

BUSINESS NAME

The Evangelical Protestant The Magazine of the Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church

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FIRST ISSUE 1917

BREAKING
NEWS!

MORE STORMY
WEATHER
AHEAD

KEEP YOUR
EYES UPON
JESUS

FILM AT
ELEVEN, ED!

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Sedona Arizona

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Evangelical Protestant
Church (GCEPC)® Inc.,

Lutheran Evangelical
Protestant Church (LEPC)®,

GCEPC "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2: 8

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Gustav Schmidt became editor. In 1917, the German Evangelical churches in the Pittsburgh area began publication of a monthly entitled The Evangelical Protestant. (Archives Smithfield UCC)

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Editor Rev. Steve Bacon

We Believe

1. The Holy Scriptures, in the original tongues, is the inspired and inerrant word of God. (Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16,17)

2. There is one God, eternal and self-existent, Creator and Ruler of the universe, and manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 1:18, Matthew 3:16-17) We are Trinitarian.

3. Jesus Christ is truly divine and truly human having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Matt.1: 18)

4. Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed His blood as a Sacrifice

for our sins; He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. (1 John 2:2)

5. Humankind was created in the image of God, but fell into sin causing separation from God. (Gen. 3:1-24)

6. Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all; and those who repent and believe on Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God. (John 1:10)

7. Water baptism identifies us with the death and burial of Christ and that we should arise to

walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19-20)

8. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ, to convict of sin, to enable the believer to live a godly life, and to empower the Church to carry the gospel into all the world.

(Matthew 12:31, Acts 1:8.)

9. In the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ for His Church. (Matthew 24:30, Rev 1:7)

10. In the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and everlasting separation from God of all those who reject Jesus Christ. (John 1:10-13, Rev 20:11-15)

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

Bishop's Page



Dear EPC GCEPC/LEPC and Friends,

Peace and grace to all of you today! I am asking our Editor to feature this letter issued earlier in this Fall issue of the Evangelical Protestant because what goes on in the Middle East is still dominating the airwaves and critical decisions are being made that affect our world and lives daily.

God has placed a heavy burden on my heart as He has with many of you that we must fervently pray for the nation of Israel and the Middle East. It is not a time to be complacent or to think that we are somehow not affected by what is taking place so many miles away on the other side of the world. It is a time to be strong in our faith and to call on the God of Heaven and Earth to intervene once again in the affairs of men. Pray for our leaders in the USA and around the world that God will turn the hearts of kings, give wisdom, strength and understanding in them making the best choices possible and in line with His will.

Not only is Israel and its capital Jerusalem with its "Saturday People" under great danger and assault but also the Christians, the "Sunday People" of the Middle East are suffering great persecution and death. It is a time to stand with Israel as scripture directs and with our brothers and sisters in Christ in whatever manner that the Lord leads us to do. It is not a time to be complacent or to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear. I encourage you individually to pray, to speak up when you have opportunity, to use the various platforms you have been given in your life to make known what the word of God says concerning the times we are in. Get others involved as you are able. Speak to those

with whom you are in ministry, to your churches, outreaches and missions to pray and to learn what the scriptures say about our times and then pass it on.

Remember, as called out members of the Ascension Gifts that cover the five functions of Christ in His church of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, you have been chosen and sent by Christ for the work of the ministry. The purpose of that work is to equip the saints for works of service for the building up of the Body of Christ, working to attain unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, to bring about maturity and attain and strive toward the fullness of Christ in each life. As a result, we and the Body of Christ move from childhood to adulthood, become not easily swayed by what goes on around us or fooled by what is outside of God and His Word. These are the goals set before us and the God description of our calling. "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. Eph 4:11-15.

The National Association of Evangelicals offers this information to us:

In the last few weeks, thousands of Christians have been forced by militant rule to flee their homes in northern Iraq. The United States has authorized air strikes and

humanitarian aid airdrops in Iraq. The United Nations has condemned militant actions and is urging a coordinated response. Stories of the persecution of Christians and other minorities in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and other areas in the Middle East continue to fill the media. Please join me and other Christians around the world in praying for peaceful resolution and relief for those caught in the violence and persecution.

Prayer Events: Encourage your church to set aside time in this Sunday's service to pray as a congregation for Iraq.

Prayer Points

Pray for President Obama and his advisors. Pray for safety for Christians and other minorities in Iraq and other areas who are fleeing violence and persecution. Pray that they would find safe harbor.

Pray for comfort for those across the Middle East who have lost loved ones and have suffered traumatic violence. Pray for those who coming under brutal persecution.

Pray for missionaries and humanitarian aid workers who serve in difficult and violent corners of the world, that they will be kept safe, and that their efforts will contribute to a fuller realization of the peace and prosperity that God intends for all.

For a few more resources, visit www.nae.net/prayforiraq.

