed oblivious to the arrow lodged in her and evaded every attempt by the game wardens to help her. My heart went out to her as I watched her scramble around to avoid the help only they could give. Every day the news reported how she avoided all attempts at capture including tranquilizer-laced grain and dodging cannon-fired nets until finally, after about a month, the wound seemed to exhaust the goose and so was caught. Surgery

was performed and she was nursed back to health. When the healing was complete, there was a big ceremony around the lake



where she lived as they released her back to freedom again. She could fly once more as God had intended! If geese could think, I'm sure she'd be wondering why in the world she had tried so hard to elude her captors for so long.

That's the way I feel now. I was ignorant of the arrow of pride that I was carrying around. I ignored the wound of sin that I was bearing, thinking that this was the normal way of life. I didn't realize all God intended for me. The arrow through my breast would have eventually led to death

if I hadn't allowed the one and only person who could perform the necessary surgery to remove it completely so that I could

the One who, to me, looked like a captor. After all, He wanted me to surrender the ultimate direction of my life to His Spirit. But now I realize that only by surrendering could I be made free. From my observation of the goose's plight, one word expresses Jesus' love — the simple word with eternal consequences: COME!

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Real freedom is found only in being secure in Christ. This relates not only in our ultimate salvation, but also to our daily walk. As servants of Christ, we are bound to be free! □ □

be healed. I was slow to realize the seriousness of my condition. I didn't understand the motives of

Ambassadors

We are sent not to preach sociology but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform but redemption; not culture but conversion; not program but parden; not the new social order but the new birth; not revelation but regeneration; not renovation but revival; not resuscitation but resurrection; not a new organization but a new creation; not democracy but the Gospel; not civilization but Christ.

BAUER . . .

(Continued from page 1)

but false, because it eliminates God, the Creator of the universe. What is the truth? It is not evolution, but devolution in man's progress morally and spiritually, until God intervenes in our behalf; for a revolution of our life and nature is necessary for salvation and the way to Glory. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Tit. 3:5-6).

Evolution Is Irrational, Untenable, and Impossible

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to Glory. He said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way, the truth,*

and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:1-6).

It is not goodness that saves mankind, although goodness is the result of faith in Christ. It is "bloodness" that saves. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ, of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast for we are his workmanship [masterpiece, Greek], created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

If evolution were true, there would be no Gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew First, and also the Greek [Gentile]. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17).

Evolution Is An Unproven and Unprovable Hypothesis

A final word to young people. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12:1).

The word Creator is in the plural, implying unity in majesty, plurality in creativity [Creative action]. The three Persons of the Godhead created the universe and all life, including man, the climax of Creation. God, the Father, created all things by and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His Holy Spirit He garnished [beautiful] the heavens. Read Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 11:1-3.

Christians are the New creation of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are becoming new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Latest Discovery of Modern Science

Did this vast universe just happen, as the evolutionists believe, or did God create it? Herbert Spencer's definition is now exploded. Biological evolution is also out-moded by the law of biogenesis. The only logical conclusion is Divine creation (Heb. 1:1-4).

"The universe was born in a matter of minutes, in a single tremendous act of creation. With this startling

announcement, a group of famous scientists has dramatically told the world that their discoveries provide a striking scientific background to the great story in Genesis.

"It provides a documented story of the universe right back to the utterly incredible moments of all — Time, Zero — the moment when there was no universe." — Dr. F.J. Meldau, Christian Victory.

This epochal memento was made by Dr. Ralph A. Alpher and Dr. Robert C. Harman, of the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, and Professor George Garnow of George Washington University.

To piece together the gigantic jig-saw puzzle of the creation story they drew on the work of hundreds of physicists, astronomers, geologists, and chemists. The few missing pieces in their revelations have been filled in by astronomers like Bart J. Bolt and Frank L. Whipple, both of Harvard Observatory. There were three acts in this Drama of Science. "In the beginning God and His Son." "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the end of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst

(See **BAUER** on page 6)

BAUER . . .

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tell? Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. And thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:4-6).

“By the word of the Lord [Jehovah] were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth ... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Isa. 3:6-9).

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by name by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isa. 40:26). The atomic and electronic theory of the universe is also hidden in the Word of God in the original languages, Hebrew and Greek.

I quote Dr. Arthur S. Way’s translation of creation: which is not a paraphrase, but an amplified translation: “It is through faith that we discern that the epochs of our earth’s development were molded by the fiat of God; that it was not his design that the world which we now look upon should not be the outcome of a mere process of evolution from nothing, but matter palpable to our senses” (Heb. 11:3).

This amplified translation of all the meaning of the original Greek words

gives its full meaning refuting evolution. This verse reveals the truth that God created the universe by His living Word, spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, so that things which are seen were made of invisible things — Atoms, infinitesimal solar systems, consisting of protons, neutrons, and electrons (2 Pet. 3:10-14).”

“O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

Appendix

Concerning the Creation of Man

A chemist discovered that there are things containing 16 elements in 17 combinations: a handful of earth, whole wheat, and the human body. If 16 elements are required to nourish the human body, we have also discovered in the Word of God that there are 16 spiritual elements required to nourish the human soul when saved: and these are also in 17 combinations (See Genesis 2:7; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:11).

Concerning the Creation of the Universe and Matter

“God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by [in] his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb. 1:1-4).

The wonderful implications of this passage of Scripture could only be understood since the discovery of atomic energy. Dr. Albert Einstein formulated the equation of energy matter in 1905. Matter is composed of molecules, atoms electrons, protons, neutrons, and numerous other sub-microscopic

particles, and is now known to be nothing really substantial at all, but composed fundamentally of tremendous energy. E equals MC². Energy equals matter multiplied by the speed of light per second, squared.

Energy is now known to be a fluid form of matter. Atoms have a tendency to disintegrate. What power holds them together?

“The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate Source” The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate source of infinite power (or energy) which revealing itself through its outworking (the Word) is the energy by which all the physical universe is upheld.” — Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Power which holds the universe together. “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (are held together).” See Colossians 1:15-18, the secret of the creation of the universe.

Concerning the Geological Ages. The rebellion and fall of Lucifer, caused the ruin of the pristine Creation. □

I am old-fashioned enough to believe that —

If Enoch walked with God, so can I; If God could speak to Abraham, he can speak to me; If Samuel could hear the voice of God, so can I; If the prophets could lift Him up, so can I.



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 otherwise; 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 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. □

Smoker or Sucker?

The person who goes about with a cigarette in their mouth thinks he is a smoker, but he is mistaken. It is not he that smokes; it is the thing in his mouth that smokes. He is only a sucker.



BMA and Texas Southern Baptists. — Messengers to the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC) annual meeting approved an agreement with the Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) of Texas to partner to some evangelistic and ministry endeavors. The BMA has historically differed with Southern Baptists over cooperative missions funding, but in recent years the SBTC and BMA have made strides in cooperation on shared ministry concerns, including Christian higher education.

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Medical Group Urges Passage of Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act. — A Christian medical group Friday called for the passage of a bill that would inform women that babies after 20 weeks of development could experience pain during an abortion. The House will vote on The Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act on Tuesday or Wednesday. Dr. Gene Rudd, an obstetrician with the Christian Medical Association, noted that the bill cites laws that protect

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animals from inhumane treatment, and yet unborn babies don't have the same protections. "What does this say about our blindness to the humanity of our developing babies?" Rudd asked in a statement. "One thing both sides of this issue should be able to agree upon is that women should be fully informed about the medical science concerning their developing babies. The Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act states the medical science and requires that women be fully informed before proceeding with an abortion," CMA CEO Dr. David Stevens stated. According to Stevens, the scientific evidence is "clear and compelling." "Women deserve to know exactly what an abortion involves for their baby," he said.

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Pray Or Lose Your Head. — Sheik Hussein Barre Rage, chairman of the Islamic court in Bulo Burto, Somalia, has decreed that residents who do not pray five times a day will be beheaded, saying, "As Muslims, we should practice Islam fully, not in part, and that is what our religion enjoins us to do." — Ark. D/G.

