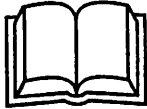


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The

Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

February 2005

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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Satan's Lie

Dennis L. Allen

The January 31, 2005 issue of *Time* magazine cries out in alarm about the "Stealth Attack on Evolution", citing that in at least six states legislatures are considering legislation allowing alternatives to evolution to be taught in public schools and acknowledging that evolution is a theory and not a fact. One approach is promoting the theory of intelligent design. The argument is that the origin of life, the diversity of species and the intricate structure of organs such as the eye are so amazingly complex that they could not have come about by chance but only by a higher intelligence. Evolutionists counter that this is only a back-door way of teaching creationism.

On ABC News this week Peter Jennings made the statement that 61% of the American people believe that God created the universe. Although these rumblings and admissions indicate that evolution is not a dead issue, most textbooks teach evolution not as a theory but as a fact.

Evolution so pervades our state university campuses that 75% of Christian students who attend them lose their faith. The theory of evolution has so permeated the intelligentsia and the media that we hear and see it everywhere in textbooks, periodicals, newspapers, radio and TV. The great majority of youth are being lost to Christ and the church. The Bible is no longer taught in public schools; the theory of evolution has taken its place. As Julian Huxley said, "The first point to make about Darwin's theory is that it is no longer a theory, but a fact. No serious scientist would deny the fact that evolution has occurred, just as he would not deny the fact that the earth goes around the sun." Again he says, "In the evolutionary system of thought there is no longer need or room for the supernatural. The earth was not created; it evolved. So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul, as well as brain and body. So did religion."

This whole mindset closes people's minds to any openness to the Gospel. Not only in the U.S. and Europe do we find this but all over the world where such falsehood has permeated. For example, in China, after the communists took over, they immediately introduced textbooks in the schools teaching evolution.

What relation does this have to missions? Evolution is nothing less than Satan's device to blind the minds of the unbelieving lest the light of the gospel should dawn upon them. Darwin's theory of evo-

lution has been swallowed by the world at large to the extent that in most areas it is presented as a fact that informed people no longer question.

This way of thinking is so pervasive that many Christians feel they must accommodate their faith to the dictums of this mindset. Even in many churches we find those who call themselves theistic evolutionists. They believe God made the world but that He used evolution to bring it about, so the six days of creation were not 24 hour days but rather long periods of time. Thus the so-called billions of years of evolution are fitted into the Genesis account. No need to be literalists. You can believe in God and in evolution.

It has universal appeal because it exalts man. Its message is people are getting better and better. Man is a great being in the making. Man can lift himself by his own boot straps. Of course, it has many other implications. If man evolved from the lower animals he also is an animal. Don't be surprised if he behaves like one. Religion also evolved, so man forms his own moral standards.

This is all in contrast to the Bible revelation that man was created in the image of God and has been degraded and ruined by sin. His natural course is now downward. Jesus Christ did not evolve out of history. Rather He came into history from above. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. (2 Cor. 5:19a). Man's only hope is through that reconciliation to become the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. 5:21b).

If we would be effective reconcilers we must see clearly the lie that Satan has used to deceive our world and be bold to expose its fallacies. We must meet people where they are. That is why we feel it is important for Christians today to be informed about evolution and bold to stand on the truth of the word of God.

[The next 5 articles are all by Brother Allen.]

Evidence for a Young Earth

Evolutionists insist that the earth is very old, because no evolutionary change can be observed as taking place today, and time is needed to make evolution credible. (Often evolutionists point to changes in dogs, finches or moths as proof of evolution, but that is change or variation within a species which unquestionably does take place, but that is *microevolution*, whereas change to an entirely new species, *macroevolution*, such as reptiles developing into birds has never been observed even in fossils.) In the 19th century the age of the earth was estimated to be 20 million years. Then it was doubled, tripled, and by the 20th century it had become one billion. Later it was gradually increased until now it is five billion, which is 250 times the original number. No doubt it will soon be raised again. Time is supposed to bring about what is otherwise impossible.