Blessings as we continue together in His love, serving Him and relying on Him in all things. I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Fall Evangelical Protestant Magazine. Special thanks to all who contributed and to our Editor Pastor Steve Bacon for his hard work and diligence in pulling it all together once again into something readable and worthwhile.

God's peace in this time.

Bishop Nancy Drew

My greatest desire for all of our ministers is that they would have a close walk with Our Lord, learning His ways, hearing His voice, knowing Him.

“The Attributes of God”

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries



My prayer and blessing for you is that you will discover and uncover the mysteries of God in His ways and His word. I pray for you a revelation of His grace in your life and that all lessons imparted to you through your message will become revelatory teaching for the flock of God.

I love to read the commentary section of my *One New Man Bible* (Rev. William Morford, 2011, pg 1790-1791). In my quiet time the other morning I came across the thirteen attributes of God.

It is always helpful to know the Hebrew meaning of the words in the bible as they expand on and give more meaning to the Greek interpretation.

The scripture is Exodus 34: 6,7:

“And the LORD* passed by before him and proclaimed, “The LORD* the LORD* God, merciful and gracious, patient, and abundant in loving kindness and truth, keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and Who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children’s children, to the third and to the fourth generations.”

Why is the Lord’s name repeated twice? It speaks of two types of mercy. One; before someone sins, knowing the sins to come, and two; for forgiveness after repentance.

El. God. Lord, Lord is followed by this name symbolizing power.

Rakhoom, Compassionate. The meaning here shows pity, compassion, love and mercy. The punishment for sin is diminished.

Vekhanoon, Gracious. We do not deserve his grace yet He gives it freely. The meaning of this word denotes grace, beauty, charm and loveliness.

Ereck Apayim, Slow to Anger. Aren’t we thankful for this one! His anger is slow and patience great for the righteous and wicked alike. He is patient, allowing one who sins time to reflect, repent and change their ways.

Verav Khesed, Abundant in Loving Kindness. My personal favorite! His love is beyond our understanding even to loving His enemies.

VeEmet, Truth. In this scripture loving kindness comes before this word, truth. Why? Because truth is necessary and should be delivered with love.

Notser Khesed Lalpim, “Preserver of Loving Kindness for thousands of generations.” This is the kindnesses God’s regards as kindness to Him.

Avon, Iniquity. God forgives intentional sin for which we have repented.

VaFesha, Willful Sin. God even forgives a willful sin intended to anger him once we have repented.

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“The Attributes of God”

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VeKhata-ah, Error. God forgives the sin committed from carelessness.

VeNakeh, Who Cleanses. God is faithful not only to forgive but cleanses our sin so its effects are gone. If we repent out of love for Him He fully cleanses. Those who do not repent are not cleansed. Partial cleansing comes for those who repent only from fear of retribution.

This cleansing is the final quality of Mercy. God is merciful and gracious in that He does not whitewash sin but fully cleanses. Whitewashing sin does not clarify good and evil only covers up and does not lead to full restoration.

Ponder these attributes in your own life and those you are sent to. He is a Holy God!

Shalom, Bishop Jessica

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Being Equipped for Service

Bishop Dr. David A. Church



Bishop Dr.
David A. Church
Director of
Missions

To reach the lost and bring them into the Kingdom of God requires that we return to *God's way* of building the Church, discarding man's methods with those given us by Jesus Christ who said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

"And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." Acts 17:2-3

We are living in a pluralistic society where opposing worldviews collide and vie to bring others into their way of thinking. We observe relativistic constructs of "truth" along with the rejection of absolutes even within our seminaries, with the rising Emergent Church deconstructing orthodox belief and the Scriptures. But if we cannot truly know what the author's intended meaning is (according to Emergent teachers) the same would also apply to the books written by Emergent authors such as Brian McClaren, Rob Bell and Doug Pagitt. Their own writings cannot stand up to the tests of logic and the methodology they insist on applying to the Scriptures either. Insistence that the reader's interpretation is what determines meaning is absurd and counter intuitive to any thinking person, and is relativism at its worst, totally removing the possibility of objective communication. It is little wonder that those following the teachings of the Seeker Friendly, Church Growth and Emergence movements are so biblically illiterate and have built on shifting sands instead of building on the Rock, who is Jesus Christ.

To reach the lost and bring them into the Kingdom of God requires that we return to *God's way* of building the Church, discarding man's methods with those given us by Jesus Christ who said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in Matthew 2:19 ESV. We make disciples by teaching all that Christ commanded, NOT having them make a decision for Christ and saying the sinner's prayer after going forward in a church service. These are man's creation, not found in the Bible, and the "cheap grace" resulting from such is what has weakened the Church. Telling someone that God has a wonderful plan for their life is a disservice because if one is not brought to the point of knowing they are a condemned rebel standing before the King of the Universe they cannot understand the grace contained in the offer of the Gospel, which is life itself and fellowship with God for eternity. Also, if we cannot expose the short comings of a false worldview held by someone it is difficult to impress upon them the better way which is truth in Christ. This was Paul's method throughout the Book of Acts and we need to return to it for effective evangelism and missions. Preaching salvation by True grace through faith in Christ alone, and teaching others how to walk before our God is our calling, and the Gospel and the Word needs to permeate our own lives.

