

EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT
CHURCH(GCEPC)®,
LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL
PROTESTANT CHURCH(LEPC)®

BREAKING
NEWS!

MORE STILL
MORE STORMY
WEATHER
AHEAD

KEEP YOUR
EYES FIXED
UPON JESUS

FILM AT
ELEVEN, ED!

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WINTER 2014

FIRST ISSUE 1917

You determined all the boundaries of the earth. You created
summer and winter. Psalms74:17



Grand Canyon, Arizona

We Believe



Evangelical Protestant Church (GCEPC)® Inc.,

Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church (LEPC)®,

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)

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

The Most Rev. Nancy Drew
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Bishop The Rev. Elijah Ruboneka

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.

The Evangelical Protestant Journal "Kirchenbote" (Church Messenger) was established in 1885,

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

Bishop's Desk



Dear EPC GCEPC/LEPC and Friends,

What are you expecting? What is it that you are longing to see happen in your life? Perhaps the Lord has put a special desire on your heart. Maybe Holy Spirit spoke something to you in your quiet time with Him that you want to see fulfilled. You day dream about this thing, this desire. Maybe you have even planned out as much as you possibly can. Now you are waiting.

The prophet Haggai describes Christ as “the Desire of All Nations in chapter 2 verse 7. During this period in history the Jews were lamenting that the second temple being built after the destruction of Solomon’s Temple would not be as grand. When Solomon’s Temple was built Israel was wealthy but times had changed and now Israel was experiencing poverty. Haggai seeks to encourage the Jews and also reveals the timing of the coming of the long sought Messiah by telling them that whatsoever thing that was lacking in glory in this new building would be recompensed, not even compare, to the presence of Jesus Christ the Messiah in this second Temple. Haggai was telling them not to be concerned with

what they were building, do the best they could because their true desire, that One they so longed for would actually come, walk in, minister in, teach in this second Temple that they were building. In their discouragement of having waited such a long time they missed the full impact of what Haggai was saying.

The Presence of Jesus Christ brings true glory, a real and excellent glory to the places where He is worshiped. Anywhere that the Presence of Jesus is there is enhancement that all the gold, silver, diamonds and precious things in the earth cannot even compare to. He adorns everywhere He goes and there is no comparison.

Fast forward to the New Testament in Matthew 24 after hundreds of years have passed, Haggai’s prophesy has been fulfilled many times over. Jesus is now walking in the Temple and the disciples are pointing out the grandeur of the now fully restored second Temple. They are focused on the building when the “Desire of All Nations” is standing there talking with them, walking with them, teaching them. Jesus prophesies to them that this Temple building that they are admiring is going to be destroyed right down to every stone being turned from its place. They asked and he told them of His second coming. He has told them in the book of John “Destroy this Temple” refer-

ring to Himself and “I will raise it up in three days.” They reply with their eyes still on the Temple building “It took 46 years to build this Temple how can you re-build it in three days?” He is telling them to worship Him the One that cannot be destroyed. His presence cannot be done away with.

So what does this have to do with our own desires? God told Solomon through David to build the first

Temple. God made the way and desired the second Temple to be rebuilt and it was. However, the greater desire of God is that we know Him and His Presence and that we experience the glory of who He is even when all of the things He has said to us either come to pass or while we wait. He wants to bring about the fulfillment of all He has spoken to us individually and through scripture but more He wants us to experience and know Him, long for Him, the Desire of All Nations.

Blessings in this winter season. We have celebrated the first coming of Christ Jesus as a Babe in a manger and we look to His second coming as the Triumphant King who is Faithful and True

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.

"Endless Possibilities"

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.

In the next season of our journey I sense the Lord speaking His possibilities are endless. Do you believe this? Do you feel hope for the future or do you fear that the future is more of the same? God says that we are blessed for our hope in Him.

Recently I went through the drive-thru to get dinner. Unexpectedly I was met at the window by a young man named LeRay who worked there. LeRay and I began to talk about the Christmas season. He said it wasn't the same now as it was when he was little. The childlike hope and expectation was gone it seemed in the world around him. He then began to tell me his story. He spent much of his childhood in foster care; he had been homeless and lived on the streets. He said he was now 23. Despite his hardship he found hope, the expectation of the Christmas season - Jesus. He knew he had a purpose now. His light was so bright and I just warmed my weary hands around the fire of his heart. He had hope! He was a carrier. A carrier of the message of Jesus Christ - HOPE! Is that not the reason for the season? A child was born, to bring eternal hope to the world. I was so blessed by this young man and his plans for the world that I reached for his hand in agreement and said "you do it LeRay!"

Many times we allow the external circumstances of our life to determine the attitude and perception of our life and of what God will or will not do. LeRay could have spent his life asking "why me?" but he decided that everything he experienced would be used for His purposes.

The thing is.... what if God did nothing? Would you still love Him, serve Him, worship Him? It's not about what happens but how you deal with what happens in life. It is the character you develop during the tests of life and the fruit you cultivate in your spirit.

Regardless of what things look like there truly are endless possibilities available. When you hear "endless possibilities" what do you think of? Do you think of something related to your career, ministry, and family? What about a change in your thinking, your attitude, freedom from addiction, a restored marriage, finding something you lost years ago? There are so many possibilities to the possibilities. Expand your interpretation so that you can receive and RECOGNIZE when a possibility has presented itself.