Based on the genealogies the Bible record indicates the age of the earth to be around 6000 years. There is actually also much evidence in the earth and the universe that they are young.

One of the reasons so much money was spent to land a man on the moon was to see how thick the dust on the moon was. If the earth and the moon are billions of years old, the dust on the moon would be 20 to 60 miles deep. NASA feared that men landing on the moon would be buried in the dust and would suffocate. Actually, when they landed they found 2 or 3 inches of dust, so the moon cannot be over a few thousand years old.

The moon is gradually moving away from the earth. If it were even 20 to 30,000 years old it would have been so close at the beginning that it would have fallen into the earth.

It is a recognized fact that the sun is gradually burning out and becoming smaller. The rate presents no problem for a young earth, but if it has been cooling for 5 billion years, it is another matter. Even several million years ago it would have been too hot on earth to sustain life.

Even the concentration of salt in the ocean poses a big problem for an earth billions of years old. It is known how much salt is being added yearly. The present concentrations fit a young earth but not the billions of years claimed by evolutionists. The depth of the sediments on the ocean floor also bear testimony. The average depth now is a little over one half mile, but according to the age given by the evolutionists, it should be 60 to 100 miles deep by this time.

There are many other powerful arguments observable around us for a young earth, such as the rate of decay of the earth's magnetic field, the growth of coral and even the rate of erosion at the Niagara Falls.

Even the historical records bear testimony. If man has been on the earth millions of years, why do the oldest records only go back to about 3500 B.C.? Further, the earliest records indicate a highly developed civilization.

The Bible is valid history which has stood the test of time and has been verified by archeological and historical research. The first five books of Moses were written by Moses about 1510-1450 B.C. The chronological data in Genesis indicates that creation week was about 4000 B.C.* The flood was about 2348 B.C. These are approximate dates. The evidence for a young earth is clear and consistent.

[*Some Christian scholars who accept a young earth dating still believe the creation week may have been some time before 4000 B.C. For there are gaps in a number of Biblical genealogies (such as in Matt. 1 and various ones in the O.T.), and on that basis the genealogies in Gen. 5 and 11 may also have gaps. This is a minor point of difference. --avw]

Every Design has a Designer

Every design predisposes a designer. No one would acknowledge that a watch, a car or even a simple cart made itself by chance. The more complex the design, the greater is the intelligence of the designer. No one would claim the masterpieces of Michelangelo were painted by a four year old child. Yet when it comes to evolution anything is possible given time and chance. Design is left out. Why? Because then they would have to acknowledge a designer.

The giraffe is often used as an example of evolution. It is our tallest animal with the longest neck. How do evolutionists explain the giraffe? Well, the story goes like this. At one time giraffes looked like the other grazing animals in Africa. But instead of eating grass he started to prefer the leaves on the higher branches. As time went on giraffes began reaching higher and higher. Only those who were able to reach the highest branches survived. The others died of starvation. Gradually their necks grew longer and their front legs became longer than their back legs. But couldn't the shorter giraffes have eaten grass rather than starve? Well, by then his neck was too

long to bend down and eat grass. Oh, really? (Did you ever see a tall giraffe spread his legs to get a drink of water? He manages very nicely, thank you.) Aren't female giraffes today shorter than male? If only the tallest survived shouldn't all the females have starved? This kind of teaching is being fed to children in the public schools, and they are supposed to accept it without question. The evidence of marvelous design is never referred to as design but as adaptation in the long upward march of evolution.