This brings us to the necessity of apologetics in evangelism and missions, giving a defense of and reason for our faith in Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is not a shutting

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Being Equipped for Service

Bishop Dr. David A. Church

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down our brain and blindly accepting a list of facts. It is looking at the facts and accepting the truth of them because they explain a worldview which mirrors reality. It is not just a philosophical acceptance of the truthfulness of facts but placing our trust *in the Person* that the facts portray. As James said in James 2:19 “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” In our witness and presentation of the Truth we are showing that the Christian worldview is the only one explaining and matching reality, and the Bible being the only “Holy Book” that is internally consistent and externally provable to match that which is observable. The Bible has been attacked since before the Canon was completed, dissected by unbelievers and academia but never discredited. Not a single so-called error in the Scriptures has held up to investigation, because there are no errors, only faulty understanding by those not accepting the idea and truth of revelation by God. We must learn and have our own beliefs settled in our own mind before attacking Satan’s dominion, because the darkness will not concede ground (souls) easily and without a fight. That is why we are told to “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth...” in Ephesians 6:14. God’s Word is Truth. We must be grounded thoroughly in the Word which we swore to uphold and teach in our ordination vows we made before God and man. We must thoroughly believe in the inerrancy of the Word, and learn to wield the Word correctly as this is the main target of the Devil and our only weapon. If Satan can find a chink in our armor he will exploit it, so we as ministers must assimilate the Word into our hearts and lives, and walk according to the Spirit. Then, and only then, can we confidently go out into the world and pull souls from the fire, and disciple them to become effective soldiers in the Kingdom.



Paul preaching at the Areopagus, by Raphael (1515-16)

Greetings

Rev David Derksen



Rev David Derksen,
M.Div, BCC

With great joy, I am making the LEPC/EPC my denominational home.

My family and faith background is as an evangelical raised by parents who both came from Russian Mennonite backgrounds. From an early age, I was taught to highly value Scripture, hymns, prayer, and a personal relationship with Jesus. Denominational labels mattered less in my family than that the church and pastor taught sound doctrine from the Bible.

Personally, I became a follower of Christ at the age of four in a family Bible study receiving Jesus as my Lord and Savior that evening now many years ago. My call into ministry came on a short-term mission trip to inner-city Denver in 2000. While on this trip, I became so sick that I could not keep water down. Realizing I was fasting, whether I liked it or not, I asked the Lord to speak to me. At that moment, the Holy Spirit brought to mind the words from John's Gospel when Jesus told Peter: "Feed my sheep." This is what I mark as my call into the ministry.

Academically, I hold degrees from Carleton College in philosophy and a Masters in Divinity from Yale University where I taught at the Divinity School as a Teaching Fellow for a year following my graduation there. Also, I completed five units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) including a unit at a trauma one center and a full year residency at the St. Cloud Veterans' Affairs Medical Center. After the end of my time serving in the VA medical center, I became a Board Certified Chaplain (BCC), and currently serve as a professional chaplain in North Branch, MN with St. Croix Hospice.

On March 28th, 2014, I married Aubree and became a father to her three year old daughter, Naolin. They are truly perfect gifts from my heavenly Father coming after some especially dark days for me. I feel like Job in chapter 42: "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part" (vv. 12a, NIV). By way of explanation, my gorgeous gals came to me after I survived the ending of my first marriage due to my former spouse's adulteries and abandonment. God used that awful experience to refine me and teach me the power of His good news in the depths of life's valleys.

When I am not busy keeping up with Naolin and Aubree, I can be found lifting at the gym, following the Vikings, sipping coffee, listening to music, or blogging. Recently, the Holy Spirit led me to start a blog as a resource for adultery/divorce survivors from an evangelical pastor's and infidelity survivor's perspective. Not much exists out there from this perspective. My blog is called Divorce Minister: Binding Up The Brokenhearted (www.divorceminister.com). The name comes from following Christ in scorning the shame of the Cross. What the Enemy tried to use to discredit and destroy me, I have decided to use as a vehicle for healing and the Gospel. My wife has joined me in writing on the blog and ministering to those who come seeking such a perspective. In the first month of operation, we had over 10,000 views and have visitors coming to the website from over thirty different countries. I am glad I obediently took this bold step in starting this online ministry.

