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THE 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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of three older teens drove slowly through the area, past the bus stop. The car turned around and accelerated towards our son.

The occupants pulled out two Walter P99 replica pellet guns and began firing shots (steel pellets) into our son's body. One of the pellets penetrated his neck with a sting.

As the perpetrators sped away, one of the neighbors identified several digits from their license plate, and the color and make of the car. Our son used his cell phone to call 911. Because the police detachment is near our home and they were able to quickly deploy several units, the carload of perpetrators was swiftly apprehended.

Our son waited about an hour to get simple surgery and five stitches, but still managed to join us for the family Thanksgiving dinner.

*A Messy Season*

I wish I could say the story ended there and we all lived happily ever after, but it didn't.

Within a couple of days our son broke down and began to express much hurt and anger. His emotional condition began to affect his studies and other relationships. He had difficulty concentrating and struggled with paranoia when he walked on the street or waited at a bus stop. School authorities indicated that his PTS (post-traumatic stress) was more than the counselors were able to deal with. So our son was placed in therapy with a specialist who deals with violent assaults.

It was a very messy season in the life of our son and, consequently, in the life of our family.

*Restorative Justice*

We were advised to take the route of

restorative justice, which meant that our son and family would face the three perpetrators and their families in an extended meeting, with the goal of bringing some understanding, public apologies, resolution, closure, and healing.

One of the hardest tasks was that of forgiveness. We discussed the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew

18:21-35) with our son and how practicing forgiveness was a deep part of our faith and worldview.

We didn't pretend that forgiveness was easy, but it was necessary in order to "move on."

Sadly our son was getting revenge and retaliation messages from his friends. At first, he refused to go into a restorative justice circle. But after nearly four months, some therapy, time away from school, and time to reflect, he was ready to face his three perpetrators.

In the evening after the restorative justice circle, our family of three huddled to pray before bed. We were amazed that our son prayed for each of the perpetrators by name.

Today our son is more peaceful, and has come through a difficult emotional process. He'll never forget the experience, but realizes it could have been more serious. He's mindful of God's providence.

Life can be messy and it may be difficult to talk about what's going on in our homes when things are quite frayed. As a pastor, I couldn't publicly discuss many of the details of our situation at the time. Lining up our emotions with our beliefs takes time. Healing takes time.

But I've witnessed, by God's grace, that a day arrives when healing is evident. In our home, we've chosen to call it Thanksgiving Day. ■

—Reprinted with permission. First published in the *MB Herald*, Aug. 2008.

**We were advised to take the route of restorative justice, which meant that our son and family would face the three perpetrators and their families.**

# Person of the Month:

## *Daniel J. Johns* (1850–1942)



Daniel J. Johns, son of John Johns, was born in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, September 8, 1850.

When Daniel Johns was nine he began attending school for several months each year.

In the fall of 1895 when Daniel was fifteen, the Johns family moved to LaGrange County, Indiana. Four years later Daniel began his studies to become a teacher. He attended three Indiana Normal Schools over the next seventeen months which resulted in a teacher's license and employment as a teacher. He taught successfully for seven years. He was definitely in favor of education.

On May 6, 1875, at the age of 24, Daniel J. Johns married Nancy Yoder. God blessed their home with six children—five sons and one daughter. Sadly, two of the sons preceded Daniel in death. At some point in time, Johns also lost his wife to death.

During the summer of 1876, Daniel accepted Christ at the age of 25, and was subsequently baptized that September.

In 1882, the Clinton Frame Church was looking for another minister, and Daniel was ordained after receiving a strong congregational vote. On May 28, 1882, at the age of 31, Brother Daniel J. Johns became the new pastor. At first he preached in either German or English, but eventually he used only English.

Five years later, in 1887, Johns, now 37 years of age, was ordained as bishop. He was a kind, humble, and cheerful man but he believed in a disciplined church. In his preaching he was biblical and down to earth and served his congregation well. However, some of the members left to form a church with a more relaxed discipline. The year was 1892.

In addition to his pastoral responsibilities, Brother Johns played a part in either the organizing or arranging of such endeavors as the Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite Conference in 1888; the first Sunday school conference in 1892; the Elkhart Institute Association in 1895; the first General Conference in 1898; and the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities in 1906.

After having pastored for forty-seven years, Daniel retired from the ministry in 1929 at the age of 79. He then moved into the home of one of his sons who was also a minister at Clinton Frame. Although retired, his concern for and interest in the work of Christ's Kingdom remained constant for the remainder of his life.

For his time and situation, Brother Johns was considered to be a progressive and a pioneer. At 91 years of age, on May 22, 1942, Daniel J. Johns went home to be with his Lord. The funeral was held at the Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, May 25.

—Gail L. Emerson

# Drift

by David L. Burkholder

**D**rift is defined as a gradual move away from a set position. Ships loosed from their moorings, for instance, drift with the tide. Airplanes may drift off course due to side winds. Vehicles drift if not parked in gear or with the brake set. People sometimes drift aimlessly from place to place or job to job. Drift signifies random, purposeless movement. In some cases drift may be harmless. In others, tragic. Severe damage or even death can result from unintended drift. Drift, however, can be prevented by taking precautionary measures. But effort is necessary to prevent drift, be it on water, in the air, or on land.

Drift may result from carelessness, inattention, neglect, or even sabotage. Those bent on another's destruction may loosen moorings, damage controls, or remove safety features to allow craft or equipment to move at random without power or purpose. Lives may be lost due to drift. Significant damage often results, as happened when a drifting barge struck an interstate bridge and caused a shutdown of the highway.

There is, however, a more dangerous and insidious form of drift than in the physical or material realm. That is spiritual drift. The same principles apply, but the end result is more consequential. Spiritual drift is also a gradual move away from a set position—either in practice or in doctrine.

There are times in the life of the believer, or in the church, when change in practice may be necessitated due to shifting cultural norms or other valid reasons. Such change does not necessarily constitute drift, as long as the principle undergirding the practice is not violated. However, when movement away from settled scriptural principles occurs, that constitutes drift—dangerous drift. It may be the result of carelessness, inattention, neglect, or even sabotage, since the enemy of our souls is constantly

attempting to draw us away from saving faith (2 Peter 2:1-3).

Individuals drift, churches drift, denominations drift. Anyone or any group is subject to a subtle shift away from established norms and practices. So, is drift inevitable? What measures must be taken to avoid it and hold at bay resulting damage? What are the “wheel chocks” for spiritual drift? How can we guard against it?

First of all, individual believers need to be sure of their relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, a relationship secured through faith in His saving work (2 Timothy 1:12). Secondly, individual believers need to be firmly grounded and settled in the truths of the Word of God (Colossians 1:23). That will stabilize one against drift or damaging change. Thirdly, there is safety in numbers. As believers band together in common faith and common agreement, there develops a mutual obligation of accountability. Christians hold one another responsible for maintaining pure doctrine (Ephesians 4:1-16).

But even with accountability and mutual watchfulness, continued effort must be made to adhere to scriptural teachings and practice. The tide of compromise and gradualism continues to flow and will clutch within its grasp any soul or group not securely anchored in the faith. Care must also be taken against deception which sends souls adrift. Heavy responsibility rests upon church leaders to maintain pure doctrine and biblical practices. In 1 Timothy 4:16 the Apostle Paul instructs Timothy to “take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” It is a serious and grave responsibility to guide others. One must first be firmly established personally before he can guide others toward truth and be alert to trends which would lead away from secure

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faith in Christ.

The way to keep vessels or vehicles from drifting is to constantly check to make sure the moorings are secure and safety features engaged. The same is true in the church. The way to maintain secure moorings is through constant attention, continued checking, and diligent teaching. It is all too true that the general tendency of individuals or groups is downward, away from established truth and practice. Constant diligence is necessary to maintain established biblical truths and practices.

Jude gives us a good example of the diligence needed to combat drift. He encouraged his readers to be diligent in maintaining their faith (v. 3) and warned, in verse 4, against those whose intent was to loosen the moorings and cause drift away from biblical truths. He goes on, with a warning note, to explain how God brings judgment on those who deviate from His principles.

Jude closes his letter with an appeal to diligence in building up or establishing one-

self in the faith, with a reminder that one's eternal destiny hinges on faithfulness. He closes by commending his readers to the One who is able to keep their moorings secure and to usher the faithful ones into His glorious eternal presence.

Drift is insidious. It usually occurs incrementally, and often people wake up only when far removed from their moorings. Then it becomes difficult at best to regain and reestablish the position we have moved away from. But drift is not inevitable. To forestall drift it is necessary to constantly check and secure one's moorings. To neglect is to create the potential for disaster. When dealing with one's eternal destiny we must not become careless. The stakes are too high.

So, Christian, belay your moorings. Check them constantly. Allow your brother to assist you in maintaining spiritual security and stability. Look to your Captain for strength and guidance and you will remain firm and stable in your faith until the end. ■

## **Israel's Shalom Ministry 2nd Annual Prophecy Conference**

**October 31–November 2, 2008**

**Salem Mennonite Church, New Paris, IN**

**Theme: *Nations in Prophecy***

*Four Notable Kingdoms in Daniel* . . . . . Todd Neuschwander  
*The Gem of Nations* . . . . . Clarence Bontrager  
*Hebrew Versus Greek Thought* . . . . . Lester Swartzentruber  
*Gog and Magog* . . . . . Jerry Helmuth  
*Information on Jewish Culture* . . . . . Art Hershberger  
*The Kingdom Yet to Come* . . . . . Wayne Yutzy  
*Vision—Jewish Outreach and Prophecy*  
*How Then Shall We Live?*

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## From the Editor's Desk



Paul M. Emerson

GUEST EDITORIAL

## Titanic Syndrome

by Lester Coblentz

It was over 96 years ago that the whole world marveled at the greatest new ocean-going vessel ever built. It was a symbol of mastering the new industrial age, with its design of the sixteen watertight compartments. It was thought by some to be unsinkable. To be sure, it was a first in many ways and a true masterpiece.

On the fateful night of April 14, 1912, at about 11:40 p.m., the *Titanic* struck an iceberg that sliced through the steel sides and ruptured six of the sixteen compartments. It was soon apparent that the fate of the great ship on its maiden voyage was in trouble, and within a few hours it was resting on the bottom of the ocean. This was a terrible tragedy which resulted in the loss of over fifteen hundred lives.

Many people have been intrigued by the *Titanic*, and it is not my attempt to explore or dispute any of the theories that are out there, but rather to see what lessons we can learn from this tragedy. How could such a magnificent ship, with

all the latest safety features, be brought down, while there were older, less advanced ships that made the journey without incident?

There are many ways that we can become complacent. We may feel we have “arrived” on our spiritual pilgrimage. We may secretly think of someone else’s sin, *I would never do that*. If and when we experience times like that, we let our guards down, it can be instrumental to our downfall. This is what I call “*Titanic Syndrome*,” and it could further be described as “*It can’t happen to me*.” We may think that we have all of the needed credentials to ensure safe sailing to our destination.

The Scriptures are very clear that we can live a life of victory, and there is sufficient grace to take us through the rough times of life. Also, I want to affirm that God is sovereign, and He is able to save and keep to the utmost. I have seen that when a person’s world is shaken by such things as sickness, a wayward child, death of a loved one, loss of a job, defamation, or

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financial failure, he is vulnerable to the tricks of the enemy. On the opposite side, success, fame, power, or fortune, also make them vulnerable to the enemy of the soul. There are principles we need to live by, because we are no match for the devil.