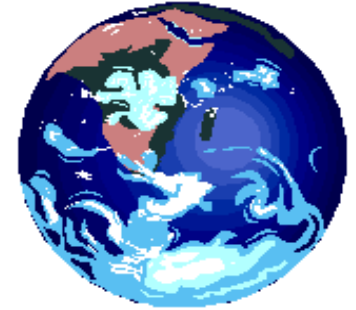
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Christians Sue University for Fraternity

Recognition — Christian lawyers have filed a federal lawsuit against the University of Georgia (UGA) after school officials refused to officially recognize a Christian fraternity. The lawyers pointed out that the university permits political party-affiliated groups to have a party membership requirement but won't allow a Christian group to require that its members be Christians. The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia Tuesday, states that members of the Beta Upsilon Chi fraternity "will suffer and continue to suffer irreparable harm to their First and Fourteenth Amendment rights," because the university has refused to recognize the group. The fraternity was recognized by the university during the 2005-2006 academic year, but recognition was revoked in 2006 because of the group's requirement that members profess Christian beliefs. University policy states that "student organizations ... may not exclude members on the basis of race, nationality, ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, and/or disability." — CNS

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My Culture Can Beat Up Your Culture. — Newly elected Muslim Rep. Keith Ellison (Minnesota)



has announced that, rather than taking his oath of office on the Bible in deference to American tradition, he will take his oath on the Koran. This is unprecedented in any form — Jews, Mormons, Deists, secularists and atheists alike have always taken the oath on the Bible, regardless of their religious beliefs, because it is America's choice. Elected officials serve America — or at least they used to. Obviously, after the antics of Muslims in recent years (protesting Mohammed cartoons, etc.) no one dares 'offend' a Muslim by not allowing him to swear upon his favorite book. So if you start seeing (D-Mecca) after Ellison's name, you'll know why."

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Pentagon Evangelism Called 'National Security Threat'. — Christian military officers who share their faith at work in the Pentagon pose a threat to national security, according to a group that advocates for religious neutrality in the military. Public displays of

(See WNR on page 14)

La Voz Del Desierto

¿Por Qué Los Bautistas Rechazan Los Libros Apócrifos? — Parte I

La Biblia que usan los bautistas se compone de 66 libros mientras que la Biblia que usan los católicos se compone de 73. ¿A qué se debe ésto? Esto se debe a los 11 libros apócrifos conocidos también como los Deuterocanónicos que la Iglesia Católica añadió en el canon del Antiguo Testamento de su Biblia católica en el Concilio de Trento (1546). Sin embargo, son 14 libros “apócrifos” (que significa de origen dudoso, falsificados, espurios), los que se hallan en la traducción griega del

Antiguo Testamento llamada la versión de los Setenta o Septuaginta (LXX). Estos libros son: 1) 1ra Estras, 2) 2da Estras, 3) Tobías, 4) Judit, 5) Ultima Parte de Ester, 6) Sabiduría, 7) Eclesiástico (también llamado “Sirach”), 8) Baruc, con la Epístola de Jeremías, 9) Cántico de los Tres Niños Santos, 10) Historia de Susana, 11) Bel y el Dragón, 12) Oración de Manasés, 13) Ira Macabeos, 14) 2da Macabeos. Pero de éstos, la Iglesia Católica aceptó solamente 11 de los libros

que les convenía y no los 14 que contiene la versión de los Setenta (LXX). Los Bautistas sostenemos que nuestra Biblia está *completa*; pero los católicos afirman que le faltan libros. Sin embargo, el canon completo no tiene que ser el que más libros tenga sino el que tenga los libros que Dios inspiró.

La Iglesia Bautista tiene razones suficientes para creer que el canon completo es de 66 libros y más ninguno. Los libros inspirados que componen el Antiguo Testamento fueron

escritos en hebreo, por profetas hebreos y dirigidos al pueblo hebreo (Romanos 9:4). Mientras que los Deuterocanónicos, es decir, los libros apócrifos, no fueron escritos en hebreo, ni por profetas hebreos inspirados por Dios. Nunca formaron parte del Antiguo Testamento hebreo y esta es una de las razones por la cual los judíos palestinos, a quienes se les confió la Palabra de Dios, específicamente, el Antiguo Testamento (Romanos 3:1-2),

(Vea APOC en el pág.10)

Nuestras Aflicciones Como Seres Humanos

Muchos de nosotros pasamos por diferentes pruebas que nos producen aflicción, esto es totalmente normal, pero no debemos afligirnos demasiado hasta el punto que nos dejemos morir.

El entristecernos y el llanto son respuestas normales de nuestra parte humana (sentimientos). Pero nos dice la Palabra, que es necesario que tengamos aflicciones para ver si podemos resistir

(John 5:7).

Dios prueba nuestro corazón, en medio de nuestras aflicciones nos brinda consuelo, fe, fortaleza, y nos sirve para evaluarnos (1ra Pedro 1:6-7). Muchos de nosotros creemos que podemos resolver todas las situaciones que trae la aflicción.

No debemos manejar la situación como lo haría cualquier persona inconversa. Al único que debe-

mos acudir y que nos puede consolar en medio de la aflicción es Dios (1ra Tesalonicenses 3:7).

Hay dos clases de aflicciones: 1) Aflicción espiritual — cuando no oramos, no leemos la Palabra, no nos congregamos, pecamos desobedeciendo la Palabra de Dios. 2) Aflicción material — cuando perdemos algo, o alguien se nos muere, algún ser querido, enfermedades, soledad, vacío, tristeza.

Dios conoce nuestro corazón cuando pasamos por aflicción, pero sólo Él nos sustenta y nos conforta, por ésto debemos estar fortalecidos y gozosos en medio de la aflicción (Jeremías 16:19).

Recordemos hermanos que la sanidad depende de la obediencia a Dios y que la aflicción nos sirve para crecer en el Evangelio y estar más unidos a Dios.

[Por Hna. Jemar Montes, Redactora.]

APOCRIFOS . . .
(Vino de la pág. 10)

también rechazan los libros apócrifos.

A pesar de esto los católicos insisten en sostener que los judíos palestinos rechazaron los libros apócrifos, a finales del siglo I. Alegando que ya existía la Iglesia de Cristo, y por lo tanto, ya no eran los judíos la autoridad competente en materia de doctrina. Pero esto es *falso*. En los días de Esdras, por el año 457 a.C., los judíos ortodoxos (inclusive Israel) adoptaron los 39 libros del Antiguo Testamento como el canon verídico de las Sagradas Escrituras. Los hebreos siempre han creído que fue Esdras quien fijó, bajo inspiración divina, el canon o catálogo de los libros inspirados del Antiguo Testamento, y en términos generales, se puede decir que los libros apócrifos fueron escritos entre el año 150 a.C. y el año 100 d.C. Por lo menos dos siglos después de la muerte de Esdras. Así lo declara Flavio Josefo, el más grande historiador judío de la era de los apóstoles (100 d.C.), enumerando solamente los libros que los judíos consideraban ser

inspirados por Dios y que nada fue añadido al canon del Antiguo Testamento, excluyendo de esta manera los libros apócrifos.

Además, el Señor Jesucristo y los apóstoles citaron casi 300 veces del Antiguo Testamento, pero estos libros apócrifos *nunca* fueron citados en el Nuevo Testamento por Cristo, ni por sus apóstoles, aunque ya existían la mayoría de ellos. Los católicos claman que Cristo y sus apóstoles sí los citaron diciendo que algunas enseñanzas de los Deuterocanónicos (libros apócrifos) son iguales a las enseñanzas del Nuevo Testamento. Pero en primer lugar las citas que usan del Nuevo Testamento en *ninguna* de ellas hay *referencia* alguna de los Deuterocanónicos. En el Nuevo Testamento no son citados por nombre, ni por Cristo ni por sus apóstoles, aunque ya existían la mayoría de ellos; y si aún estuvieran en lo correcto, los escritores del Nuevo Testamento *no se refirieron a ellos como escrituras*. Pablo, por ejemplo, era un hombre tan culto y versado aun en la literatura griega, que hasta citó a los mismos autores clásicos (Hechos 17:28; 1ra

Corintios 15:35; Tito 1:12); pero no por eso se deben considerar dichas obras como inspiradas divinamente.