My excitement in joining the LEPC/EPC comes from many things. First, I appreciate the focus upon Scripture and following Christ. Second, I appreciate the genuine ecumenical spirit of the denomination. And finally, I appreciate how the denomination is very relational and supportive. It feels like family, and I feel like I have finally come home. I look forward to ministering in the denomination for years to come and getting to know my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

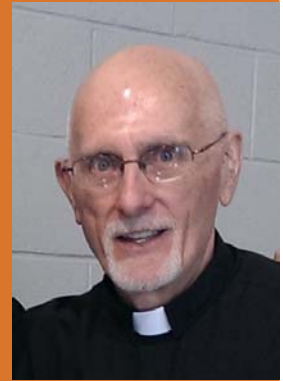
Blessings!

Rev David Derksen, M.Div, BCC



Greetings

Rev Dan Curtin



Rev, Dan Curtin

My name is Dan Curtin, and I was ordained in the LEPC on September 20th of this year at Bishop Dennis Overlien at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Waupun, WI. Bishop Dennis was assisted by Bishop Bill Dorn and Bishop Pat Pierce. Two brothers in Christ were ordained at the same service: Rev. Dennis Klak and Rev. David Dirksen. It was a joyful, Spirit-filled day that I shall never forget. Our first priestly act upon ordination distributing the Eucharist (by intinction) to those who came to witness our ordinations. What an amazing privilege!

I have attached a photo of myself taken right after the ordination service. I am not able to include any photos from my ministry because we are not allowed to take pictures inside our state prisons.

Some highlights from my life:

I was born in Chicago, IL, but raised in Northern WI.

I spent several years at Sacred Heart Seminary, near Green Bay, WI, studying for the Catholic Priesthood. I left in my third year. I didn't like the fact that priest could not marry.

After seminary, I enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a paratrooper, serving for three years during the Viet Nam War. I was a combat squad leader with an honorable discharge at the end of my tour of duty.

I was a sport parachutist, a martial arts instructor (in the army and as a civilian), a published poet, and graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, class of 1971, with a B.A. in English Literature.

I worked for the State of Wisconsin for over 30, first as a veteran assistant counseling Viet Nam and disabled veterans concerning VA benefits and job training. I retired from State service as a Labor Market Economist.

On September 23 of this year my wife, Jan, and I celebrated our 37th wedding anniversary. We have two adult sons and five beautiful grandchildren....some in WI and some in Colorado.

I am currently learning the Spanish Language. I am a strong advocate of life long learning.

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Greetings

Rev Dan Curtin

My ministry:

I am in my eighth year of prison ministry as a volunteer for Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU). I have a co-worker I team-up with. We minister in three state prisons each week. Two of the prisons are maximum security facilities and one is medium security. I do one-on-one pastoral visits, conduct Bible studies, organize discipleship groups, visit terminally ill prisoners in the prison hospice, administer baptisms, communion, and preach at worship services on many Saturdays as well as Sunday mornings and evenings.

I entered prison ministry one day after praying with our pastor about what the Lord wanted me to do in retirement. In a conversation with a brother in Christ, I asked what his ministry with Crusade was about. He said, "Why don't you come and see?" So he arranged to get me a clearance to go with him to one of our maximum security facilities. While there I gave my testimony to a group of 50 prisoners. The following week my brother asked me to take charge of the group, answer questions, and present the gospel. I did, and the Holy Spirit moved seven prisoners to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. I knew the Lord had called me to ministry.

Prior to Prison ministry I cooked at an inter-church soup kitchen for four years and did outreach to the poor of our community, delivering food, directing them to support services, sharing the gospel and praying with them. I also volunteered with the Aids Resource Center for Wisconsin providing companionship for men dying of AIDS.

How I came to know Christ:

After my seminary years I rebelled against my Roman Catholic upbringing. I entered the university after my military service and became fascinated with eastern mysticism and transendental meditation, spirit guides, and all that accompanied it. I became a Rosicrucian after becoming intrigued with that "ancient mystical order".

After years of bondage to sin, I was sitting alone in my apartment one evening and when I turned on the TV a Billy Graham Crusade was just starting. I listened, he got my attention, he was talking about me. I could hardly believe what I was hearing. I had never heard the Gospel preached, ever, (no, not even in Catholic seminary). I repented, received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, went out and bought a Bible and the Holy Spirit has been leading me ever since that evening. God has been so gracious to me, a wretched sinner. And not only has he washed me, justified me, sanctified me (and He continues to sanctify me), but he called me to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His sacraments! Don't tell me grace isn't AMAZING!!! It just doesn't get any better than this on this side of eternity. Praise God!

The Slippery Slope

Rev. John M. Haase, DTh



Rev. John Haase

Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984) warned for decades of the growing pluralistic climate in the West. He argued, among other things, that without antithesis, truth would fall apart, as indeed it largely has—especially regarding morality. Schaeffer noted how the embrace of the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, had done so much to undermine truth and absolutes. Schaeffer said “Christianity demands antithesis, not as some abstract concept of truth, but in the fact that God exists and in personal justification” (Schaeffer, 1990:47). If we embrace synthesis, not antithesis, we are left with relativism, pluralism and no absolutes. There no longer remains good and evil, there is only something in-between that is neither. This compromise ethos is also at the heart of the Eastern religions, and to no small degree present in post-modern eclecticism. These pluralists take the middle ground between good and evil, embracing the luke-warmness Jesus specifically warned us of in Revelation 3:15-18.