Following are a few lessons that we can learn from the *Titanic* episode:

1. Always follow Bible principles. It matters not whether failure, loss, success, or whatever life hands to us, we need to follow the principles of the Bible. Can you imagine the great pride and ecstatic feeling the shipbuilders, the owners, the townspeople, the crew, and passengers must have felt as the *Titanic* started its maiden voyage across the mighty ocean? When we have very high or very low experiences we are most vulnerable to the tricks of the devil. Here the *Titanic* had the same conditions that the other ships in the area had, but ignored them. ***It can't happen to me!***

2. Don't let personal goals dictate your decisions. Captain Edward Smith, we are told, had a goal to break all records in crossing the Atlantic. Personal goals have their place, but never violate biblical principles to achieve them. Don't you realize who I am? ***It won't happen to me!***

3. Don't ignore the obvious. There were indications that the temperatures of the ocean waters were cooler than normal, which was a sign that icebergs were imminent. The other vessels in the area, the *Californian* and the *Carpathia* took heed. They got the same warnings and stopped and waited for daylight. Don't you think I know what I'm doing? ***It won't happen to me!***

4. Heed the warnings of those around you. There were radio transmissions by the other vessels of dangerous icebergs in the area. Most of us have blind areas in our lives. Here is where we need the aid of a brother or sister who can help us to see areas where we are blind. Oh, the blessings of a kind word of warning from

our brethren. So often we think, *Don't tell me what to do—it won't happen to me!*

"Can't happen to me," you say—well, that tells me you are infected with the "*Titanic Syndrome*" bug. We may feel somewhat like the captain of the *Titanic*. We may have experienced great success, crossed many deep waters, and climbed many high mountains. We are operating from a platform that seems somewhat elevated (at least in our own eyes). We need to realize that we are in a battle, and the enemy of our soul will come to us as an angel of light. Then again, he may come to us as a roaring lion seeking to devour us. We have to be aware of the fact that our enemy's goal is to destroy us, and he will use different tactics to accomplish this. In Ephesians 6:10-18 we are admonished to put on the whole armor of God to fight against the enemy. From these Scriptures and others we see that we are engaged in a battle, in which the stakes are very high. ■

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#### A TALE OF TWO SISTERS . . . cont'd.

Then LOVE began to notice  
The charms of HERESY,  
And awed by his opinions,  
She wanted to be free;  
And UNITY perceived that  
Her virtues were desired  
By many, many others  
Whose ways she so admired.  
At length, two precious unions,  
So promising, so blest,  
Were darkened by delusion,  
Disloyalty, unrest;  
Till came the day of sorrows,  
And rendering vows of youth,  
When LOVE divorced her DOCTRINE  
And UNITY her TRUTH.

—Author Unknown

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



## *A Devotional Commentary*



by David L. Burkholder

**NOVEMBER 2, 2008**

### ***Working Toward Brotherhood Unity***

Ephesians 4:1-16

The general theme of the quarter's lessons has been "Christ Builds His Church." In September we looked at foundational principles, in October at leadership issues, and now in November we look at unity in the body of believers. November's lessons are taken from the epistles of the New Testament, from the pen of Paul whose glorious rebirth experience we looked at in the October 19 lesson. Today's lesson from Ephesians 4 focuses on unity in Christ and the exercise of individual giftedness for the enhancement and growth of the body.

Paul has just spelled out in the previous three chapters the blessings and privileges the believer has been given in and through Christ Jesus. Now he says (4:1), in light of these be careful that you live in a manner worthy of these privileges and blessings. He then outlines four principles which should exemplify one's life in regard to his fellow believers. Humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance are to be exercised in an overarching attitude of love, all the while attempting to maintain a peaceful unity fostered by the Spirit of God.

Paul then makes an appeal for oneness on the basis of the oneness of other essential elements of Christianity. We are members of one body. We are infilled and guided by one Spirit. We have one purpose, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father who is supreme and embraces us all. On the basis of those unifying factors we are to live out an expression of oneness toward each other in the body of

Christ.

Each believer has been given a measure of grace sufficient to the task he has been assigned within the body. The ascended Christ has given gifts adequate to the needs of the brotherhood. In the early church there were apostles whose role was establishing and administering the church. Prophets were proclaimers of the message of Christ. Evangelists were itinerant church planters. Pastors and teachers, whether the same or separate individuals, had the responsibility to shepherd, guide, teach, and minister to the needs of the local church.

The purpose of these various giftings was for the establishing of individual believers, equipping saints for the work of ministry, and the edifying or building up of the body. The goal was unity of the brotherhood and completeness in Christ. The exercise of these gifts in mutual concern serve also for the stabilizing of the body and as a guard against the intrusion of false doctrine.

The result of such cooperative effort under the direction of Christ, the head of the body, is stability and growth of the body. As each individual member fulfills his role there is functional harmony which creates an atmosphere in which growth most easily takes place. So, as each member exercises his gift and fulfills his role, the benefit expands beyond himself to the mutual benefit of all and the expansion of the brotherhood.

Unity in the brotherhood is the theme of today's lesson. That unity will only be achieved as each individual Christian fulfills his role in building the body of Christ. The beauty is that not only will he experience soul satisfaction, but that he will be

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blessed by the fulfilling of others' roles. Together we achieve harmony and blessing.

***For thought and discussion***

1. Perhaps some class discussion on the elements of the worthy Christian walk will help to rivet them in each one's mind.
2. What are the elements essential to brotherhood unity, and how are they achieved? Why do they often seem so elusive?
3. Discuss the function of the various gifts necessary for a smoothly functioning brotherhood. Add to the list in verse 11.
4. What are the most prevalent and insidious dangers facing the unity of the church today? How can they best be met? Discuss.
5. As you reflect on this lesson, examine your commitment to the larger brotherhood. Are you faithfully exercising your gift for the benefit of others and the overall unity of the church?

**NOVEMBER 9, 2008**

***Maintaining Pure Doctrine***

Galatians 2:11-21

The Jews held a special place in God's heart. They were His chosen people. When Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the kingdom of heaven He sent them first to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." However, Jesus did intend that the message of salvation be the great leveler among all people, with special privilege or status extended to no one group or nationality above another.

It was difficult, however, for the Jews who had so long basked in God's special favor, to easily or readily accept Gentiles, who had no long tradition of a spiritual relationship to God, and were not considered to be on an equal footing in Christ's kingdom. It was inconceivable to those with a long history of a ritualistic relation-

ship to God that others could now be accepted by Him with a simple confession of faith. It took awhile to change this thinking in the emerging church. It became a lingering problem as strict Judaizers continued to insist on certain Jewish rites before Gentiles could become full-fledged members with them. This background provides the setting for the confrontation we observe in today's lesson.

Peter was actually the one who initially broke the nationality barrier in the church between Jew and Gentile when he led the centurion, Cornelius, to faith (Acts 10 and 11). And here at Antioch he initially practiced a nondiscriminatory attitude toward Gentiles, participating freely with them in the love feasts. However, when a delegation of strict Jews came from Jerusalem, he separated himself from the Gentiles out of fear for his reputation. His action influenced others and, as Paul said, even "Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation."

Paul saw through Peter's hypocrisy and faced him down publicly. There was more at stake here than simply eating or not eating with Gentiles. The very essence of the gospel was being challenged and undermined. Salvation in Christ was equally available to all men and simply on the basis of faith without any works or ritualistic practices. Paul reaffirmed in his discourse that justification does not come by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ (v. 16). The law, he said, justifies no one.

Paul does give credence to the validity of the law in convincing him of the hopelessness of finding justification in its keeping (v. 19; see also Romans 8:3). Now that he has experienced justification by faith, the law no longer exerts an appeal to him. It has served its purpose. There is now something gloriously better and completely satisfying.

Paul goes on then to give his testimony of what the grace of Christ means to him. He has died to self and all selfish ambitions. He is now so completely given over

to Christ that his mortal life is simply a vehicle through which Christ can accomplish His purposes in the world. His response is in light of all Christ has done for him, loving him to the extent of giving Himself for him. Paul's response is in kind.

Paul caps his argument on the efficacy of grace above law by saying (v. 21) that if righteousness could be achieved by keeping the law, then Christ's death was useless. And no one who has experienced grace would argue that.

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

1. Contrast the gospel of freedom with the bondage of the law. What are distinctive elements of both? Which is more appealing? Why?
2. Has the fear of man ever caused you to compromise your faith in Christ? What was the result? How can we overcome the fear of man?
3. We cannot earn favor with God through works. Yet works are an important element of the Christian life. Just how do they figure into the total scheme of things?
4. Are there ever times today when bold confrontation is necessary in the life of the church in order to preserve pure doctrine? Discuss.
5. How would you rate your commitment to Christ compared to Paul's in verse 21? Cannot we all do better?

## **NOVEMBER 16, 2008**

### ***Consistent Christian Living***

Philippians 3:17-4:9

Paul, with his companions, had established the church at Philippi on his second missionary journey (see Acts 16). This was the first planting of the gospel on the European continent and the first converts exemplify the cosmopolitan nature of the church and the breadth of appeal of the gospel message. The church at Philippi

held a special place in Paul's heart (see 1:3-5). He visited there on several subsequent occasions and they reciprocated by sending gifts to Paul on several occasions (see 4:14-18).

The occasion of the letter is explained in 2:25-30. The tone of the letter is personal and encouraging. Though a prisoner in Rome, Paul's concern was not so much for himself as it was for the ongoing unity and consistency of the brotherhood at Philippi. In fact, he specifically mentions a situation in 4:2 where correction was needed to ensure ongoing harmony.

Perhaps Paul's entire theme in this passage can be summed up by the phrase in 4:1, "So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." That was his heartfelt desire for the church at Philippi. He then gives admonitions and instructions to aid in achieving that goal.

First of all, Paul says, follow me, and others like me who are living exemplary lives. Take a pattern from those of us who are consistently following Christ, recognizing all the while that our citizenship is in heaven and that Christ will one day appear to give us a glorified body and take us home to be with Him. That prospect should be the motivation and purification of one's life.

Paul also inserts a warning (verses 18 and 19) that not all who profess a Christian walk are actually doing so. There are hypocrites and deceivers even within the church. They live to fulfill sensual, earthly desires. Beware of them. Shun them. Compare their lives to godly standards.

Paul then turns to a situation causing disharmony within the brotherhood. Apparently these two women, Euodias and Syntyche, who were helpers of Paul, had had some disagreement that was affecting the life of the church. Paul appeals to them to settle their differences and encourages his "true yokefellow" to assist in defusing the tension between them. This "yokefellow" may have been the pastor or a leader in the church. Paul also here gives recognition to others of his

helpers who are listed in the book of life.

The remaining verses are loaded with admonitions and exhortations, all with the view of strengthening Christian commitment in light of Christ's imminent return (v. 5). Joy is to be on their lips, gentleness their attitude, trust their guiding principle, prayer their watchword. Exercising themselves thus would result in God's peace guarding their hearts. This is a peace only God can give, a peace that surpasses human understanding.

To assist these, and all believers, Paul shares a list of positive virtues on which to focus their attention. When things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report are the focus of one's mind and thoughts, the expression of life will be molded by these characteristics and result in consistent Christian living.

In closing, Paul says, pay close attention to what you have learned, follow worthy examples, and "the God of peace shall be with you."

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

1. Are you, am I, living so close to the Lord that we would dare encourage others to follow our example, as Paul did? It should cause each of us to do some serious thinking.
2. Unfortunately, there are still those in the church who are "enemies of the cross of Christ," living for sensual pleasure. How do we identify such, and how should they be dealt with? Discuss.
3. Tensions, disagreements, and misunderstandings will arise within the church. What are the biblical ways of dealing with such? Discuss with your class.
4. Explore with your class the various aspects of the Christian life expressed in these verses.
5. There is a constant battle for the mind of man. What steps can we take to guard against deception and maintain a focus on the virtues that are pleasing to God and of spiritual benefit to us? Discuss.

**NOVEMBER 23, 2008**

### ***Qualities of Capable Leaders***

2 Timothy 2:1-7; 3:14-4:5

Paul penned this epistle, his last, from prison in Rome to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy. Paul realized that his time was short but his concern for the church and her leaders was strong and urgent. In this epistle he gives warnings against false teachers and inconsistent believers. He also gives Timothy instruction for his personal life and for his ministry to the church at Ephesus. Paul's warnings and instructions are valid for church leaders of every era of time. (Read the entire epistle for background on today's lesson.)

Throughout this epistle Paul encourages strength of character and purpose for Timothy. He was concerned for the ongoing consistency and faithfulness of the church, encouraging Timothy to be strong and to also appoint other men of faith to the ongoing task of teaching and shepherding the flock.