Consider the marvelous design of a worker bee in the context of the claims of evolution. He has "(1) Compound eyes able to analyze polarized light for navigation and flower recognition. (2) Three additional eyes for navigation and flower recognition. (3) Two antennae for smell and touch. (4) Grooves on front legs to clean antennae. (5) tube-like proboscis to suck in nectar and water. When not in use, it curls back under the head. (6) Two jaws (mandibles) to hold, crush and form wax. (7) Honey tank for temporary storage of nectar. (8) Enzymes in honey tank which will ultimately change that nectar into honey. (9) Glands in abdomen produce beeswax, which is secreted as scales on rear body. (10) Five segmented legs which can turn in any needed direction. (11) Pronged claws, on each foot, to cling to flowers. (12) Glands in head make royal jelly. (13) Glands in body make glue. (14) Hairs on head, thorax, and legs to collect pollen. (15) Pollen baskets on rear legs to collect pollen. (16) Several different structures to collect pollen. (17) Spurs to pack it down. (18) Row of hooks on trailing edges of front wings, which, hooking to rear wings in flight, provide better flying power. (19) Barbed poison sting, to defend the bee and the hive. (20) An enormous body of inherited knowledge regarding: how to grow up; make hives and cells; nurse infants; aid queen bee; analyze, locate, and impart information on how to find the flowers; navigate by polarized and other light; collect materials in the field; guard the hive; detect and overcome enemies; and lots more!

"With all this high-tech equipment on each bee, surely it must have taken countless ages for the little bee to evolve every part of it. Yet, not long ago, a very ancient bee was found encased in amber. Analyzing it, scientists decided that, although it dated back to the beginning of flowering plants, it was just like modern bees! So, as far back in the past as we can go, we find that bees are just like bees today!" The Evolution Cruncher, Vance Ferrell, p. 895-6.

Are Dinosaurs in the Bible?

In light of the fact that from an early age children are confronted with the lies of evolution, I believe it is very important that parents and Sunday School teachers discuss these issues with children. One good approach is dinosaurs. Children are fascinated with dinosaurs. However, almost every book or article about them starts out with the assertion "millions of years ago, dinosaurs..." When a lie is repeated again and again it is accepted as truth. Dinosaurs are displayed in museums as outstanding proofs of evolution. Actually they are no proof at all. Extinction simply proves that animals can die out, not that they evolved. Neither do fossils prove evolution if there are no transitional forms. There are millions of fossils, but the great majority are present living animals. There are gaps between distinct species. Where are the missing links?

Were there dinosaurs on the ark? I believe there were. God told Noah, "Of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female/" (Gen. 6:19.) Just as there was no need to bring large elephants so small dinosaurs could have easily been brought on the ark.

Job who lived after the flood, describes creatures that resemble dinosaurs. In fact, God Himself is giving the description of Leviathan and Behemoth. (Job 40:15-24-41:1-34.) Behemoth is identified in the marginal reading as hippopotamus. Yet God says, "he moves his tail like a cedar." Look at the tail of a hippo. It entirely fails to qualify. Leviathan is identified as a crocodile, yet his description sounds more like a dinosaur or a fire breathing dragon. "Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire lead out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron." (Job 41:19-20.) Of course, the word dinosaur was not coined when the Bible was translated. At that time they were called dragons: which term of course is in the Bible.

Huge beds of dinosaur bones are found scattered over the earth. These evidently died during the flood. After the flood apparently dinosaurs gradually died out. That is not surprising. It is true of many other animals that are a threat to man. People don't like to live in close proximity to such animals. Even today people won't tolerate tigers and cougars living in close quarters with them.

Do we know that there are not any dinosaurs on the earth today? There have been countless sightings of creatures that look very much like dinosaurs. For example, the Loch Ness monster, Ogopogo in a

lake in Canada, and frequent sightings in the jungles of Africa to name only a few. In April 1977, a Japanese fishing vessel caught a 4000 pound dead creature in its nets near New Zealand. It was photographed and measured. It had every appearance of being a plesiosaur. Japan even printed a postage stamp in honor of the find.

Evolutionists insist that dinosaurs have been extinct for a least 65 million years, yet several years ago in the bed of the Puluxy River in Texas they discovered a number of dinosaur tracks, yet intersecting them were human foot prints.