Jesus said "...all things are possible to him who believes..." (Mark 9:23) In this passage the father of the boy with an evil spirit says to Jesus "...if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us". Jesus reply? "If you can?"

There is no if when it comes to His power and his desire to make possibilities actualities. Hope in the Lord, expect from His heart and His hand in this next season. Endless possibilities are here.

Psa 146:5 - "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God."
Isaiah 40:31 - "But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

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“Endless Possibilities”

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries

Psa 147:11 - "The LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."

Rom 15:13 - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Psa 62:5 - "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him."

Rom 8:24-25 - "In this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

Psa 119:74 - "May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word."

Psa 25:3 - "No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame,..." 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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Study in Galatians 5

Bishop Dr. David A. Church

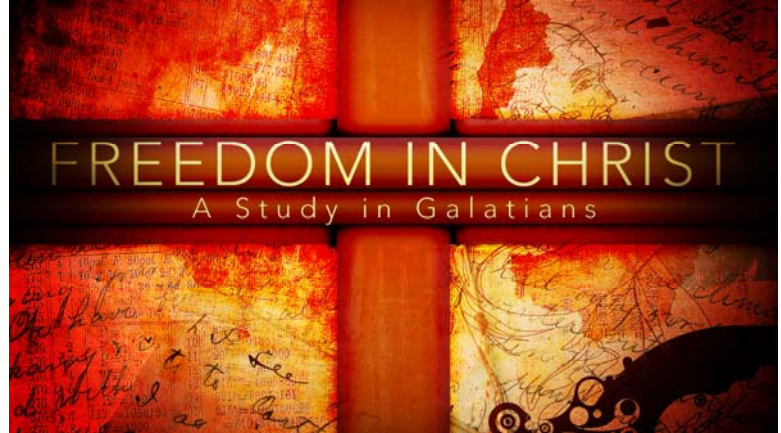


Bishop Dr.
David A.
Church
Director of

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"

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:16 NKJV

Working with those struggling with addictions and other life affecting problems brings questions of "Why do I struggle so much to stay clean?" and "If I'm saved (justified) why does sin have so much control over me?" But this is really a problem all of us experience, including the Apostle Paul when he wrote in Romans 7:15 **"For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do."** How do we answer such questions when asked, especially when we know that we as ministers experience the same thing?



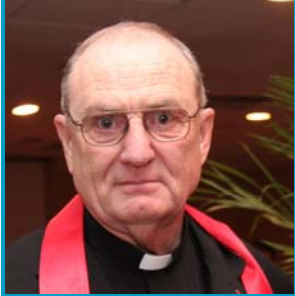
I see in studying Scripture that the problem is we recognize that we were saved by faith alone but seem to look within ourselves for our sanctification. We try to stay holy by our own power and strength. Whole movements have resulted from this thinking: The Methodists within the Anglican Church, the Pietists within Lutheranism, the Pentecostal Holiness Movement, etc.. Extra-biblical rules and regulations are laid upon the sheep to supposedly walk in holiness before the Lord, although they can no more be perfectly kept than the Ten Commandments. The Pharisees were rebuked by Jesus for doing exactly same thing in Matthew 23:1-4 **"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, [a] that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on en's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."**

The questions then should not be "how do I get past the temptations?" Or "How do I overcome this addiction?" The right question is "Why am I not letting the Lord work out the sanctification within me?" Why do we think we must struggle in our own strength to overcome the power of sin when it was already defeated at the Cross of Christ. SIN IS BROKEN! If we are Christ's it has no power over us. We are crucified with Christ according to Galatians 2:20, and His righteousness is imputed to us. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who provides the ability to say NO to every temptation Satan dangles in front of us. We are also told in Romans 12:1-2 **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a**

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Empathy More Than Listening and Responding.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy Board Certified Crisis Chaplain.



Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy Board Certified Crisis Chaplain

In the Book of Romans 12:15 we read “When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad share their sorrow.” I came across this verse recently when reading an article, Empathy a Vital Component of Love, by Dr. Joyce of The Caring Heart, Spokane, WA. The article may be found at [http:// www.all-creatures.org/living/empathy.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/living/empathy.html).

After reading the article I was reminded that my clinical understanding of empathy needed a bit of re-examination and polishing. Clinically, I know the nuts and bolts of empathy, active listening, eye contact, setting aside personal thoughts and focus on what the person is saying. These concepts are easily recalled however, to put them into actual practice is quite another effort.

Dr. Joyce talks about paying close attention the person’s total communication. That attention would be to the words, emotional tone, facial expression, body language, eye contact, pauses, silence and other activity. To do this kind of listening we must set aside our personal thoughts for the moment so the focus will be on the person talking. The idea is to respond in such a way the person talking does not feel alone and their burden is shared. Having said that, the effort is easier said than done because empathy requires practice. Just as a good musician practices the scales again and again, the one who uses empathy will become better and better with practice. According to Dr. Joyce, the more we empathize, the more we mature as loving beings.