Paul uses the illustration of three occupations to drive home his concern: the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer. The soldier must be tough and totally disengaged from all other pursuits. His total focus must be on pleasing his commander. The athlete must be disciplined and compete according to the established rules of the game. The farmer must wait with patience for a harvest. The apostle urges Timothy to apply these principles in his life and in the calling of other men to ministry.

In the first part of Chapter 3 Paul warns of perilous times when there will be deceit, hypocrisy, and persecution—all intended to draw souls away from a settled faith. So Paul encourages Timothy to be steadfast in the principles and truths he has learned, knowing that he has learned them from a reliable source. Paul acknowledges Timothy's godly upbringing and the bearing that had in bringing him to saving faith, though they had only the Old Testament Scriptures to point them to Christ.

Then Paul states one of the cardinal

doctrines of the Christian faith, that all Scripture is inspired of God, or God-breathed. As the pure, reliable, and sufficient word from God it is therefore profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. The goal of these is providing well-developed, capable workmen for God and the church. God's Word is capable of doing this if men but apply themselves to these disciplines.

In his closing admonitions Paul charges Timothy before God and Jesus Christ, who will be our eventual judge, to faithfulness and boldness in his preaching ministry. He is to be prepared at all times, whether convenient or not, to defend the Scripture and to preach corrective measures with patience. Paul knew all too well that difficult times were coming for the church (see 3:1-5) when people would not listen to the truth, but desire only to have their ears tickled with nonthreatening platitudes.

In light of that and of the threat to Timothy to compromise, Paul charges him to make "full proof of his ministry." That will involve alertness to trends; a willingness to suffer, if need be, in the defense of the truth; and a total commitment of life to his task. A capable, qualified leader will allow nothing to detract him from fulfilling his calling.

May God give us more such men.

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

1. Christians grow in their usefulness through the process of mentoring. Reflect on how this has been beneficial in your life. Are you capable and willing to mentor others? Think about it.
2. Are Paul's admonitions to single-mindedness, discipline, and patient work only for leaders? How can each individual Christian develop these characteristics? Discuss.
3. Why is it so important to appoint faithful men to positions of leadership? How do we develop such men in the brotherhood?
4. Why is the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture so important? What happens if that principle is denied?
5. Explore the various functions of Scrip-

ture in creating competent, well-rounded leaders (and followers).

6. Pray to God for faithful men who will not allow distractions or compromise to turn them from faithfully proclaiming the message of truth, the only means to salvation.

**NOVEMBER 30, 2008**

#### ***Strength Out of Weakness***

2 Corinthians 11:21-30; 12:7-10

Paul had established the church at Corinth on his second missionary journey. It was now some five years later and perhaps a year after penning his first letter to the church. The first letter was written to correct problems in the church. This second letter was written primarily to defend his ministry and authority as an apostle which some, apparently, were questioning. In defense of his authenticity, Paul does not boast of his accomplishments, but rather of the rigors he has faced in his ministry. Though out of keeping with his humility, Paul allowed himself to boast of his privations in order to prove his sincerity. No one, certainly, would have continued to endure the hardships Paul faced if he were not totally convinced that the cause he was striving for was not valid.

Paul's response to his critics was first of all to identify himself equally with them as to heritage and status. On the matter of service for Christ, however, he boldly declares that he exceeds them all, and then goes on to describe the many adversities he had experienced in his ministry for Christ. This was not prideful boasting of accomplishments, but a candid stating of the struggles he had willingly endured in order to "please him who had chosen him to be a soldier." Paul was enduring the hardness which he encouraged Timothy to be prepared to face in his ministry.

This catalog of hardships gives us an interesting window into Paul's life (see Acts 9:15, 16). One can only guess at the physical pain Paul suffered—in beatings, in prisons,

stoning, shipwreck, as well as the uncertainties and dangers he faced in his travels. The list goes on. And so does Paul, in spite of weariness, pain, hunger, and other deprivations.

Then, as if this wasn't enough, Paul says, there was also the burden of caring for the churches under his administration. Mental anguish may at times be more debilitating than physical pain. Paul suffered both. Verse 29 shows Paul's identity with and concern for those who struggle spiritually and who face temptations. It affects him when others struggle. His was the heart of a true shepherd.

To cap off his boasting, Paul says that if he must boast, he will boast of his weaknesses because therein he experiences the strength of Christ in his life (see 12:10). He recognized that only by God's strength was he able to overcome all difficulties and to persevere in his ministry and in his quest for Christlikeness.

In the first verses of Chapter 12 Paul recounts an indescribable vision he had once experienced and the impact that experience had on his life. Then, he says, lest that experience result in pride, he was given "a thorn in the flesh" to keep him humble. Whatever the nature of this "thorn," God chose not to remove it through Paul's pleadings. Paul says it was from Satan. God used it to bring glory to Himself because it served to remind Paul that God's grace and strength were far superior to any suffering he might experience.

Paul was content with God's answer and accepted his limitation as a blessing, for in his personal weakness, Christ could show Himself strong. For that realization he took pleasure in suffering, in weakness. What a man!

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

1. How would you describe Paul's boasting in these verses? In what way does it deviate from normal boasting?
2. What motivated Paul to continue in spite of the severe hardships he faced? What lesson does that have for us?
3. Today we frequently hear of leadership burnout. What is the antidote? How can

laity assist leadership in forestalling burnout? Good for discussion.

4. Ministers of the Gospel today face many perils in travel and heavy burdens for those under their care. Are we praying for them as we should? and meeting other needs as we can?
5. Discuss the purpose of a "thorn in the flesh." What benefits? What dangers?
6. Paul's example should help us to a better understanding of sufferings and limitations. Remember, in our weakness, Christ shows Himself strong. ■

## **A Tale of Two Sisters**

### *The Tragedy of Ecumenical Unfaithfulness*

With heart so kind and gentle,  
And sympathetic eye;  
With touching deep affection,  
And loyal, tender tie—

Was LOVE betrothed to DOCTRINE  
To hold him all her days,  
And walk the path of gladness  
United in His ways.

Her younger sister also  
Had qualities so fair,  
Of caring, selfless, kindness,  
And warmth without compare;

Thus UNITY was drawn to  
The husband of her youth;  
And pledged herself forever  
To be the bride of TRUTH.

But TIME, with bitter envy,  
Across the testing years,  
Pursued the slow erosion  
Of happiness to tears;

Till LOVE began to weary  
Of DOCTRINE's pleasant voice,  
And UNITY grew cold to  
The partner of her choice.

*(continued on page 5)*

# 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

## Cold War II? Russia Invades Georgia

For many years, Russia has been working to reestablish control over the former Soviet Republics. The most blatant such move was the poisoning of the current President of the Ukraine (Viktor Yushchenko) by the FSB (the new name for the KGB) in 2004. They did this in an election in which Yushchenko was threatening to beat the incumbent pro-Kremlin government. In 2006, the FSB also murdered Alexander Litvinenko, a Russian dissident in London, by poisoning. Russia has used its oil and gas to bully many former Soviet states into submission; many leaders of such states fly to Moscow for consultations before making any major decision.

The remarkably farsighted McCain said in 1999, “The mindless slaughters being conducted by a Russian military that seeks to reassert itself . . . in the former Soviet Union . . . in an attempt to fold back into the Russian Empire those countries that have broken away from it, most notably Georgia.” This stands in sharp contrast to the lack of understanding of the issue displayed by Obama who has been criticized in the *Washington Post*, on ABC, and from many quarters for his fumbled handling of the matter.

Russia has been inciting violence in Georgia, a former Soviet republic to its south, for years by supporting separatist rebels in the Georgian states of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Ajaria, as well as shooting down Georgian reconnaissance drones (over Georgian territory) with Russian fighter aircraft. When South Ossetia and Abkhazia gained their autonomy from Georgia by pushing Georgian forces out of

their regions, Russia sent in “peacekeepers” who mainly were there to support the rebels. Several years ago, Russia started a campaign to bribe (with pensions, etc.) South Ossetians and Abkhazians into applying for Russian citizenship. They also offered incentives for real Russian citizens to move to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. This has resulted in 90% of South Ossetians and Abkhazians holding Russian “citizenship.” Christopher Waters, a law professor and Eastern European expert at the University of Windsor in Canada, said, “Given the sham-like nature of the granting of passports in so many cases, Russia’s basing its forceful actions on protection of nationals abroad . . . is invalid.”

When Georgia made an effort to regain control of rebel areas in South Ossetia, Russia invaded with a huge column of tanks, easily crushing the diminutive Georgian army. Georgia hurriedly recalled its 2000 troops from Iraq—the third largest contingent in Iraq—but Russian troops had already secured not only South Ossetia (which Georgia was trying to regain control of) but also Abkhazia and significant portions of Georgia proper, most notably the large central Georgian city of Gori (whose capture cut Georgia in two) and the port city of Poti (which is Georgia’s main port on the Black Sea). Along the way, Russian troops looted banks, Russian bombers deliberately (or incredibly incompetently) bombed civilian targets, and Russian troops throughout Georgia systematically destroyed civilian and military infrastructure (crippling Georgia for years to come).

*Wikipedia* writes (and meticulously documents) that residential districts, a media center, and a hospital have been bombed by Russians in the Georgian city of Gori. Georgia

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SWORD AND TRUMPET

has alleged ethnic cleansing of Georgians by South Ossetian and Russian forces. Human Rights Watch backs this claim up and has witnessed Georgian villages burning. In an interview with a South Ossetian (SO) officer, he said they “burned these houses . . . to make sure that they (the Georgians) can’t come back.” An SO officer gave an account of one of many summary executions of Georgian soldiers after being captured. Looting is rampant throughout Russian-controlled regions of Georgia with ethnic Georgians targeted. Russian soldiers got caught on a security camera robbing a bank. Russia claims to be taking action against the looters, but a *Daily Telegraph* reporter saw SO rebels looting and pillaging around Gori with a Russian officer shouting, “Take whatever you want!” SO troops also carjacked a UN aid vehicle while Russian troops benignly looked on. Russian and British journalists report that SO rebels are abusing and executing captured Georgian troops, under the watchful eyes of their Russian protectors. *AP* reports that the Russians have captured civilian Georgians and used them as forced labor, a violation of the Geneva conventions to which the U.S., Georgia, and Russia are signatories. The UN describes the humanitarian situation in Gori (controlled by the Russian military) as “desperate.” Human Rights Watch has appealed to Russian authorities to “immediately take steps to end Ossetian militia attacks on ethnic Georgians.”

Ironically, the reason given by Russia for defying the cease-fire agreement that they and Georgia signed (which stipulates withdrawal to pre-conflict lines) and digging in and fortifying its positions in Georgia proper was to “keep order and security.”

One of the principle reasons for Russia’s interest in conquering Georgia (beyond simply wanting to control the former Soviet Republics) is an oil pipeline running through it that links Azerbaijan to the sea. The pipeline is the only route out of the oil-rich Azerbaijan (a former USSR republic) that doesn’t run through Russia or Iran. In an interview before the Russian-Georgian

war, Azerbaijians expressed relief that they are able to sell their oil on the open market without Russia taking it all, as happened when part of the USSR. Apparently Russia doesn’t like this new development as much as Azerbaijians. Russia has used its natural gas monopoly in the region to blackmail Europe with threats to turn off the taps.

Another reason was cited in a phone call between Condoleezza Rice and the Russian foreign minister in which the foreign minister said that the current pro-Western government of Georgia “must go.” The clear message Russia wants to send the former USSR is: If you have a pro-Western government, we will invade until you kowtow to our will and kick that government out.

The Russian president Medvedev warned that anyone who kills Russian citizens—no matter where they are—will receive “a shattering blow.” It apparently matters little if those are newly minted Russian citizens who are part of an illegal rebel campaign in another sovereign nation.

Fortunately, the fear of Russia has led to the opposite of submission to the threats. All the democratic, free, and open former Soviet republics—fearful of a rising Imperialist Russia and with fresh memories of the atrocities and oppression suffered under Russia in recent history—have stood firm in supporting Georgia and in calling upon the West to step up to the plate to stop Russian aggression.