Gene Mutation

As David contemplated the body that God had given him he exclaimed, "For thou didst form my inward parts: Thou didst cover (knit me together, marginal reading) me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psa. 139:13,14.) How much more we know today of the wonder of the inner workings of our complex human bodies!

Every human life starts out as a tiny sphere about the size of a dot on this page. Within that small dot there is over six feet of DNA all curled up. It contains the code for what each person will become—his sex, all his features and organs. As the fetus develops in the mother's womb, the different parts develop in the proper time and sequence. Scientists tell us that inside the chromosomes are genes and each gene has a thousand or more DNA units inside it. The code within each DNA cell is extremely complex.

When we begin to contemplate the infinite complexity of a single cell and the billions of cells in the body, for one to assert that all this developed by chance certainly requires a leap of faith and credulity. The DNA would have to originate itself by accident and the machinery to translate it at the same time; otherwise it would be useless.

How did all this amazing complexity come about? Without a God to create, the evolutionist has to start out with nothing. Even if he is granted the first living cell, there are still mountains of obstacles in the way.

Modern evolutionists have been unable to come up with any biological mechanism for producing evolutionary change except gene mutations. The big problem is that all mutations thus far observed have been either neutral or harmful. This is to be expected in the light of the universal law of entropy.

Julian Huxley, one of the greatest proponents of evolution, has said,

“A proportion of favorable mutations of one in a thousand does not sound much, but is probably generous, since so many mutations are lethal, preventing the organism living at all, and the great majority of the rest throw the machinery slightly out of gear. And a total of a million mutational steps sounds a great deal, but is probably an understatement--after all, that only means one step every two thousand years during biological time as a whole. However, let us take these figures as being reasonable estimates. With this proportion, but without any selection, we should clearly have to breed a thousand strains to get one favorable mutation; a million strains (a thousand squared) to get one containing two favorable mutations; and so on, up to a thousand to the millionth power to get one containing a million.

“Of course, this could not really happen, but it is a useful way of visualizing the fantastic odds against getting a number of favorable mutations in one strain through pure chance alone. A thousand to the millionth power, when written out, becomes a figure 1 with three million noughts after it; and that would take three large volumes of about 500 pages each, just to print! Actually this is a meaninglessly large figure, but it shows what a degree of improbability natural selection has to surmount, and can circumvent. One with three million noughts after it is the measure of the unlikeliness of a horse--the odds against it happening at all. No one would bet on anything so improbable happening: and yet it *has* happened! It has happened, thanks to the working of natural selection and the properties of living substance which make natural selection inevitable!”

Here we see the blindness of the mind that has rejected God and creation. Even though it is impossible it has happened, he says, because it is unthinkable to accept creation! This is why the evolutionist needs billions of years of time to bolster his theory.

Evolutionists have done hundreds of thousands of experiments in the laboratory in an effort to prove this theory, yet not once have they ever recorded a truly beneficial mutation. In spite of this we are asked to believe that an organ as complicated as the human eye came about in this way. All that is needed is millions of years of time. Mutations are usually produced by radiation and always weaken the organism in which they occur. Thus the final result is a weeding out process. But this is the opposite of evolution. Furthermore, mutations are random. For example, sometimes a person will be born with six fingers or with no hands, but never with an improvement.

To change one species into another which is the claim of evolution, would require millions of beneficial mutations closely related. Yet even the occurrence of any mutations is rare and then they are harmful.

The Fruits of Evolution

Jesus said, "By their Fruits ye shall know them." The true nature of evolution is best seen by the fruits it has borne. When we look at the social and political currents that have swept the world in the 20th century it is apparent that most of them have their origin in the Darwinian view of nature and the universe.

