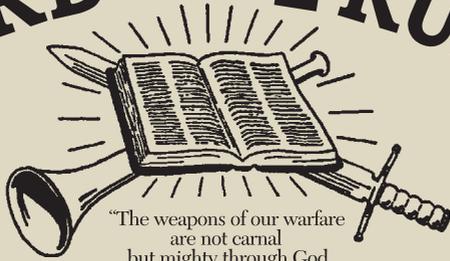


# The SWORD and TRUMPET

“Blow ye  
the Trumpet  
and warn  
the People.”



“The weapons of our warfare  
are not carnal  
but mighty through God  
to the pulling down of strongholds.”

“Take the Sword  
of the Spirit  
which is  
The Word of God.”

## *Guidelines*



*JOSEPH C. DRIVER*

SEPTEMBER 2006

\$1.50

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# The Sword and Trumpet

Founded in 1929 by Geo. R. Brunk I

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SEPTEMBER 2006

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**SWORD AND TRUMPET GUIDELINES** monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for “the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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# Person of the Month:

## Joseph C. Driver (1867-1964)

Joseph Casper Driver, one of six boys and four girls, and the fifth child of Daniel Funk Driver and Sarah (Branner) Driver, was born February 13, 1867, in Henry County, Illinois. Brother Driver's parents and their three children had moved to Illinois from Virginia during the Civil War because they were conscientious objectors, hence, Joseph's birth in Illinois rather than Virginia.

The family then moved to Missouri, near Versailles, where Joseph attended public school. Wanting to further his education, he entered the State Teacher's College in Warrensburg but had to return home due to illness and was not able to finish his schooling.

For a short time he worked on a farm in Johnson County. While there he attended an evangelistic meeting at which Brother J. S. Coffman was preaching. God moved in his heart and brought about Joseph's conversion. Brother Driver was then 25 years of age.

Returning to his home congregation of Mt. Zion, he became the Sunday school superintendent. He also began a friendship with Anna Kauffman. At the age of 29 Joseph married Anna on September 17, 1896. Just one month later Brother Driver was ordained to assist his preacher father, replacing his father-in-law, David D. Kauffman, who passed away one month before Joseph and Anna were married.

During their marriage God blessed the Drivers with six children—3 boys and 3 girls.

Joseph served the pastorate of his home congregation for ten years but due to his wife's ill health they moved to LaJunta, Colorado. For three years Brother Driver served with other Mennonite pastors in extension work in two nearby communities. As a result a new congregation was established in East Holbrook.

In 1908 Joseph and some other ministers were asked to go to Larned, Kansas, to serve in the Mennonite congregation there. During these years in Kansas the Drivers experienced the death of their ten-year-old son, Menno. Anna also had a serious operation, which prompted them to return to Versailles, Missouri, in 1911. A year later Joseph was called to pastor the Bethel congregation near Garden City. They then bought a farm close to the Bethel church in February of that year and by fall Brother Driver was ordained bishop for the congregation. For a while he also served as bishop for other congregations in Missouri, the Ozarks, Arkansas, and Kansas City.

In 1943, at the age of 76, Joseph sold his farm and he and Anna moved back to Garden City while still pastoring at Bethel. In 1947 the Bethel congregation joined with the nearby congregation of Sycamore Grove. That same year the Drivers moved to LaJunta, Colorado, to be near their oldest daughter. Joseph and his wife joined the East Holbrook congregation where they fellowshiped for the rest of their lives. Twelve years later their daughter passed away. Joseph was 88 years of age at the time of her death.

Over the years of his ministry Brother Driver took an interest in conferences and ministerial meetings. He served on many committees. He also served as moderator of the Missouri-Kansas Conference. He was also active in the mergers and reorganizations of various conferences west of the Mississippi. He also gave counsel in the formation of the Rocky Mountain Conference in 1961. *(continued on page 3)*

# On Vanity, Values, and Virtue

by Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Does our Pennsylvania state legislature need more work? Lately someone proposed a law that would prohibit public schoolteachers from “indoctrinating” students. Some church people might find that both amusing and strange, for it seems that certain churches have cut out doctrine for some time, already.

The church flounders over Bible doctrine, but the state legislature is different. Legislators deal with political issues. Their concern about “indoctrination” has to do with giving the wrong slant in state-funded schools.

In the proposed law, the teacher could *not* give his own personal ideas or values in the material presented. What is the public schoolteacher supposed to do? Give just bare facts? When values are removed from bare facts, does anything of value remain? Such a ruling could result in teachers being positively neutral and students becoming neutrally negative. When that happens, it moves the issue from values to vanity.

Espousing values was about as high as our nation could go in academics and morals from 1960-2006. Prior to that, virtue had the high ground in Europe and in North America. The higher level of living held out to the general population was based on virtue as taught in the Bible. Nobility came as a result.

Coming into the 1960s, virtue was seen as too confusing, as holding to too few options, and as being too rigid. As our world came into the modern mode

of plurality, it was soothingly massaged with values. Values felt more free. Values allowed for personal input. Values provided for a more flexible faith. Values gave us a no-fault works ethic that justify, mind you, almost any sin. America felt pretty good about having cleverly developed the perfect “self-effectualized” citizen based on values, not virtues.

Now the state wants to interfere by saying that the next generation cannot even be “indoctrinated” with our self efforts and the teaching of how much better off we are as “free thinkers.” Apparently, even evolution isn’t far enough away from God. More help seems to be on the way to make ours a tetherless society that can go farther without God than with Him.

Prior to 1960 (music revolution time via the Beatles), virtues based on the Bible were unashamedly held up from generation to generation. A definite shift changed all that as America tilted toward more personal freedoms. The secularization of public schools became much more pronounced as the schools consolidated into larger districts. This resulted in much larger centralized schools run by professionals. Secular values quickly replaced Bible-based virtues. The great debate currently going on about evolution versus Intelligent Design is a disappointing result of the earlier loss of values. Earlier it was virtueless sex education in the guise of progress, fostered by independent thinking and decisions made by self-determination.

Now values themselves are “up for grabs.” In the academic tug-of-war, tolerance wins. Values can change as culture changes, as norms change, as tolerance allows a shift toward prevailing trends of thought. As former President Bill Clinton said in the midst of his administration (1993), “Sometimes all of the answers have to come from the values that speak to us from within.” No doubt, the church people who heard Mr. Clinton’s speech that day in the Church of God in Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, were pleased. Imagine, if you can, the wide latitude of behavior that allows.

Jesus said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts . . .” (Matthew 15:19). And God had earlier said that “every imagination of the thoughts of [man’s] heart is only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Man’s answers from within say predictably just what man prefers to hear.

Some of the general population’s values are commendable. The problem is in mixing nobility and carnality, graciousness and selfishness, truth and error. The prevailing mood of tolerance will scarcely allow anyone to be sure about what is right, nor judgmental about what is wrong.

Bible-based virtues define a clearer line of deportment. Virtues have elevating qualities in them that contribute to society wherever they are lived out and expressed. They are never out of date, never inappropriate, and always commend any individual who consistently lives by them.

*The Bottom Line* is: The higher road of virtue cannot be legislated. It is God’s gift to those who are born again and who love Him with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. Virtue grows as we grow in Christ and rises as we rise in newness of life. ■

—Reprinted with permission from the *Calvary Messenger*, June 2006

**PERSON OF THE MONTH . . . cont’d.**

Mentally alert until the end of his life, Joseph Driver was always interested in the work of the church. He was a good example of faithfulness in the work of the Lord that was an inspiration to others.

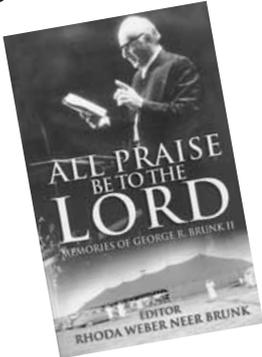
Brother Driver went to be with his Lord on April 8, 1964, at the age of 97.

—Gail L. Emerson

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## **From the Editor's Desk**



Paul M. Emerson

# **Our Frantic Pace: Self-Inflicted or Necessary Evil?**

Often I find myself running hard in the tasks of life and getting farther behind rather than catching up. It would seem Biblically that God wants us busy in His work. Does that mean we should be buried in tasks without hope of a break? I think not! An instructor once said to us, "God gave us 24 hours in a day and He does not require more than can be done in that time." His inference was clear. If we students did not meet the requirements, it was due to lack of organization and misplaced priorities instead of lack of time. He went on to say that a 36-hour-day would not help.

I have observed that most people who are extremely busy are no less busy if you take away some of their work. Being busy is a part of who they are. Remove all of their present work and they will immediately find something else with which to be busy. I ask myself if that is true of me. While I do not particularly like the answer, I must admit that it is true of me.

It usually can be proved that we do not have to be as busy as we are. Beyond the bare necessities of life, we choose to do other things. Our tendencies to procrastinate push our work into stressful bunches. Would it not be helpful to ask what is absolutely required in life? Of all the things that we do, what will actually matter a million years from now? Reduce the list even more and we will have to admit that much of what makes us busy is not of eternal value, yet we often trade the eternally important for the non-essential, earthly things we want to do.

The question at the top of these thoughts must then be answered, "Self-inflicted!" The world pushes us with all sorts of things to do but they are not necessary evils. They are choices with eternal consequences. Let us sit down and deliberately evaluate our frantic pace. It is fine to be busy if that is who we are, as long as it is not distracting us from what really matters. ■

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



*A Devotional Commentary*



by David L. Burkholder

**SEPTEMBER 3, 2006**

## ***God's Covenant With Noah***

Genesis 9:1-17

September's lessons focus on our covenant-making God, His covenants with Noah, Abram, and Israel. Today's, from Genesis 9, focuses on the covenant He made with Noah after the flood. For background read Chapters 5:28 through 9:17. Therein we see the reason for the flood, God's choice of Noah and his family to survive the flood, then climaxing with God's covenant promise to Noah and his descendants after the flood. (Today's lesson.)

God's perfect earth and highest creation were corrupted by man's disobedience and descent into sin. As man's depravity deepened, God became increasingly disenchanted with man's ways and determined to purge the earth of evil men and start over with a godly remnant. Noah met that qualification and God preserved him and his family from the worldwide calamity that destroyed all mankind and beasts.

At the outset of this new beginning after the flood, God set some guidelines for Noah and his sons, and established an everlasting covenant with them and their posterity. Upon their exit from the ark, God blessed them and charged them with repopulating the earth. He again established man's dominion over animal life and sanctioned their use for food along with the "green herb."

However, God placed a restriction on the use of blood for food. And He established the requirement of life for the shedding of innocent blood. Blood, the vehicle of life, was to be held sacred since it was

also the vehicle for the expiation of sin. Man's life was to be held sacred since he was formed in the image of God.

As assurance of His blessing and in confirmation of His declaration to never again destroy the earth by water, God established an irrevocable covenant with Noah and his posterity. As a visible reminder of His covenant, God gave the rainbow as a covenantal sign. Whenever Noah saw the rainbow he was reminded of God's promise and assured of His ongoing blessing and protection. That sign still assures us in the present age of God's faithfulness and trustworthiness.

Notice in verses 14-17 that the rainbow is also a reminder to God of the covenant He made with man and the earth. God looks down through the rainbow on man and recalls His promise to preserve. Man looks up to God through the rainbow and remembers God's covenant of protection. For those of us in this generation there is assurance and trust through this unfailing symbol of God's unfailing promise.

While man often fails to live up to his best intentions in the promises he makes, God is always faithful and trustworthy. The Scriptures and the experiences of mankind attest to the faithfulness of God in performing what He has promised. What a comfort!—especially in a world that cannot be much better than the world in which Noah lived before God sent the purifying flood. But God is not unaware of man's sinfulness and degradation. One day He will again destroy the earth, this time by fire. However, as He once preserved the godly Noah family, He will once again provide protection for the godly by removing them from the flames of destruction.

**SEPTEMBER 2006**

**PAGE 5**

The rainbow in the heavens reminds us of God's eternal promise. It is a reminder to us to be faithful to the covenant we have made with Him so we can escape the coming destruction He will inflict on sinful man.