A key component to empathy is listening and listening can be accomplished in a number of ways. I have read of listening in many ways. We hear when we listen however, hearing is only a component of listening. We can listen clinically and intellectually and hear messages that allow for therapeutic, clinical and calculated response. These responses have an element of empathy in them but they differ in ways different than the listening that I have heard called “listening as a heart with ears.” As I see the concept, of a “heart with ears,” the practice of this listening allows for the listener to identify with a person’s circumstance on a more personal and less clinical level. This kind of listening allows for the burden to be shared at a level of feeling that brings understanding to the listener and their person sharing their story. When this level of heart hearing is practiced, the

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Empathy More Than Listening and Responding.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy Board Certified Crisis Chaplain.

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listener can match the person sharing in mood and intensity of response. The listener can offer responses that and echo and resonate with what the person sharing has said and the listener can identify the feelings of the person sharing.

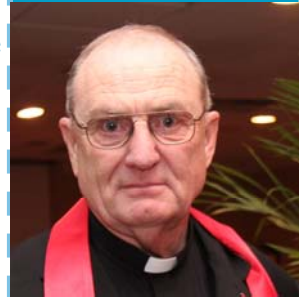
When empathic understanding and response is made, barriers are broken between people and bridging the distance between has begun. A person who shares their life experience is allowing another to know them more deeply. The more accurate the empathy response the better the insight into each one sharing.

When engaged in listening and empathic response, it is essential that the listener understands they are guests in the emotional and physical environment of the one sharing. In this interaction the listener and the person sharing are treating one another with respect and consideration and as genuine people. In this environment shared empathy helps in producing strong, healthy, happy individuals who become kindly and good hearted to all life.

The call to work with those who need to share their burden is a call to work with these people in a sacred place, the place of their emotional being and fragility. Empathic understanding is the gift to those called to help in this place and the gift is to be practiced and use to help bear another's burden.

Dr. Joyce in her writing states that empathy was at the very core of Jesus' motivation when He died on the cross for us. He had the capacity to feel empathy and compassion for us at the core of His being. He knew our circumstance, our weakness and He cared deeply. Jesus' empathy was involved and active. He healed, helped, died and rose again to give hope to a lost world. He broke the barrier so we can have eternal life.

All praises be to Him as we try and practice empathy as He has given us the model.



Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy Board Certified Crisis Chaplain



Reaching out. Reaching deeper. Going Beyond Where We Are.

Be creative. Think outside of the box. Reach out to where you have not gone before. Go deeper.

The LEPC GCEPC encourages outreach. We encourage going deeper than you have before. Community outreach is a good place to look and is considered part of home missions. Your church or ministry can touch the lives of others for Christ by getting involved in the communities around you that you come in contact with on a regular basis or that you become aware of through the General Conference Office.

Get those you minister to and minister with involved. One of the outreaches the LEPC GCEPC is involved in is Communities in Schools. One avenue of community involvement is to touch the lives of young people in positive ways to assist them where they are in need. For some children this is providing essentials such as clothes; jackets, jeans, sweaters, or shoes. For others it is food. The LEPC has worked for two years now in elementary schools to offer these provisions to children and families of these children at the holidays with food gift cards and throughout the year with clothes through Kids Closet. When it is determined that a child needs shoes or clothes they can go to Kids Closet located at the school and choose the items they need. We help furnish these items and there is no cost to the child.

No child should have to come to school in the winter time to learn wearing flips flops because it is all they have or in short sleeves with no jacket because they do not have one. With a little effort you can help with this. We are working with Community in Schools this year in this endeavor. It is our privilege to be able to help. Your support goes to help children be able to stay in school, succeed in school and graduate from school. Jesus said that children “of such is the Kingdom of God.” When we lend to the poor Jesus does the repaying. It is important to reach outside of our walls. It is good to give to those who cannot pay us back. This is known as alms.

Communities in Schools Success Coaches stationed at various schools around the United States “help organize community-based services to respond quickly, on a case-by-case basis to get children what they need — when they need it, so they can achieve in school, and graduate on-time, prepared for their future.” They provide prevention service: Short-term resources such as school supplies, clothing, or health screenings available to all students at a school. They also provide: Intervention Services: Long-term resources such as, tutoring, mentoring, case management, and curriculum, provided through well defined initiatives for students who need additional help with attendance, behavior referrals, or course achievement. You can get involved with actually volunteering to work with the students or you can get involved by assisting financially through your church or ministry. If schools near you do not have Community in Schools stationed in their school you can contact the Guidance Counselor to see what is needed and how you can help. For more: www.cism.org/how-to-help



Bishop Nancy Drew and Bishop Jessica Johnston with Jillian Fosse, Coordinator with Community in Schools in the “Kid’s Closet “ at one of the schools we work with in the Midlands of South Carolina.

Hanukah: Why it is Important for Christians to Understand

Sundown December 16, 2014 is the beginning of Hanukah, the Festival of Lights, the Feast of Dedication. It is a celebration that runs for eight days and will end this year on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2014. Most people think of this as a Jewish holiday, so what does it have to do with us as Christians? It is a festival that our Savior, Jesus Christ, celebrated with his family and community for every year of His life on earth. It is a celebration of God's provision and faithfulness. It is a story of sacrifice, faith and victory for God's people. It is presented as a type and simple of Christ so it is important for us as Christians to understand the significance of Hanukah and the Jewish roots of our faith.