Evolution by denying that God created man and asserting that man by chance evolved from the lower animals, wipes out the basis for morals, since it is basically atheistic. The evolutionary theory has been extended into every field of study. Julian Huxley said,

"The concept of evolution was soon extended into other than biological fields. Inorganic subjects such as the life-histories of stars and the formation of chemical elements on the one hand, and on the other hand subjects like linguistics, social anthropology, and comparative law and religion began to be studied from an evolutionary angle, until today we are enabled to see evolution as a universal, all-pervading process." *"Evolution and Genetics," in V. R. Newman (ed.), What is Science? (1955), p. 272.*

The impact on society, morals and culture has been incalculable. Nietzsche fully embraced Darwinism. He declared that the way for man to evolve was through wars to kill the weaker races, in order to produce a superior race. Hitler embraced the views of Nietzsche and was an ardent evolutionist. He carefully read the writings of Darwin and took up the goal of the superior race which was the white race and specifically the Germans. He believed man must conform to the law of evolution which was the survival of the fittest. He used this view to justify the sterilization and mass murder of the 'unfit', 'inferior' races. Hitler not only hated the Jews but Christianity as well.

One has only to read the complete title of Darwin's book to see the source of his ideas. On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life. Of course you never see the complete title today. Darwin looked forward to the day when the lower races as he viewed them, would be eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world. In other words the white race would kill off the other races. The fruit of this concept was the Holocaust. It is also easy to see where the justification of abortion and euthanasia come from. Evolution has no room for compassion and pity. Too many organisms are born, so a lot of them are going to have to die. There are evolutionists today who argue the population of the earth needs to be reduced to less than one billion. Darwin often said it was wrong to better the condition of the poor, since that would hinder the evolutionary struggle for existence.

Marx read the Origin of Species and was thrilled. He wrote Darwin and asked to dedicate Das Kapital to him. Darwin thanked him but de-

clined. Marx used evolution as the basis of the class struggle in society. We don't need to go into the evil fruits that have come from communism sweeping over the world. Lenin and Stalin were both ardent evolutionists.

In the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries most of the great scientists were creationists-Lewis Pasteur, Jean Henri Fabri, Francis Bacon, Louis Agiszez, Gregor Mendel, Samuel F. B. Morse, Blaise Pascal, and Isaac Newton, to name a few. What a contrast to today when evolutionary concepts have so captured the minds of the scientific world that it takes a great deal of courage to stand against the current and those who do find it very difficult to get an audience.

There is a direct correlation between the collapse of moral standards in the western world and the acceptance of evolution. If man is but an animal is Columbine surprising? If evolution is true what is the basis for any standard of right and wrong? Evolution stands condemned on the basis of its fruits.

Sources of Information on Evolution

There are a number of excellent sources of information and materials for those who wish to do further reading and research on this important topic. A few are listed below:

Institute for Creation Research

10946 Woodside Ave. North
Santee, CA 92071

Dr. Henry Morris founded this organization. He has written a number of excellent books related to evolution.

Ken Ham, President of Answers in Genesis. Ken has a number of excellent books available on the Internet. He also has a 12 part video series. Answers in Genesis is building a large Creation Museum and education center in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area. It will open perhaps in 2006.

Creation Science Evangelism

29 Cummings Rd.
Pensacola, Fl 32503

Web: www.drdino.com Email: dino@drdino.com

(A free catalog of books, DVDs and videos is available)

Dr. Kent Hovind, director, has an excellent seminar series on DVD and VHS. This is a complete set of 7 (17 hours of material) for \$99.00. His material is not copywrited. You may make copies to give (not sell) to others. He desires that this material have the widest possible circulation. Some of the topics covered are: The Age of the Earth, The Garden of Eden, Dinosaurs and the Bible, Lies in the Textbooks, and the Dangers of Evolution.

Evolution's Links to Abortion

By Alex Wilson

In the 32 years since 1973, when the *Roe v. Wade* case legalized abortion, from *44-50 million babies in the U.S. have been killed in the womb!* Why? One major reason is that *many people do not consider human life sacred any more.* It has become very cheap. How did this come about?