***For thought and discussion***

1. Do you understand the nature of a covenant? What are its primary features?
2. Why did God choose Noah (and his family) as the sole survivor(s) of the flood, and the progenitor(s) of the post-flood race? What were Noah's qualifying characteristics?
3. Explore the ramifications of the "life for life" principle. Does that principle still hold today?
4. What significance does the rainbow have for our day? Explain.
5. God is always faithful in regard to His promises. Think through what that has meant for your life and experiences.

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2006**

***God's Covenant With Abram***

Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22

Abram's story begins in Genesis 11:26. He was born approximately 300 years after Noah's family began re-populating the earth after the great flood, and was a descendant of Noah's son Shem. God singled out Abram to be the progenitor of a distinctive race whom He would call His special people, and through whom He would bless the world with a Saviour. Today's lesson centers on God's unconditional covenant with Abram which set him and his posterity apart from the nations of the world.

God's call to Abram had come 24 years before the events in today's text. (See 12:1-5.) God had already promised Abram the land (12:7); He now promises him a multitude of descendants (17:2). God's blessing of Abram was contingent upon

Abram's faithfulness (v. 1b), and his keeping the terms of the covenant God was initiating with him. (See verses 9-14.) In acceptance of God's terms, Abram "fell on his face" in submission and worship. At this point God also changed his name to Abraham in keeping with His promise to make him the father of a great multitude. (See v. 5.)

The astounding scope of God's promise was not lost on Abraham for at this time he and Sarai had no child. In response to Abraham's request for Ishmael to become the promised heir to these covenant blessings, God said no, it would be a yet unborn son by Sarah to be named Isaac. God also reiterated His promise to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession.

God also changed Sarai's name to reflect her new status as the mother of many nations. She was now to be called Sarah, a princess. We usually think of Sarah's incredulity as expressed in Chapter 18, but notice here in verse 17 of our text that Abraham also laughed at the idea of a 100-year-old man fathering a child.

Certainly the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child in their old age helped them to have faith in God's other promises which they did not live to see fulfilled. A lesson here for us is that our faithfulness to God in our generation provides the avenue for His blessing upon future generations. This was certainly true of Abraham and it is for us as well today. We may simply be a bridge for the blessing of God upon our posterity. This should challenge us to a life of faithful living.

In His call and blessing of Abraham, God began the long process of providing a Saviour for sinful man. He called a man; through him He established a family and, subsequently, a nation through which many years later came Messiah, the Redeemer/Deliverer. It seems that at times God works in prolonged and devious ways to accomplish His purposes. However, He is always faithful to His promises

and will accomplish His purposes. God promised Abraham that His covenant would be with him and his seed as an everlasting covenant. It still stands.

### ***For thought and discussion***

1. Why did God single out Abram to be the founder of His special people? What characteristics set Abram apart from the crowd?
2. Don't we believe that God is always true to His Word? How then would you answer those who claim that the church has replaced Israel as God's special people and, that because of their unfaithfulness, Israel no longer has claim to the land promised to Abram?
3. Something to ponder: Does man's unfaithfulness to a covenant agreement nullify God's promises? What does it do?
4. God's covenant with Abraham was not solely to benefit him. Trace the impact of that promise down through the ages to today. What is its meaning for you? (You may need to go beyond the lesson text for help.)
5. Please observe how important individual obedience to God is in terms of extending His blessing to future generations. Are you providing a faithful bridge?

## **SEPTEMBER 17, 2006**

### ***God's Covenant With Israel***

Exodus 19:1-6; 24:3-8

Approximately some 400-500 years after God's covenant with Abraham and the fulfillment of the promises embodied in that covenant, we find the nascent nation of Israel entering into a new covenant relationship with God. He had just delivered them from bondage in Egypt, and as they began their journey toward the Promised Land, God formalized His relationship with them at Mt. Sinai. The Law, given by God, to which Israel here agreed, encompassed moral,

social, and religious/ceremonial components. It is interesting to note as one reads the chapters between today's text selections, that some aspects of the Law were not implemented until 40 years later when the children of these Israelites to whom the laws were given actually entered the land of Canaan.

God had been at work for many years developing a people for Himself, through which to accomplish His purposes in relation to all mankind. Now with the nation of Israel aborning He established guidelines for their governance and for their relationships—to Himself, to each other, and to other peoples. Having just been released from the oppression of Egypt, the Israelites were ripe for acceptance and direction.

God called Moses onto the mountain and began giving him instructions for the people. He first of all told Moses to remind them of His greatness and power in delivering them from bondage. In so doing He established Himself as capable of their continuing care and worthy of their respect and worship.

Then God laid down the stipulations for their ongoing relationship. In return for their obedience, God would continue to hold them as a "peculiar treasure above all people." He emphasized that this was His choice, since "all the earth is mine." He could have chosen others, but upon them He placed His special pleasure. That awareness should encourage their continued faithfulness.

Furthermore, God placed upon them a special responsibility. They were to be a kingdom of priests, representing Him to other peoples and providing other peoples a route to His favor. As such, as His children and as His representatives and the recipients of His special favor, they were to be a holy people, free from the defilements which characterized the nations of the world. God then instructed Moses, "These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

In the passage from Chapter 24 we see

the response of the people. “All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.” They embraced God’s proposals, accepted His terms, and pledged their obedience. It was a high-water mark in the relationship between God and His people Israel. Unfortunately, it wasn’t long till that seemingly secure bond was breached by Israel’s unfaithfulness.

Moses then recorded the words of the Lord in a book as a permanent record, built an altar, and offered sacrifices to the Lord in confirmation of the covenant relationship. He took of the blood of the sacrifices and sprinkled it upon the altar and upon the people, thus sealing the relationship between God and His people. This sanctifying symbol of blood foreshadowed the shedding of Christ’s blood in the New Covenant relationship. It was also the basis for the prohibition to Noah and his descendants regarding the non-eating of blood. (See lesson for September 3.)

#### ***For thought and discussion***

1. As background, trace the history of Israel to this point in their existence. Note the overruling hand of God in their varied experiences.
2. As a sidelight to the main theme of the lesson, note the importance of capable and qualified leadership for God’s people in all eras. (Note especially the lives of Moses and Joshua [next Sunday’s lesson].)
3. Be sure to note how the terms of God’s covenant with Israel foreshadowed the terms of the relationship between God and man under the New Covenant relationship.
4. Why is it that the enthusiasm of an initial bond between God and man, whether Israel under the Old Covenant or individuals under the New Covenant, often tends to wane after the first flush of affection? What changes? Discuss.
5. What lessons can we learn from the experiences of Israel that will aid us in maintaining our covenant relationship with God?

**SEPTEMBER 24, 2006**

### ***The Covenant Renewed***

Joshua 24:1, 14-28

From the time that God established His covenant with the fledgling nation of Israel (last Sunday’s lesson) till today’s lesson was a period of approximately 50-60 years. After wandering 40 years in the wilderness because of their failure to follow God’s command, Israel was finally led into Canaan by Joshua. He led them in the conquest of the land and then divided it among the tribes. His work was now over and his life drawing to a close.

Joshua’s farewell to Israel begins in Chapter 23 (where we read) how he called together the leaders of Israel and charged them with courage and faithfulness in their ongoing leadership of the nation. Then in Chapter 24, (read it all), he called together both the leaders and the people. First he briefly recounted their history, from Terah, the father of Abraham, through the Egyptian bondage, deliverance, wilderness wanderings to conquest of Canaan. He reminded them of God’s goodness in giving them a land, cities, vineyards, and olive orchards for which they had not labored.

“Now therefore,” he says in verse 14, “fear [revere] the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth” and put away all other gods. Joshua challenged them to make a conscious choice of which god they would serve—the gods of the heathen or the God of heaven, the One who had demonstrated His love and power on their behalf.

Joshua made it clear where his loyalty lay. He would serve the Lord with unswerving fidelity, and he would carry his family along in his commitment. The people responded with a positive commitment to serve God, honoring Him for the great works He had done for them. “God forbid,” they said, that they should forsake Him for a lesser god.

Joshua was pleased with their response,

but he wanted to make sure their decision was genuine and enduring. He knew God would not be satisfied with a halfhearted commitment. He also knew the changeableness of the people, so he challenged them on the depth of their decision, warning them that God would not stand for an irresolute, fickle pledge. He is a jealous God, requiring full commitment.

Again the people responded positively: "We *will* serve the Lord." With that affirmation Joshua reminded them that they were "witnesses against themselves." They had pledged allegiance to God; now they were bound to uphold their pledge. And they were witnesses to each other. They were responsible not only for themselves individually to see that their commitment held; they were also responsible for each other. Therein lay the strength of their vow. It was a community decision with mutual responsibility.

Joshua warned them once more to put away all foreign gods lest they be tempted away from serving the one true God. He had observed over his lifetime how fickle their intentions could be. To seal their pledge Joshua wrote it down and then set up a stone of memorial which served as a

visible reminder to them. Joshua's work was done. He had served faithfully and left the people with a challenge for their ongoing faithfulness to the Lord.

### ***For thought and discussion***

1. It will be helpful to review Israel's history from last Sunday's lesson to today's, involving the wilderness wanderings, the conquest and settling of the Promised Land.
2. Review the life of Joshua. Note the important role of faithful leaders. Note especially 24:31. Where do such leaders come from?
3. What was the secret of Joshua's success as a leader in the nation and the home? How can we develop such men to lead our churches and homes today? Discuss.
4. Why did Joshua challenge the Israelites' commitment to serve the Lord? Think about the difference between saying and doing. Are we ever guilty in that regard?
5. Reflect on the strength of community in maintaining commitment to serve the Lord. List/discuss the advantages. ■

## **Newslines . . .**

*by Hans Mast*

incidents events occurrences facts illustrations episodes committees vignettes proceedings problems  
experiences crises adventures transactions meetings tragedies scoops reports conferences happenings  
bulletins questions reports affairs dramas encounters personages actions tidings et cetera

### **Voice of the Martyrs: PrisonerAlert.com Report**

"Five years after his arrest on false blasphemy charges, Parvez Masih prayed while having a vision of a bright, holy cross: 'Lord, in Your first miracle, You converted water into wine. Change my impris-

onment to a release. Please show me a sign of victory.' Jesus appeared to him, making a 'V' with His fingers. When asked by a guard why he was sweating one cold night, Parvez replied, 'I will be released today, because I was praying and saw Jesus with the sign of victory.' He was

released at noon. While in prison, Parvez prayed for a Christian with leprosy and a Muslim leader dying from a heart condition. They were both completely healed the following day, and the Muslim exclaimed, 'I saw Jesus Christ!'

—Excerpt from "PrisonerAlert.com," *The Voice of the Martyrs*, July, 2006

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Mennonite Church Raided in Vietnam**

"BANGKOK—Brandishing nightsticks and electric cattle prods, about 50 Vietnamese police and security officials on May 22 stormed and demolished a Mennonite church in Vietnam's central Binh Khanh area. Several members of the congregation were injured, and police arrested the pastor, Reverend Nguyen Hong Quang, and 10 others who resisted.

Quang is no stranger to state-sponsored religious persecution. He recently served 15 months of a three-year sentence for 'interfering' with officials during a similar violent incident against his church in March 2004. While he was in detention, local police frequently raided his damaged house of worship and harassed his family, often late at night."

—Excerpt from "In capitalist Vietnam, it's 'repression as usual,'" *The Asia Times*, July 6, 2006

\* \* \* \* \*

### **The Power and Influence of the U. S.**

Plato said, "Those who tell the stories rule society." America has long ruled the world not only because of military power, but also through a dominance of media intertwined with a relatively tough-love populism (freedom and democracy, but also personal responsibility). This was a relatively positive force in the world. However, this media dominance has come to be embodied in one word: Hollywood. Hollywood supplies 70% of Europe's movies and 90% of the rest of the world's. Mortimer Zuckerman puts it well, "The underside of

this commercial success is the cultural deficit of associating America with crime, vacuity, moral decay, promiscuity, and pornography—a trend that also worries American parents; Asian and Muslim worlds are already in revolt against it. . . . Our media project defiance and ridicule not just of illegitimate authority but of any authority at all—parents, teachers, and political leaders. Even in the West this elicits as much loathing as love. . . . So America's narrative, which has waxed for so long, is now waning in its universal appeal." When we interact with the rest of the world, we should burnish the image of the U.S.; certainly not for the *purpose* of burnishing that image, but it should rather be a natural outflow of our reflection of Christ to those around us.