Hanukah is an eight day celebration of the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE during the Maccabean revolt against the oppressive Greek rulers who had forbidden the Jewish religious practices that God had established for the Jews. This was not a battle against the Jews only but against God Himself. The Jews were forbidden to worship in God's Temple. The Temple had been desecrated by the Greeks urinating on and offering pigs on the altar that God had established for His sacrifices to be given. God's direction to the Jews regarding sacrifice is outlined in the Old Testament in Leviticus chapters 1 and 2 and Numbers 15.

As usual God had a plan and used the foolish and seemly small of things of the world to confound the seemingly wise of the world. A small family known as the Maccabees and those who joined them took on the army of the Greek ruler Antiochus and won. The Greeks were ultimately driven out and the temple retaken. It had to be purified and then rededicated to the Lord. The Lampstand in the Holy Place was required to burn day and night without going out once lit. However, there was only enough oil for one night or so the Jews thought with broken hearts but God caused the oil to last for eight days until more oil could be obtained. The number eight in scripture indicates a new beginning. God was blessing the new beginning of the Jews, the Temple and their worship. Two miracles had occurred a small group overcame a much larger oppressive army and the oil that should have last one day, lasted for eight so that accounts for the eight days of Hanukah and the celebration of God's provision and faithfulness. The Light recognizes Jesus the Messiah as the Light of the World that will never go out and cannot be put out by man. He is the oil of the anointing and the miracle giving God. Jesus was there then and now and always will be with us as Emmanuel God with us in times of trouble and times of peace.

In John 10 in the New Testament we find Jesus in Jerusalem in winter celebrating Hanukah at the Temple, walking and talking in Solomon's Colonnade. Not far away is the treasury room in the Court of the Women. In the Court of the Women there are stood 4 fifty foot high lamp stands whose ever burning light could be seen from afar off. Jesus stood there under these magnificent oil burning lights in the Court of the Women in John chapter eight and said, "I am the Light of the World, whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life. In understanding Hanukah we can more fully celebrate the Light who is Christ Our Lord.



"The Festival of Dedication then took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's portico" (John 10:22-23).



Bishop
Nancy Drew

Diversity, I know you well.

Pastor Ed Burns



Pastor Ed Burns

While recently reading an article in the NAE newsletter titled “Less Divided Over Doctrine” a whole flood of thoughts came to me.

First what is “Diversity” and how far do we go as it applies to our Core Beliefs. Merriam-Webster's defines diversity - the quality or state of having many different forms, types, ideas. For me as far as my beliefs, they are those Core Beliefs of the LEPC. Does that make me too rigid as a Christian? I think not, but it does make me a good Christian? One needs to be a good Christian in order to be a good Pastor.

Diversity. That's certainly Christianity, and Protestant Christianity by far, has too many denominations and traditions to go into. A few years back I read there were over forty Lutheran Denominations in the U.S. alone. Diversity yes, to a certain extent, but stick to, and stand up for those Core Beliefs. Always!

Then I looked to Scripture, thinking of “many parts; one body”.

1 Corinthians 12:12 (NIV) THE BODY IS A UNIT, THOUGH IT IS MADE UP OF MANY PARTS, AND THOUGH ALL ITS PARTS ARE MANY, THEY FORM ONE BODY. SO IT IS WITH CHRIST. So maybe it's OK with Christ, this diversity? Well maybe, maybe not!

Then thinking, many parts, unity, doesn't seem at first to be any connection.

I remembered something credited to Saint Augustine “In the essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all else charity”.

It occurred to me the diverse ministries of those ordained along with me on March 1, 2014.

Rev. Dr. John Haase, Christian Educational Broadcasting, on a world-wide scale.

Rev. William Sirginson, Law-Enforcement Chaplain, Mission in America.

Rev. Gladysrose Rusch, Adult Community Pastoral Ministry

Rev. Edward Burns, called Associate Pastor, Gospel Mission Corps., Fresh Ponds Chapel.

Talk about diversity!

Again talk about diversity, I'm thinking now of the Gospel Mission Corps. All are volunteers, no one receives any compensation. Here is the list of denominations the Clergy of GMC are from: American Baptist, American Rescue Workers (off-shoot of Salvation Army), Anglican, Assembly of God, Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church, Pillar of Fire Church, United Methodist, Wesleyan.

Saint Augustine's “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all else charity” in practice.



Children of God-Who did Jesus say they are? By Bishop Nancy Drew



Bishop
Nancy Drew

We are living in a time when there is a campaign on to confuse who is a child of God. There are those who say that all are children of God even some Christians have fallen into using this vernacular in their desire to let people know that the God we know is a God of love and acceptance. Our God truly is a God of acceptance and He is a God of love as well. He has the desire because of His acceptance and love that all people would come to know Him (Jesus) and the one who sent Him (God the Father) and in that to have eternal life. The truth is that all are not children of God. There are conditions to being a child of God.

Becoming a child of God is a right that must be conferred by the King of the Kingdom Himself. There are pre-requisites to the bestowing of this most coveted right by the King. Being a child of God is a right reserved for those who: 1. have received Him and 2. have believed in His name.