También es sumamente importante el testimonio de Jesús con respecto al canon hebreo. Jesús se refiere a todo el Antiguo Testamento con la frase *“desde la sangre de Abel hasta la sangre de Zacarías”* (Mateo 23:35). Estos dos mártires se mencionan en Génesis 4:8-11 y 2da Crónicas 24:21. Génesis es el primer libro del canon hebreo, y Crónicas el último. En otras palabras, Jesús indicó que el canon del Antiguo Testamento abarca desde Génesis hasta Crónicas, lo que según nuestro orden de libros nosotros diríamos desde Génesis hasta Malaquías. Otro hecho además, que no puede ser pasado por alto es que Jesús también se refirió a todo el canon del Antiguo Testamento mencionando las tres primeras partes que la componen: *“La ley de Moisés, en los profetas y en los salmos”* (Lucas 24:44). Note que aquí Jesús tampoco incluyó estos libros apócrifos.

Por último, los mismos libros apócrifos afirman no ser inspirados. En el segundo libro de Macabeos 15:37-38 leemos: *“Yo también terminare aquí mismo mi relato. Si ha quedado bello y logrado en su composición, eso es lo que yo pretendía; si imperfecto y mediocre, he hecho cuanto me era*

posible” (Biblia de Jerusalén). ¿Acaso la Palabra de Dios puede ser *mediocre e imperfecta*? De ninguna manera (Salmo 19:7-10; 1ra Pedro 1:23-25). De este versículo se ve que el escritor se atribuye a sí mismo la autoría de dicha obra y que no está escribiendo por inspiración divina. Por lo tanto, esto sólo, es suficiente para probar que este libro no es inspirado divinamente. Es importante notar, que esta cita directa de uno de los apócrifos, se puede aplicar a todos los demás; ya que todos esos libros siempre se han manejado como un todo, un conjunto. Recordemos que, *“Toda palabra de Dios es limpia; Él es escudo a los que en él esperan. No añadidas a sus palabras, para que no te reprenda, Y seas hallado mentiroso”* (Proverbios 30:5-6).

[Por Hno. Félix M. González: Bulgadá Redactor.]

La Gran Comisión

Y llegando Jesús, les habló, diciendo: Toda potestad me es dada en el cielo y en la tierra.

Por tanto, id, y doctrinad a todos los Gentiles, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre, y del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo;

Enseñándoles que guarden todas las cosas que os he mandado: y he aquí, yo estoy con vosotros todos los días, hasta el fin del mundo. Amén.” — Mateo 28:18-20

Iglesia Bautista El Redentor

Carretera 755, Km. 0.1, Barrio Pitahaya

H C-1 Box 3418

Arroyo, Puerto Rico 00714

(787) 839-3669 y (787) 839-5792

Marcos A. Curet, Pastor



Rome Fell While Moralists Slept

By Joe Bayly

“Like environmentalists fighting for laws for clean air, we have the right to fight for laws against moral pollution.”

“You can’t legislate morality” has become the battle cry of libertarians in recent years whenever Christians have forsaken their trenches and spoken up for moral principles as a basis for civil laws.

Abortion, homosexuality, pornography — even prostitution — have been defended against any attack with those words.

Sadly, many Christians have accepted the argument and become silent about these evils. So the trenches are full of sleeping moralists, and victory has been won by fighting libertarians.

You may not be able to legislate morality, but our country has certainly legislated its approval of immorality. (This seems to me to be a close parallel to the total exclusion of Christian religion from public schools and the total freedom of expression given to advocates of agnostic religion — some call it secular humanism.)

And so we have seen homosexuality and abortion decriminalized during the

past twenty years. Prostitution is legal in much of Nevada. Only child sexual abuse and pornography — though on public display, even in neighborhood convenience stores are illegal. Even here libertarians are fighting for the right of adults to introduce children to sexual experience. Attacks on laws against incest are frequent. After all, we’re told, with new birth control methods the danger of genetic anomalies is practically eliminated, so what’s the harm. “You can’t legislate morality in the home, of all places.”

Besides, why should Christians force their moral ideas on the whole population through laws? Here’s why!

1. We believe that there is such a thing as moral pollution, a climate of decadence that characterized Rome and other civilizations in their declining years. As good citizens we have the right — even the responsibility — to fight for laws that will prohibit prostitution, pornography, abortion, homosexuality, and other evils. We have the responsibility to provide a safe moral climate for our children and

grandchildren to grow up in. This right is as clear as that of environmentalists to fight for laws that will insure clean air, water, and soil for present and future generations.

2. There are public consequences of the private acts of “consenting adults.” A prime example of this is AIDS. Open sewers lead to typhoid epidemics, homosexual practices have led to the AIDS epidemic.

I’m troubled when I read statistics that are aimed at exonerating homosexuals for the AIDS epidemic. Users of contaminated needles, hemophiliacs, and heterosexuals — not just homosexuals — are spreading the fatal disease, we’re told. But where does the virus come from that infects those innocent parties — even babies? Homosexuals. That there should be any question about closing public bathhouses in New York or San Francisco, places where homosexuals engage in promiscuous sex, angers me. This is as much a matter of public health as prohibiting drainage of sewage into our cities’ gutters.

Further, we Christians

are paying for the epidemic homosexuals have introduced with our tax and health-insurance dollars. No one has come forward with statistics related to the escalating cost of this disease. This would seem harsh and unsympathetic toward sufferers, as do my words. Sympathy and understanding have become prime virtues in our society. Do any citizens, including Christians, have the right to object to the decriminalization of a lifestyle that carries such heavy costs in human tragedy and economic loss?

3. From a Christian standpoint (but remember that Christians are also citizens of a democracy), we cannot escape the words of Jesus Christ about nations being judged. The United States is our nation as surely as Germany during the Third Reich was German Christians’ nation. Silence before the slaughter of Jews, silence before the slaughter of the unborn; either one, we believe, lays us open to the judgment of God. Therefore we have a duty to influence legislation and the courts by our murmurings, or thunderings,

(See **ROME** on page 12)



Story of the Caduceus

The caduceus is fast becoming a well-known emblem. Most Americans didn't know that such an emblem existed. Since well over a million young and stalwart Americans have given their lives, limbs, and health to defend us from our enemies, the caduceus, emblem of the medical corps and of physicians, is now highly esteemed.

The caduceus, pronounced ca-DOO-see-us, has a fascinating history.

It comes to us from Roman and Greek mythology. Mercury, whose Greek name was the god of wind, messengers, and of doctors. He wore a winged helmet and winged sandals; he escorted the sun, supposed to be a fiery chariot driven by Apollo, across the sky each day. He also carried a winged wand, gift of his mother, Venus, which had power to make peace between any quarreling or fighting creatures.

One day on his journey, Mercury found two snakes engaged in mortal combat. He touched them with his wand. At once they coiled

themselves neatly and quietly around his wand. He liked the effect of it so well that he commanded them to stay there ever after. Since Mercury was the god of physicians, the emblem of his wand with the two coiled snakes was chosen as a fitting symbol for them.

Like practically all religious myths, it is a grotesque distortion of a story taken from ancient Hebrew records written by the prophet, Moses, and found in the Holy Scriptures in the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Numbers.

The Israelites, after being delivered from bondage in Egypt, were found murmuring and complaining against the God who had so miraculously delivered them. As a punishment for their ingratitude, God sent fiery serpents, whose bite was fatal, to plague them. Though they were under such an evil curse for their sin, God provided a way of escape for any would choose it.

He told Moses to fashion a serpent of brass

and hang it upon a pole where all could see it. Thereafter any person who became a victim of the bite of the deadly serpent could be healed at once ... simply by looking at the serpent upon the pole.

But it is true that though the story of the caduceus comes down to us badly altered from its original form, the good news of God is still inherent in it.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Great Physician. He carries with Him power to heal the wounds of the afflicted ... to give cheer to the weary heart ... to lift the burdens of the oppressed. Moreover, He made peace with God for us, and brings sinners nigh to God by the blood of His cross.

By a simple look of faith the sinner, the one victimized by the deadly bite of Satan, is made whole of his malady ... and given peace, joy, gladness. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:134). □ □

ROME . . .

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and voting.

4. The prohibition of alcohol in the twenties is usually the example used to prove the dictum, "You can't legislate morality." I'm not sure Prohibition

was really a "noble experiment" that failed. It failed with the sophisticated and wealthy; I'm not sure it failed equally with the poor and middle class.