—"What Sets Us Apart," Mortimer B. Zuckerman, *U.S. News & World Report*, July 3/July 10, 2006

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Subway Wreck in Spain**

A Valencia, Spain, subway train going away from the Jesus station crashed and killed at least 34 people. Officials believe, pending an official investigation, the cause of the accident was excessive speed coupled with wheel disintegration. Graham Moore, an eyewitness, described the scene: "There were lots of police running around, kids with their parents. There were people with heads bleeding, cuts, and bruises. The injuries appeared to be just head, neck, and chest injuries—they were quite seriously injured." He further said that the scene was "chaotic and confusing." The Valencia system has 4 lines, 116 stations, and serves 165,000 people each day. In June 2003, a head-on collision involving a mass-transit train in central Spain killed 19 and injured 48. —*Sources: AP and BBC*

\* \* \* \* \*

### **North Korea Launches Missiles**

North Korea fired seven missiles on July 4th in open defiance of a unified world calling on them to abstain. The

DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the official name of North Korea) has also ignored calls to cease its nuclear weapons development and it claims that it already has several nuclear weapons. The DPRK launched six relatively short range missiles similar in capability to Scud missiles. These six went as planned. They also launched a much feared, due to its theoretical range of being able to hit the U. S. coupled with the tens of millions of casualties a nuke would cause, Taepodong 2 missile which failed during its first booster stage. These incidents have caused Japan to forge closer ties, especially military, to the U. S. Japan was shocked several years ago by a Taepodong 1 test that was fired across their territory and landed in the ocean. Japan recently put in an order for a large quantity of Patriot surface-to-air missiles which intercept missiles and aircraft. The U. S. already has anti-missile systems of questionable accuracy deployed against the DPRK threat: Patriot missiles based in Japan, Aegis cruisers off North Korea's coast, and land-based interceptor missiles in Alaska. There was rampant speculation among security experts that the U. S. might use any DPRK test as a real-life test of their own anti-missile systems, but due to early failure of the launch, that wasn't an option. Japan, the U. S., and the U. K. have called upon the U. N. security council to enact sanctions against the DPRK, but Russia and China are both firmly against it. Their veto makes sanctions unlikely. North Korea's U. N. ambassador has said the DPRK would take sanctions as a declaration of war. The world has remarkably joined in condemning the tests, but action rather than words seems to be another thing altogether.

—*Sources: AP, Washington Post and Chosun Ilbo (South Korean newspaper)*

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### **Kenneth Lay, Former CEO of Enron, Dies**

Kenneth Lay, the former CEO of Enron

died of a heart attack on July 5th. He was recently convicted of various conspiracy and fraud charges in relation to the rigged accounting and massive collapse of Enron's stock. He faced life in prison.

—*Source: ??*

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### **Israeli Corporal Kidnapped; Israel Re-Invades Gaza**

Nineteen-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped on June 25th by Palestinian militants, including Hamas (which was recently elected as the government of the Palestinian Authority), who are demanding the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for his return.

Several days ago, Israeli tanks rolled into Southern Gaza. Today, July 5th, they re-invaded Northern Gaza as well, in response to Qassam rockets fired by Hamas into Israeli cities. Israel has killed a number of militants with rocket attacks in recent days. They have also shot a number of terrorists attempting to execute suicide bombings. They arrested a goodly portion of the Palestinian cabinet, most of whom are Hamas terrorists, as well as bombing the Prime Minister's office. Shalit is believed to still be alive. Israel has said they will withdraw from Gaza as soon as Shalit is returned unharmed.

—*Sources: CNN, London Telegraph, Voice of America*

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### **Man Shot in Las Vegas Airport**

"A man was shot and wounded by police at McCarran International Airport on Tuesday after he pulled a knife on a child, police and airport officials said. Las Vegas police spokesman Jose Montoya said two officers were involved in the shooting, which occurred after the man had crossed through a security checkpoint."

—Excerpt from "Man Shot at Las Vegas Airport Checkpoint," *Associated Press*, June 27, 2006 (<http://tinyurl.com/p34ct>).

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## **"Breathtaking" Waste and Fraud in Hurricane Katrina Aid**

Scams, schemes, and bureaucratic bangles after Hurricane Katrina have cost taxpayers up to \$2 billion.

—Excerpt from "‘Breathtaking’ Waste and Fraud in Hurricane Aid," *New York Times*, June 27, 2006 (<http://tinyurl.com/z65tf>).

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Democrats Spearhead Anti-Abortion Bill**

In a step that is slightly jarring for its unusualness, but quite welcome nonetheless, Democrats in Louisiana introduced and passed a bill strictly outlawing abortion if the Constitution is amended or Roe is overturned. Democrat Governor Kathleen Blanco is expected to sign the bill.

—Source: *WWLTV*

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## **The Terrorist Report**

It has been a busy month for both terrorist cells and for the law enforcement agencies and militaries battling them. A cell of 17 terrorists was arrested in Toronto with tons of explosives. A group of seven terrorists was arrested in Miami with plans to bomb the Sears Tower, the FBI building in North Miami Beach, and other government buildings. Al-Zarqawi, the head of Al-Qaida in Iraq, was killed by a U.S. airstrike. *TIME* magazine revealed that Al-Qaida had a detailed plan in place to attack NYC subways with poison gas. The plan was inexplicably called off by Al-Qaida's #2 man, a mere 45 days before the scheduled attack.

—Sources: *TIME* magazine, *Washington Post*, *AP*

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## **Gore's Movie on Global Warming**

Al Gore has taken the Michael Moore route and has released a movie entitled "An Inconvenient Truth." It is about the alleged dangers of global warming. It has been criticized by many scientists, such as Richard Lindzen who is the Alfred P. Sloan professor of Atmospheric Science at MIT,

as being absurdly hyperbolic and just plain misleading. Lindzen especially takes issue with Gore's claim that his view on Global Warming is an accepted conclusion among the scientific community. Lindzen says, "First, nonscientists generally do not want to bother with understanding the science. Claims of consensus relieve policy types, environmental advocates, and politicians of any need to do so. Such claims also serve to intimidate the public and even scientists—especially those outside the area of climate dynamics. Secondly, given that the question of human attribution largely cannot be resolved, its use in promoting visions of disaster constitutes nothing so much as a bait-and-switch scam. That is an inauspicious beginning to what Mr. Gore claims is not a political issue but a 'moral' crusade. **Lastly, there is a clear attempt to establish truth not by scientific methods but by perpetual repetition** [emphasis added]." (Sounds familiar to me. Evolution, anyone?)

—Source: *Wall Street Journal*

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## **New Jersey Government Shut Down by Democrats**

Democrats in the state legislature and the Democrat in the governor's mansion can't agree on a state budget. Thus, all except essential state employees are being put on leave because NJ has no legal authority to pay them. This has resulted in the closure of the Atlantic City casinos because the state employees that are legally required to monitor gambling operations are being put on leave. This is costing NJ \$1.6 million in tax revenue daily. I'm not so sure this is a bad thing. The government is finally figuring out what essential services actually are and the plug gets pulled on the monumental waste and unnecessary government programs. What fiscal conservatives have fought for for years has been accomplished, however temporarily, in a moment, by Democrats and a budget impasse.

—Source: *CNN*

# Counsel for Exercising Daily in God

## *A Study of 1 Timothy 4:1-16*

by Harold S. Martin

Joan Raymond, in the December 19, 2005, issue of *Newsweek*, said, “Come December 31, Americans will resolve to lose 20 pounds, quit smoking, and save the environment—only to slip back into old habits before the snow melts.” Our age is not a friend to disciplined living. It seems like the discipline of loyalty to the Lord’s work is lacking in many lives. Many in typical congregations have only a limited commitment to Christ and the church. Some seem bored. Others seem characterized by indifference, unconcern, and a passive mood. Multitudes give lip-service to the Lord. They attend church services only if it is convenient, if the weather is nice, if company doesn’t come, and if there are no special programs on television.

I have been involved with church services in a number of countries outside the United States, and have spoken with people who have been tortured and imprisoned because they were committed to obedience to Jesus Christ. There is something about hardship and persecution that brings out the best in people. We Christians in the United States of America have tendencies to become careless and complacent for a number of reasons.

Carl Brubaker, in a 1993 message on “Causes for a Lack of Commitment in the Church,” says that “*when one observes life in America in the 1990s, it is quite evident that the influence of the church has waned considerably. Some writers have even called our era a ‘post-*

*Christian’ era. The good news, however, is that the Church of Jesus is alive and well, and it won’t be defeated, for Jesus Himself said that the ‘gates of hell’ shall not prevail against it. Yet it troubles many of us to see the very prevalent lack of commitment to Christ, to His Word, to the church, and to the Christian way of life.*”

Carl Brubaker continues, “The tremendous rise of affluence (which can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution), is [one of the] maladies that has invaded our churches today. Materialism is affecting our priorities and commitments. We pride ourselves in saying that we believe in the simple lifestyle. But really, are we serious about that? Even in conservative churches—the desire for material things and the drive for worldly success, is at the forefront in many people’s lives. Our obsession with materialism is much more prominent than we would like to admit.”

Note now the summary teachings found in 1 Timothy 4.

### ***1. Warning About False Teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-5)***

Early in its history, the church learned that wherever *the truth of Christ* is proclaimed, the voices of error soon follow close behind. Timothy was a young preacher, and he was being instructed to counter error by *godly living, faithful teaching, and rigid self-discipline.*

The Holy Spirit declares clearly (expressly) that some will depart from

the faith. The word *depart* (verse 1) is the word *apostasia*—which means “to fall away” or “to defect from the faith.” Apostasy is not the same as ignorance, or a lack of knowledge. Apostasy is a deliberate rejection of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. The apostate leaders “speak lies in hypocrisy” (verse 2). They try to hide their true identity. They use the *vocabulary* of the true Bible believer, but they do not use the same *dictionary*. They know what the Bible teaches, but their consciences have been “seared with a hot iron.”

Verse 3 says that some of the false teachings include “forbidding to marry” and “commanding to abstain from foods.” The false cult (known as Gnosticism), taught that *everything pertaining to the body* was inherently evil. Thus, marriage must be avoided, and abstaining from certain foods must be practiced. The Gnostics believed that the soul lives on, but the body is evil—and is really a prison house for the soul. Yet *the real enemy* of the spiritual life is a disobedient heart. It is not the decision to marry or not to marry.

## **2. Duties of Faithful Believers (1 Timothy 4:6-10)**

Timothy was to remind the church of the dangers that surround the embracing of false teachings—and to see that they are “nourished in the words of faith and of good doctrine” (verse 6). Error can best be refuted by *the positive teaching* of Christian truth. God’s people need to be taught, and reminded from time to time about what the Bible says *in all areas of belief*, so that the church will remain stable, and will keep true to scriptural teachings.

Christians also are to put energy into keeping themselves *spiritually* fit—described here as “exercising yourself toward godliness” (verse 7b). Eugene Peterson’s more free translation paraphrases the text found in verses 7b-8: “*Exercise daily in God—no spiritual*

*flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever”* (The Message, 1 Timothy 4:7b-8).

Regular *physical* exercise has some value (verse 8). Our sedentary lifestyle and our overabundance of high calorie foods and drink—have made exercise programs necessary in the United States today. A discipline of regular exercise and of weight control is an important part of the stewardship of our bodies. On the other hand, in some quarters, physical exercise has been made a virtual religion—with priests and temples and liturgies. Many are spending big money on special diets, on exercise equipment, and on membership in health clubs—to offset the thousands of dollars spent on rich foods and riding lawn mowers and automatic garage door openers, etc. We should not ignore physical fitness, but we must be even more careful to guard against becoming *spiritually* flabby.

Just as bodily exercise helps people ward off some physical ailments, so spiritual exercise helps to protect us from the false teachings which sometimes threaten believers. Paul is not saying in verse 8 that bodily exercise is of no value. We need to exercise our physical bodies so that they will furnish us strength to serve the Lord well—but the point of this passage is that we are to focus especially on keeping ourselves spiritually fit.

Spiritual exercise includes prayer, meditation, self-examination, fellowship, service, sacrifice, submission, Bible study, witnessing to others, and determination to persevere in the faith. The issue in this verse is not whether physical exercise is of value, but whether spiritual fitness is of *supreme* value. Our desire to serve Christ faithfully should be as strong as the athlete’s desire to improve certain skills in the world of sports. We should

approach the duties of the Christian life with the same vigorous determination that athletes demonstrate when they try to develop competence in football or soccer.