“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

When the Pharisee, Nicodemus, came to Jesus he told Him that he knew Jesus was a teacher sent by God but, that was not enough. Jesus did not say to him, “That’s great Nicodemus. Enter the Kingdom.” Jesus did not assure him of heaven. Instead, Christ said to Nicodemus, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” They discussed for quite some time with Jesus answering Nicodemus’ questions and explaining the truth of the gospel message. He explained that to become a child of God we must experience two births. We must be born twice; once a natural fleshly birth that brings us into the human race and puts us in position to become a child of God but we are not yet until we experience a second spiritual birth. We are flesh when we are born of our parents. We are spirit when we are born of God. Jesus came to us and made provision for this spiritual transaction to occur. We can no more say that someone is a child of God without meeting the pre-requisites than we can say that someone is a child of our parents without having met their pre-requisites. It sounds “nice”, creates “warm fuzzies” to say we are all children of God but it may not be true depending on who you are talking to. Jesus did the more loving thing and told Nicodemus the truth. (John 3:1-21)

Jesus told Nicodemus, “He that believes on God’s Son is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” who we know is Jesus. Jesus makes it clear there are two sets of people: those who believe and those who do not believe, those who are condemned and those who are not condemned. There are those who meet the pre-requisites of having received Jesus and those who have believed in His name and those who have not received Jesus and have not believed in His name. Satan wants to perpetuate the lie that “It’s all good. All are children of God.” when he knows full well that Jesus said that Satan himself is the father of those who do not know Christ revealing an even further separation of the two. Jesus told Nicodemus that he would have to believe spiritual things to understand but those who do not believe do not understand because they cannot hear His word. They are spiritually deaf because they believe a lie that they do not need Christ. (John 8:43-45)

In this time of Advent and expectation let us be sure to make the loving choice and tell those who do not know Christ Jesus, how they can know Him and become a child of God; by receiving Jesus and believing in His name. Child of God, a designation, a right conferred by the King to those who receive Him and believe in His name,

I am a
CHILD
of God.
I know it. I live it. I love it.

Point



Bishop Dr.
David A.
Church
Director of
Missions

Critical Reading of the Word

by Bishop David A Church

Not to be in the spirit of Ebenezer Scrooge, every Christmas season I am reminded of the lack of knowledge of the Bible with people instead believing in the traditions they have heard all of their lives.

There are many examples in the “Christmas” carols and stories we grew up with. My question is “If we believe what the Scriptures say, should we not make the truth known and dispel the myths that endure?” As an apologist believing in the inerrant and infallible Word of God I believe that the traditions should be set aside regardless of the sentimental memories held.

We hear that three wise men came to see the baby Lord Jesus in the manger. Actually, no number was given, and by the time they arrived the family was living in a house. Also, the wise men or Magi were not named in the Bible, but **tradition** names them as *Gaspar, Balthazar, and Melchior*.

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **wise men** from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

Matthew 2:1-2 ESV

“And going into the **house** they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:11 ESV

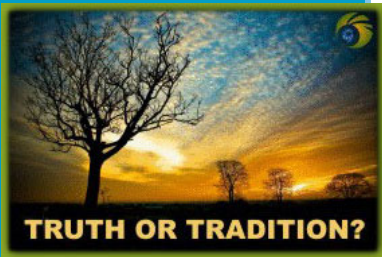
Several carols such as “*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*” and “*O Come All Ye Faithful*” proclaim that the heavenly hosts sing in glorious choirs to proclaim

Christ's birth. True? No, **tradition**

again, with no mention of the angels actually singing. The shepherds did find Him in the manger, and no mention is made in the story about animals being present in spite of the lines from “*Away in a manger*” saying “The **cattle** are lowing, the poor baby awakes...”

“And

the angel **said** to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a



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baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host **praising** God and **saying**, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:10-14 ESV

I bring these facts up only to point out how we can believe something without it being true, therefore the Word of God should be consulted as the final authority. It is the same slackness and inattentiveness to what is written in Scripture that brings us watered down versions of the Gospel of Christ such as the Love Gospel requiring no repentance from sin. It has also given us many traditions in various denominations that are not found in the Bible, but are results of *eisegesis* instead of *exegesis*.

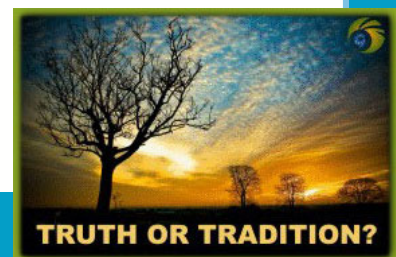
One such example coming to mind is from many Pentecostals stating “Baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in an *unknown* tongue” is what proves one has the Holy Spirit. The Bible states if we are Christians we have the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul clearly taught that we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. First Corinthians 12:13 declares, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” Romans 8:9 tells us that if a person does not possess the Holy Spirit, he or she does not belong to Christ: “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”

This is not to deny the gifts of the Spirit, but in the passage used to prove their doctrine concerning “speaking in tongues” they consistently ignore the fact of what 1Corinthians 14:2 says: “For he that speaketh in an *unknown tongue* speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” The word *unknown* **is not** found in the original Greek manuscripts, but was added by the translators. The whole “proof text” of the doctrine believed by many Pentecostals is based on a non-existent word in the King James Bible. Also, in the Acts of the Apostles people understood “tongues” as being in known languages that were not learned by the speaker.

Paul states in 1Corinthians 13:1 “*Though I speak with the tongues* of men and of angels...” implies that tongues (languages) of angels also exist that are not normally spoken by Mankind, but could legitimately explain the prayer language of many individuals that possess the gift of tongues.