Regardless, I'd prefer the abolition of slavery rather than Prohibition as an example of moral change brought about by Christians. Nobody calls the war that brought freedom to slaves a holy war. Yet that freedom was a direct result of Christian intransigence in the face of a great social evil, a moral blot on our nation.

The writings of Jonathan Blanchard, first president of Wheaton College, reveal this intransigence, this unwillingness to accept half a loaf. In fact, he scorned any sort of compromise with slave holders.

We have become a compromising Christian community to such an extent that we are now compromised. We invite proponents of "evangelical" practicing homosexuality to speak at our training institutions and sacred assemblies. We seriously propose compromise on the abortion issue rather than excise the evil.

You can't legislate morality? Tell that to William Wilberforce, or to William Lloyd Garrison. It will have to be in heaven, unfortunately, when we're rationalizing our own inaction toward the evils of

(See **ROME** on page 14)



Prayer In the Oval Office

For those of us who sometimes find ourselves having doubts about our President, here is an excellent piece — worth every minute it takes to read it. This story is from Bruce Vincent of Libby, Montana who had gone to the White House with others to receive an award from the President. He writes:

“I’ve written the following narrative to chronicle the day of the award ceremony in DC. I’m still working on a press release but the White House press corps has yet to provide a photo to go with it. When the photo comes I’ll ship it out. When you get done reading this you’ll understand the dilemma I face in telling this story beyond my circle of close friends.

“Stepping into the Oval Office, each of us was introduced to the President and Mrs. Bush. We shook hands and participated in small talk. When the President was told that we were from Libby, Montana, I reminded him that Marc Racicot is our native son

and the President offered his warm thoughts about Governor Racicot. I have to tell you, I was blown away by two things upon entering the office.

“First, the Oval Office sense of ‘place’ is unreal. The President later shared a story of Russian President Putin entering the room prepared to tackle the President in a tough negotiation and upon entering, the atheist muttered his first words to the President and they were ‘Oh, my God.’

“I concurred. I could feel the history in my bones. Second, the man that inhabits the office engaged me with a firm handshake and look that can only be described as penetrating. Warm, alive, fully engaged, disarmingly penetrating, I was admittedly concerned about meeting the man. I think all of us have an inner hope that the most powerful man in our country is worthy of the responsibility and authority that we bestow upon them through our vote.

I admit that part of me was afraid that I would be let down by the moment — that the person and the place could not meet the lofty expectations of my fantasy world. This says nothing about my esteem for President Bush but just

my practical realization that reality may not match my ‘dream.’

“Once inside the office, President Bush got right down to business and standing in front of his desk, handed out the awards one at a time while posing for photos with the winners and Mrs. Bush. With the mission accomplished, the President and Mrs. Bush relaxed and initiated a lengthy, informal conversation about a number of things with our entire small group. He and the First Lady talked about such things as the rug in the office. It is traditionally designed by the First Lady to make a statement about the President, and Mrs. Bush chose a brilliant yellow sunburst pattern to reflect ‘hope.’ President Bush talked about the absolute need to believe that with hard work and faith in God there is every reason to start each day in the Oval Office with hope. He and the First Lady were asked about the impact of the Presidency on their marriage and, with an arm casually wrapped around Laura, he said he thought the place may be hard on weak marriages but that it had the ability to make strong marriages even stronger and that he was blessed with a strong one.

After about 30 or 35

minutes, it was time to go. By then we were all relaxed and I felt as if I had just had an excellent visit with a friend. The President and the First Lady made one more pass down the line of awardees, shaking hands and offering congratulations. When the President shook my hand I said, ‘Thank you Mr. President and God bless you and your family.’ He was already in motion to the next person in line, but he stopped abruptly turned fully back to me, gave me a piercing look, renewed the vigor of his handshake and said, ‘Thank you — and God bless you and yours as well.’

“On our way out of the office we were to leave by the glass doors on the west side of the office. I was the last person in the exist line. As I shook his hand one final time, President Bush said, ‘I’ll be sure to tell Marc hello and give him your regards.’

“I then did something that surprised even me. I said to him, ‘Mr. President, I know you are a busy man and your time is precious. I also know you to be a man of strong faith and I have a favor to ask of you.’ As he shook my hand he looked me in the eye and said, ‘Just name it.’ I told him

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PRAYER . . .

(Continued from page 13)

that my step-Mom was at that moment in a hospital in Kalispell, Montana, having a tumor removed from her skull and it would mean a great deal to me if he would consider adding her to his prayers that day. He grabbed me by the arm and took me back toward his desk as he said, 'So that's it. I could tell that something is weighing heavy on your heart today. I could see it in your eyes. This explains it.'

"From the top drawer of his desk he retrieved a pen and a note card with his seal on it and asked, 'How do you spell her name?' He then jotted a note to her while discussing the importance of family and the strength of prayer. When he handed me the card, he asked about the surgery and the prognosis. I told him we were hoping that it is not a recurrence of an earlier cancer and, that if it is, they can get it all with this surgery. He said, 'If it's okay with you, we'll take care of the prayer right now. Would you pray with me?' I told him yes and he turned to the staff that remained in the office and hand motioned the folks to step back or leave. He said, 'Bruce and I would like some private time for prayer.'

"As they left he turned back to me and took my hands in his. I was prepared

to do a traditional prayer stance — standing with each other with heads bowed. Instead, he reached for my head with his right hand and, pulling gently forward, he placed my head on his shoulder. With his left arm on my mid-back, he pulled me to him in a prayerful embrace. He started to pray softly. I started to cry. He continued his prayer for Loretta and for God's perfect will to be done. I cried some more. My body shook a bit as I cried and he just held tighter. He closed by asking God's blessing on Loretta and the family during the coming months. I stepped away from our embrace, wiped my eyes, swiped at the tears I'd left on his shoulder, and looked into the eyes of our president. I thanked him as best I could and told him that me and my family would continue praying for him and his.

"As I write this account down and reflect upon what it means, I have to tell you that all I really know is that his simple act left me humbled and believing. I so hoped that the man I thought him to be was the man that he is. I know that our nation needs a man such as this in the Oval Office. George W. Bush is the real deal. I've read Internet stories about the President praying with troops in hospitals and other such uplifting accounts. Each time I read them I hope them to be true and not an Internet perpetuated

myth. This one, I know to be true. I was there. He is real. He has a pile of incredible stuff on his plate each day — and yet he is tuned in so well to the here and now that he 'sensed' something heavy on my heart. He took time out of his life to care, to share, and to seek God's blessing for my family in a simple man-to-man, father-to-father, son-to-son, husband-to-husband, Christian-to-Christian prayerful embrace. He's not what I had hoped he would be. He is, in fact, so very, very much more.

"NOTE: If you decide to forward this story ... please do not add to it. Let Mr. Vincent's encounter stand as he wrote it."

[From the Maranatha Baptist Watchman.] □

ROME . . .

(Continued from page 12)

our times. "Had we lived then," we'll say, "we'd have stood with you."

Jesus said it: We dedicate memorials to dead prophets and kill living ones on our way home from the cemetery (Mt. 23:29-34).

WNR . . .

(Continued from page 8)

faith by high-ranking military officers project an image of a Christian nation waging war on non-Christians, both inside and outside the United States, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation said

Monday. This created an "internal national security issue every bit as great as the one we're fighting outwardly," said the organization's president, Mikey Weinstein. "The jihadists, the insurrectionists, everybody from the head of Hamas, Hizballah, the Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, they see us as invading American imperialists and crusaders," he told a news conference in Washington, D.C. — CNS

* * *

Atheists Demand Removal of Church Bells.

— Local officials vow that the bells of a Baptist church will continue to peal above the complaints of atheists. A sound system owned by the borough of Jewett City and the town of Griswold and housed in a church has prompted the Connecticut chapter of American Atheists Inc. to demand that the governments cut their ties with the bells. The group also wants the volume turned down. More than 75 residents pushed back Monday, demanding that the borough's Board of Warden and Burgesses not silence the sound system that plays the chimes heard throughout the area. Some officials say that barring a court order or legal advice to the contrary, the bells will continue to sound. "The

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bells will continue to toll until they stop us," Borough Warden Cynthia Kata said. Burgess Patrick Sullivan was defiant. "The borough is not gonna run," he said. "We're here, and we're gonna fight."