The preacher's labors for Jesus (verse 10) are often strenuous, and sometimes bring opposition. The Apostle Paul labored and suffered reproach because he trusted in the living God. Our confidence in the living God is intended to be so strong that it will give us an incentive to push onward, telling the story of God's love to people everywhere.

### **3. Counsel on Personal Self-Discipline (1 Timothy 4:11-16)**

The model Christian is to teach God's truth (verse 11), to give attention to reading and exhortation (verse 13), and is to guard his own life and teaching (verse 16).

The preacher is to teach with firmness and authority. The words *command* and *teach* (verse 11) imply firmness in presenting the truth. Timothy seems to have been a timid and shy person. Confronting the false teachers was not his favorite activity. This may be one reason why the Apostle Paul admonished him to be strong, to take charge, and to lead.

One preacher, speaking to a noted secular actor, said, "Why do you actors get such large audiences, and we preachers seem so ineffective?" To which the actor replied: "We actors *take fiction* and present it as if it were true; many of you preachers *take truth* and present it as if it were fiction."

Those believers who are younger (verse 12) can gain the respect of people who are older, by setting before them a good example. Timothy was to set an example in six areas:

- *"in word"* means that we are to be careful about our speech. Timothy was to guard his language, and to carefully keep promises. (When we

borrow a book, a hammer, or an umbrella—and promise to return it, we must be meticulous about doing so.)

- *"in conduct"* speaks of general behavior, the way we live from day to day.
- *"in love"* speaks of kindheartedness—a deliberate choice to treat other persons with concern and care and thoughtfulness.
- *"in spirit"* speaks of attitudes. It is possible for a person who doesn't gamble or swear or get drunk—to be difficult to live with because of wrong attitudes. We must guard against being irritable, faultfinding, unforgiving, and childish.
- *"in faith"* speaks especially of faithfulness. Faithfulness means loyalty to Christ regardless of the cost, loyalty to one's married partner, and loyalty to the family of believers.
- *"in purity"* means to avoid sexual impurity. Purity speaks of chastity before marriage and loyalty after marriage.

The Lord expects His people to live exemplary lives. The plural "you" at the very end of the 1 Timothy letter means that the instructions found here are for all Christians.

Timothy was told to use *the gift* for proclaiming God's truth (verse 14), by paying attention to the public reading of Scriptures (verse 13). Those who read the Scriptures publicly ought to prepare themselves privately, so that the Bible can be read in a moving way, and not with casualness and sloppiness. The word *exhortation* means that the minister is to take the Word of God and make practical applications for daily conduct. The word *doctrine* refers to beliefs. Every Christian should welcome the proclamation of doctrinal truth.

Timothy was to "meditate" on what he had been taught (verse 15)—meaning that he was to attend to what he had heard with carefulness. He was to

become so absorbed in the duties described in verses 11-16 that his “progress” would be evident to all. A hardworking, enthusiastic, devoted church worker will bear spiritual fruit that will be noticed by others. People will notice that he works hard, studies much, and gives attention to reading.

Chapter 4 is concluded with an admonition to all Christians, reminding us to guard our lives and our teachings (verse 16). It is important for all Christians to keep in mind that the testimony of *daily life* and *words* are both supremely important. All believers are exhorted to give attention to their daily lives—taking inventory frequently to see that their lives are what God expects. And we are to make certain that our *teachings* are consistent with God’s Word.

The word *save* in verse 16 is not speaking of salvation in the *eternal* sense. The verse concludes with the words, “For in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” The *salvation* named here has to do especially with salvation from the snares and pitfalls which Satan places before Christians—false teaching, erroneous thinking, and complacent living. The errors today include relativism, New Age monism, and a host of other strange ideas.

Timothy had started well. Now he must be sure to *continue on this good path*. Winners in the spiritual race must not only begin well, but must cross the finish line still running with enthusiasm. We can expect hardship because of our testimony, but God urges us to get into the gymnasium and exercise for all we are worth!

J. H. Sammis wrote the words of the hymn, “Trust and Obey.” One stanza says: “*But we never can prove the delights of His love, until all on the altar we lay; for the favor He shows, and the joy He bestows, are for those who will trust and obey.*” Wholehearted

devotion, all-out loyalty, and complete self-denial—these are requirements for discipleship under Jesus Christ! He wants people to know that toil and danger, self-sacrifice and suffering—are all part of living the Christian life. Sadly, the cost of discipleship is more than many people are willing to pay.

Jesus says, “Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life” (Matthew 7:14). It is discouraging to note that many people who seem to cast their lot with Jesus, sometimes later lose interest and fall away. Think about a man named *Demas* and another named *Judas*.

Karen Phelps is a marathon runner. Her plan for training is fivefold:

- 1) *Run daily*, even if you don’t feel like it.
- 2) *Run daily*, even in bad weather, and even if people think you are weird.
- 3) *Run daily*, even when it gives you aches and pain and you feel like quitting.
- 4) *Run daily*, even if you sometimes have to skip fun and pleasure.
- 5) *Run daily*, even if you don’t feel like it’s doing any good!

Just so, the disciple of Christ must continue to run the race—keeping on doing what is right. If we want richness of experience, meaningful living, and a sense of doing the will of God—then we need to choose to become loyal disciples of Jesus Christ. It will require walking contrary to the way of the crowds, but in the end it’ll be worth it all. ■

—Reprinted with permission from the *BRF Witness*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 2006.



# Is Hollywood Waging War Against Judeo-Christian Values?

by Haven Bradford Gow

In his book *On Moral Fiction* (Basic Books), the late literary critic and novelist John Gardner maintained that true art is moral; it is life-giving, life-affirming, life-enhancing. It seeks to improve life, not debase it, and appeals to and satisfies that which is noble and good within us. True art, as Mr. Gardner observed, is good only insofar as “it has a clear, positive effect, presenting valid models for imitation, eternal verities worth keeping in mind . . . which can inspire and incite human beings toward virtue, toward life affirmation as opposed to destruction or indifference.”

According to Concordia University (Wisconsin) professor of English Dr. Gene Veith, author of *State of the Arts* (Crossway), the arts “permeate our lives and our culture. The . . . music we listen to; the entertainment we enjoy in books, television, and films are all manifestations of the arts. They influence us and our children. . . . For good or for evil, the ideas, the concerns, and the imagination of the age are expressed and communicated throughout the culture by the arts. The question is whether we live . . . with good art or bad art.”

According to Rev./Dr. Philip Ryken, a Protestant minister/scholar in Philadelphia, PA, and author of *Art for God's Sake* (P & R Publishing), “God has high standards for art. . . . Using Exodus 31 as a guide . . . God's aesthetic standards include goodness, truth, and beauty. And these standards are not relative; they are absolute. A Christian view of art thus stands in opposition to the postmodern assumption that there are no absolutes.” He adds: “Goodness is both an ethical and an aesthetic standard.”

Concerning truth and beauty in art, Rev./Dr. Ryken, a graduate of Oxford University, says: “Art has . . . suffered a tragic loss of sacred beauty, as many modern and postmodern artists have been attracted instead to absurdity, irrationality, and

even cruelty.” He adds: “To be pleasing to God, art must be true as well as good. . . . Art is an incarnation of the truth. It penetrates the surface of things to portray them as they really are.”

An AP story in the December 18, 2004, *News-Star*, Monroe, LA, pointed out that, while TV entertainment programs mentioned God more often today than in the mid-1990s, the shows still tend to present religion in a negative light, according to a study by the Parents Television Council. Brent Bozell, an official of the media watchdog group, said: “Ninety percent of the American people believe in God. It is an important issue to most people. Hollywood is attacking the very thing they consider important in their own lives. Perhaps Hollywood ought to be changing its worldview.”

In his book *Invasion Within* (Regnery Publishing), educator Dr. Domenick Maglio maintains that the entertainment industry has been waging a vicious war against traditional Judeo-Christian moral and religious values and standards; he observes that “celebrities are poisoning our minds against our leaders who are extolling traditional values. Hollywood and the media appear to be unanimous in their hatred of the stable middle-class, working Americans who are the backbone of the country.”

According to Derrick Cook, vice principal, Greenville-Weston High School, Greenville, MS, popular TV shows, movies, and music have been *miseducating* young persons about sex, marriage, and life. He insists that, instead of encouraging young people to practice abstinence from drugs, alcohol, and premature and irresponsible sex, the media have been glamorizing and promoting sex devoid of commitment, responsibility, and morality.

A recent study by the Rand Corporation buttresses the above sentiments. As Brent Bozell of PTC points out, the study

demonstrated that “young people who viewed the greatest amounts of sexual content were two times more likely than those who viewed the smallest amount to initiate sexual intercourse during the following year or to progress to more-advanced levels of other sexual activity.”

An article in the February 2005 *Reader's Digest* noted TV's message to young persons about sex: “ ‘Sex and the City’ was more than a hit TV show; it was an invitation to girls to think of sleeping around as a harmless kick. That was the message also in MTV shows like ‘The Real World’ and ‘Spring Break,’ which glorified random encounters of sexually aggressive and often booze-soaked young women.” Indeed, as family counselor/syndicated columnist Dr. Robert Wallace notes, “Television . . . exposes teens to casual sex and drug and alcohol use in ways that suggest this behavior is normal and risk-free. The message seems to be: ‘Everyone is doing it.’ ” In fact, “television characters rarely say no. Sadly, this fantasy world has a devastating effect on the real one.”

The February 2005 issue of *America's Christian Newspaper* pointed out the message many TV shows convey to viewers: “TV subtly establishes a carnal and worldly standard of values in the mind of every viewer. . . . TV subtly teaches that fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are accepted alternative lifestyles. . . . TV suggests violence as a vent for anger and frustration.”

According to conservative columnist/social critic Cal Thomas, increasing numbers of Americans have expressed displeasure concerning the sexual/moral content of TV programs, and also will not allow their children to watch certain programs.

For columnist/social critic Charley Reese, TV people must accept moral responsibility for promoting anti-social, anti-moral thinking and behavior: “The entertainment industry in America, in its greed for profits and ratings, has vulgarized and desensitized American society.”

In her new work *Celluloid Saints* (Mercer University Press), Georgetown University theology teacher Dr. Theresa Sanders

observes: “Movies do more than entertain. . . . They also shape our hopes and desires. They tell us who we are and what we ought to be. They give us a language to express our loves and our fears and the full scope of our messy, complicated humanity. That humanity is contemptible and noble, craven and courageous, pitiable and dignified.” Dr. Sanders adds: “As members of (humanity), we share one thing in common: A desire that something matters. We long for something to devote our lives to with all our heart and with all our mind and with all our strength.”

What Dr. Sanders says about movies also can be said about television programs. TV shows also can tell us who we are and what we ought to be. They can encourage us to be good human beings, or they can promote attitudes, thinking, and behavior that demean human beings and human dignity.

According to Dr. Craig Anderson, chairman of the psychology department at Iowa State University, “Exposure to violent TV and movies causes increases in aggression and violence. These effects are of two kinds: short-term and long-term. . . . Both the long-term and short-term effects occur to both boys and girls. . . . Indeed, the media violence effect on aggression is bigger than the effect of exposure to lead on IQ scores in children, the effect of calcium intake on bone mass, the effect of homework on academic achievement, or the effect of asbestos exposure on cancer.”

Even those who contend TV programs saturated with sex, violence, exploitation, and anti-religious hostility are harmless must at least tacitly acknowledge the power and influence of words and ideas; otherwise, they never would attend school, go to the library or write letters, articles, books, advertising copy, and TV and movie scripts.

Certainly if what we read, hear, and see affects our thinking, and thinking influences behavior, then TV shows saturated with sex, violence, exploitation, and anti-religious bigotry indeed can and do have a damaging impact on thinking and conduct: Again, ideas do have consequences. ■

—Mr. Gow is a radio commentator and writer from Greenville, MS.

# Creation *Ex Nihilo*

by Derek W. H. Thomas

No sentence is more pregnant with meaning than the opening one of the Bible: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). It tells us several things all at once, four of which are worth reflecting upon: First and foremost, it tells us that God is the ultimate Being. Before there was a universe, there was God. He exists independently of matter and sequence of time. God transcends space and time. He is not limited by spatial considerations (He is everywhere in His fullness continually). Nor is He locked into the present in any way. It is not strictly accurate to say that before the universe was created there was "nothing," for this, too, is a spatial and temporal idea: before the created universe existed, there was God. Theologians speak of God's immensity, infinity, and transcendence to describe this and our minds race at the thought of it, unable to take it in. All we can do is acquiesce and worship.