The concept of antithesis is as basic as creation itself. Consider for example, the God-established dichotomy between light and dark. “Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw the light, which it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:3-5; cf., 14-19; Mat. 5:13-19).

Jesus makes very clear that antithesis—the separation of mutually contradictory things—is God ordained. The sin-corruption that so pervades all of creation (cf., Rom. 8:18-22) makes the difference between right and wrong ‘grey,’ or difficult to clearly and definitively distinguish. Sin-corrupted human beings are not fully able on their own to make such distinctions. This is why God provides His Law. The difference between right and wrong, good and bad, is not then according to man’s already corrupt notions, but according to the sinless, incorrupt, transcendent, and perfect understanding of all things that God alone possesses. Apart from God, mankind is completely incapable of identifying the true disparity between right and wrong, good and evil, for mankind is too corrupt to know the difference. This is precisely why God’s Laws are not bad, keeping us from having fun, as it were. Rather, knowing right and wrong makes the quality of our lives better, and our relationship with the Creator right and healthy (cf., Psa. 19:7-10).

The pluralist prefers to embrace a non-committal middle ground that is not true nor false, right nor wrong, cold nor hot. It is neither pleasing, nor offensive. It produces neither passion, nor anger. It promotes instead, apathy and disinterest. It is reactive, not proactive: it simply exists -- stale, stagnant and lifeless. It is not pleasing to God, for He and His Kingdom are proactive, truth and mission driven.

Religious pluralism is without question an unholy agenda meant to lull even God’s own into moral lethargy. For the Christian the remedy for such a lackluster faith is the fresh embrace of our first love -- Jesus Christ (Rev. 2:4-5). Those

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The Slippery Slope

Rev. John M. Haase, DTh

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who have fallen into apathy about God and His Word need to put Him back on the throne of their lives, to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mat. 6:33). Only when our priorities are set in proper order, does life make any sense.

The present-day call for ‘tolerance’ and ‘political correctness’ is pervasive. Any kind of absolute faith commitment or firm doctrinal conviction is ridiculed. Those who embrace ‘totalizing concepts’ and metanarratives like the Bible are criticized as relics of bygone days. While it is ‘OK’ to embrace personal beliefs, it is quite another matter to proselytize. It is quite alright for the pluralist to demean those who embrace traditional, conservative views, but to criticize them in return is wholly unacceptable: a double standard to be sure.

Religious dogma is simply not welcome in today’s ultra-modern cultural climate—even in many churches, who have succumbed to the spirit of our age (cf., 2Co. 4:1f; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 6:12). Lesslie Newbigin suggests that part “of the reason for the rejection of dogma is that it has for so long been entangled with coercion, with political power, and so with the denial of freedom—freedom of thought and of conscience” (Newbigin, 1989:10). Mindless obedience to church dogma is not healthy for the individual, or for the church. Fideism in metaphysics means giving priority to faith over reason, but in contemporary usage has come to mean an irrational belief in things supernatural. What too often happens is that ‘faith’ becomes a rote human tradition that is blindly followed.

A true, vibrant faith is one that has been intellectually considered and wrestled with, and then embraced. God has given us reasoning minds so that we can thoroughly consider the intellectual dimensions of the faith, especially in contrast to other religions and philosophical constructs. Pluralists and postmodernists alike cannot endure the so-called intolerance of conservative, orthodox Christianity that stands upon the ancient, apostolic teachings. Such certainty and dogma are for them, unrealistic, unproven, and unworthy of humanity’s advance beyond mankind’s mythical and superstitious past. They prefer instead something far less certain. “Universalism is thus the *raison d’être* for the response of openness to religious diversity thought to be required by postmodern thinkers. Total openness and religious relativism spring from an abhorrence of Christian particularism” (Okholm, 1995:83).

Those who endorse religious pluralism also necessarily endorse religiosity that stands upon no absolutes, and no solid ground. Nevertheless, world religions do make different claims, and cannot all be true. By simple, logical necessity, all claims can be false, or some can be true and others false, but not all can be true. G.K. Chesterton said of pluralists: “Tolerance is a virtue of the man or person without convictions” (Chesterton,

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The Slippery Slope

Rev. John M. Haase, DTh

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in Carson, 2000:331).