* * *

Elton John Calls for End of Organized Religion. — Pop star Elton John has called for a total ban on all organized religion, saying faiths promote hatred toward gay people and turn heterosexuals into "hateful lemmings." The British singer-composer, who is gay and linked in a British "civil relationship" with long-term partner David Furnish, said "the reality is that organized religion doesn't work." In an interview with the Observer of London newspaper's Music Monthly Magazine, John said, "I think religion has always tried to turn hatred toward gay people" and that it would be best to banish it completely." — RNS

* * *

Archdiocese Pays \$60 Million To Settle 45 Abuse Claims. — The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles has announced it will pay \$60 million to settle 45 sexual-abuse claims made against its clergy. The decision will

help bring to a close 8 percent of the 562 cases brought against the nation's largest archdiocese, and will cover two periods when the church had little or no insurance against sexual abuse claims. Each claimant is expected to receive \$1.33 million — among the largest amounts paid to sex abuse victims by the Roman Catholic Church. The claims involve 22 priests in the archdiocese of 4.3 million Catholics in Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. — RNS

* * *

Sears Advertises On Homosexual Channel. — The American Family Association is calling on Sears, which is owned by K-Mart Corporation, to pull its advertising from a homosexual cable network. LOGO, the newest channel from MTV Networks, bills itself a 24-hour cable network dedicated to programming for "lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered persons." Sears is supporting the network with two-minute infomercials that the pro-family groups says will "help the fledgling network get on firm financial ground"

* * *

Valedictorian Silenced Over Her Christian Faith Will Go to Court. — A high school student whose commencement

speech was cut off when she spoke about her Christian faith will have her case heard in a federal court. A federal judge in Nevada ruled Monday that a debate over freedom of religious expression in public school commencement ceremonies will go to court. The charges stem from a June 15 incident at Foothill High School in Henderson, Nevada, when school administrators cut off valedictorian Brittany McComb's commencement speech after she strayed from a pre-approved script. Earlier, they had removed from her speech references to the Bible and her faith. McComb described God's love as "something we all desire. It's unprejudiced, it's merciful, it's free, it's real, it's huge, and it's everlasting." Then the microphone was switched off. Amateur video of the ceremony showed graduates and their families cheering and booing as McComb continued to deliver her speech without the microphone. Audience members heckled administrators as McComb argued with them onstage. After the ceremony, attorneys with the Virginia-based Rutherford Institute filed

suit in the U.S. District Court in Nevada, accusing the administration of violating McComb's First Amendment right to freedom of speech and Fourteenth Amendment right to due process.

* * *

Catholic Church in Oregon OKs \$75 Million Settlement. — The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, will pay about \$75 million to settle at least 170 claims of sexual abuse by its priests as part of a revised bankruptcy reorganization plan, according to legal documents. The new plan was filed on Monday with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Portland. It calls for 143 people who claimed they were abused to receive about \$40.7 million. About \$13.75 million will be set aside for 26 people who may either settle or sue the archdiocese and \$20 million will cover future sex abuse claims. Insurance companies will pay \$51.75 million and the remainder will come from archdiocese holdings and loans. No parish or school property will be used to pay the settlement. □

**Character is what you are
in the dark**

The integrity of the upright shall guide them.
Proverbs 11:3

Fundamental Baptist Information Service

By David W. Cloud

P. O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48106

fbns@wayoflife.org

Rock & Roller Elton John Says He Would Ban Religion.

— Elton John, the homosexual rock star, says he would ban religion because of its alleged hatred. In an interview with Music Monthly Magazine he said: “I think religion has always tried to turn hatred towards gay people. Religion promotes the hatred and spite against gays. But there are so many people I know who are gay and love their religion. From my point of view, I would ban religion completely. Organized religion doesn’t seem to work. It turns people into really hateful lemmings and it’s not really compassionate” (“Elton John: Religion Promotes Hatred,” FoxNews.com, Nov. 11, 2006). This is a very sad and wrong-headed statement. It is also hypocritical. Elton John would be the first to say that religious people who judge his “lifestyle” are wrong to judge, but he obviously believes that he is perfectly free to judge them in the most severe manner. The true religion of the New Testament does not promote hatred toward homosexuals. While it condemns their homosexuality, it teaches that they are the

objects of God’s love and it offers them eternal life through the grace of Jesus Christ if they will repent and believe. It is not hatred to warn of danger, whether physical or moral, and the Bible plainly says that sinners who refuse to repent of their sin will be judged. If a bridge is out and someone stands beside the road and warns drivers to turn around before it is too late, that is not hatred, and that is exactly what the Bible-believing Christian is doing in regard to homosexuality. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

* * *

Biased Reporting On Iraq.

— The Prime Minister of Kurdistan in Iraq likens CCN International to the radical Arabic television network Al-Jazeera, saying they “are equally bad in

their coverage of the situation in Iraq” (“Iraqi Leader Disparages US Media Coverage,” CNN-News.com, Nov. 6, 2006). He said: “When I was in the United States recently and read the negative news in the Washington Post, New York Times and in the network TV broadcasts, I even wondered if things had gotten so bad since I had left that I shouldn’t return.” I have observed the same thing. We don’t have a television in our home, but I have occasion to view CNN in airports and elsewhere on my travels, and it spews forth a steady stream of anti-American, anti-Israel, anti-Christian propaganda. It is important that we understand that the mainstream news media outlets, both newspaper, radio, and television, are propagandizing an extremely liberal philosophy.

* * *

Ted Haggard’s Down- fall.

— The media, both secular and religious, has been filled for the last week with stories of the moral downfall of Ted Haggard, one of America’s most prominent Christian leaders. He was the pastor of the 14,000-member New Life church in Colorado Springs; the head of the National Association of Evangelicals; and the founder of the World Prayer Center. A homosexual named Mike Jones claimed that Haggard was his regular partner, and

though Haggard denied the accusation at first, he eventually admitted his ‘dark side’ and was fired from the pastorate. A letter from Haggard was read to the New Life Church on November 5 in which the founding pastor admitted that he is “guilty of sexual immorality” and “a deceiver and a liar.” He said, “There is a part of my life that is so repulsive and dark that I’ve been warring against it all of my adult life.” Haggard is a Charismatic, a New Evangelical, and a radical ecumenist. In October 2005 Haggard said, “New Life doesn’t try to ‘convert’ Catholics” and “the church would never discourage its members from becoming Catholic or attending Catholic Mass” (Berean Call, Jan. 2006). We would like to say that Haggard’s carnal “non-judgmental” philosophy was the cause of his downfall, but the sad truth of the matter is that immorality is not something that happens only to doctrinal compromisers. In recent years fundamental Baptist preachers have also resigned for reasons such as child molestation, adultery, and drunkenness. Whether or not Haggard was ever truly born again is something that only the Lord knows, and there is a good chance that he is not; but the Bible teaches

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us that even born again people can sin grievously by yielding to the old fleshly nature that we inherited from Adam. The apostle Paul described this internal warfare and taught that the victory is through walking in the Spirit: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16-17). By the way, it is puzzling to me that New Life Church and the National Association of Evangelicals would dismiss Haggard for his moral disobedience when they completely ignored his spiritual disobedience. The Bible, on the other hand, soundly condemns both.

* * *

Presbyterian Church Court Dismisses Homosexual Marriage Case.

— On November 16 a tribunal of the Presbyterian Church USA dismissed all charges against a female "minister" who conducted a lesbian "marriage" ceremony in 2005. Even though the action was contrary to denominational law, the tribunal dismissed the case on a procedural error, claiming that the investigating committee did

not bring the charge by the one-year deadline (the charge was filed four days late). As a result "Rev." Janet Edwards is free to continue her role as an ordained Presbyterian minister. In June 2005 Edwards performed a marriage ceremony for Nancy McConn, a Presbyterian, and Brenda Cole, a Buddhist. "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14). "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24).

* * *

South African Parliament OKs Homosexual "Marriages".

— On November 14 the South African parliament approved a bill that recognizes homosexual "marriages." The vote was 230 to 41. The bill now goes to the National Council of Provinces, and it is expected to be approved by that body and then signed into law by President Thabo Mbeki. Well did Jesus liken the time of His return to the days of Lot (Luke 17:28). Lot lived in Sodom and was 'vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" there (2 Peter 2:7). The city was given over to homosexual practices, and the day that Lot went out of Sodom God destroyed it with fire and brimstone from heaven

(Luke 17:29).