Second, everything that exists originates from God. Genesis employs a special Hebrew verb for the act of creation the subject of which is always God. No other subject is employed or implied. Man, too, "creates" (poetry, music, literature, architectural wonders, for example) but not in this sense. "To create" is exclusively an act of God, and by employing it in the first and last verse of the creation story (1:1 and 2:4), the writer is employing something that looks like "bookends" that encase the central idea that God is at work. Easy as this is to write (and read!), try to imagine the power it takes to bring into existence the entire cosmos!

Third, He creates "out of nothing." A grammatical possibility has given rise to at

least one translation of the opening verses suggesting that when God began His work of creation, matter already existed: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void" (NRSV). Contrast that with the *English Standard Version*: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void." The point of this second rendition is to emphasize a crucial issue that God created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Other ancient Near Eastern creation stories (from Egypt and Mesopotamia, for example) assume that their gods worked with material that already existed. However, biblical testimony here and elsewhere insists that at the point of the beginning there was nothing apart from God (Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11), and what exists apart from God was brought into being by Him.

Fourth, and this is particularly interesting, that which He initially creates is not its final form. He creates in order to employ further artistry and design. Beginners in Hebrew at seminaries can often be heard repeating a phrase from Genesis 1:2: "The earth was without form and void." What God initially brought into being was "formless and empty mass." Initially, the created universe had no distinctive shape; its structure would be formed by the artistry and design of God. In this sense, we are like God. We, too, fashion and mold and make things that are often beautiful. It is, in part, what Genesis 1:26, 27 means by saying that Adam was created "in the image of God." Man, too, creates, or better, re-creates, shapes his environment in such a way as to reflect something pleasing and good. Once man fell, this capacity became

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as much a liability as a blessing; his capacity to fashion became a means to idolatry.

What should we make of this? Again, several responsive features are worth consideration, but two will suffice here:

In the first place, God is to be worshiped as the Creator; creation is to be viewed as a reflection of the signature of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). "O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Psalm 104:24). We live out our lives in a world that He has created and sustains. All around us and within us there are fingerprints betraying His handiwork. Knowing this (as we do whether we acknowledge it or not) should make us live dependently, reverently, and expectantly.

In the second place, creation is never to be viewed as inherently evil (as some philosophies have taught). God intends in His plan of salvation to re-create this

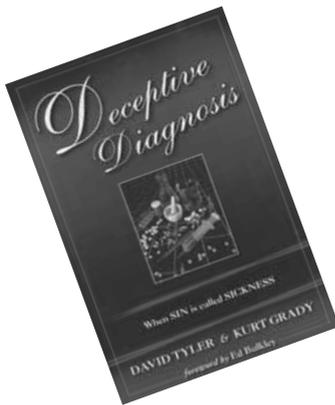
fallen world and provide for His redeemed children "a new heavens and new earth" in which to live. Even now, the present creation waits (8:19)—subjected to futility as it has been by sin (Romans 8:20)—groaning in sounds that resemble childbirth (8:22), for the "new world" (Matthew 19:28), the home of the righteous (2 Peter 3:13). The resurrected redeemed will thus dwell in a (transformed) physical universe in union and communion with their resurrected Lord. This strand of biblical teaching ensures that we never view creation (and our physical bodies) apart from God's claim of ownership and demand for holiness. We are, as Paul insists, to present our "bodies [as] a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" as an act of "spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). The story of creation signals that we are God's handiwork—made by Him and for Him and that (through redemption) forever. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Table-talk*, January 2006.

## *Deceptive Diagnosis*

### **When Sin Is Called Sickness**

by David Tyler & Kurt Grady



#### **From the Forward by Ed Bulkley:**

"I believe that if you will examine the arguments and evidence that Dave and Kurt provide in this book, your faith in God's Word and His power to transform lives will be strengthened. Your confidence to help others with their problems of living will be enhanced as you realize that our Lord is more than able to heal confused minds and wounded hearts."

**Great Buy!!**  
**Only \$10.00 postpaid**

# Compelled by the Gospel to Lay Down Our Lives

by Mo Leverett

When I was a small child, I was a troublemaker in many different ways, and so my family decided that I should play baseball. When I'd get a hit, I would always find a way to slide. And if I got onto first base, I'd take a big lead to coax the pitcher's throw so I could slide headfirst back into the base.

Why? So I could get my uniform dirty, because there was nothing worse than walking off the field with a clean uniform. I didn't know how to slide, so often I would do it awkwardly and skin my knee. Blood would soak through the uniform, and when I walked off that field I was proud of those wounds; I felt like a warrior, and I knew that people would look and say, "He hurt himself out there," and they would think well of me.

I think one of the greatest shames we might ever experience is if we cross the Jordan River with a clean uniform. We've all had the opportunity to respond to the gospel in a way that would show our deep gratitude—in a way that would mean getting our uniforms dirty—but for the sake of comfort and safety, we often choose not to. That said, I'm never more encouraged than when I see a group of people who have developed habits and attitudes to ensure their own security and comfort, change that mindset, and begin to enter into one that is more biblical.

We sometimes think of discipleship as the dispensing of theological postu-

lates from lofty pulpits; the deeper the postulates, the more mature Christians become. But that's not the kind of discipleship Jesus has called us to. He says, "If you want to be my disciple, deny yourself, take up your own cross, and follow me."

One of my great frustrations is our use of the term "mercy ministry"—as if we need a separate department or new category for mercy. But no, this is central. The work of mercy and justice is not something we add to what we do.

Remember when Jesus corrected the Pharisees, saying, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees. You tithed your mint, dill, and cumin." In other words, you are so meticulous about your faith that you even tithed from your spice rack. But, He says, you've forgotten the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Jesus did not see these concepts as parenthetical or peripheral; to Him they were at the heart of the matter.

How many sermons have you heard on justice recently? Micah 6:8 says, "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Are the leaders of our denomination here yet? I'd love to see our prominent pastors in our leading congregations embrace the biblical fact that mercy and justice are at the center of God's mission in this

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**JESUS IS THE WORD MADE FLESH AND HE DWELLED AMONG US, MEANING THAT THE GOSPEL IS INCARNATIONAL, AND THAT CARING FOR THE POOR IS CENTRAL TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH—SO MUCH SO THAT ONE ROMAN EMPEROR WROTE, "THE CHRISTIANS HAVE SHAMED US. NOT ONLY DO THEY CARE FOR THEIR OWN POOR, THEY CARE FOR OUR POOR AS WELL."**

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world. Our teaching and ruling elders need to hear this, because I'm not convinced that we've all understood it.

True religion that God our Father finds faultless, James says, is this: 1) to look after orphans and widows in their distress, and 2) to keep oneself from being stained by the world. Now I know that's not the whole thing. So why would he say it? I think it is because this passage summarizes the heart of the gospel. God expects us to be pious, on the outside and the inside, and our outward piety should always include care for the poor.

If you go into a typical Christian bookstore, what percentage of the books is dedicated to the development of inward piety and spiritual development? I'd guess 99 percent. And what percentage would be dedicated to helping us understand our responsibility toward the poor? The math's pretty simple. Yet James and Micah and Isaiah and many other cool biblical figures tell us that this is at least half of what God expects of us.

When you look at the constitution of the early church, there were two offices needed: the elder and the deacon. And the deacon was appointed to administer the Old Testament poverty mandate, "There should be no poor among you because in the land I give you I will richly bless you" (Deuteronomy 15:4). Acts 4 brings the mandate forward, "They shared everything in common, no one considered their possessions as their own, and there were no poor among them."

### ***Recovering the Work of Mercy***

Jesus is the Word made flesh and He dwelled among us, meaning that the gospel is incarnational, and that caring for the poor is central to the work of

the Church—so much so that one Roman emperor wrote, "The Christians have shamed us. Not only do they care for their own poor, they care for our poor as well."

But today we've relegated this critical component of our work to people who don't even believe in God, and who have used a secular and humanistic mindset to develop their programs. In the end they've entrapped the poor, crippled them, and caused poverty to become a multigenerational character issue. Nowadays when we enter into concentrated pockets of poverty, we find layers of problems that are hard to undo.

It is time for the Church to recover this crucial aspect of our work. And I hope this becomes a clarion call—that we would become a group of people so profoundly affected by the gospel of Jesus Christ that we are utterly compelled to lay down our lives for the least and the lost of our communities.

We're not talking about a new law or some kind of new legalism. We're talking about understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ and the deep effect it has when we understand what He's done for us. Philippians 2:5-11 says that our "attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." When we think about our responsibility to the poor, and the business of the church, perhaps it helps to know that Christ left the most exclusive gated community in the universe, and moved into the worst ghetto of Israel. He took on all of our shame, so that we might be seen as innocent. He took our poverty and transformed it into eternal riches.

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If we ever fully understand the depth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we will be utterly compelled to go into our communities and lay down our lives, to move into poorer communities and become a part of the fabric of their shame, deprivation, and depravity. And to strive through the power of the Holy Spirit to maintain our purity in those dark places.

I've heard people say, "I don't want to just write a check, I want to get my hands dirty." But it's a good idea to start by writing checks. I'm convinced that you can go down to the inner city and do some tutoring and get your urban ministry fix, and yet still not have sacrificed on behalf of the poor. I like the example of John Calvin in Geneva. There, more than half of the money that went into their coffers went to allaying poverty. What percent of our budgets are allocated to alleviating poverty within the covenant community of Christ, must less in our own, broader, neighborhoods?

***When We Work With the Poor  
We Find That God Has Preceded Us***

We have a lot of work to do. This is not some minor repair. It is not like bringing your car in for a checkup and an oil change. We need to have our entire engine rebuilt. We must place God's heart for mercy and justice at the center of what revs our engine.

I have four wonderful children, and since I've mentioned them, let me also mention this: A lot of people use their children as an excuse for not entering into the work of mercy and justice, thinking that your primary objective is to protect your children. But your primary objective as a parent is not to protect your children. Your primary objective is to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of Christ. And what is the best context for that? It is where you are obeying Christ. Our children learn from our example, and when

we wall ourselves away from the problems of poverty, they learn. They think that Christianity is about sheltering yourself from these problems.

Anyway, in the early days, our family would sometimes go on trips, and periodically we would have to stop and get gas. My children loved to get out of the car and help me. As a matter of fact, they loved to do anything I did. On this particular occasion they were fighting over who got to help. And so I intervened and said, "It's okay, you can all help." And so all my children came bouncing out of the car. I told Lindsey, my oldest, "Lindsey, you put your hands on top of your dad's hands," because Lindsey was not strong enough to hold the handle. And I said, "Lacy, you put your hand on top of your sister's hand." Then to Maggie, I said, "You hold your daddy's thigh." If you had seen us, you would have been at the very least amused. I invited them into my work. Why? Because my children found joy in being with their father in his work. The reason we carry out justice and mercy is not so much to fill some requirement. It's about being with our Father—sharing His heart, His mission, and His work.

As you decide to participate in ministries to the poor, you will discover that God has preceded you. And mostly you will just be putting your arms around His thighs, watching Him do what only He can do.

Let us pray and work toward a new reformation in the Church where we see what has been lost in the execution of His kingdom ministry, that it might be recovered, that He might receive glory and honor, and that the Church might be the spotless bride she was chosen to be, caring for those who are lost and needy without Christ. ■

*Mo Leverett is the founder and director of Desire Street Ministries in New Orleans.*

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# Logos: Logic Incarnate

by Spiros Zodhiates

Ever since the Fall, man's limited perspective has been at odds with God's omniscient intelligence. At the beginning of his Gospel, John introduces us to the Word (*ho Lógos* [3056]) who was with God and was God (John 1:1). *Lógos* not only means "word" but also denotes logic and intelligence. In a nutshell, the goal of logic is to arrive at a definite conclusion based on a starting premise or idea. Because God is not only logical but logic itself, His thought patterns would undoubtedly make the most sense when applied to any situation.