The war has caused a number of things. First, it caused Poland to quickly ratify an agreement with the U.S. it previously opposed (public support went from 30% to 58%)—an agreement to host anti-ballistic missiles (ABM) in its territory. In return, the U.S. has agreed to give Poland a Patriot surface-to-air missile (SAM) battery that protects against invading aircraft and short-range missiles; extraordinarily, this will be operated by U.S. military personnel. Secondly, the Ukraine told Russia that if they used naval craft based at a navy base leased from the Ukraine for aggression against Georgia, they would terminate the contract before the scheduled 2017, because

it violates Ukraine's neutrality in the conflict under international law. Since Russia did destroy Georgia's Navy, apparently with craft from the Ukrainian naval base, it is unclear what will transpire. Thirdly, the Ukraine also offered the use of a Soviet-built radar station in the Ukraine for integration with European and American defense networks, including the ABM system. Fourth, Russia threatened the Ukraine and Poland with "military action" and nuclear retaliation for supporting the West. Finally, Germany joined America in its support of Georgia's long-standing bid to join NATO.

The U.S. and France have clearly said that Russia is not abiding by its cease-fire agreement because it still controls the port city of Poti and the large city of Gori, both ethnic Georgian cities outside the borders of Abkhazia or South Ossetia.

Commentators rightly compare this invasion to Hitler's attack on Czechoslovakia in 1939. President Carter's former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski writes, "Unfortunately, Putin is putting Russia on a course that is ominously similar to Stalin's and Hitler's in the late 1930s. Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt has correctly drawn an analogy between Putin's 'justification' for dismembering Georgia—because of the Russians in South Ossetia—to Hitler's tactics vis-a-vis Czechoslovakia to 'free' the Sudeten Deutsch. Even more ominous is the analogy of what Putin is doing vis-a-vis Georgia to what Stalin did vis-a-vis Finland: subverting by use of force the sovereignty of a small democratic neighbor. In effect, morally and strategically, Georgia is the Finland of our day."

Also similar is the Russian calls for and claims of peace and withdrawal, but they continue fighting and destroying even though Georgian troops have ceased all action. On October 6, 1939, Hitler gave a speech to the Reichstag proposing a peace conference with Britain and France; three days later he issued orders for the invasion of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

The President of the Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko said, "It is the first time in

Europe since the Cold War that a foreign army has entered the territory of a sovereign state without any internationally accepted legal basis. If we were to be ambivalent about this it would give tacit approval to put our country and our citizens under threat. Ukraine has to move towards the NATO alliance. It is the only way for our country to protect our national security and sovereignty. When the borders of NATO expand, so too does the region of peace and stability. The peace and security of Europe are under threat, thus a united Europe should give a robust and appropriate response."

The question is, Will the West appease Putin like Neville Chamberlain did Hitler? Or will they refuse to allow imperialism against weaker neighbors a la Winston Churchill?

**Recommended Reading:** "Russia's state craft—Thievery and Intimidation" (<http://tinyurl.com/572fpo>), Graphic Pictures of the War (<http://tinyurl.com/5kvnt2>), "Travels in the Former Soviet Union" (<http://tinyurl.com/61cy7n>), "Report from Tbilisi" (<http://tinyurl.com/5sftoh>), "Russia's Actions in Georgia Is Cause for Great Concern" (<http://tinyurl.com/6ztyj5>), "Failing the Georgia Test" (<http://tinyurl.com/5rcnqh>), "Volunteering to Kill Georgians" (<http://tinyurl.com/54sq9u>), "The Russian Empire Strikes Back" (<http://tinyurl.com/6a4486>), "McCain Condemnation Upstages Bush" (<http://tinyurl.com/6dbzca>), "Georgia on my mind" (<http://tinyurl.com/5fyg7q>), "Brzezinski: Russia's Invasion of Georgia Is Reminiscent of Stalin's Attack on Finland" (<http://tinyurl.com/5a77re>), "Russian Aggression meets 'anticipatory capitulation'" (<http://tinyurl.com/5zjzjv>), "True colors: Where's the 'anti-war' movement on the Russo-Georgia war?" (<http://tinyurl.com/6mffln>), "We helped in Iraq—now help us, beg Georgians" (<http://tinyurl.com/5hs7fu>), "Russia aims to keep control of Georgian port city" (<http://tinyurl.com/6z2sea>), "No, It's Not Good at All" (<http://tinyurl.com/6c24mw>).

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### Jonathan Edwards Admits to Affair

Former Democratic vice-presidential candidate and candidate for the Democratic 2008 nomination, Jonathan Edwards, finally admitted to an affair with a lady—Rielle Hunter—who worked for his campaign. He only admitted it after *National*

*Enquirer* reporters popped their flashbulbs as he exited the elevator into the lobby of a hotel at 2 a.m. after a “meeting” with his supposedly former mistress and mother of a child that is likely his. This affair was especially cynical because he used his “good” relationship with his wife, who was suffering from cancer, as one of his primary talking points about him being a good family man. It also seems that the only reason the Edwards campaign hired Hunter in the first place—using over \$100,000 in contributions to his poverty-eradication campaign—was to keep Hunter accessible to Edwards.

Another big scandal from this incident is the mainstream media’s failure to report this story (even when it was very factually substantiated) when they freely printed on the front page of the *New York Times* unsubstantiated rumors of a McCain affair.—Sources: *ABC*, *Huffington Post*, *Slate*, *Pajamas Media*

**Suggested Reading:** “Edwards: Hey, I Was ‘99% Honest’ ” in *Slate* (<http://tinyurl.com/5576cn>), “John Edwards’ False Assertion During the ABC Interview” in *Huffington Post* (<http://tinyurl.com/6dg3ck>), “The MSM’s Latest Embarrassment” in *Commentary Magazine* (<http://tinyurl.com/5omecjk>).

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## China and the Olympics

There are a number of items of note from the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing: The opening ceremony was the most spectacular show on earth and included a spectacular price tag of \$100 million. Included was a song “Ode to the Motherland” sung by 7-year-old Yang Peiyi, but deviously lip-synced by a very cute 9-year-old Lin Miaoke; at the last minute a Politburo member deemed Yang not good-looking enough and demanded that Lin lip-sync to properly reflect China’s glory.

Michael Phelps, a U.S. swimmer, won a record eight gold medals—the most earned by any Olympian in a single Olympics.

China did not fulfill its promises of free internet and free press (see WSJ: “Reporting in Beijing”—<http://tinyurl.com/5n4oyl>) during the games.

During the opening ceremonies, the American, Iraqi, and (surprisingly) Taiwanese

teams received rousing cheers when they walked in, but the Iranians were booed.

China has won the most gold medals, but the U.S. has won the most medals overall.

Speaking in Bangkok hours before his arrival in Beijing, President Bush said, “America stands in firm opposition to China’s detention of political dissidents and human rights advocates and religious activists. We press for openness and justice—not to impose our beliefs but to allow the Chinese people to express theirs.”

—Sources: *The Times* of London, *Wikipedia*, *Yahoo! Answers*

See also: “China confiscates Bibles from American Christians” (<http://tinyurl.com/5zlcqv>).

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## Obama on Affirmative Action

“No Democratic candidate for president has ever come so close to calling for an end to the era of identity-based affirmative action as has Barack Obama.”

—Excerpt from “Obama shifts affirmative action rhetoric” (<http://tinyurl.com/5etquu>) in *Politico*; go read the whole thing.

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## Obama’s Earmarks

For a candidate that campaigns on bringing change and honesty to the White House, his (short) record in politics is disturbing. While in the U.S. Senate, he gave a million-dollar earmark to his wife’s employer, after which her salary shot up 160% (\$121,910 to \$316,962). Obama also requested \$3.3 million for an organization whose chairman and two vice-chairmen raised \$250,000 for Obama’s campaign. Obama also earmarked \$8 million for a defense contractor; Obama’s IL finance chairman owns a sizable chunk of that defense contractor, sits on its board of directors, and has raised more than \$200,000 for Obama’s campaign. Obama has requested \$97.4 million in earmarks for FY 2008 alone. McCain has, in contrast, never requested an earmark in his 22-year career.

—Sources: *The Next Right*, *FactCheck.org*, *MSNBC*, *Citizens Against Government Waste*, *National Review*.

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(continued on page 19)

# *Come as You Are, Stay as You Are*

## Concerns About the Emergent Church

by Rachel Lonas

**Editor's note:** Most of the ideas discussed in this article come from the book *Why We're Not Emergent: By Two Guys Who Should Be* (Moody Press) by Ted Kluck and Kevin DeYoung. The authors, one a pastor and the other a journalist, have firsthand experience with recent emergent texts and emergent churches. They believe that the so-called emergent church has helped some people, but they nevertheless have grave concerns about its theology and the effects it is having on the church as a whole.

Christians across America have witnessed the well-documented departure of young adults from traditional evangelical churches. What they may not know, however, is where those who leave are going.

While some, to be sure, have left all appearance of faith, many have turned to a movement that is rapidly growing and gaining acceptance right under our noses—the emergent church.

At first blush, the emergent movement seems like an extension of traditional Christianity, with more emphasis placed on Christlikeness. A closer look, however, reveals a far more complex and confusing situation. We need to be aware of the trends in this movement and recognize what distinguishes the traditional church from them.

Defining the emergent church, to quote Kevin DeYoung, co-author of *Why We're Not Emergent*, is like “trying to nail Jell-O to the wall.” The emergent church, by its very nature, is not meant to be put in definable terms; it is a rebellion against religious labels. Hence, there is no “leader” of the emergent movement per se, but some with very recognizable names, such as Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Doug Pagitt, and Donald Miller, organize conferences and author books to promote their thoughts about the way the church handles their faith—issues such as orthodoxy, doctrinal statements, heaven and hell, inerrancy of Scripture, etc.

One of the first points Kluck and DeYoung make is about how the big names in the emergent church do not want to be classified as “authoritative theologians,” but rather as “talkers” in the global discussion of church. This should prove troublesome to Christians who recognize how these men are constantly feeding theological musings (whether through books, conferences, or weblogs) to their devoted audience. They shirk the responsibility of proclaiming the Truth in the name of relativistic “conversation.” Many of these men do not even claim to endorse one another's writings, though there are strong similarities between them.

The main thrust of the emergent church is an emphasis on a “social gospel,” as opposed to the scriptural definition of Christ's mission. Many of them seem to promote a “works-based” theology instead of one grounded in grace. To support this analysis, *Why We're Not Emergent* shows a comparison between what Brian McLaren (the “would be leader” of the emergent movement) claims are the emergent church's guiding principles with the mission statement of the Unitarian Universalist Association. These are eerily similar in how they esteem accomplishing good deeds and how they do not mention the essentials of receiving salvation and assurance of a life with Jesus.

The reason why the emergent church holds to that kind of a belief system is tied into a game of emphasis and de-emphasis—orthopraxy (right living) over orthodoxy (right beliefs). They believe that in order to carry out Jesus' good works you do not need to be tied to doctrinal statements that compile and articulate the teachings of the Bible. This is partially due to what Kluck and DeYoung describe as the “implied doctrine of unknowability.” The emergent authors are saying that because we are finite beings we

can never truly know who God is. This begs the question, however: How can we commune with God intimately and distinguish Him from anything else if we cannot know His attributes? According to Arthur W. Pink's *The Attributes of God*, "An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshiped . . . something more than a theoretical knowledge of God is needed by us."

Another example of this exalting of human effort is that those who author emergent books encourage a journey mentality in which the **path** becomes more important than the **destination**. Besides being tinged with ambiguous New Age spirituality, this leads to more self-examination, as opposed to thorough scriptural examination, resulting in rather intense narcissism (i.e. "everyone's got a story to tell").

Books with intentionally provocative titles like Donald Miller's *Blue Like Jazz: Non-religious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* and Rob Bell's *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith* are perfect examples of this point. Both books have sold thousands of copies within a short period of time because of their catchy narrative technique, but when closely examined, their core theology is revealed to be quite hollow. Narrative and ambiguous theology can be quite appealing to inquiring minds, but discussion should never trump the message of truth itself.