* * *

Persecution Round-up.

— On November 25 two professing Christians were sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined 25,000 rupees (US \$411) for allegedly burning some pages of the Koran under Pakistan's blasphemy law. The sentence was imposed despite the lack of evidence. Khalil Tahir, the men's attorney, said he was disappointed by the judge's decision since there was "no direct evidence against the two men who rather seem to be the victims of a personal vendetta. We believe that the verdict is the result of pressures by extremists. This explains why it took four days for the court to reach its decision" (Asia News, Nov. 27, 2006). In Uzbekistan a Baptist church was raided on August 27 and massive fines were imposed on six people, while a Pentecostal church was raided on November 13 (Forum 18, Nov. 28, 2006). The authorities there have confiscated and then burned Bibles and other religious literature. In Uzbekistan, "participating in prayer meetings of unregistered groups (even if they asked to be registered) is considered illegal and consequently punished. Baptist groups often refuse to ask for registration because they believe it is

unwarranted interference by the State" (Asia News, Nov. 28). In Xinjiang, China, a Christian woman named Tian Maishi, a 53-year-old retired English teacher, was arrested on October 18. She was taken from her home and jailed for "illegal evangelism" and "engaging in superstitious fraudulent activities" (Christian Newswire, Nov. 22, 2006).

* * *

Christians Killed In Iraq.

— Professing Christians continue to be targeted and killed in Iraq. This year alone 14 Assyrian Christian women in Baghdad were kidnapped and murdered on August 13, an Orthodox pastor was kidnapped on October 9 and decapitated two days later, a car bomb targeted Christians on October 4, and one 14 year old boy was crucified in Albasra and another was decapitated in Baquba on October 21. It is not only the "extremist" Al Qaida types of Muslims that persecute Christians in the Middle East; it is also the "ordinary" Muslims who take the Koran seriously. And Muslims in the Middle East not only hate Christians and Jews; they hate one another. In Iraq the Sunni Muslims (Saddam Hussein's Baath party is mostly Sunni) hate the Shiite Muslims and the Shiites

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The Commission Was Given To The Church

By O. W. Taylor

The nature and the performance of the duties set forth in the Commission require the idea that the Commission was given to the church.

If given to the apostles only, the Commission ended when they died. But the duties enjoined were to continue “until the end of the age.” This called for an organized body to carry on through the centuries after the apostles and after other workers died.

There was a church before the Commission was given. “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom” (Jn. 3:29). “The bridegroom” was Christ. “The friend of the bridegroom” was John the Baptist. What was “the bride,” if not the church in its initiatory stage? Was “the bride” non-existent when “the friend of the bridegroom” said, “He that *hath* the bride is the bridegroom,” referring to the time then present? Evidently the bride was existent. This same body was later called “the church which was at Jerusalem.”

Jesus gave “commandments unto the apostles when he had chosen” (Acts 1:2). One of these was the Commission. The apostles were “*set ... in the church*” (1 Cor. 12:28). *The apostles corporately*

considered were the initial church. To it the Commission was given.

The duties in the Commission could be performed “unto the end of the age” only by an organized body carrying on when individual workers died. Only such a body could furnish the necessary workers and support for the program. Left to people unorganized, the work would not and could not be done. The body which meets the specifications is the church.

“Make disciples” carries, of course, an individual responsibility. But to “make disciples of *all nations*,” and that “*unto the end of the age*,” requires the idea of an organized body, the church, sponsoring the program.

“Baptizing them” is enjoined. If this was entrusted simply to individuals, then no church as an agency in relation to it is in view in the Commission and no baptism into a church is indicated. But this conflicts with 1 Corinthians 12:13, which teaches that the New Testament idea is baptism into a church. It is logically unthinkable, therefore, that Jesus commissioned men to baptize independently of the church. And the duty of making and baptizing disciples

among “all nations” to “the end of the age” requires the concept of church sponsorship of the program which brings the duty into exercise.

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Admittedly, one of the things included here is the Lord’s Supper. With men reasonably instructed in the Word of God, the proposition calls for no argument that no individual has the right and authority to administer the Lord’s Supper “on his own.” Then neither does he have the right and authority to baptize “on his own.” These duties and the other things in the Commission were entrusted to the church as the organized and authorized body to carry on the program through the centuries.

Only the church is the sponsoring body logically its into the concept of the Commission considered as a whole. □

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hate the Sunnis, and the Sunnis hate the Kurds and the Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds all hate Christians and Jews. Christians in Iraq have petitioned President Bush to help them against the oppression of Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds alike.

Pelvic Thrust Dance

At Saddleback Church. — The following is from the Extreme Theology website for December 9, 2006: “This is a video of a Saddleback Worship Concert. There are teenage girls doing dance moves that include Pelvic Thrusts. Is this really worship to the one true God of the Bible or is this worship to one of those pagan sex gods? You be the judge? You can go to the original *YouTube* post. After seeing this, Is there any wonder why Saddleback’s worship is so appealing and attractive to unbelievers? Saddleback is offering jiggly-dancing and sexual stimulation at church and calling it worship. ‘Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire’ (Matthew 7:17-19).”

Joel Osteen Voted One of 10 Most Fascinating People.

— Joel Osteen, pastor of a megachurch in Houston, Texas, has been selected by Barbara Walters as one of the 10 Most Fascinating People for 2006. This is the first time that a pastor has appeared on the annual

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They'll Do It Every Time

The preacher had just concluded a hot and scathing sermon on the sin of swearing. He had stated several times that he knew of one of his members who was guilty.

The service ended! The worshippers one by one filed out at the back door.

The first was a woman suspected of using foul language. With a red and angry face she exclaimed, "I shall never darken this door again."

Before the astonished preacher could recover from the blast, another said, "Well, brother, If I had known you were about last week, I would have been

more careful about my language."

A third said, "I think that you might at least have come to me privately rather than telling it to the whole church."

A fourth remarked, angrily, "I was never so embarrassed in my whole life."

Then came the real culprit — the one whom the preacher had in mind as he spoke. With a bland and cherubic smile, he grasped the preacher's hand and pumped vigorously, saying, "Brother, that's what I call real preaching. You certainly poured it on them today!"

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television special. Osteen focuses on a "positive" message and refuses to preach on such things as repentance and judgment. You won't hear a red-hot sermon on hell, such as those that Jesus preached, at Lakewood Church. Walters said it was Osteen's positive message and huge congregation that led her to pick him. An uncompromising Bible preacher will never be rewarded by this wicked world. The world did not love Jesus 2,000 years ago and it does not love those who are faithful to His message today. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so

did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:19-20).

* * *

Saddleback Church Missions Team Using Atheist Song "Imagine". — A video that contains a graphical slide show from an Argentina missionary

trip by Saddleback Church members features John Lennon's atheistic song "Imagine." The trip, made August 1-12, 2006, was part of Rick Warren's P.E.A.C.E. program, and the video was published on YouTube. The soundtrack uses several pieces of music, including John Lennon's original recording of Imagine. The lyrics say: "Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us. Above us only sky." There is no separation from the world at Saddleback Church. Practically any sorry piece of rock or rap music is fine as long as it is accompanied by a thin veneer of religiosity. Last week we reported in the Friday Church News Notes on a Saddleback Worship concert that featured teenage girls doing immoral dance moves. On April 17, 2005, when Rick Warren announced his P.E.A.C.E. program to Saddleback Church, he sang Jimi Hendrix's drug-drenched song "Purple Haze" to the

congregation, accompanied by his "praise and worship" band! He said he had wanted to do that for a long time. There has never been anything innocent or pure about rock and roll. From its inception it has had two grand themes: licentiousness (sex, drugs, etc.) and rebellion ("I can do whatever I want any old time"), and this is nowhere more evident than in the music of Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles. There is no excuse for this action on the part of an influential pastor who should set a standard of godliness instead of carnal foolishness. I want to say again publicly, Shame on Rick Warren, and shame on his fellow Southern Baptist Convention leaders for not loudly and unequivocally rebuking him for such worldly shenanigans. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

**You can win
More friends with
Your Ears than with
Your Mouth**

*"Let every man be swift to hear,
slow to speak, slow to wrath"*

James 1:19b



Bruises For Our Iniquities

A. C. Dixon, a Baptist preacher who was born in the mountains of Virginia, relates the following:

Years ago there was a certain school in our section whom no teacher could handle. The boys were so rough that the teachers resigned.