Man, on the other hand, has his own method of logic, which the Greek Scriptures call *dialogismós* ([1261], to reason through). These are his thought patterns that he uses to draw conclusions about God and everything else. Sad to say, this type of reasoning frequently begins with the wrong premise and therefore ends with the wrong conclusion. According to Jesus, *dialogismoí* (plural of *dialogismós*) proceed from the hearts of men and all too often are transformed into the filth of sin: murder, adultery, theft, and all kinds of perversity (Mark 7:21). And no matter how people justify their behavior, it will never conduct one into the accurate facts of reality or true logic (*lógos*).

After humanity had been wallowing in wrong conclusions for several millennia, we could say it had lost touch with reality. Then when man least expected it, the Word (*ho Lógos*) took on human flesh and, bearing the gift of salvation, entered into the murky waters of humanity's anti-logic (John 1:14).

As the embodiment of God's intelli-

gence, Jesus Christ stood in stark contrast to the fantasies (*dialogismoí*) around which man had built his life. In fact, the basis of Christ's reasoning was diametrically opposed to mankind's self-centered intellectual foundations. The men and women among whom Jesus lived could not comprehend that He had existed eternally, even before the creation of the world. He not only was God but "had been" (*εἶμῃ* [2258], imperfect of *eimí* [1510], to be, exist) God even before there was time.

Of the three members of the Godhead, Jesus is the only One to have "become" (*ginomai* [1096], to come into being). The Father and the Holy Spirit have existed eternally, as did the Son, but only the Son took on human flesh and became God incarnate.

The Logic (*ho Lógos*) of God took on humanity so that men would have a pattern by which to compare their own lives, see their shortcomings, and receive deliverance from them through His sacrifice on the cross.

Although Jesus' example of perfection among men was not the only reason He came to earth, it was definitely part of the Father's purpose. Until the Messiah's advent, no man had seen God, but the Son "declared him" (*exēgéomai* [1834], to unfold).

Up to that point, God had been completely intangible, or Spirit (*Pneúma*). But Jesus' incarnation made Deity tangible, able to be perceived by the physical senses. That's not to say that our Lord relinquished His intangible, spiritual existence when He came to earth. In that sense, the Saviour never left the Father's presence

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but continued with Him through the three decades of His humanity.

While unbelievers' rejection of God's *Lógos*, Jesus Christ, inhibits their ability to think clearly, believers can have the real Logic living within them if they will engraft His Word into their lives (Col. 3:16). The Divine Logic then ushers them

into real perception by faith instead of looking at life based on their own cognitive processes (*aísthēsis* [144], intellectual perception). ■

*Dr. Zodhiates is chairman emeritus of the Board of Trustees and president emeritus of AMG International.*

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## Last Days Scoffers

by Ed Hindson

The Second Coming of Christ is one of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. Jesus emphatically said, "I will come again" (John 14:3). The questions raised by believers over the centuries have always been "When?" and "How?" The answers to these questions divide Christians into various views of eschatology ("last things"). Some believe He will come before the Tribulation. Some during it and some after it. Some believe He will come at the end of the Church Age and some think He will come after the millennium.

One of the most bizarre interpretations of eschatology is the view that He has already come back! No, I'm not talking about the Jehovah's Witnesses who think Jesus returned in 1914. I'm talking about a viewpoint called preterism, which teaches that Jesus returned in AD 70 when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem.

You may be thinking that no sensible person really believes that Jesus already came back. Well, it may surprise you to know that preterism is experiencing a new wave of interest these days thanks to the encouragement of popular radio personalities like R. C. Sproul and Hank

Hanegraaff. Sproul openly admits he is a "partial preterist" and Hanegraaff claims he is seriously considering it.

I have watched various eschatologies come and go over the past 40 years. Some last a few weeks (like *88 Reasons the Rapture Will Be in 1988*) and some a few years (like the fast-fading so-called Pre-Wrath view). But none have had more insidious implications than preterism—the idea that Jesus already came back and we missed it! In fact, the Bible warns us: "There shall come scoffers in the last days . . . saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Peter 3:3, 4).

### *What Is Preterism?*

The term *preterist* is Latin for "past." Thus, preterists believe that Bible prophecy was fulfilled in the past. Therefore, they view the major prophetic passages of Scripture, such as the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation as already fulfilled. Preterism is the exact opposite of Futurism, which views these major biblical prophecies as being fulfilled in the future.

Extreme preterists, who prefer to call themselves "consistent preterists," hold

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**THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF PRETERISM REST ON PASSAGES THAT REFER TO CHRIST COMING "QUICKLY" (REVELATION 1:1), OR "THIS GENERATION WILL NOT PASS" (MATTHEW 24:34). THEY INSIST THESE MUST BE RELATED TO AND LIMITED TO THE FIRST CENTURY.**

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that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. They view this event as the Second Coming of Christ and reject any belief in a future return of Christ. Thus, they deny a future bodily resurrection of believers and a literal return of Christ to earth. Extreme preterists believe we are already in the “new heavens”! Their view is not only ludicrous, but it is also heretical and places them outside the parameters of biblical orthodoxy.

Moderate preterists, like R. C. Sproul, claim they still believe in a future Second Coming, but still insist on interpreting the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation as basically already fulfilled in the past.

In contrast to the basic beliefs of premillennialism, moderate preterists believe that God is finished with biblical Israel. They see no prophetic future for national Israel. The fact that the State of Israel exists today is blamed on an “accident of history” perpetrated by “ignorant premillennialists” who supported the Balfour Declaration that eventually led to the formation of the modern State of Israel in 1948. While most preterists would insist they are not anti-Semitic, their theology certainly leans in that direction. One of the symbols of the current preterist movement is an artist’s rendering of the smoldering ashes of Jerusalem in AD 70, as though they are rejoicing in the destruction of the Holy City.

***Preterist Beliefs***

As a rule moderate preterists tie their belief system to a postmillennial vision in which the Church becomes the new “Israel” and must bring in the Kingdom on earth in order to prepare the world for the return of Christ. Most preterists believe the following:

1. Nero was the Antichrist. There will be no future individual Antichrist.
2. The Tribulation Period is already over. It occurred when the Roman army besieged Jerusalem in AD 66-70.
3. Christ “returned” in the clouds in AD 70 to witness the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army.
4. God replaced Old Testament Israel with the Church. Therefore, all the biblical promises to Israel belong to the Church. God is finished with national Israel. Whatever is happening in Israel today has nothing to do with prophecy.
5. Armageddon already happened in AD 70. The fall of “Babylon” refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

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6. Satan is already bound in the abyss and cannot hinder the spread of the Gospel. Revelation 20 has already been fulfilled.
7. We are already in the Millennium, but it is not literal. Some preterists equate the entire Church Age as the Millennium. The 1,000 years are not literal but figurative, even though they are mentioned six times in Revelation 19–20.

The basic assumptions of preterism rest on passages that refer to Christ coming “quickly” (Revelation 1:1), or “this generation will not pass” (Matt. 24:34). They insist these must be related to and limited to the first century. By contrast, premillennialists believe that Christ’s coming is imminent and; therefore, could occur at any moment. Darrell Bock of Dallas’ Theological Seminary counters the preterist view observing: “What Jesus is saying is that the generation that sees the beginning of the end, also sees its end. When the signs come, they will proceed quickly; they will not drag on for many generations. It will happen within a generation.”

### ***Fallacious Reasoning***

Preterists insist they are defending the Bible by making its prophecies fulfilled in the past. That way, they can't be accused of making false assumptions about the future. In other words, their interpretive methodology might be called: "back up and punt!" By confining predictive prophecy to a past fulfillment they eliminate any real need for eschatology. However, their fallacious reasoning and flimsy logic leaves them supporting a series of ridiculous conclusions that fly in the face of the entire history of biblical interpretation.

For example, the idea that Satan is already "bound" is clearly contradicted by Peter's statement: "The devil, as a roaring lion, wanders about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The Apostle Paul refers to Satan as the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). One would have a difficult time convincing Peter and Paul that Satan was already bound by the power of the cross. If Satan is bound today, why are the nations still deceived?

If we are already in the Millennium, why is there still war in the world? When did the lion lie down with the lamb? And when did the nations beat their weapons into plowshares? If the 1,000 years are only symbolic, then is the reign of Christ only symbolic? If God broke His everlasting covenant with Israel, how do we know He will not break His covenant of everlasting life with us?

If God is finished with ethnic Israel, why did Paul ask: "Has God cast away his people?" And why did he respond so emphatically, "God forbid!" (Romans 11:1)? Why did Paul ask of Israel, "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" And why did he respond again: "God forbid!" (Romans 11:11)? Why did Paul state that "blindness in part has happened to Israel,

until the fullness of the Gentiles comes" (Romans 11:25)? Why did he believe, "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26) if God is already finished with Israel?

If the Church replaces Israel and becomes the Kingdom of God on earth, why did the disciples ask Jesus at the ascension: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). That was the perfect opportunity for Jesus to tell the disciples that He was finished with Israel and that they were the new "Israel." But He did not! He simply told them it was not for them to know that time which the Father has predetermined for Israel to have the kingdom (Acts 1:7).

### ***Practical Implications***

Tom Ice writes: "Because of the current spread of preterism, pastors and teachers need to be prepared to defend orthodox

eschatology from this attack." Those who believe that Christ already came back in AD 70 can hardly obey our Lord's command to "keep watching" until He comes (Matthew 24:42).

Preterism rests on a faulty hermeneutic and raises serious concerns for sincere students of Scripture. Consider the following:

#### **1. Destroys the Literal Meaning of the Bible.**

Once you start arguing that the language of prophecy cannot be taken literally, you are not that far removed from not taking the rest of the Bible literally either. Preterists are following the dangerous path of Liberalism, which began denying predictive prophecy and soon rejected the literal interpretation of creation, the flood, biblical history, the virgin birth of Christ, His vicarious death and bodily resurrection.

#### **2. Distorts the Promise of the Second Coming.**

Placing the return of Christ in the past robs the Church of a confident expectation

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about the future. We are left on earth trying to “make the best of it” without any real hope of divine intervention. It leaves the Church desperately trying to “bring in the Kingdom” without the King.

### **3. Diminishes the Hope of the Believer.**

Preterism negates the biblical commands to “watch” and “be ready” for the coming of Christ. It limits those injunctions to the first-century believers prior to AD 70. In fact, it limits every biblical command related to the return of Christ. The phrase “until He comes” would have to be limited to AD 70. How can we “build the church” (Matthew 16:18) or “occupy until he comes.” In fact, how do we celebrate the communion service to “show forth the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26)? Should we stop celebrating the Lord’s Supper because He already came in AD 70?

### **4. Deprives Israel of Her Future.**

Preterists insist that God is finished with Israel. Many of them teach that it is actually Jesus who breaks the covenant

with Israel in Daniel 9:26, 27. In essence, preterism pits Jesus against Israel and therefore smacks of anti-Semitism. Preterists actually teach that the “Babylon” of Revelation 17–18 is Jerusalem! Therefore, the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 represents Christ’s ultimate triumph over unbelief.

### **5. Denies the Power of Christ.**

While most preterists would insist they are defending the power of Christ, they are actually denying it. They are trying to “bring in the Kingdom” without the King. And might I add, they are fighting a losing battle! Christianity is under attack like never before. We are not winning the battle for world dominion and we never will. Yes, the Church will continue to grow (Matthew 16:18), but so will the resistance of Satan (1 Timothy 4:1). God will continue to do marvelous things in this world. But the Church will never bring the Kingdom of heaven to earth until the King of heaven returns in person. ■

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## **The Rule of Respect**

by John Coblentz

Many years ago, a high school teacher in a public school told me how he established rules for his classroom. He taught science, and each year he began by talking about classroom rules.

“What rules do we need for this class?” he would ask his students.

The students offered helpful suggestions:

*No talking.*

*No hitting.*

*No passing notes.*

*No cheating.*

*No throwing things.*

*No bad language.*

The teacher would write the rules on the chalkboard, and amazingly, the class would come up with a sizable list.

When the suggestions began to wane, and the chalkboard was quite full, the teacher would say, “How about if we have just one rule?”

“Wow!” the students would say. “One rule!”

The teacher took the eraser to all the rules on the board, and then he wrote one word: RESPECT.

“That’s our rule,” he said. “You respect

me. I respect you. We all respect each other. No one in this room is to be treated with disrespect. When we show respect to others, we can respect ourselves.”