That message of truth is also being undermined by the emergent church. According to Kluck and DeYoung, emergent authors are turning religious terminology on its head; "They don't want to use traditional terms—authority, infallibility, inerrancy—they would rather use phrases like 'deep love of' and 'respect for' " when talking about Scripture. To them, hell is no longer significant as a real and terrible alternative to heaven for eternity; rather it is a problem on earth that we must eradicate.

Thus, the implied message is that we as Christians should make evangelism less of a

priority and make cleaning up the tangible horrors that are going on around us our main concern. But Jesus states in Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." In other words, while it is important to be concerned about suffering in the world, the truest form of help for those in need is leading them to find eternal salvation through Christ.

Emergent authors are raising a lot of questions about spirituality but not giving any substantive biblical conclusions. This kind of musing leads to a "come as you are, stay as you are" mindset of its church members; it breeds self-importance and extreme tolerance instead of demanding that its members die to themselves and focus on becoming more holy as God is holy.

Unfortunately, it does the church no good for men like Miller and Bell to be silent or oppositional to core Christian beliefs because those who struggle with sin need definitive answers, not an "if it works, then it's true" response. Nebulous responses allow individuals (believers or non-believers) to stay where they are spiritually because they require no discipline, sacrifice, or change.

Despite the red flags emergent theology raises, the fact remains that the movement is meeting a felt need in society, particularly among younger generations. This should be a wake-up call to the traditional church. Why are students and young adults leaving the Body? What can we do to help keep them faithful?

One of the crucial issues for emergent Christians is authenticity. We need to make sure that we are not so focused on the eternal that we forget Christ's call to be salt and light in a world that desperately needs the Truth. ■

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**Those who struggle with sin need definitive answers, not an "if it works, then it's true" response.**



# Counseling From the Word

## Helping Without Burnout

by James Rudy Gray

Quite often I get phone calls from parents, grandparents, other relatives, or just friends of someone who “needs counseling.”

The request is genuine and the concern for the person they care about is legitimate. However, many people will invariably attempt to instruct me on when to call or what to say or how to help the person in need. My usual answer is, “Please tell the person to call me and I will be glad to set up an appointment to meet with him (or her). I have found it is much more productive for the counselee to contact me rather than me contacting them.”

In most cases, one of two things will likely happen next: The person contacting me will simply thank me and I will never hear from the other person, or the person in need will call me for an appointment. There have been rare occasions when someone gets upset because I do not immediately submit to their idea of help for their friend or relative.

When it comes to counseling in the context of the church and the Christian faith, pastors and counselors must be careful not to get trapped into no-win situations. We must also be cautious and not attempt something for which we are not equipped or we know is counterproductive from the start. It is okay to say “no.” Counselors, like any healthy person, must also have godly boundaries.

I have been amazed at the wisdom and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had the power to heal anybody, but He chose not

to heal everybody. In fact, when the crowds began to grow larger and larger, He would slip away and pray. He and His disciples were typically on the move. When everything was going great and the crowds were big, He would lead His disciples to another place. When He retreated to the wilderness, the crowds came to Him. Jesus’ ministry was to do the will of His Father. That was His spiritual food.

The late Vance Havner used to say to preachers, “If you do not come apart for awhile (meaning relaxation or retreat) you will just come apart (burn out or break down).”

**He had the power to heal anybody, but He chose not to heal everybody.**

Even though Jesus was God in the flesh, He did not minister directly to everybody. And Christian counselors cannot be everything to everyone. We can, by God’s grace, help many people, but we cannot help everybody who needs help. We are limited. We are finite. When we recognize our limitations, we can work more effectively within those parameters.

We can certainly do all things through Christ who strengthens us, but we cannot do everything that needs to be done.

Recently I took a week of vacation. I didn’t go anywhere, but I worked long hours each day on a home improvement project. It was exhausting work, but it was also refreshing for me. During that time I received several messages. Some people wanted me to contact a relative immediately and talk to them because the situation was urgent. I waited until my vacation was

over and contacted the people who left the messages. Some had already found help for their loved ones in other places while others were understanding and instructed their relatives in need to call me.

Proverbs presents the harvester ant as a very hardworking species. They have no leader and yet they are extremely hardworking and organized. They get a lot done. However, when it is time to hibernate, they hibernate. The balance of work and rest is built into the very creative example of God Himself. He rested on the Sabbath, not because He was tired but because He was finished with His creative work.

When God rested, He was not idle; He was leaving us a principle for life and an example worth following for a stronger and healthier life. Balance in life is the key—especially for Christian workers. ■

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**NEWSLINES . . . cont'd from page 15**  
**Suggested Reads**

*The New Yorker* magazine writes about “Superbugs” (<http://tinyurl.com/5ead97>) in an article that discusses the dangers of bacteria bred in hospitals that involves resistance to nearly every drug out there and is practically untreatable.

*Commentary Magazine* writes a meticulously referenced piece (entitled “1948, Israel, and the Palestinians—The True Story”) (<http://tinyurl.com/5yvfuz>) filled with quotes from Arab leaders of 1948 and British mandate government documents to show that it was the Palestinians’ hostile Arab neighbors and their own corrupt leadership that forced the thousands of Palestinians to leave as refugees in 1948.

“How the Surge Worked” (<http://tinyurl.com/6znxwn>) in *The Washington Post* explains in detail the surge strategy in Iraq and how it has changed the near-defeat of Gulf War II into near-victory—a victory which can only be proven by time.

Feedback: [hansmast@hansmast.com](mailto:hansmast@hansmast.com)

# No Reserve

by Mark D. Avery

We attended one particular auction because advertising stated several classic cars would be sold. It was a car buff’s dream. Prospective buyers and lookers could examine cars whose condition ranged from just-pulled-out-of-the-barn-after-thirty-years, to fully restored, to highly customized.

As each car was pulled or driven to the center of the arena, auction personnel loudly proclaimed the virtues of the vehicle and the benefits of becoming its new owner. One car sold for \$250, and probably brought all it was worth. A child’s pedal car, modeled after a Packard and in mint condition, sold for around \$3000. Other cars sold for many thousands of dollars. Occasionally, before the bidding started, the auctioneer announced, “No reserve.” For the sake of that auction, “no reserve” meant the vehicle would sell to the highest bidder, regardless of whether the bid matched the seller’s estimate of its worth.

No reserve is also an important Christian concept. No reserve to the Christian means we have surrendered ourselves completely to God. He now has complete authority over who we are, what we do, and where we go.

Jesus set a high standard for His followers. Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself was the challenge He gave in response to the lawyer’s question. Love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The Apostle Paul stressed this same idea when he instructed us to present or consecrate our bodies—that is, all that there is of us—to God. The standard is total commitment to Christ, total abandonment of self to Him.

Sometimes, however, Christians find difficulty in their attempts to live up to

*(continued on page 27)*



## Sermon of the Month



*Each month we will feature a Biblical sermon in this column. We would like to emphasize expository preaching and ask our readers to submit good expositional sermons for consideration. Please send typewritten copies by “snail mail” or email to: Editor, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803; swandtrump@verizon.net.*

### A Better Country

by John DiMarco

In light of the waves of patriotism that frequently flood through not just our society but Christian churches as well, I felt it would be useful to examine this matter through the lens of Scripture. Christians should be loyal to the country that is truly their home. After recounting the faith of godly individuals from the Old Testament, the writer of Hebrews tells us in Chapter 11, verses 13-16 that “these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” As Christians, do we make it obvious that we seek a heavenly country? If not, I think reevaluation of our Christian walk would be advisable, lest we return to that country from which the Lord called us out to be His children.

Peter tells us, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). First of all, every human being

who has ever lived has descended from one man. Further, all the believers worldwide comprise the holy nation. The Lord, after all, commanded us in the Great Commission to teach all nations—not just the one we were born in. On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:5 reports—“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Even though these people were from different countries, they had in common their faith in God Almighty—which is far more important than any national loyalty.

We are supposed to be strangers and pilgrims in this world, not feeling love for our current place of residence. Our patriotism should be as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Sadly, this attitude seems to be lacking in many American Christians. Some time ago, I received a catalog in the mail, offering conservative Christian products. A lot of the items were appealing, but there is some commentary that encapsulates this issue of Christian patriotism. Supposedly, one of the aspects of courageous boyhood is loyalty and patriotism. The catalog explains: “Behind the courage of a truly faithful boy is gratitude for his family, his nation, and for the tender mercies of God in his life, motivating him to demonstrate an unflinching loyalty. Therefore, he has the heart of a son and the spirit of a patriot.” I do not understand what exactly the United States has done to earn such gratitude from Christians, but I know from personal experience

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SWORD AND TRUMPET

rience that this view is quite common among professing Christians in America.

I thought that a good way to illustrate the dangers of nationalism was to examine the Pledge of Allegiance. For any of you not familiar with it, the pledge involves a person facing an American flag, putting his hand over his heart, and reciting that he “pledges allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” First of all, Jesus makes it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that His followers should not swear oaths of any sort. Even worse, what is this loyalty oath being sworn to? The U.S. flag—an inanimate object, made with hands. To me, this sounds perilously close to worship of a graven image. Far above any nation, the Lord is just (e.g., Psalm 89:14). As for any country being “under God,” consider how Satan tempted Jesus: “And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it” (Luke 4:5, 6). All earthly countries are part of the ungodly world system and thus are in Satan’s hand. This pledge of allegiance is commonly recited every day by children in government schools across the United States. They are being indoctrinated at an early age that their primary loyalty should be to their nation, not God.

I think a lot of Christians get hung up on the idea that the United States was founded as a Christian nation, thus making it worthy of our loyalty. I was raised to feel the same way. I have done a lot of studying of American history, both in college and personally, and I have to say this concept is far from the truth, despite what I used to believe. For one thing, many of the nation’s founders, including Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, were deists. Basically, deists believe in God as a great Clockmaker who wound up the universe in the begin-

ning and now simply sits back and watches it run. This deity is a far cry from the God of the Bible who craves a personal relationship with us. Why else did He send His Son to die for us? A quote attributed to Franklin: “Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.” I suppose having His Son dwell among us and suffer crucifixion for the remission of our sins was not good enough to make God’s love obvious. These are not individuals who deserve a Christian’s admiration. Romans 13:1, 2 instructs us, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” What does this say about the “Christian” founders of America who battled the British government for independence? In the U.S.’s early years of nationhood, the country did not exactly show Christ’s love for all men by stealing the land of the natives and basically destroying their whole way of life. The list can go on for the entirety of this nation’s history. The early Anabaptists well understood the concept that an earthly nation could not be Christian. Their belief in the separation of church and state was one of the main reasons for the virulent persecution they suffered at the hands of both Protestant Reformers and Catholics, who could not conceive of an alternative to the state church system.

The Bible instructs us to obey the government authorities, but only to a point. “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). If our nation ever calls on us as Christians to do something that we know contradicts the Word of God, we are obligated to peacefully disobey. In a prophecy of the coming Messiah, Isaiah 9:6 tells us the source of authority for the government of the citizens of heaven—“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called

Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

The law of God tells us, for example, to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18). Despite this, many Christians, through use of nationalism (with all its love of fellow countrymen and hatred of the opposing nation), can be whipped into a murderous fervor when the government requires their services as cannon fodder in war. This is exactly what Adolf Hitler did in Germany in the years before the Second World War, filling the ranks of his army with professing Christians. Even in this nation, the government tried to convince the citizens, say, that attacking Iraq was for a “good cause,” namely making the U.S. a safer place. So, Christians enlist in the military, going to foreign countries to kill people in the name of their country. Meanwhile, those on the home front offer prayers for the troops that God may be with them in their campaign of destruction.

The Bible’s teachings on nonresistance are clear, and yet Christians can fall prey to excessive patriotism that makes it easier for them to justify in their hearts the killing of other human beings. Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 5:11, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” If a Christian is so patriotic that he is willing to die or even kill for his country, this patriotism is a work of darkness that deserves strong reproof. Hatred or distrust between citizens of different nations does not make much sense for Christians in light of Galatians 3:28—“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” If we are all one, it is clearly wrong for a Christian to be killing other Christians on the battlefield. On the flip side, if the enemies are not Christian, blowing them up does not exactly make a good witness of the Gospel. In fact, by killing them, the Christian has ended their opportunity to receive the Lord and be saved.