The truth is, pluralism is rooted in fear. It means not having to make choices and take stands, to have personal convictions and to live them out before others. Pluralism is the easy way out—the coward’s choice—the way of the unconvicted, the spineless, and the apathetic. In contemporary Western societies, one may be considered a fool to believe in the supernatural, but general talk about ‘god,’ prayer and the like are not likely to stir much commotion. Bring the name Jesus Christ into the mix, however, and the situation quickly changes, because there is no name more controversial and offensive than Jesus Christ (cf., Rom. 9:33): the so-called ‘Jesus problem.’ While many, including Muslims, will broadly accept Jesus as a moral figure that may, or may not have actually lived, to cross the line into discussing Jesus’ own incredible claims stirs controversy.

The problem is, if Jesus actually lived, people must consider his claims, and most people truly do not want to face those questions. It is therefore much easier to take a relativistic and pluralistic stance. It is far easier to discount and ignore the possibility that Jesus existed historically, believing that he is but one of many ancient mythical figures that men still turn for moral guidance. Postmoderns and pluralists truly do embrace and endorse a dream-scape reality, where right and wrong, good and bad do not matter. Right and wrong are personal choices and in the end, it does not seem to matter whether Jesus lived, or not. They care little about what their personal moral choices may mean for others, how their penchants may impact those around them. It is careless and selfish living.

Postmoderns and pluralists twist truth and make history say what pleases them and fits their biased agenda. In spite of this, Jesus did make exclusive claims about himself; claims that others cannot accept (cf., Mat. 11:6; Joh. 15). For example, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Joh. 14:6; cf., Mat. 28:18; Joh. 10:30; 14:9). The claims Jesus made about himself offended the (Jewish) religious leaders of His day, and have been offending people ever since. Christians ever since have defended their faith as a reality rooted in history, making Christian claims unique among all others. Only Christianity dares to step with both feet into public courtroom of history, to argue the veracity of Christ’s claims.

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Points to Ponder

10 THINGS JESUS NEVER SAID

1. YOU'RE TOO FAR GONE TO BE SAVED.
2. I'M SO DISAPPOINTED IN YOU.
3. THIS WOULDN'T BE HAPPENING IF YOU WERE A BETTER CHRISTIAN.
4. IT'S OKAY NOT TO LOVE CERTAIN PEOPLE.
5. EVERYONE SHOULD BELIEVE AND ACT LIKE YOU DO.
6. IT'S ALL UP TO YOU.
7. YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO REALLY HURT YOU.
8. YOU MISSED MY WILL FOR YOUR LIFE.
9. I'VE GIVEN UP ON YOU.
10. THIS IS A CROSS YOU MUST BEAR ALONE.

Rev William D. Sirginson

Here's a prayer I found in the current copy of "Our Daily Bread" from Sunday July 20, which I've posted above my deck. Helps remind me that whatever I do in ministry, small or large, if done for the glory of God is of value to Him.

" Lord..... Help me to remember.....That there are no small places or small people.....

All are precious in your sight.....May I see the value of my work.....

And cherish it as you do..... Amen.

Helps me everyday, may help someone else.

God's peace and blessings to you this day !

IHS

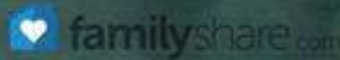
Rev.Edward G.Burns

Points To Ponder



Just for Clarity

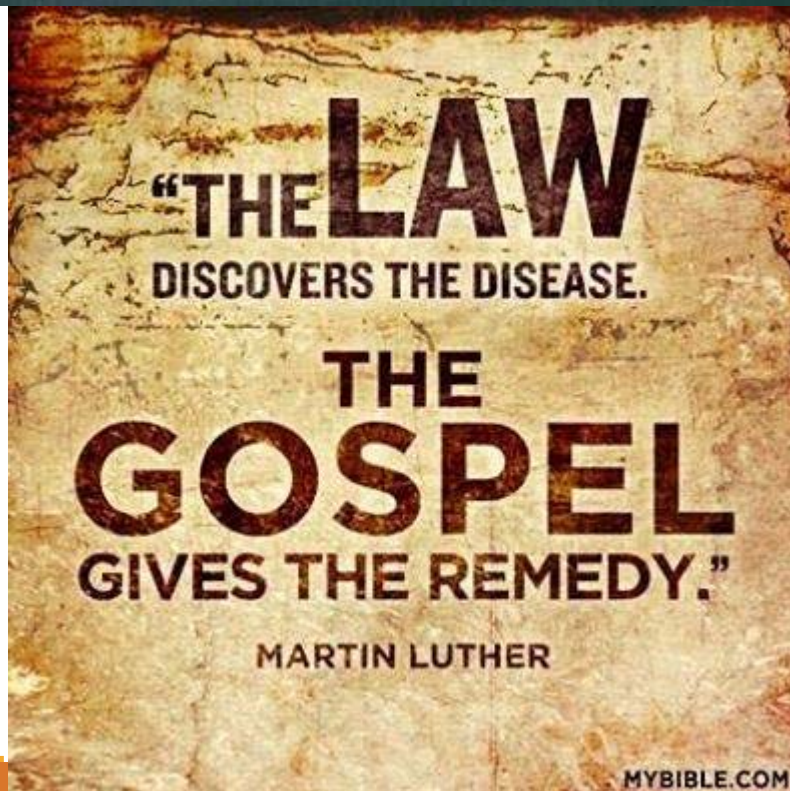
God



Satan

Stills You
 Reassures You
 Leads You
 Enlightens You
 Forgives You
 Calms You
 Encourages You
 Comforts You