My teacher friend did not invent this “rule of respect.” It has been in the Word of God for centuries. The Apostle Peter said, “Honour all men.” Or as the NIV translates it, “Show proper respect to everyone” (1 Peter 2:17).

What does it mean to honor or show respect?

The Greek word literally means “to prize or value,” and in usage, then, the word meant “to revere or hold in esteem.” It is the same word Peter used a couple of sentences later when he said, “Honour the king.”

Immediately, we raise the question, “But what if a person is not respectable?” We raise the same kind of question when Jesus calls us to love our enemies. It seems like expecting too much to be told to act nicely toward people who do not act nicely toward us.

But that’s what God calls His people to do. Respect, like love, can be shown when it is neither earned nor deserved. This kind of respect depends not primarily on its recipient, but on its giver. It comes from within.

Certainly, when a person is respectable, it is easier to show respect. If a person demonstrates dignity, grace, self-discipline, and kindness, our admiration comes almost automatically. But if we respect only those who are respectable, how are we different from anyone else? Or, as Jesus said, “If you love them which love you, what reward have ye? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?” (Matthew 5:46, 47). Sinners can do that!

Actually, if we can respect only those who deserve it, we are dependent on others for our responses. Jesus taught us to live from within, not to be dependent upon our outward circumstances.

So how does this come out in daily living?

When we respect people:

1. We will speak courteously to them.
2. We will not use derogatory names.
3. We will not mock or belittle them.
4. When we disagree, we will be clear, but we will not resort to using tactics such as yelling or screaming.
5. We will not misrepresent them, either in speaking to them or in speaking to others about them.
6. We will be considerate in pointing out their weak areas.
7. We will not invade their boundaries or their territory unless it is clearly our responsibility to do so.
8. We will not assume upon their time or resources.
9. We will not use them for our selfish advantage.
10. We will be true to our commitments to them.
11. We will take their concerns seriously.
12. We will be compassionate about their needs.

The list could go on a long time because respect finds expression in all of life.

Unfortunately, we sometimes show more respect to those we don’t know than to those we live with every day. Respect really does start at home.

Every human being appreciates respect. Whether you are a church leader or a church member, a schoolteacher or a pupil, a parent or a child, an employer or an employee, the one who finished first or the one who came in last, the person who succeeded or the one who failed, you appreciate when those around you respect you as a human being—when they are considerate of your ideas, your words, your feelings, your reputation, your abilities, and your limitations.

*How would your relationships change if you followed the rule of respect?* ■

—Reprinted with permission from Deeper Life Ministries Newsletter, June, 2006

# Glory for Another

by David Chapman

**“NOT TO US, O LORD,  
NOT TO US BUT TO YOUR NAME  
BE THE GLORY, BECAUSE OF  
YOUR LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS.”  
—PSALM 115:1**

William Wilberforce stands as one of the great British statesmen of the 19th century. Today history recalls Wilberforce as one who, because of his commitment to Christ, sought the abolishment of British slavery. Yet, despite his hard-won achievements, Wilberforce's diary perhaps most reflects the measure of his life.

In his diary we learn that the evening after Wilberforce's greatest victory as a statesman, when Parliament passed the bill to abolish the slave trade, he meditated on a psalm. The words of the psalm were, “Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness” (Psalm 115:1). Today we also look to this psalm and remember that God alone is worthy of glory and praise.

God is preeminent beyond all His creatures. To Him is due all honor, glory, and allegiance. As Christians we acknowledge these truths. Yet, is it not the case that we often direct our gaze elsewhere? We lose our perspective and are tempted to grant glory and praise to people and things rather than to our Creator.

Imagine a young man, fresh out of seminary, who has just planted a church. Over the course of five years, he witnesses that congregation grow to about 300 people. He cannot help feeling a little proud of himself. Is it not a great challenge to give God all the glory when we work hard and everything is going well? This imaginary church planter checked the ethnographic makeup of the community, consulted church growth books, and planned out a strategy. Some of that glory certainly belongs to him, right?

Another three years passes and the

church has stopped growing. The elders are bickering with one another; and no one can decide whose name should be on the new education wing. The pastor is tired and feeling less self-fulfilled. Is it not difficult to focus all glory on God alone when we work hard and everything has started to fall apart? Why doesn't God put those bickering elders in their places? Why won't God keep blessing with more members? Why doesn't God give a spiritual boost that will pull this pastor out of the ministerial doldrums?

Another two years passes and the pastor is still journeying with this congregation. In a way, they seem to have beaten the odds. But they have been hard years. After the church split, it seemed that there were more Jehovah Witnesses going door to door than church members. Materialism consumes the flock, and the church members fear that the new school board is implementing policies that will suck their children away from Christ. It is hard to give God all the glory when we endure incessant and bitter opposition to our Christian faith. Why doesn't God show those Jehovah's Witnesses the error of their Christological ways? Why does God allow the materialism and pluralism of culture to steal away our hearts and the hearts of our children? In times of plenty, in times of want, and especially in times of opposition, our hearts are quickly waylaid from glorifying the Lord.

But as we look to Psalm 115 we must recognize that the psalmist does not utter these words during a time of ease for Israel. The psalmist asks, “Why do the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’” (Psalm 115:2). When I read Scripture, I am often struck by how easily we mistakenly relegate the Word of God to a time far removed from us. The Bible speaks of people who worshiped pagan deities and fell at the feet of idols that we no longer have. And yet, our cultural situation manifests

striking analogies to this ancient era when the single-minded worship of the Lord was opposed by the surrounding culture.

The psalmist reveals in verse 2 that the surrounding nations were mocking Israel. If we understand ancient Near Eastern religious practices, we can better comprehend this taunt. Ancient Near Eastern religion primarily directed veneration toward deities that could be seen and envisioned. Most people worshiped statues, sometimes of human figures and sometimes of animals. The statues could be tiny carved objects or they could be two and three times life size and made with stone, silver, bronze, or even gold. The Israelites faced the derisive query, "Where is your god?" If the same question was put to the Assyrians they could respond, "Right over here." But the Israelites could only reply that their God dwells in heaven, for they had no visible image of the Lord.

Furthermore, throughout Old Testament history, countries seeking to overwhelm Israel surrounded the Promised Land. Egypt lay to the south, the Philistines to the west, the Midianites and Edomites to the east, not to mention the Assyrians and Babylonians who could advance from the north. All of these ancient Near East heavy hitters were staring at Israel and taunting, "Where is their God?" It is similar to the bully who mocks, "So where is your dad *now*? Where is your protector *now*?"

The psalmist counters with penetrating insight. He says, "Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases *him*. But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them" (Psalm 115:3-7).

The psalmist affirms that the gods these nations worship are not gods at all. This familiar refrain appears elsewhere in the Psalter and in the prophets (e.g. Psalm 135:15-18; Isaiah 37:19; 44:10-20; Jeremiah

10:3-5). The idea may seem obvious to us today that these hunks of metal are no gods at all. But before we dismiss the worship of Israel's enemies so quickly, we ought to give the nations some intellectual credit. Those nations did not actually claim that a hunk of metal was their god. Each idol was an image that represented a particular deity, regardless of who that god was and where he or she was thought to reside. This image gave the people a place to present offerings and to gain the deity's favor. But the psalmist denies that these man-made images represent anything. There is only one God in heaven and there are none who can compete with Him. An idol represents nothing. These idols have no sound, no voice; they cannot help anyone.

What does this have to do with the 21st century world around us? Most of us in America do not worship actual metal figures. Certainly, communities exist throughout the world where people still contend that their physical idols represent deities. But in the West, we do not often witness that type of adoration. Could it be instead that our idolatry takes the form of other man-made religions, where we write our own religious contracts and expect God to sign?

It is said that the great inventor Thomas Edison was a stickler for productivity. In one of the factories he oversaw, he noticed that the workers would concentrate so much on the clock at the end of the workday that their work would slow down. So Edison changed all the clocks in the factory to show different times. In that vast array of possibilities, a person no longer knew what time it was. They had no place to focus to count down the remaining minutes, so they could only turn back to their work. Modern American pluralism has a similar effect in our culture. There is no focused pious devotion. Amidst a vast array of religious options, the question is not, "Can you worship the one true God?" but, "Which god will you worship today?" In this pluralism we can lose sight of the God whom we worship.

We who are Christians must comprehend the vanity of trusting in idols, whatever

they may be. I remember my first semester as a campus minister. I was assigned to a quadrangle of men's dorms. There were probably 1,000 young men represented in those four buildings. We had hopes that there were true worshipers of God among these men, but we knew none. I was faced with the daunting prospect of meeting person after person with competing worldviews who appeared quite happy believing what they did. It was at times difficult to talk to them about Jesus Christ.

One of the things that kept me going was the realization that everything they were following in place of Jesus was futile. Many whom I met were devoting themselves to invisible idols that were empty, vain, and could not speak to their lives. Whether they worshiped materialism or pluralism or the latest religious fad, their idols were in truth dead and were not worthy of their devotion. Notice how Psalm 115 contrasts the greatness of God with the worthlessness of idols, and how it warns of the ultimate end of idol-worshipers. Verse 8 cries out, "Those who make them will be made like them, and so will all who trust them." We should take courage because we know God deserves glory. He can speak into our reality, while it is vain to give glory to these paltry idols.

The transition from verse 8 to verse 9 constitutes a switch from discussing the danger of wrong-headed religions to invoking trust in the Lord that leads to His protection. Verse 9 begins, "O house of Israel, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield." Notice the threefold repetition. Israel, trust in the Lord (v. 9), Aaron, trust in the Lord (v. 10), you who fear Him, trust in the Lord (v. 11), and each time the refrain, "he is their help and shield." We dare not miss the point here. All those whom God brings into relationship with Himself are to trust the Lord, for God alone is their help and shield. The Lord is a protecting and delivering God. His nature requires Him to shield those who are His own. Certainly the Lord provides for us in the physical circumstances of life, yet ultimately He has sheltered us from the just

desserts of our sin through His Messiah whom He Himself sent to deliver His people. Jesus delivers us from the power of sin and the terror of death. He protects us.

In addition to being our protector, the Lord is the source of all blessing. Everything that we have comes from the hand of the Lord. We are often tempted to draw glory to ourselves due to our own achievements or position in life, but we must remember that all gifts and blessings come from God's hand. We even have this hope in verse 13: "He will bless those who fear the LORD—small and great alike." No Christian is too small to avoid the watchful keeping of the Lord. In verses 14 and 15 we see the implication of that blessing, "May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."

The blessing that God gives is not in opposition to His glory. It is as we see the true source of blessing, the Lord Himself, that we give Him the glory. Verse 16 says, "The highest heavens belong to the Lord." And then the psalmist continues, "But the earth he has given to man." The Lord *gave* the earth to man. The earth is ours, we might think. But it is only ours because the Lord gave it to us. All the blessings we have come from God's hand.

Knowing such a great God, how dare we rob Him of glory? Yet you and I know that our lives often betray an incessant turf war as we seek to steal glory for ourselves. When things go well, it is due to us. When things are mundane, we find ourselves in spiritual doldrums. And when we face opposition, we wonder why God has not acted already. We are prideful and arrogant by our fallen nature. What shall we do? In part, the psalmist calls us to look at the world around us. The opposition that we face is worthless. God will ultimately bring us through it. The blessings that we have all come from God, and so we bless Him.

As Christians we see the fullness of blessing in our Lord Jesus Christ who set aside His glory in order to face the cross. Now Jesus sits in glory reigning at the Father's right hand. Our very eternity

rests in Jesus' nail-pierced hands. Were it not for the Holy Spirit operating in our lives, constantly pointing us back to the Lord, there would be no hope of us overcoming our pride and arrogance. But now with the Holy Spirit in our lives and Jesus as our Saviour, we can redirect the glory that we want for ourselves to the Lord to whom it properly belongs.

The famous example of Johann Sebastian Bach forms a fitting conclusion to a meditation on Psalm 115. At the end of several of Bach's most memorable works, he penned the phrase *solī Deo gloria* ("to God alone, glory") as an abbreviation, "S.D.G." The fact that Bach completed many compositions in this way took on new meaning for me when I studied baroque music in college.