There are many examples of errors in the books found in the local Christian book stores one could find on their own, and which could also be checked with a careful reading of the Bible. Also, become a Berean and search the Scriptures for yourself to make sure the preacher you are listening to is correct. God gave us His Word so we would know the Truth for ourselves, and to keep us from false teaching.

May the Lord bless your continued walk and service to Him.



Counter Point

Not So Critical Reading of the Word

by Rev. Steve bacon



Rev. Steve Bacon

First of all let me begin by saying that everything Bishop Dave just said is correct. To enlarge on the point there also wasn't a Drummer Boy beating the drum for Baby Jesus and in "Do You hear What I Hear" and when the Magi asked King Herod where to find the new King, he sent his soldiers to kill every male Baby two years old and under, the Magi were the one who brought the gifts and since there were three gifts we assume that there were three Magi.

However, Saint Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:18-19 The message about the cross is nonsense to those who are being destroyed, but it is God's power to us who are being saved. (19) Scripture says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. I will reject the intelligence of intelligent people."

Especially today, the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed in its simplest and purest form. John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

That is the message that needs to be on the lips of every Christian. Whether or not there were cattle lowing, angels singing, or drummers drumming is not an essential truth. The fact that God came to earth in the form of Jesus the Christ, lived with us and died on a cross only to rise again on the third day and return to heaven where he will come again is the essential truth.

Once the Holy Spirit has convicted you of your sin and allowed you to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then you can start understanding the Word. You will then realize that the "world" knows very little about the Word and has made up folk stories to fill in where they feel clarification is needed.

You will know and grow as you continue to study God's Word and hopefully you will have a Shepherd like Bishop Dave to give you the true rendering of God's Word.

Your faith walk will be longer and stronger as you come to know the richness of God's love and God's plan for you and all mankind.

Get the one undeniable message out to those who walk in the darkness around us, only Jesus saves. The rest of the story will clarify itself after that main point brings us to our knees.

If I had a cow it would be lowing, if I had a drum I would be drumming, I do have a voice and I'm singing, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth.

Pastor Steve



I love to tell the story,
'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story

Of Jesus and his love.

"The Measure of Our Worth"

December 11, 2014

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Romans 12:3-5

The Lord has blessed me with a wife who has stuck with me for 44 years. He has given me a Christian mother, sister and two daughters. If you were to ask what are they worth to me, I would be hard-pressed to come up with the words that would explain their value. Certainly, anything which spoke in terms of dollars and cents could never enter my reply.

Many of you Christian men can understand and will agree.

This is why a document that was recently issued by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is so incredibly troubling and so very wrong -- ethically, morally and spiritually. The document I refer to is an official price list for the sale of Yazidi and Christian women and children who have been abducted by members of that despicable group.

The document was motivated by a glut of slaves who have recently shown up in the marketplace. To combat falling prices, ISIS has decided the value of Christian women and girls to be

- * a (Yazidi or Christian) slave woman, aged 40 to 50 years, will sell for 50,000 dinars (\$43);
- * a (Yazidi or Christian) slave woman, aged 30 to 40 years, will sell for 75,000 dinars (\$64);
- * a (Yazidi or Christian) slave woman, aged 20 to 30 years, will sell for 100,000 dinars (\$86);
- * a (Yazidi or Christian) slave girl, aged 10 to 20 years, will sell for 150,000 dinars (\$129);
- * a (Yazidi or Christian) slave girl, aged 1 to 9 years, will sell for 200,000 dinars (\$172).

It is incomprehensible to me the civilized nations of the world would allow *anyone* to steal women and girls from their families and publicly place them on the auction block where their freedoms are ended, and they become property to be used and abused.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be.

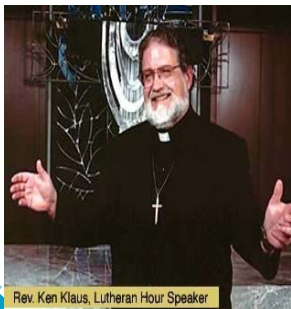
How very different is Christianity which has a Savior who lived, died and rose so that Jews and Greeks, male and female, slave and free, might all be granted forgiveness and eternal life.

How blessed we are to have a Savior who took little children in His arms and blessed them rather than abusing or enslaving them.

How wonderful it is to have a Lord who has encouraged, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

THE PRAYER: Dear Lord, we live in a world where the powerful mistreat the weak and where men say God has endorsed their slavery of women. Today I ask You to protect our sisters and daughters in the faith from such monsters and grant that our homes may be a beacon of Christian joy for all the world to see. This I ask in the Savior's Name. Amen.

In Christ I remain His servant and yours,



Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour Speaker

Pastor Ken Klaus
Speaker Emeritus of [The Lutheran Hour](#)®
Lutheran Hour Ministries

Christianity? Revolutionary? Let me count the ways

December 26, 2014



Elizabeth Farrelly

Elizabeth Farrelly is a Sydney-based columnist and author who holds a PhD in architecture and several international writing awards. A former editor and Sydney City Councilor, she is also Adjunct Associate-Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney. Her books include 'Glenn Murcutt: Three Houses' and 'Blubberland; the dangers of happiness'.

Historically, it was Christianity's equalizing fire that impelled us from primitive tribal loyalties toward an idea, at least, of universal franchise.

"Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over...every living thing that moveth upon the earth." That was some brief to give a band of murdering primates, not long from the trees.

Even if we see this "subdue the earth" injunction as a self-generated permission slip – humanity imitating teacher's blue-black ink – here's no denying the outcome. We've had ourselves dominion. Have we ever.

Humans now weigh an immense 350 million tonnes of global wet biomass. The only other species that comes close is the Antarctic krill, but they're stuck on rung two of the food chain and we, naturally, are on top. Dominion is what we do.

Yet here we are, on Boxing Day*, placidly digesting the heroic gluttony by which we celebrate the birth of the revolution that should, by now, have overthrown the "subdue" regime.

Christianity should have been that revolution. It is on any reading, a socialist, feminist, greenie polemic; the exact opposite of dominion. The child came to earth trailing radical love, openness and equity. Yet for two thousand years we deployed these wands as clubs to perpetuate dominion. That's gotta be interesting. Right?

Exodus, now showing, is not a good film. Ridley Scott turns Moses' grand narrative into another soulless computer generated imagery epic with no sense of sacredness and God as a surly mountain-child with nice vowels and bad clothes. But *Exodus* does show why the Old Testament world of vengeful mayhem was one you'd want to vacate. It shows why revolution was necessary.

Jesus' bid to replace tribal vengeance with radical love was an absolute overturning of the apple cart. Even if you don't buy the theology, you should applaud this rampageous inversion since it's this, if we can get our heads around it, that could unlock the future – not just of the church, but of the planet.

Christianity? Revolutionary? Let me count the ways.

Begin with earth. Christianity is rooted in ancient paganisms, but that's not all. The idea of universal love, nestled in Mary's cradle, is not just about personal relationships. It's also about loving nature, discerning the sacred reality of place. This, argues philosopher Roger Scruton, is humanity's deepest intimation of what it truly means to be on earth.

Scruton coins the term "the face of the earth" to convey nature as subject, not just exploitable object. Our failure to recognize this, he says, dooms us perpetually to "deface" nature, producing "an ever-expanding heartlessness."

Melbourne theologian David Tacey writes similarly of the need to reinvest, through the soles of our feet, in an earth-based spirituality. He also notes how deeply subversive this "tread lightly, treat others" approach is of regulation consumer life.

Which brings us to socialism. The last shall be first, the meek exalted, the hungry fed, the rich

(Continued on page 19)

* **Boxing Day** is a holiday traditionally celebrated the day following Christmas Day, when servants and tradesmen would receive gifts, known as a "Christmas box", from their bosses or employers,^[1] in the United Kingdom, Barbados, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, South Africa, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and other former British colonies. Today, Boxing Day is the bank holiday that generally takes place on 26 December.

Christianity? Revolutionary? Let me count the ways December 26, 2014

turned away. This is the most iterative theme in scripture that re-echoed, almost verbatim, through 20th century hippiedom. As Bob Dylan crooned to a generation, "the first ones now will later be last, for the times they are a-changin'."

Historically, it was Christianity's equalizing fire that impelled us from primitive tribal loyalties toward an idea, at least, of universal franchise. Without that idea, the incredible second-millennium tide, from Renaissance humanism to Enlightenment thought, the abolition of slavery and the birth of modern democracy could not have happened.

In this feminism, like gay equality, is implicit. But the role of the female in Christianity goes much deeper than Maryology and women priests since it, at its core, is an ancient fertility cult, the cult of the mother.

An unwed Jewish peasant girl, being mysteriously pregnant, can expect to be ostracized, stoned, possibly killed. It is situation catastrophic. Yet she decides to have the child.

The story can be told as the boy-child's, which is the story we have. Or it can be told as the girl's, a story in which Mary, turning metaphysics into physics, remakes history.

There are two critical choices in Christian theology. Both pivot on elective personal submission, the win-by-losing paradox that manifests in the cross. One is Jesus' choice of death. The other is Mary's choice of life. The two are indivisible, and both pin their ultimate trust in the springing of new life from pain and fear.

Yet of these two stories, one is endlessly retold and elaborated. The other is a footnote, a side chapel, an -ology. Mary's voice appears in the lovely (but impersonal) Magnificat, and that's about it. Let's face it. Mary, as told, is boring.

The core Christian message has been betrayed; traduced by a church that has always conceived itself principally as a power structure, with all the conniving, nastiness and deceit that suggests. This betrayal is not simply flawed humans doing their best. It's a 180 opposition to the true Christian message. It allows the pretence that some of us are less flawed than others to replace the liberating truth that we are all cripples.

I think that was Jesus' point. I don't even care whether the story is "true" in the meagre, historical sense. Its power lies in the larger truth that recognizing our common frailty anchors human happiness and, probably, survival.

Christianity could lead us to survival but only, it seems to me, if it can radically change this devotion to rigid and exploitative power within its instrument, the church. That seems hugely improbable.

When churches change they generally dumb-down the surface, shedding history while the power structures beneath become increasingly entrenched. This is why most people see church as somewhere between the dull and the downright evil.

So the revolution is incomplete. But if, rather than losing history, we could rediscover the true Christianity of those early centuries – centuries before the Old Testament reasserted its stranglehold dominion, centuries when women were priests –we might yet learn to love the earth and every living thing that moveth upon it.