There is a poem with a Latin title: “Dulce

et decorum est pro patria mori.” It means, “It is sweet and becoming to die for one’s country.” No earthly authority should command this sort of fealty from followers of Jesus Christ. In contrast, the Lord tells us in John 15:13—“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” So, as Christians, should “friends” refer to the governmental authority or people who just happen to be living in the same geographic area, or should “friends” refer to the holy nation of the believers across the globe?

As a way of making sure that its citizens are ready to leap into war at their leaders’ command, the act of dying for one’s country is glorified, and people that do so take on the status of martyrs. National holidays are observed to honor these individuals who died for their country. It fosters the lie that these sacrifices for the nation’s sake are what preserve liberty for us all. I was driving through town on the weekend of Veterans Day. I passed a building with an electronic sign that said, “Enjoy your freedom? Thank a veteran.” The edifice displaying this sentiment was a Christian church. Our freedom does NOT come from men, but from Christ. Jesus says in John 8 that “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” and also, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Many people in this country who claim to be followers of Christ have seemingly forgotten this core Biblical principle.

I believe Christians must stand guard that an issue such as love of country does not compete with our devotion to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We must remember that all we do must be to the glory of God. “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30). If we, as Christians, are devoted to any activity that detracts from or interferes with this love, it could very well be our personal false idol. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). ■

# Short-Term Missions: It Really Is the GREAT Commission

by Dan Olinger

When Christ finished His earthly work and returned to His Father, He left a job for His people to do. We call it the Great Commission, and it appears in all three of the Synoptic Gospels as well as in Acts. The classic statement of it is in Matthew:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:19, 20).

It has been often observed that this passage's structure emphasizes making disciples; the passage is literally arranged as follows:

Going, therefore,  
Make disciples of all nations,  
Baptizing them in the name  
of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
Teaching them to keep whatever  
things I have commanded you.<sup>1</sup>

Our primary task is to make disciples. We do so by going, then baptizing those who repent and believe, and then teaching them the way of Christ. According to

our Lord Himself, that is why we are here.<sup>2</sup>

Other accounts of this command, most specifically the one in Acts 1, make it clear that the "going" is to be progressive and global. We start where we are ("Jerusalem") and then move outward to "Judea" and "Samaria" and eventually to "the uttermost part of the earth" (v. 8).

The church has obeyed this command, more or less, throughout its history. According to tradition, the Twelve traveled as far as India and Ethiopia to make disciples. The gospel was in China long before Marco Polo, and the great outburst of the modern missions movement, initially focusing primarily on Asia and Africa, has become legendary. Names such as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, and Mary Slessor are well-known to modern Christians.<sup>3</sup>

The movement experienced a surge in the years after World War II when soldiers returned as men from a war to which they had gone as boys. The post-war Christian GIs were passionate about taking the gospel to the lost. This passion was augmented early in 1956 when five American missionaries were killed by Huaroani natives (then called Aucas) in

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1. Translation is mine.

2. I am of course not forgetting that mankind's larger, eternal mission is to bring glory to his Creator: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). My point here is that during our time on earth, which providentially lies between the ascension of Christ and His return, we glorify God primarily by devoting ourselves to His specific commandment for this age, which is the Great Commission.

I am also aware that some hyperdispensationalists teach that the Great Commission was given to an earlier dispensation. That obviously is not my view, but I cannot devote the space necessary here to delineate why.

3. A relatively recent history of missions has become virtually an instant classic: Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

Ecuador.<sup>4</sup> Hundreds of young Christians stepped forward to take their place.

Many have noted a decline in interest in missions in the last 25 to 30 years. It is indisputable that many more missionaries are coming home—due to retirement, discouragement, or medical necessity—than are arriving on the field to replace them. Many reasons for this decline have been suggested. Probably the easiest factor to spot is the rampant materialism and prosperity in the United States, which for the last century or more has been the leading nation behind the world missions movement. American Christians are generally not in spiritual shape because they rarely get any spiritual exercise. Another factor is the fall of the Soviet Union and the consequent perception in the States that the persecution of Christians overseas is declining.<sup>5</sup> Add to that the recent growth of the Internet and satellite broadcasting, which have made communication across political borders much easier, and you have a recipe for decline in motivation to go to the ends of the earth.

One hopeful sign, however, is the significant increase in popularity of short-term missions, whether 1- to 4-week mission terms or 1- to 2-year mission assignments.<sup>6</sup> From Bob Jones University, where I teach, nine different mission teams spread out across the globe in the summer of 2007, as did others during the Christmas break. It is not unusual for half of an incoming freshman class to have done some sort of short-term mission work with a local church before starting college.

Since I began teaching, I have tried every summer to find a Bible college or institute somewhere overseas where I could teach for a few weeks during the academic break. It is a luxury afforded teachers, who have options for that portion of the year. It has been my privilege to teach in a number of cultures and climates and to see the Lord work in remarkable ways.<sup>7</sup> There are few practical barriers to such efforts; the time is available, there are scores of institutions that are eager to use willing teachers, and many churches have mission funds set aside for just such short-term efforts. I find fund-raising quite distasteful, but I have found raising support to be the easiest part of the process. Individual or family travel for qualified people, in whatever needed skill area, is not at all difficult to accomplish.

More common, however, are teams assembled for the purpose of working on a specific project. The team might include anywhere from six to twenty-five people who travel to a specific mission site for a week or several weeks to accomplish a specific task. The most common tasks are construction and child evangelism since these are always needed and allegedly require the fewest technical skills. (More on that in a moment.)

The subject of short-term missions raises a number of questions, both philosophical and logistical. What are the benefits of short-term work? What are the dangers? Who should go? Who should not? And what should be the primary goals of anyone directing such an effort?

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4. The definitive work on this event is by the widow of Jim Elliot, one of the martyred missionaries, Elisabeth Elliot, *Through Gates of Splendor* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1996). The original edition was published in 1957.

5. This perception, though common, is thoroughly inaccurate. A reliable source of information on persecution of Christians worldwide is the free newsletter *Voice of the Martyrs* ([www.persecution.com/](http://www.persecution.com/)).

6. Some would question whether this is a positive development. Some see in it further evidence of the prosperous church's general lack of commitment. While this point is well worth considering, it is difficult to disregard the benefits of short-term work or the potential it has for developing long-term talent.

7. I suspect that I was the first person ever paid by a Communist government for the publicly stated purpose of teaching Christian doctrine to its own people—but that's a story too long to tell here.

### ***Benefits***

The benefits are great. A brief experience gives the student an opportunity to experience mission work up close and reasonably realistically, at relatively low cost. It certainly makes sense for the student to find out that foreign missions is not his calling before he has gone through the effort and expense of candidate school, deputation, and language school. On the other hand, a large number of career missionaries testify that it was a mission trip that either initiated or confirmed their recognition of God's will for them.

A significant benefit for American students is that it attacks the insularity with which most American teens develop; they are separated from the rest of the world by two large oceans, and they really believe that Paris Hilton and the Super Bowl are significant news stories. They can learn otherwise very quickly if given the opportunity. The student will benefit from this exposure whether or not the Lord eventually calls him to foreign mission work.

Pretty much everyone can benefit from team-oriented activity. Sports provide most young people their primary experience with teamwork, but mission work provides a team experience that is different in many ways from what they will learn on the athletic field. Most obviously, the work they will be engaged in is overtly and primarily spiritual; they will be helping one another not to swing a bat or kick a ball but to tell the story of Christ and to disciple younger believers. They learn to make sacrifices, to encourage one another, and to share failures and successes as they go about the business of taking the message to the ends of the earth. That is precisely preparation for life in the church.

Often overlooked is the benefit to teachers of gathering foreign mission experience. It rejuvenates the jaded teacher, and it places into his toolbox a set of experiences that will both shape his

teaching techniques and enrich his teaching content for the rest of his life.

### ***Pitfalls***

Any work that can be done well can also be done badly. Mission trips are no different. And the price of failure is high—waste of financial resources given in good faith by God's people, which could have been used instead on something worthwhile, not to mention the spiritual damage that can be done both to team members and to potential ministry recipients if the job is done badly.

A great danger, obviously, is that the trip becomes simply pious tourism: the members are interested primarily in experiencing something new, in gathering experiences for their own selfish purposes. There is nothing wrong with tourism, I suppose, but there is also no reason why the church should pay for it. Teams need to understand that they are there to work, and they need to be held accountable both by supervisors on site and by the sending churches back home.

Another danger with short-term work is that it gives the impression that you have "seen missions," but it typically is not long enough to provide a realistic experience. In a week or two, you do not really have time for the adrenaline to wear off. It is all a whirlwind and very exciting. But that is not what missions is like. Missions is all about being faithful through drudgery, routine, and only the occasional moments of terror. Lust for adventure is a lousy reason to become a missionary. My recent mission team experience lasted eight weeks, and intentionally, I wanted the students to have enough time to get really tired. That is part of what they needed to learn.

My greatest fear in short-term mission work is that I, or the team, will turn out to be more of a burden to the missionary than a help. Most short-term "missionaries" do not realize how much work it is for a missionary to prepare for and supervise the work of a team. I know of

cases where teams ran up significant expenses for the missionary (I hope without realizing it) and then left him to pay the bill. The team leader needs to discuss frankly with the host missionary whether what the team is doing is really worthwhile from the missionary's perspective; the team needs to ensure that the missionary lets them do as much of the work as possible;<sup>8</sup> and they need to pay attention to the costs they are running up.<sup>9</sup>

A very significant danger of short-term work is the fact that in a short stay, team members cannot learn to work effectively in a strange culture. They do not have time to learn the language; they are unknowingly being strange and offensive in virtually everything they say and do;<sup>10</sup> and their effectiveness at carrying out the Great Commission will be significantly hampered.

One more danger worth mentioning is the temptation to cut corners on qualified, discipling leadership. Team leaders need to know how to disciple believers, how to discern what is happening spiritually in the lives of team members, and how to confront biblically. There are all kinds of leadership styles, of course; some leaders are very intense and driving (in a healthy way), while others lead with a lighter touch. But whatever their style, leaders need to lead, and they need to be proactive in spotting and addressing spiritual needs as they arise. Not everyone can do that well; knowing a lot about the country or the culture or the cuisine or the airline is simply not

enough. This is a mission trip, not a cultural exchange program.

### *Personnel*

Experienced business people will tell you that a business rises and falls on hiring; if you hire the right people, everything else about the business is a lot easier. Mission teams are no different. Leading a team that gels and works proficiently is one of life's greatest joys; herding a bunch of cats around a strange country is one of the worst experiences imaginable. So who should be on the team, and who should not?

As was implied earlier, you want to weed out the tourists. You also want to filter out the abysmally selfish, the secretly sinful, and the well-intentioned but largely useless hangers-on. This can be difficult, obviously, because we cannot see hearts, and people who want to go on a mission team tend to be on their best behavior when around those who are deciding who will go. Many team leaders have found that the simplest way to discourage the insufficiently or improperly motivated is to set up the team so that it costs something in personal effort before the team leaves. Team members are required to read certain books, memorize verses, or prepare and perform a children's Bible story or two—not busywork, mind you, since these are things that they will need and use during the trip—but things that require some discipline and sacrifice. Have potential team members engage in exercises or ministries where you can watch for their

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8. I have no wish to stereotype, but many missionaries are used to working alone and thus are not particularly skilled at delegating. Teams need to encourage their hosts to let them do as much of the work as possible—and then they need to do the work well.

9. On one trip recently, I had to press the host fairly hard to get him to let me buy him a tank of gas after he had been driving us around for most of a day. I'm not sorry that I insisted.

10. Yes, I'm exaggerating, but not by much. On a recent trip to South Africa, I was setting up two-person teams to distribute flyers for a youth rally. I suggested that each of the "Americans" team up with one of the "Africans." But this was a Colored (mixed-race) church we were working with, and they unfortunately took offense at the word *African*, which to them was a synonym for "Black," a different racial group in South Africa. I meant simply someone who lives in Africa, with no thought of race. I should have known better; this was not my first trip to South Africa. But it illustrates how easy it is to be well-intentioned and yet inept.

willingness to put self aside and prefer someone else.