Rushes You
 Frightens You
 Pushes You
 Confuses You
 Condemns You
 Stresses You
 Discourages You
 Worries You



clarity

“Money and Stuff”

September 20, 2014

When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Luke 18:22

Let me assure you that in the test which follows, I shall not know how many answers you get wrong. The test is made up of five questions. All you need do is check the "Yes" box, if you think the passage is in the Bible, and the "No" box, if it is not. The answer key can be found after the prayer.

Is This Passage In The Bible?

Cleanliness is next to godliness. Yes ___ No ___

Honesty is the best policy. Yes ___ No ___

Confession is good for the soul. Yes ___ No ___

We are prone to sin as sparks fly heavenward. Yes ___ No ___

Money is the root of all evil. Yes ___ No ___

The truth is many of us don't know as much about the Bible as we think we do. That is especially the case when it comes to what God and our Savior had to say about money and stuff. This is why this devotion speaks about money and stuff.

Now, if you're ready to stop reading, please don't. You may be surprised by what the Savior had to say.

First, let me tell you some of the things Jesus didn't say. He didn't say many of the things you can hear coming out of the mouths of TV evangelists. Jesus never had His disciples selling holy handkerchiefs, inspirational incense, or anointing olive oil soap and water taken from the Jordan River.

Nor did Jesus ever tell anybody that if they wanted to have God give them money and stuff they first had to bribe the Lord and get His attention by making a "seed offering." That also means Jesus didn't imply the larger the seed offering the more money and stuff God would be compelled to give.

What foolishness!

God has no need of our money and stuff. In the book of Psalms, God says, "I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is Mine ... and the creatures of the field are Mine ... the world is Mine, and all that is in it" (see Psalm 50).

So, what does Jesus say about money?

The Savior told His followers that money isn't a bad thing: "Just don't let your love for the stuff get in the way of your love for Me and the salvation I bring." In other places, Jesus said not to let family get in the way, or your plans. In that spirit, He told the God-loving rich, young ruler to "sell all that you have, distribute it to the poor ... and come, follow Me" (see Matthew 19:21).

It was a request the man could not do because -- although he loved God -- he loved his wealth and lifestyle even more. His is a mistake we dare not repeat as we follow the Redeemer who gave His life for us. We need to keep first things first, and Jesus should always be first. And that, my friends, is an idea which is in the Bible.



THE PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant my heart may be properly aligned so nothing gets in the way of my love and loyalty to the Savior. This I ask in His Name. Amen.

TEST KEY: All the boxes should be checked "NO," since none of these passages is found in the Bible

In Christ I remain His servant and yours,

Ken R. Klaus

Draw Close...an Invitation for Intimacy

by Bishop Nancy Drew



Bishop Nancy Drew

"He who is the Word of God teaches Me His word. I have experienced Him and know His word is true and my faith grows. I learned to hold my heart and my ears close to Him so that I can recognize His voice in the quiet and the chaos. I know that He is my refuge because I read it in scripture but also experience it in life. What an amazing God. What a good God. What a loving God. What a God of integrity and strength of character is Christ Jesus."

"There are times in life when everything seems confusing. As we walk with the Lord we have to maintain a sense of God's goodness, His love and His character to carry us through places where we cannot see or understand. During these times one of the enemy's favorite strategies is to undermine God's goodness to us, defame His character and try to make us believe that we are not loved when in fact we are greatly loved. We are blessed in having God's word to read any time we desire to remind us of these things but it becomes even better when we allow the Holy Spirit to write it on our hearts, instill it into our lives and make it a non-negotiable that God is good. God is of high character. God loves us. It is settled within us. This is a battle and decision that must be fought and decided once for all to grow in maturity and faith in Him. Then from that solid, immovable position we can fight the good fight of faith.

There was a time in my life when I questioned these particular aspects of God. I grew up being taught the Bible but I was not taught God. I was taught His Word but I wasn't taught Him. There is a huge difference in the two. As an adult I learned God's faithfulness by Him being faithful and my recognizing His faithfulness. Recognizing His faithfulness proves to us that the scripture is true in every day life but also that God is true and God is good. When He repeatedly showed up in every circumstance of my life, I knew that He was a God of integrity who was not an on again, off again God. He was there all the time.

He is not fickle. He does not come close to us and then ignore us later on. He is faithful when we call. He delights in us and desires to be near us. If He is waiting we can trust that He is on His way because of His character which is without reproach.