Twitter [@emfarrelly](#)



LEPC Events

An Ordination and Consecration Service was held in the Wisconsin Synod Region on September 20, 2014 at Imanuel Lutheran Church in Waupan, Wisconsin officiated by Bishop Overlien with Bishop Dorn assisting. Bishop Pat Pierce did a wonderful communion service by serving the elements to the ordinates first and they in turn served their families. It was wonderful service with families and friends present. A luncheon was held afterwards in honor of the ordinates. What a blessing to be a part of these special services and the LEPC. Front row new ordinates: Rev. Dennis Klak on the left with Rev. David Derksen in the middle and Rev. Dan Curtin on the right. Back row: LEPC Ecumenical Bishop Rev. Patrick Pierce, center Wisconsin Synod Bishop, Rev. Dennis Overlien and on the right, Bishop Rev. Dr. William Dorn, Board of Advisors.



News from Bella Terra Residential Care faith community with Pastor Gladysrose "GR" Rusch: I've been very busy here at Bella Terra. We finished working on Operation Christmas Child and completed 139 shoe boxes that were sent off on November 17th. It took a lot of work but it was very successful. The residents really responded to the project. Even our Jewish residents took part. They had a good time. I'm trying to promote interfaith relations and it seems to be working. We held an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on November 25th. I worked with a team of Christian and Jewish folks to put the Service together. For Advent we had a special Christmas Service.



(Continued on page 21)

LEPC Events

Congratulations to LEPC Ministers, Rev. Cherrie Dickerson, in being appointed as the new President and CEO of Venture International and her husband Rev. Tom Dickerson as they begin this exciting new adventure together. We share the following with you in part from Leonard Rodgers, Founder/President Emeritus in the December 2014 Venture International Newsletter. "A new day has dawned ... this is why I want to tell you about Venture International's new president, Mrs. Cherrie Dickerson. The purpose of this letter is to encourage Cherrie and her husband, Tom, in a new chapter in their lives and in the life of Venture International. Recently Cherrie was appointed by Venture International's board of directors as president and CEO of Venture International. Cherrie has what it takes to lead: a Christ-like spirit and love for those whom Venture International serves; outstanding leadership, public relations, and business skills; eight years of experience as Venture International's second in command; the support of a dedicated spouse; and a wonderful vision for the future. When Cherrie joined Venture International nearly 10 years ago, she brought 20 years of experience as a manager in the corporate world and as a youth and family director in several churches. She accepted a significant cut in salary from her former executive employment simply because she felt a solid Christian calling for the unique ministry of Venture International. Time has proven it was the right decision. I am now asking you to support Venture International as a way of saying congratulations to Cherrie in her new role and to ensure that the striking history of Venture International continues to prosper under the national team Cherrie directs in places you cannot reach without her leadership; please pray for her and encourage her as she builds the Venture International team." "Venture International is a non-profit Christian Relief and Development Agency that partners with missionaries and churches in providing compassionate assistance to desperately poor third world families and individuals. The Gospel of Christ is demonstrated in word and deed as the cycle of poverty and disease is broken and individuals are able to develop skills and resources needed to achieve self sufficiency." (Cherrie Dickerson, President, Venture International).



Ministry in the Park from Dr. Michael Norton, "Bishop Mike." The homeless ministry continues in the park downtown. We had a large turnout the Sunday before Christmas, about 200 came.

After the service a number of the people came forward to talk to me or pray for salvation. Sandwiches and drinks were served afterwards by Cafe' ministries.



The “Back Page”

Christians Around World Under Siege

ISIS is killing children who are Christian, beheading them and putting their heads on a stick. The mothers are being raped and killed and the fathers are being hung.

Syrian Christians, Iraqi Christians, Egyptian Christians, Indian Christians, Chinese Christians, Pakistani Christians and African Christians are being killed for their faith.

Yet so many Western Christians are silent. In January, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) penned a letter to 300 Catholic and Protestant leaders complaining about their lack of engagement. “Can you, as a leader in the church, help?” he wrote. “Are you pained by these accounts of persecution? Will you use your sphere of influence to raise the profile of this issue—be it through a sermon, writing or media interview?” There have been far too few takers.

Wolf and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) sponsored legislation last year to cre-

ate a special envoy at the State Department to advocate for religious minorities in the Middle East and South-Central Asia. It passed in the House overwhelmingly, but died in the Senate. Imagine the difference an outcry from constituents might have made. The legislation was reintroduced in January and again passed the House easily. It now sits in the Senate. According to the office of Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO), the sponsor of the bill there, there is no date set for it to be taken up.

Wolf has complained loudly of the State Department’s lack of attention to religious persecution, but is anybody listening? When American leaders meet with the Saudi government, where is the public outcry

demanding they confront the Saudis for promoting hatred of Christians, Jews, and even Muslim minorities through their propagandistic tracts and textbooks? In the debate on Syria, why has the fate of Christians and other religious minorities been almost completely ignored?

In his letter challenging U.S. religious leaders, Wolf quoted Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed for his efforts

in the Nazi resistance: “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

2015 will be a pivotal year for Christianity. As we are assaulted here and abroad the Good News of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed.

He warned us that there would be days like these...get busy

Pastor Steve



Steve & Teddy 9/28/1951

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?

JUDE 1:2
MAY MERCY, PEACE, AND LOVE
BE MULTIPLIED TO YOU.



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