It should go without saying—but unfortunately it cannot—that team members need to be qualified for the work they are allegedly going to do. Many people think that construction work does not require skilled help—but people who think that do not do construction work. Not everyone can work effectively with children; not everyone can teach even basic courses in a Bible institute. You need to show up with people who can get the job done, and well. There is no excuse for sending missionaries the personnel equivalent of used tea bags.

### Goals

Different teams will obviously have slightly different goals, depending on their type and location. But a few basic goals should serve as the foundation for any short-term mission work:

- Carry out the Great Commission as effectively as possible, given the cultural limitations.
- Lighten the load of the host missionary, both while you are there and after you leave.
- Expose the team members to as realistic an experience of missions as possible.
- Disciple the team members in their spiritual walk as they are experiencing and assimilating what the Lord is teaching them on the trip.

Short-term missions is not a substitute for career missions, but it is an important ingredient in an overall missions strategy when done well. Most Christians would be surprised at the positive impact it can have on the spiritual walk and effectiveness of almost any believer. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Teacher to Teacher*, a publication of BJU, May 2008.

### NO RESERVE . . . cont'd. from p. 19

the standard. It is easier to sing, “I surrender all” than it is to live a lifestyle of surrender. Yes, we understand that a step toward entire sanctification is surrender, yet some Christians seem to forget that maintaining a spirit of surrender to God—His purpose and authority—is essential as well.

No reserve, then, is not just an experience, it is a lifestyle. Just as we were once dead in trespasses and sins, so now we who are alive in Christ must be dead to sin and self. No reserve. No reservations. To know God’s will is to do it. Paul expressed it well when he said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“No reserve” Christians are of great use to God’s kingdom. They make life decisions based not on convenience or their own hopes and goals, but on their best understanding of God’s will for their lives. Sometimes that means being placed in a secular workplace for many years and demonstrating Christian responses to coworkers and customers. For others, no-reserve Christianity is carrying the message of the gospel to a specific church, while still others take the message to some faraway place. Yet for all, it is willing, humble submission to God’s plan for life. My goal is to be a no-reserve Christian. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *The Church Herald & Holiness Banner*, June 2007.





# Song of the Month

Douglas A. Byler, Music Editor

*This column welcomes the submission of original hymns. Please send hymns, as well as applicable information about the author and/or composer to: Douglas A. Byler, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.*

## Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

by Alford/Elvey

**Lyrics:** When the Pilgrims first designated a specific day of thanksgiving to God at the time of harvest, their thanks were offered primarily for the physical blessings of a good harvest. God had blessed them with food and health, in contrast to the preceding year, when many of them had died of disease and malnutrition. Ever since then, when a Thanksgiving feast or holiday has been proclaimed, it is primarily focused on the material blessings that we enjoy, especially food. This month's hymn begins with the traditional Thanksgiving theme of harvest, and uses that as a springboard to discuss the spiritual harvest that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 13:24-30.

The first verse of "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" is essentially what one would expect from a traditional Thanksgiving hymn. It begins with the exhortation to "come" and thank God for the harvest that has been "safely gathered in." Then it reminds us that God does always provide for our "wants" (probably meaning "needs"), and closes with another call to come and thank Him.

The second stanza makes the shift from the literal harvest to the final harvest of souls at the end of time. It sets the stage for the final harvest, describing the fields of "wheat and tares" and the process of growth from the "blade" to the "full corn." The last line is a prayer that we would be part of the "wholesome grain" that God is looking for.

One of the reasons to be "wholesome grain" is elaborated on in the following verse: "For the Lord our God shall come." The good grain will be stored away, while all the "tares" will be thrown into the fire, which is obviously speaking of hell.

The fourth verse asserts our longing for the greatest Thanksgiving Day ever, when the final harvest will be gathered in. Then we will finally be "Free from sorrow, free from sin," and be with our Lord forever.

**Music:** The composer of this tune, George J. Elvey, spent most of his life leading the boys' choir and playing the organ in St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, England.<sup>1</sup> Since Windsor Castle has been an official residence of the British royalties for 900 years,<sup>2</sup> many important events have taken place at St. George's Chapel. Many important people have been buried there, and it has been the site of many royal weddings. Elvey's music was no doubt influenced somewhat by the "royal" atmosphere of the chapel. One of his other hymn tunes which definitely shows its royal flair is "Diademata," which we sing to the words "Crown Him With Many Crowns." The tune for "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" is named after the chapel in which he served most of his life, and has a majestic disposition of its own. ■

1. [www.cyberhymal.org](http://www.cyberhymal.org)

2. [www.royal.gov.uk/output](http://www.royal.gov.uk/output)

# Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

*They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest. - ISAIAH 9:3*

ST. GEORGE'S (WINDSOR) 7. 7. 7. 7. D.

HENRY ALFORD, 1844

GEORGE J. ELVEY, 1859

1. Come, ye thank-ful peo-ple, come, Raise the song of har-vest-home:  
2. All the world is God's own field, Fruit un-to His praise to yield;  
3. For the Lord our God shall come, And shall take His har-vest home;  
4. E-ven so, Lord, quick-ly come To Thy fi-nal har-vest home;

All is safe-ly gath-ered in, Ere the win-ter storms be-gin;  
Wheat and tares to-geth-er sown, Un-to joy or sor-row grown;  
From His field shall in that day All of-fens-es purge a-way;  
Gath-er Thou Thy peo-ple in, Free from sor-row, free from sin;

God, our Mak-er, doth pro-vide For our wants to be sup-plied:  
First the blade, and then the ear, Then the full corn shall ap-pear:  
Give His an-gels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast,  
There for-ev-er pu-ri-fied, In Thy pres-ence to a-bide:

Come to God's own tem-ple, come, Raise the song of har-vest-home.  
Lord of har-vest, grant that we Wholesome grain and pure may be.  
But the fruit-ful ears to store In His gar-ner ev-er-more.  
Come, with all Thine an-gels, come, Raise the glo-rious har-vest-home.

# Reproducing Your DNA

by Steve Gallagher

**B**urnout is but a step away for many of us in ministry. We all understand that one of the main solutions to the stress and demands of ministry is to delegate responsibility. The challenge, however, is to find people we can trust to properly handle those duties.

The simple answer is to hire someone, i.e., a secretary or an assistant pastor. But this often creates more problems than it solves. An employee often comes with a hiring attitude, a rebellious spirit, a different doctrinal understanding, or some other form of baggage.

After years of frustrating attempts to hire people at Pure Life Ministries, I came to see that the answer was sitting in front of me all along. It came through a piece of advice offered by my friend Ben Mwima. Ben once miraculously escaped Idi Amin's famous prison of horrors in Uganda, and he has the down-home wisdom often possessed by African ministers. When we shared our frustration of hiring new workers, he said, "When you want a grove of trees, you don't dig up fully grown trees from another region and transplant them on your land. You plant saplings that are native to your area."

He hit the nail on the head: we needed to reestablish the priority on discipleship that was once a mainstay of our ministry. Rather than trying to bring in people from a different spiritual culture, we needed to build into those who were already in our fold.

The fact is that God works through different people differently. If you are a godly minister, the Lord has imparted to you something that is exclusive to yourself. In some inexplicable way, the comingling of His Spirit with yours (if I can say it that way) produces a mission and a message that are unique to you. They are, in turn, imparted to those to whom you minister. It is, well, your personal DNA.

To build the kind of unity that makes for an effective and smoothly running ministry, the entire team must possess the same

DNA. Without that kind of uniformity, there tends to be a lack of harmony and cohesiveness among the workers. Hiring someone from within one's denomination may limit doctrinal differences, but it doesn't necessarily ensure loyalty to you or to your mission.

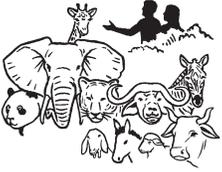
It is interesting that in the Great Commission, Jesus didn't tell us to hold crusades or even to preach—although they have their place. He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." (Matthew 28:19, 20, emphasis added).

Wasn't He telling us to invest ourselves into the lives of others? Wasn't He saying that we should impart into other people what had been imparted into us? Of course, getting involved in people's personal lives can be difficult, but it is also far more effective than merely teaching from the pulpit.

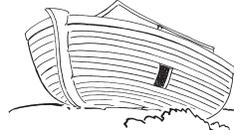
One pastor I know meets with five men from his church every week for an entire year. By the end of the year these guys have been infused with his DNA and can then pass it along to others in the church. At Pure Life Ministries, we are committed to building into people's lives through biblical counseling. By helping them overcome their problems and leading them into a deeper life in God, a tremendous loyalty has been produced in many of them. Without a doubt, those who stay with us to be further disciplined in our intern program become our most valuable co-laborers.

Unquestionably, the purpose of discipleship is to produce lasting spiritual fruit in people's lives, but there is also a very valuable side benefit. Over time, you will notice a small group of healthy Christians growing up under your leadership. They will be devoted to you personally and loyal to your mission. In short, they will possess your DNA and will be motivated to pass it along to others. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Unchained!*, a publication of Pure Life Ministries, [www.purelifeministries.org](http://www.purelifeministries.org).



## Beginning Issues



# Dinosaurs and the Bible - Part 3

by John Mullett

*Continued from two months ago . . .*

**M**ainstream science and much of our world, that has been steeped in the evolutionary belief of millions of years, says dinosaurs died out about 65 million years ago and since man arrived on the scene much later the two could not have lived together. In this article I want to look at biblical and extra-biblical evidence for dinosaurs living alongside man.

If we begin with biblical presuppositions, accepting Genesis as literal history as the writer intended and as its literary form demands, it is clear that sea-dwelling dinosaurs were created on Day 5 and land-dwelling dinosaurs on Day 6 of creation week. Biblically they were contemporaries as man was also created on Day 6. They could not have died out before the creation of man because death was not present until man was here. Their presence in the fossil record clearly indicates dinosaurs were still present at the time of Noah's Flood as the pre-flood geologic record was largely destroyed in Noah's Flood from the cataclysmic forces that were at work. According to the Bible all the air-breathing land-dwelling animals were represented on the ark and this would have included dinosaurs.

But does the Bible make any mention of dinosaurs specifically anywhere and especially after the Flood? I believe it does. You won't see the word *dinosaur* in the modern English Bible translations for various reasons—one being timing of translation. For

example, the King James Version was translated (1611) over 200 years before the word *dinosaur* was invented. *Dinosaur*, meaning "terrible lizard," was coined by Sir Richard Owen in 1841.<sup>1</sup> We simply won't find the word in the KJV because it didn't exist at the time of translation. Are there other English words though that may have been used for it before that time? In Genesis 1:21 the Bible refers to sea monsters (Hebrew: *tannin* or *tanniyn*). While it is translated *whale* in that passage, elsewhere in the Bible including Psalm 74:13 and Isaiah 27:1, the word is translated as *dragon*. Dragon legends abound in cultures throughout the world and the depictions resemble dinosaurs. In Job 41 God refers to *leviathan*, which is described as being a terrible sea monster that even breathed fire, in His conversation with Job. Leviathan is mentioned in several other places in the Bible including Isaiah 27:1 where it is connected with *dragon*. In Job 40 God reminds Job of the largest animal he created and refers to it as *behemoth*. The animal is described in great detail—a description very similar to *Brachiosaurus*, one of the largest dinosaurs. Many modern Bible translations reference *behemoth* to an elephant, the hippopotamus, or a crocodile in the footnotes with some even directly translating the text that way, but this is clearly a result of evolutionary influence as the description simply doesn't fit. In Isaiah 30:6 the Bible also mentions a flying serpent which could be

one of the Pterodactyls popularly called flying dinosaurs.