The scripture that says "if you draw near to God (Me), He(I) will draw near to you" has meant a lot in my life. For these words to be true, I had to believe that they are true and so I took Him at His word. I began to seek ways to try to draw close to God. I focused on this. I talked to Him all day. I stopped trying to "find time to pray." I just prayed. I asked Him to come close to me and I tried to set up times when He might do that like a walk in the park or a quiet time of just sitting still. I learned to worship. Really worship and not just while at church. This allowing of God into every aspect of my life and time changed my life and gradually my perception of God changed also. I learned about the true reality of His Presence. I learned that I could sense Him in the grocery store, walking down the street or in the shower. It does not matter where I am, He comes. Just like with the two walking on the road to Emmaus, Jesus shows up. We have dinner. We talk. We visit. He opens His word to me and gives me understanding. He shares Himself with me. Confusion is minimized and disappears all together when Jesus comes. Sometimes we are quietly together in His healing Presence. Sometimes He comes in power and dispels the darkness. Sometimes He makes me laugh. He makes me want to be like Him because of who He is. He who is the Word of God teaches Me His word. I have experienced Him and know His word is true and my faith grows. I learned to hold my heart and my ears close to Him so that I can recognize His voice in the quiet and the chaos. I know that He is my refuge because I read it in scripture but also experience it in life. What an amazing God. What a good God. What a loving God. What a God of integrity and strength of character is Christ Jesus. I have walked this walk of intimacy for many years now and have no regrets in drawing close to Him. His word is true. He is true.

Draw close to God and He will draw close to you. He has sent a written invitation through His word. It is up to us to respond. It is an invitation for intimacy in every area of life with the God of the Universe.

The “Back Page” When I’m 64

When I’m 64

*When I get older, losing my hair, many years from now
Will you still be sending me a valentine, birthday greetings, bottle of wine?
If I'd been out 'til quarter to three, would you lock the door?
Will you still need me, will you still feed me when I'm sixty-four?*

*You'll be older too
Ah, and if you say the word, I could stay with you*

*I could be handy, mending a fuse when your lights have gone
You can knit a sweater by the fireside, Sunday mornings, go for a ride
Doing the garden, digging the weeds, who could ask for more?
Will you still need me, will you still feed me when I'm sixty-four?*

*Every summer we can rent a cottage
In the Isle of Wight if it's not too dear
We shall scrimp and save
Ah, grandchildren on your knee, Vera, Chuck and Dave*

*Send me a postcard, drop me a line stating point of view
Indicate precisely what you mean to say, yours sincerely wasting away
Give me your answer, fill in a form, mine forever more
Will you still need me, will you still feed me when I'm sixty-four?*

The Beatles, 1967

to be sure that his girl would still love him when he was 64, 48 years from now.

In June 1967 I was 16 and “When I’m 64” was released by the Beatles. Paul McCartney wrote it when he was 16 and tweaked it for the Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely hearts Club Band Album.

I always liked the song and thought it was neat that a guy wanted

Paul is 72 now and I turned 64 September 28th. I still like and sing the song, but who would have thought that staying out ‘til quarter to three was referring to PM, not AM?

At age 16 I couldn’t envision what I would be doing at 64. I had not yet met my wife and I planned to join the Air Force out of High School and make it a career.

I would retire after 20 years in the Military and then begin my civilian career.

God had other plans. I flunked the Air Force Physical and spent the next 47 years selling Millwork, selling Shoes, selling Insurance and working on Computers. Finally in 1995 God got through to me and said go into the Ministry.



Steve & Teddy 9/28/1951

God had been pulling at me since I was a young boy but I kept insisting that I new what I wanted to do.

God had other plans and it took 30 years for me to get it.

If God is calling you, I hope it doesn't take 30 years for you to get it.

If it does, so be it , but be prepared to give him all that you have, just as he has given us all that we have.

I don’t know how long I will be in the ministry, I don’t know how long God wants me here. I do know that I am finally doing what God wants and I do know that now more than ever God needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed to a world in crisis.

I am rewriting the song to go “When I’m 84”
Who’ld of thunk it?

Pastor Steve

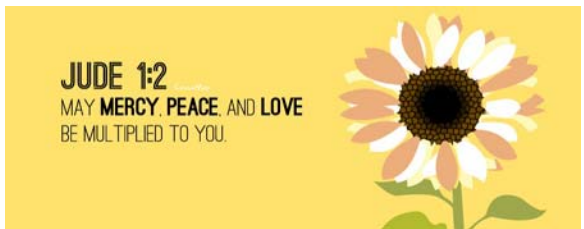
From the Editor

Thanks for all of your contributions. Remember, for this magazine to be a success you must be the reporters and the photographers. I will try and put it together in the best light and we will all praise God in the process.

May the blessings of Christ be with you all. ED.



Is he done yet?



Business Name