A young, grey-eyed teacher applied, and the old director scanned him then said, "Young father, do you know what you are asking? An awful beaten! Every teacher we have had for years has had to take it." He replied "I'll risk it."

Finally he appeared for duty. One big fellow, "Tom," whispered, "I won't need any help. I can lick him myself."

The teacher said, "Good morning, boys, we have come to conduct school!" They yelled at the top of their voices. "Now, I want a good school, but

confess I do not know how unless you help me. Suppose we have a few rules. You tell me and I will write them on the blackboard."

One fellow yelled, "No stealing!" Another yelled, "On time." Finally ten rules appeared.

"Now," said the teacher, "law is no good unless there is a penalty attached. What shall we do with the one who breaks them?"

"Beat him across the back ten times without his coat on." "That is pretty severe, boys. Are you ready to stand by it?"

Another yelled, and the teacher said, "School come to order!"

In a day or so "Big Tom" found his dinner was stolen. Upon inquiry the thief was located — a little hungry fellow, about ten. The next morning the teacher announced. "We have found the thief and he must be punished according to your rule — ten stripes across the back. Jim, come up here."

The little fellow, trembling, came up slowly with a big coat fastened up to the neck and pleaded, "Teacher, you can lick me as hard as you like, but please don't make me take my coat off!"

"Take that coat off; you

helped make the rules!

"O teacher, don't make me." He began to unbutton and what did the teacher behold? Lo, the lad had no shirt on, but strings for braces over his little bony body.

"How can I whip this child?" Thought he, "But I must do something if I keep this school." Everything was quiet as death. "How come you to be without a shirt, Jim?"

He replied, "My father died and mother is very poor. I have only one shirt to my name, and she is washing that today, and I wore my brother's big coat to keep warm."

The teacher, with rod in hand, hesitated. Just then "Big Tom": jumped to his feet and said, "Teacher, if you don't object, I will take Jim's licking for him."

"Very well, there is a certain law that one can become a substitute for another. Are you all agreed?"

Off came Tom's coat, and after five hard strokes the rod broke. The teacher bowed his head in his hands, and thought, "How can I finish this awful task?"

Then he heard the entire school sobbing, and what did he see? Little Jim had reached up and caught Tom with both arms around the neck. "Tom, I am sorry I stole your dinner, but I was awful hungry. Tom, I'll love you till I die for taking my licking for me! Yes I'll love you forever!"

Sinner friend, you have broken every rule and deserve eternal punishment. But Jesus Christ took your scourging for you, died in your stead, and now offers to clothe you with His garments of salvation. Will you not fall at His feet and tell Him you will love and follow Him forever?

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." □ □

**It has been said that
You can tell the character of a nation
By the songs it sings.
Is it that bad?**

Earnestly Contend for The Faith

By T. T. Eaton

We are to “contend earnestly” for the truth. The Greek is *epi-agonize* and it is the strongest word in any language, so far as I know, to express intensity of struggle. It occurs in the New Testament only here (Jude 3). We are to *agonize* (“Strive in Lk. 13:24) to enter the strait gate, but we are to *epi-agonize* for “the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.”

This, then, is the supreme struggle of our existence. It is more important that “the faith” be maintained than anything else, yes, than even our own salvation as individuals. We are to *agonize* for the latter, but to *epi-agonize* for the former. We are not to let error alone, we are to attack it with all our force and contend against it with all our strength. Of course, we must use no wrong means or methods, but our whole power should be exerted against error and in favor of the faith.

The oft-quoted utterance of Gamaliel has done great harm. “Let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will

come to naught, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; but haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

There is not a heresy but has sought shelter behind this utterance. And it is quoted as if it were Scripture, and therefore binding. Luke, by inspiration, simply tells us that Gamaliel said this, *but nowhere is it intimated that the saying was right.* All the Bible is responsible for is that Gamaliel did say it. Many things are quoted in the Bible that are not Scripture at all. We are told what the devil said on certain occasions, but never is a statement of the devil endorsed. Neither is this statement of Gamaliel approved.

Men do not argue in such fashion about the practical affairs of life. A farmer does not let the weeds alone on the plea that “if they be of man they will come to naught, while if they be of God, I cannot destroy them, lest haply I be found even to fight against God.” When the yellow fever appeared in New Orleans, the medical

authorities did not accept Gamaliel and say: “Let it alone, for if it be of man it will come to naught, but if it be of God we cannot check it, lest, haply we be found even to fight against God.” *Such superlative nonsense is tolerated only in the matter of highest importance; only in religion.* All that weeds can do is to prevent a crop. All that yellow fever can do is to destroy life; while error destroys the soul. Hence, while we are to contend against evil that is hurtful, we are to *epi-agonize* against error.

Whenever a man earnestly acts up to his light, God will give him more light. Earnest, fiery Saul of Tarsus *epi-agonizing* for his faith is met and converted, but complaisant Gamaliel is not saved. There is no hope for such as Gamaliel, but Paul is blessed and crowned. One Paul is worth more to the world than an acre of Gamaliels.

Never was there a time when there was greater need to epi-agonize for the faith than now. Skepticism has be-

come more aggressive than ever. For a time infidelity walked the earth in haughty exclusiveness. But now infidelity has professed religion and joined the church. Now it occupies pulpits and theological professors’ chairs, and the attack is from within. They seek to evaporate the faith into moonlit mist. They teach an inspiration that does not inspire, and atonement that does not atone, and a salvation that does not save.

Their chief point of attack is the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. They emphasize this incarnation and seek to substitute the gospel of the manger for the gospel of the cross. They are willing to believe in Christ, yes, but not in Christ upon the cross, bearing “our sins in his own body on the tree.” It is the same old cry of the priests and rulers who stood upon Calvary — “Come down from the cross and we will believe.” — Copied from the book, “**Faith and The Faith.**” □

**Hatred is the View of
Narrow Souls**

The Story of Amazing Grace

By Clyde Turner

John Newton, the celebrated English preacher and hymn writer, realized that he was a trophy of divine grace. A while before his death, a brother minister came in to have breakfast with him. Family prayers followed the meal. Mr. Newton's sight had almost failed, and he was unable to read. He sat and listened to the friend as he read the 15th chapter of First Corinthians. When this tenth verse was read, "But by the grace of God I am what I am," Mr. Newton began to speak.

"I am not what I ought to be. Ah! how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil, and would cleave to what is good. I am not what I hope to be. Soon, soon, shall I put off, with mortality, all sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say I am not what I once was, a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, "By the grace of God I am what I am." John Newton could say that with conviction and joy.

What had he once been? When he was seven years old he lost his

mother. A little later, he went to sea with his father and learned all the evil of the seaman's life. Still later, he was forced into the navy. He deserted, but was caught and stripped and beaten, until the blood flowed from his wounds. He had now become a hardened infidel. He fell in with African slave traders. He went on from bad to worse, until he himself was sold as a slave. It was a Negro woman who bought him, and she gloried in her power over him. She made him depend for his food on the crusts she tossed under the table. He had fallen to the depths of human

degradation. And yet, the grace of God found him, and saved him, and made of him one of the ministers of Christ and a writer of hymns that have stirred the hearts of men the world over. Truly he could say, "I am not what I once was." And truly could he say, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

No wonder he wrote the words of that old hymn:

"Amazing grace, How sweet the sound,

"That saved a wretch like me!

"I once was lost, but now am found; 'Was blind, but now I see."

When God Came Down

An eminent naturalist believed in a "Supreme Being," but found it impossible to believe that the God who had created the wonders of the universe could be known by man.

One day as he was walking in his garden, he came upon an ant-hill covered over with a swarm of ants that seemed greatly agitated as his shadow fell upon them. "If only those ants knew how kindly I feel toward them," he thought, "they would not be disturbed at my presence."

Following this line of thought, he found himself wondering if a man could ever communicate his thoughts to ants. "No," he decided. "That is impossible for a human to teach an ant what he is like, and to convey to them his thoughts, he would have to become an ant."