The film *The Great Dinosaur Mystery* gives the following accounts<sup>2</sup> among others:

- A Sumerian story dating back to 2000 B.C. or earlier of Gilgamesh who went to fell cedars and slew a huge vicious dragon, cutting off its head as a trophy.
- China is known for its dragon stories and dragons are prominent in its artwork and culture.
- Tenth-century story of an Irishman who wrote of his encounter with what appears to have been a *stegosaurus*.
- In the 1500s, a European scientific book, *Historia Animalium*, listed several living animals that we would call dinosaurs. A well-known naturalist of the time, Ulysses Aldrovandus, recorded an encounter between a peasant named Baptista and a dragon whose description fits that of the small dinosaur *Tanystropheus*. The

encounter was on May 13, 1572, near Bologna in Italy, and the peasant killed the dragon.

Other evidence of man and dinosaurs living together such as petroglyphs (drawings carved on rock) and cave-paintings of dinosaur-like animals exists as well. In 1990 a team of scientists from the University of Montana found *Tyrannosaurus Rex* bones that were only partially fossilized but what's more they contained what seems to be hemoglobin and blood cells. If those bones were 65 million years old then the blood cells and hemoglobin should and would have been totally disintegrated.<sup>3</sup> This fits with the biblical timescale, but not millions of years. ■

1. Ken Ham, *The New Answers Book*, Answers in Genesis 2008, Masterbooks: 157-158.

2. Ibid: 161

3. Ibid: 162



## Coming in the Clouds of Heaven

by Delmas Gehman

“*Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*” (Mark 14:61b-62).

Jesus was in the palace of the high priest when this event took place. He was on trial before Caiaphas, the high priest. They tried and tried to find something they could bring against Him but their witness did not agree! Finally they got some false witnesses who claimed that He said He would tear down their temple, made with hands, and raise up one made without hands in three days. But even their false witnesses did not agree!

The high priest still tried to dig in and

challenge Jesus to get Him to say something. This was a travesty of justice. There was nothing fair about this trial. It was done by night illegally. They were not proving anything by the allegations they were making. Yet the high priest tried to get Jesus to say something, something to hopefully help some of the charges to stick. *Aren't you going to say anything? These charges are serious!*

But Jesus was silent. He held His peace. Then the high priest asked Him, “*Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*” In other words, “*Are You the Son of God?*” Jesus said, “*I am,*” and further told them they would see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

That was enough for them! The high priest ripped his clothes. He said, "That's it! We don't need witnesses! He blasphemes! He's worthy of death! After all He called Himself God! He said He would be sitting on the right hand of God!" And if Jesus truly was calling Himself God when he was not, He deserved to be killed. But Caiaphas and his crowd were not looking far enough. They thought Jesus was just another man. They did not want anything to do with His claims to be God. After all, they figured nothing good could come out of Nazareth. *"They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet"* (John 7:52).

With these words Jesus reminded these angry men that the story was not all told yet. There would be a day coming when they would change their minds. Jesus was telling these Jewish leaders, "It's not all like you think it is! There will be a reckoning day!" He's telling them "I'll be back!"

In Acts 1:1-11 when Jesus ascended into heaven, He rose up before the disciples and a cloud received Him out of their sight. It all happened very quickly, but not so fast that they could not see what happened. The Scripture clearly records that they saw Him go. They kept watching steadfastly heavenward and, as they were still looking up, two men in white apparel, doubtless angels, stood by them. They told them, "This same Jesus whom you just watched going up, will come back! He's coming back the same way you saw Him go! That's the way He will return!" A cloud received Him out of their sight.

Revelation 1:7 says, *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."* This coming in the clouds of heaven will not be in secret. Just as He went up, so He is coming back! When He went, those who were watching saw Him go. When He comes back, every eye shall see Him. This is a personal, vis-

ible appearing of Jesus Christ! That means all who are on the earth at that time shall see Him coming in the clouds of heaven. I believe that God will make it that every eye sees Him at one time. God does not need TV or any other manmade technology to accomplish that. He has the power to accomplish it without man's help! Every eye shall see Him—none shall miss out on this event, whether they want to or not! There will be no hiding when our Lord comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And they also which pierced Him—this is a direct reference to the events in the high priest's palace and following and how Jesus was crucified. Those who pierced Him will see Him coming in the clouds of heaven. I believe it is referring primarily to the Jewish people when it says this. Zechariah 12 speaks of the same event and refers to the Jewish people when it says they shall look on Him whom they have pierced.

All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him—to wail is to beat oneself on the breast in grief. It is the strongest word used in the Scriptures to depict an outward expression of inward grief. They will be wailing but not repenting. The time of repentance will be past when He comes in judgment in the clouds of heaven.

This event of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven happens after the great tribulation period according to Revelation 19:11-21. The rapture of the church of 1 Thessalonians 4 will have taken place seven years prior to this event of Revelation 19. We now have the church saints in heaven, depicted in Revelation 4 and 5 by a representative group of twenty-four elders seated on twenty-four thrones. By the time of this event, the seven seal judgments are past, the seven trumpet judgments are past, and the seven vial or bowl judgments are past. The world has been through the worst time ever known and the false, harlot church (Revelation 17 and 18) has been destroyed.

Now in Revelation 19 we see the saints in heaven singing “Alleluia.” The bride of Christ is at the marriage supper of the Lamb while the terrible events of the Great Tribulation are taking place on the earth. In verse 11 we see a new scene. Heaven is opened allowing John to see a majestic procession from heaven! He sees a white horse with a rider. This is the second white horse seen by John, the seer. In Chapter 6 he also saw a white horse and rider going out to conquer the earth. That was the false christ.

Here, however, it is clear who the rider of this horse is. He is the One whose very Name is Faithful and True. This is none other than Jesus Christ coming in the clouds of heaven as He promised He would. In contrast to the wicked deceivers that are going to rule the earth in the tribulation (the antichrist and the false prophet and the devil himself) Christ is faithful and true. It is His very character. He fulfills every word He has prophesied.

Today, many people say, “Oh, God is a God of love. He would never hurt anyone.” We have a much different picture here than that. True, Jesus did come to earth the first time as a little baby. He was laid in swaddling clothes in a manger as a helpless, little baby. And when Jesus was here the first time He healed the sick and was meek and lowly. And so people say, “Oh, Jesus wouldn’t hurt anyone, He is a God of love.” And they are absolutely right when they say He is a God of love. But just as integral to His character is justice and judgment. He will never overlook sin! He will forgive sin if it is confessed and forsaken; He will never overlook it! And for all those who refuse to obey Him, He is coming in judgment! Paul says in Acts 17:31: *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”*

Notice how Jesus is coming in full, majestic, military regalia. His eyes are as

a flame of fire—ready to mete out judgment on the wicked. On His head were many crowns—the evidence of a conquering king. Notice the armies of heaven following Him, dressed in fine, white linen—the saints of the ages—these are the same as the Bride the Lamb’s wife in verse 8. His name is called the Word of God. Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword to smite the nations! In the beginning, our Lord spoke the world into being and in the end of the age He will smite the nations with that same Word.

He is coming to claim the earth for which and for whom He died and He will now reign as triumphant King of kings and Lord of lords! *“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen”* (1 Tim. 6:14-16).

He will now exercise His sovereignty and absolute power! The beast, the kings of the earth, and all their armies lay aside all their quarrels and unite against Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ slays the armies and their horses with the sword of His mouth, I believe by simply speaking the Word.

He takes the beast, the antichrist, and the false prophet alive and casts them to their eternal doom in Gehenna, the Lake of Fire. And then the King shall reign gloriously on the earth with His throne in Jerusalem for one thousand years with the devil confined to the bottomless pit.

Where will the Lord come when He returns to earth in power and great glory? The Lord left from the Mount of Olives and that is where He will come back! We find this in Zechariah 14:3-5. Not only will His manner of coming be similar, the place will also be the same. The mountain will split down the middle creating a valley running east and west with the one

half of the mountain moving to the north and the other to the south. According to Zechariah 14:5, *“The LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”* This is the same group as Revelation 19 calls the armies of heaven who are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Jude says the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints. The saints who come with Christ when He returns includes the church saints, those who are caught up (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) before the time of great tribulation takes place.

In Matthew 24:19-31 we have another Scripture depicting Christ’s coming in the clouds of heaven. *“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”* (Matthew 24:30). The setting of Matthew 24 is the tribulation period. This is a time of tribulation such as was never experienced before and never will be again. The time of tribulation will be seven years in duration. The Jewish people are warned here of the deception that will abound immediately prior to the coming of Christ. When someone tells you, “Here is Christ, or there,” do not believe it. Christ’s coming will be as the lightning comes out of the east and shines all the way to the west—dramatic and unmistakable!

In Matthew 24:29 we are told, immediately after the tribulation of those days there will be great cosmic disturbances. The sun will be darkened. The moon will not give her light. The stars will fall from heaven. The powers of heaven will be shaken.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. The coming of the Son of man will be striking and unmistakable. Think of it. How dark will it be when the sun is darkened, the moon doesn’t shine, and the stars begin to fall? Even on a cloudy day, light from the sun comes through the clouds. The prophets speak of the day of the Lord as a gloomy,

dark day. Zechariah 14 says it will be known to the Lord as a day that is neither day nor night. In that gloom and darkness, the Lord Jesus Christ will appear in blazing glory! It will cause all tribes of the earth to mourn. This is not a time of joy; it is a time of mourning and a time of fear for the wicked. *“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”* (Luke 21:26, 27).

How will it be when the Lord comes in the clouds of heaven? Read Matthew 24:36-44. No man knows the day or the hour when Christ will appear. Jesus told the disciples at His ascension it is in the Father’s power. In the day of the Lord, the day of Christ’s coming, it will be as it was in the days of Noah. How was it in the days of Noah? People were marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking. People were going on with their normal lives oblivious to impending judgment. It was not that they could not have known. They did not want to bother themselves with that strange man, Noah, building that large boat on dry land. So they just wrote him off as being a little funny in the head, just a little too religious, one of those who fell off at the deep end, and soon they didn’t even think about it any more. And the Bible says they knew not until the flood came and *took them all away!* That’s how the coming of the Son of man shall be!

**One shall be taken and the other left.** What does this mean? Some have said this is the rapture of the church of 1 Thessalonians 4. Could this be the rapture? Not according to this passage. How was it in Noah’s day? Who was taken? Was it the believers or the unbelievers? Who was taken and who was left? The wicked were taken away in judgment and the righteous were left. In Luke 17 Jesus was speaking to His disciples. *“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one*

bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (Luke 17:34-37). The disciples asked, “Where, Lord?” and Jesus’ answer indicates a gathering together of birds of prey. It is obvious that they are taken away to judgment, likely referring to the great supper of the birds of Revelation 19. The parable of the tares in Matthew 13 also agrees with this in Matthew 13:37-43. The wicked are gathered by the angels and taken away to judgment and the righteous who survived the tribulation on this earth go on into the kingdom.

Psalm 2 depicts a gathering of kings who are setting themselves against the Lord and against His anointed one, with

the thought of casting away the restraints that the Lord would place upon them. When Christ comes in the clouds of heaven, the Lord will laugh at the distress of these armies. The admonition to all kings, judges, government leaders, and anyone who is against God today, is found in the last three verses of Psalm 2.

*“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him”* (Psalm 2:10-12).

As Christians, we can expect to be caught up to be with the Lord when He calls the church home and then come back with Him when He comes in the clouds of heaven. Let us be faithful until the day He calls us home! ■

—Reprinted with permission from *The Watchword Messenger*, 4th Quarter 2005.



## A Random Act of Violence at the Bus Stop

*One family’s journey towards forgiveness*

by Matthew Todd

**I**t was Thanksgiving Day 2007. Our extended family had planned a dinner for 6 p.m.

The weather was bright, and the sun was warm and forgiving. My wife and I had gone for an early afternoon coffee and muffin and were returning home when we received a cell phone call that our son was in Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, B.C., and we needed to get there quickly.

We weren’t told what had happened, so I was left to speculate that maybe our son had fallen down the stairs or done

something clumsy—after all, he was a developing 16-year-old teenager.

We arrived in the hospital to find an RCMP officer present and our son awaiting a surgery to remove metal from his neck. We were completely shocked to find out our son had been terrorized and violently assaulted.

### ***Random Act of Terror***

He was waiting at the bus stop across the street from our home. While neighbors were cutting their lawns and entertaining their children outside, a carload