For a class project I analyzed six Bach

oratorios, and thus I witnessed a musical genius at work. If there was anybody who had inherent musical skill, it was Bach. When you examine a Bach oratorio you can observe how he carefully wove together the deeply spiritual words with brilliant lyrical canons in a way few could ever equal. But Bach also faced great difficulties in life. At times he was scrounging for jobs. His first wife and several of his children died prematurely. In the midst of all of those trials and through the times of his great successes, Bach could still pen over his work *solī Deo gloria*. May the Lord grant us grace that, at the end of our days, the banner over our lives would be "Not us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be glory." ■

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## Sixty Years After the Holocaust

by Norbert Lieth

**How could organized mass murder take place?** Approximately six and a half million Jews were murdered in the death factories of Nazis. At least one and a half million of them were children. The Allies liberated the concentration camps 60 years ago and what they witnessed was a picture of horror. Although by this time many of the gas chambers and crematoriums had been blown up and tons of evidence destroyed, the extent of one of the greatest mass murders in world history could still be imagined. How could this happen?

Last summer I visited Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald and Dachau, all former concentration camps, and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial center in Jerusalem.

You walk through these former sites of human misery. You notice how other visitors shake their heads and shrug their shoulders. Many of them weep, and even whole school classes are quiet and almost

reverent. In a few places you can see the butchers' hooks on which human beings were hung up like pigs. Photographs show how medical experiments were performed on men, women, and young people. You see instruments of torture and blocks to which prisoners were bound and then whipped, as in the Middle Ages. You look into little cells, stand before gas chambers and ovens. You see pictures that can hardly be described in words and read documentary reports that describe hell on earth. Fear and desperation are in the eyes of the prisoners, and infinite arrogance and bestiality are on the faces of camp commanders and down to the lowest guards.

Everyone asks in his or her heart how such an organized mass murder could ever be possible. Certainly we shall never fathom the whole depths of this drama, but we have the responsibility of at least attempting to

come to some kind of conclusion. The following thoughts occurred to me:

**1. It was the work of the devil.** It should be clear to everyone that there is a devil, a mass murderer. Otherwise, what would be the origin of such inexplicable evil? Jesus said that it comes from the devil. The devil is described in the Bible as the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air and the ruler of the world, who has his work in the children of unbelief and who “deceives the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). The “god of this world” is spoken of in 2 Corinthians 4:4, “in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” We read of the “prince of the power of the air” in Ephesians 2:2, “wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [the ruler of the kingdom of the air, NIV] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” And Ephesians 6:12 speaks of the devil as a “ruler of the darkness of this world”: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

The devil leads nations that have no relationship with God according to his diabolic will. Satan is familiar with the Bible and knows that the restoration of the Jewish people to their homeland is one of the most important conditions to precede the return of the Lord Jesus. His return is closely connected with the Jewish people in the Jewish land. Israel lived in the Diaspora for almost 2,000 years. Even before the end of World War I the Jews were given the assurance by the British government (which was sure of their victory) of their own homeland in Israel, through the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917. Therewith an important basis for the return from the Diaspora was created, and simultaneously our world history came slowly into the focus of the Messianic era.

The god of this world knows that with

this his time is coming to an end, for when Jesus returns the devil will be conquered by Jesus’ power. In Revelation 12:12, we read, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Was it a coincidence that after the Jews were promised a homeland, the wrath of the Nazis was directed against this people and raged against them? Or did the “world ruler” have a part in this? Was his destructive hatred directed against the Jews in order to thwart the return of Jesus?

People who had radically turned their backs on the Bible were a welcome tool to accomplish this and, blinded by Satan, they even saw themselves as the bringers of salvation. Yet they were enemies of God and put themselves at the disposal of the enemy of God.

The return of Jesus is within reach today more than ever, and Satan’s battle has not ceased, but becomes increasingly more violent. We should be conscious of this and not have any part in the wickedness of the powers of darkness. Anti-Semitism is ultimately directed against the plan of God to found the kingdom of the Messiah in Israel.

**2. It was the work of an empire without God.** Psalm 14:1 says, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”

Hitler wanted to create a so-called Third Reich to follow the first “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation” of Karl the Great, and the second empire of Otto of Bismarck. The second had fallen in World War I and they wanted to counteract this with the third. Full of pride, and in boundless arrogance, they wanted to create a “thousand-year empire,” which did not have the true God as its center. “There is no God!” They promised the people work, prosperity, and prestige. But just as the first and second empires did not have God at their center, neither did the third; therefore, it was also doomed to fail from the beginning because it did what

is written in Psalm 14:1: "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works." In an empire that does not have God at its center, Jews and Christians are of a necessity excluded. Christians are excluded because Jesus is building His spiritual kingdom through them, and Jews are excluded because the Messianic kingdom will be built on earth through them.

Today a "Roman empire" is being created again within Europe, and once again God is not at the center. The mention of God has been struck from the preamble of the European Union constitution; therefore, it will be an anti-Christian kingdom and will fall, just as the Roman Empire did. This will also turn against Christianity and Judaism sooner or later.

**3. It was the work of man.** It would be simple to put all the blame on the devil and leave it at that. No, he used a nation that no longer obeyed the Bible, whereby we must remember that there were great exceptions, but they were exceptions.

Once again the proverb proves true: "Humanity without divinity becomes inhumanity." At the time of the Nazis, biblical Christianity was forsaken, the Bible was set aside and churches were seldom visited. It turned out to be a fatal error—one that could not be reversed—that some Christian churches taught that the Church had taken over all the promises given to Israel. The Scriptures were no longer rightly divided; God's promises for Israel and those for the Church were no longer kept apart. The prophetic Word of God was disregarded and churchgoers were no longer taught these pillars of truth. Israel was completely out of sight of Christianity. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Today we have to confess the failure of "Christianity" to prevent the genocide of those whose root bears her (Romans 11:18). It was as though they had pulled their own roots out of the water and withered on account of this. Of course there were a few

that realized this and had the courage to confess it; we only have to think of Pastor Wilhelm Busch, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and many others. But their voices were too few to be heard among the loud cries of godless people like Goebbels, who had the media on his side for his lying propaganda, and so influenced the people that they joined in his cries, his battle, and his murder.

The following question is justified: Would this have been possible if people had lived according to what is written in the Bible, if the churches had taught correctly and raised their voices in unison?

It is shocking that Jesus was speaking at the time to the most religious people of all when He said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Anti-Semitism goes hand in hand with forsaking the Bible. That is why it is important we take a stand in our churches and do not neglect the prophetic Word (2 Peter 1:19).

**4. It was the work of the media.** The responsibility of the media can be seen very clearly in the so-called Third Reich. What great guilt the media brought upon itself! The lies of the devil, which inspired Hitler, Goebbels, and Himmler, were broadcast over the air. Hundreds of thousands of people heard the propaganda speeches and were influenced by them. Behind them stood the influence of the murderer of men, who turns truth into lies and turns everything upside-down.

It is of great concern that today almost 80 percent of the media in Europe does not speak in a positive manner about Israel and they often back the enemies of the Jewish people. Christians should take advantage of publications and the media to defend themselves, while there is still time. Readers' letters could be a way of doing this. We should do everything in order that we do not have to say one day, "Why was I silent?"

**5. It was the work of hatred.** What power hatred has! It is said that Hitler read a lot and had concerned himself with books that had a spiritualist background. He suffered from paranoia, and according to reports, he saw demons. Goebbels was an intellectual who also read a lot and wrote tirelessly. In his speeches he did not hold back from tirades of hatred and slander against Judaism. Goebbels was so fascinated by Hitler's idea that he separated from his fiancée, who had a Jewish background, although he loved her very much. What power drove these men to such things so that they stopped at nothing and at the Wannsee conference decided upon the extermination of the Jews? It was hatred for God, which came from hell. Psalm 83:2-5 speaks of this, "For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee."

It is not by chance that people concerned with occult practices have a negative attitude towards Christians and Jews. An increasingly demonized world turns increasingly against Israel.

**6. It was the work of a transfer of guilt.** Already in the Middle Ages the Jews were blamed for the plague; they were condemned as well-poisoners and accused of using the blood of Christians for the production of pita bread. Such slander has not ceased, even 60 years after the Holocaust. It still exists in the 21st century. There were groups who put the blame for September 11th on the Jews, as also for the death of Arafat. It was said the Jews had poisoned him.

At the beginning of the Nazi era, the Jews were accused of a worldwide conspiracy, and it was claimed that Jewish financiers were the cause of the financial disaster in world economics, merely in

order to bring themselves financial gain. In his book *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*, Hitler wrote, "The terrible example" of this is Russia where he (the Jew) "killed or starved three million people in truly fanatical, partly inhuman, barbarity." He ignored the fact that Hitler himself was prepared to inflict inhuman torment on his enemies at his attack on Russia.

**7. It was the work of underestimation.** A certain indifference and underestimation ruled the German people. Even Christians in general, as well as non-Christians, were no longer conscious of their responsibility and gave up. Ralf Georg Reuth wrote, "If the Germans had given the power to Hitler in 1933, it would have been partly for the reason that his criminal aims surpassed by far the powers of the imagination. His unmistakable statements in the middle of the 1920s were all too easily regarded as pure rhetoric of a "conventional" anti-Semite, such as had always existed. This applied all the more because since 1928 he had shelved his racial/ideological propaganda against Jews. Ignorant, self-pleasing conservatives even believed they could "confine Hitler."

We need to nip things in the bud and resist the devil (James 4:7). Those who play with sin, tolerate it and underestimate its power will soon succumb to it. We may not tolerate anti-Semitism in silence; therefore, for through this we are making room for it. Is not the indifference of the members of the Full Assembly of the United Nations this year a sad scandal? It says in this connection, "The memorial celebrations of the U.N. Full Assembly in memory of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps did not meet with great interest in many delegates. The assembly hall was only half full during the ceremony, which lasted for a few hours." U.N. General Secretary, Kofi Annan, warned on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the death camp, Auschwitz, of being silent and looking away at the misdeeds of regimes that had no regard for mankind. "All that evil needs in order to triumph is the silence of the majority,"

said Annan. The German Foreign Minister, Fischer, described Auschwitz as one of the absolutely lowest points in German history.

We must be aware of our responsibility and put this into practice. The fact that we, as born-again believers, are ambassadors for Christ. We must heed Romans 11:25, 26, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

**8. It was the work of us all.** Ultimately we see from history what man is capable of, and we are all human beings. We are all sinners by nature, and therefore anything is possible, even today. Romans 3:10-18 says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes."

We should learn from the past to nip anti-Semitism in the bud, but only turning to Jesus Christ, His forgiveness and following in His footsteps can so change a person that he or she turns from hatred to love. Romans 3:23-25 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

**9. A work that brought about a turning point.** The Holocaust (burnt sac-

rifice) is the darkest hour of German history; it cannot be explained in human words and thoughts, and it certainly cannot be excused. It is an unprecedented mass destruction of those with whom God has made an eternal covenant. But for this very reason, not even the most bestial work of man, inspired by hell, can thwart the purposes of the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is not by chance that Hitler's Nazi Reich fell miserably after exactly 12 years (according to the number of the tribes of Israel).

The Jewish state, which is now home to as many Jews as perished under the Nazi regime, arose only three years after the end of World War II before the eyes of all nations. The birth of a new life does not take place without the preceding birth pains. In Isaiah 66:8, 9 it says, "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God."

I would like to venture to ask: Would the Jewish state exist today without the despicable events in Nazi Germany? The United Nations was so traumatized by the Holocaust that the majority of [its members] voted for a Jewish state. This is not a reason for the Holocaust, and certainly not an excuse for it, but it is a reality.

God let the salvation of the state of Israel in the Promised Land come about through the wickedness of people who acted without God. Even in the future, ultimately the Great Tribulation and the regime of terror of the Antichrist will have their part in the Lord coming to His goal with His people. The prophet Jeremiah said of this, "For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness of Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel" (Jeremiah 31:7). ■

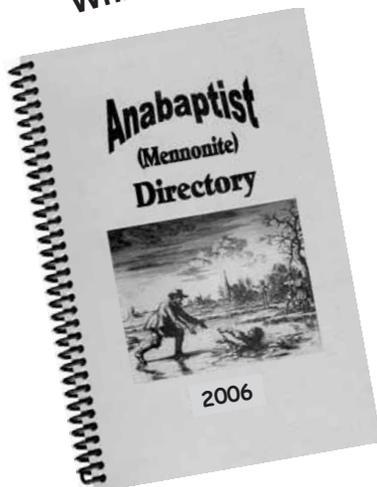
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