Then, like a flash of lightning came this thought — "That is it exactly. The God of this universe, infinitely high as He is above us in His being and in His thoughts, had to become a man to teach men to know Him and to know His thoughts!"

And there in the quiet of his garden, one who had long rejected the gospel record bowed in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, exclaiming in holy awe, with Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God!"

Amazing Grace

TRADITIONAL

A - ma-zing grace How sweet the sound That saved a - wretch like me!
 man - y dangers, toils and snares I have al - ready come 'Tis grace
 that brought me here this hour And grace will lead me home. When we've been
 found; Was blind, but now I see. 'Twas grace that brought me here this
 far And grace will lead me home. When we've been there ten thousand years,
 Bright shining as the sun, How pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The
 We've no less days to sing God's praise Than hour I when we
 first be - lieved! Through first be - lieved! Through

BONES . . .

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prevents shock.

The first two vertebrae at the top differ from the rest, since they are given a special function of carrying the head. The first bone is called atlas, because it bears the skull, as the giant Atlas was said to have carried the earth. The second is called the axis, because it has a bony peg around which the atlas carrying the skull revolves like a railroad car on a revolving platform. These two bones form a complex combined joint. When we nod the head in assent, the skull moves in a see-saw manner on the runners of the atlas, much like a rocking chair. On the other hand, if the head is rotated from side to side, it is being turned on the pivot-joint between the atlas and the axis as on a rotating platform.

The spinal column is, after all, not actually a column, but more like a spiral spring bent into the shape of the letter S. At birth, the backbone is straight but gradually the curves develop. These are three in number: a large backward curve in the middle, and smaller ones above and below, the two exactly equal to the larger curve. This curvature is an admirable contrivance. The large curve provides more space for the lungs and heart in the chest, and the column is strengthened

against shock from jumping or running, all the jars being absorbed and prevented from reaching the head. Without the curve, terrific headaches would be the common lot, and an awkward jump might easily result in a skull fracture.

The presence of the three curves divides the weight of the three masses of organs in the body. The upper sector carries the head, the middle one, the thoracic viscera, and the lower one the abdominal organs. In a straight backbone, the weight would increase from the top downwards, resulting in too great a load at the bottom.

The curves protect the spine against fracture. A tall pole will break easily, but a doubly bent spring yields when subjected to force. So perfect is the arrangement that most people pass through life without knowing they have a backbone, which carries the all-important spinal cord, and they seldom give a thought to the possibility of injury to the hundreds of nerves passing out of the column and apparently exposed to constant danger of pressure or more serious hurt.

Remember then, these several features: the astonishing articulations by which the bones touch one another in many places but invariably fit absolutely accurately; the ligaments which bind each pair together; and the wholly wonderful perforation of the individual bones to carry the

spinal cord without injury of the slightest degree, although it is one of the most delicate structures in the body; and then the strange curvature — all these revealing again the wisdom of a Creator.

In fish, where great flexibility of the spine is required to permit lateral movements of the body in swimming, each vertebra is excavated into two conical cups, the apices of which are nearly or quite continuous. The hollow space between each two contiguous vertebrae is occupied by a soft gelatinous substance, and the adjoining vertebrae are bound together by an elastic membrane, which allows great freedom of movement, and aids in economizing muscular effort.

In snakes, where similar flexibility is essential, but greater strength and precision of movement are also indispensable, each vertebra has a smooth ball in front, filled into a corresponding excavation or socket at the back part of the adjoining vertebra which lies in front of it. Thus each pair of vertebra form a complete ball-and-socket joint, permitting free movement in every direction. As snakes are dependent on the movements of their ribs for progression, so these bones are united to the spine by joints, and are moved freely by powerful muscles in every direction.

Birds have some special arrangements. The

cervical or neck vertebrae vary in number according to the length of the neck, and the required flexibility is obtained by omitting the elastic discs of cartilage between each pair. Lower down, however, where an unyielding support for the wings and muscles which move them is needed, the vertebrae of the chest form a continuous chain of bones, firmly united.

Here again we have mystery piled on mystery. Before birth the tiny cells, millions of them that are to be turned into one take their appointed places, skull, vertebrae, arm and leg bones, pelvis, etc., changing from cartilage to bone after birth, growing its length and size until they reach their appointed stature, carrying out their destined work with remarkable success. Their manner of growing and developing — everything about them — is the result of innate power of which we know nothing.

Is it any wonder that Solomon, the Preacher, wrote in Ecclesiastes 11:5: "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even, so, thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."

How true that is. We know not, we understand not "the works of God." These wonders cannot be explained except we believe them to be performed

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47 YEARS . . .

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month.

As you know, today it is no longer being mailed by means of the post office but is now on the Internet where it is available free all over the world. We have no way of knowing how many read it each month, but at one time we learned that each month we had around 20,000 “hits” from over 30 countries.

How long will **The Baptist Challenge** continue? Only God knows. I am now over 81 years-of-age, and though I have had to slow down somewhat, I will continue to publish **The Baptist Challenge** as long as I am able to do so. Though I do not preach as often as I did in the past, I still am active in the ministry.

As most of you know, I was a missionary in Old México for 13 years before returning to the States to become pastor of the Central Baptist Church of Little Rock. I retired as pastor of the Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas in 1990, so I am no longer pastoring, but I am still active in preaching though not as much as in the past. This past year I spoke at several Bible Conferences. In addition I was invited to preach for the special anniversary services of a church in Elliott, Mississippi where Bro. Cecil Fayard is pastor, as well as a church that we

helped organize in Arroyo, Puerto Rico some 22 (I think) years ago. These services in Puerto Rico were all in the Spanish language. I baptized their pastor, Bro. Marcos Curet, some years ago, and helped in his ordination and call to be pastor of the church there in Arroyo. We had excellent attendance at the services with over 100 present, including the Mayor of the city.

I ask each of our readers to continue to remember me in your prayers as I plan to be active in the Lord’s work as long as God enables me to do so, including the publishing of **The Baptist Challenge**, and though I am 81 years of age, my health is still good and I am still able to travel and preach, and I hope to do so until the Lord comes or He chooses to take me home.

Thanks for the prayers of all of our readers, and we wish each of you a Prosperous and Happy New Year of 2007. □

BONES . . .

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by the Creator of all things. Every bone in our bodies cries out, “*There is a God.*”

While this knowledge of the existence of God is basic and fundamental, it is not enough to get us to the courts of heaven. We are not given salvation and eternal life because we accept this fact. There is

yet another consideration which must receive our attention. It is our attitude toward Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God has arranged that there can be no entrance to heaven except in and through His Son. And neither is it sufficient to believe that Jesus Christ lived on earth, or even that He was God incarnate.

All that is good, but it does not go far enough. God’s plan was for Christ to die as a Substitute of guilty sinners, who then can profit from this sacrifice by making it a personal affair, accepting the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and linking up with Him. So many are carelessly hoping that somehow or other a kind and loving Heavenly Father will overlook the neglect to do this, excusing that insult to His Son, and after all, will permit every one to have everlasting life.

There is no reason to hope for anything like that. God cannot lie, and He has

said, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Also, He has repeated over and over again that Jesus must be taken into the life, made part of our life, then His blood can cleanse from sin. The issue is clear-cut and definite. It may be hard for you to come to the point of surrender — to be willing to give up the world — but if you do not trust Him implicitly, the result is eternal separation from God, and that is *Hell*. Do you say you cannot turn to Christ, relinquish the world and its allurements? That may be true of yourself, but you cannot afford to sign your own death warrant, and to decide that sin and the service of the Devil are to be preferred to salvation and the joy and glory of eternity with God. By no stretch of the imagination, is it possible to discover any sense of reason in a decision like that. Why not take Him? HE’S WONDERFUL!

[Next month: Your Skull and Other Bones.]

Is One Church As Good As Another?

Is a church that teaches for doctrines the commandments of men as good as a church that teaches for doctrine the commandments of God?

Is a church that was founded by a man (or woman) as good as the church that Jesus built?

Is a church that teaches salvation by works as good as one that teaches salvation by grace?

Is a church that majors on man’s plans and programs as good as one that majors on God’s plan and program as found in the New Testament?