The theory of evolution says humans are merely the highest of the animals, with no essential difference between us and the lower ones. Thus in the early 1900s, U.S. Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, **"I see no reason for attributing to man a significance different in kind from that which belongs to a baboon or a grain of sand."**

As belief in evolution developed, such ideas became more widespread. Thus Ted Turner in 1992 said, **"Over-population is the cause of drive-by shootings and other social ills, but the root of the problem is Christianity, which believes that people are more important than sea otters and elephants."** How do you like that logic? A bit extreme, don't you think? Well, listen to another quote that shows the results of such far-out thinking. In the summer 1991 edition of an environmentalist magazine, *Wild Earth*, this paragraph appeared:

"If you haven't given voluntary human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But, if you give it a chance, I think you might agree that the extinction of *Homo Sapiens* would mean survival for millions, if not billions, of Earth-dwelling species.... Phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social and environmental."

Such beliefs explain, among other things, why today there are extreme penalties for anyone who breaks an egg of some eagles or turtles—but no penalty at all for aborting a human fetus—a pre-born child.

The FACTS of the Matter

In its opening chapter, the Bible teaches us that we **humans — and only humans, not animals — are "made in the image and likeness of GOD"** and are thus of supreme worth among His creatures.

The psalmist expounds this basic truth, saying that the Lord made man "a little lower than the heavenly beings [angels], and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; *you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea.*" (Psalm 8.)

And later, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. *Are you not much more valuable than they?*" (Matt. 6:26.)

Such passages provide a Biblical basis for protesting abortion and standing for life.

[The humanist quotations above are from the excellent book by D. James Kennedy, *What If Jesus Had Never been Born?* Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994.]

WORLD MISSIONS:

Changes in China: A Small Beginning

In recent years, a small number of privately-owned Christian bookshops have opened in China's cities. Somehow the owners have managed to gain favor with local officials and they are thus able to run these small bookshops without too much interference.

Like the government-approved Christian bookstores, mainly based inside TSPM churches [the government-approved congregations], these shops usually stock Christian materials that have been printed officially within China. Praise God that the number of Christian book titles printed legally within China has now reached 340. They mainly consist of academic titles aimed at those who are studying religions, but we know that the Lord is able to work through these materials to draw people to Himself.

As well as the academic titles, there have also been some books printed that are more suitable for the average reader. These include around 25,000 copies of evangelical preacher John Stott's commentaries on Acts, Romans and Ephesians. Ten thousand copies of a book suitable for children, called "Pictorial Bible Stories", have been printed, and it has been reported that fifty thousand copies of the Jesus film in DVD format have recently been legally distributed.

While these materials are only available in very limited numbers and are not widely distributed, we praise the Lord for the small beginning and pray that this door will continue to open. --China Prayer Update, Feb. 2005

A Paradigm Shift?

Dennis L. Allen

Last October, following a two-day international conference on religion and law in Beijing, Chinese officials said that they were open to changes in religious policy. A top religious affairs official claimed that the day of issuing administrative orders on religious affairs were over. New laws would set clear limits on the authority given to local officials to control religious activity and the new approach would be "*a paradigm shift in China's religious policy.*" Most analysts, however, suggested that any changes would prove to be merely cosmetic. And the experience of the past few months seems to bear this out.

Evidence has now emerged that shortly before those comments were made, three new internal directives were issued calling for much tighter control of religion. One directive emphasizes once again that no Communist Party member is allowed to join a religious organization. Interestingly, the document admits that 230 top Party officials have become believers in the past three years. All were dismissed from their posts as a result. The second directive calls for a detailed investigation into the growth of religion, and lists "Four Don't" and "Five Prohibitions", which particularly emphasize strict control of contacts with religious organizations overseas. This directive also calls for a crackdown on the "rampant" growth of religious believers in eleven provinces. The third directive prohibits all religious activities in institutions of higher learning. And another secret document, which has recently come to light, calls for the strengthening of "Marxist atheism research, propaganda and education."

There have been suggestions that the renewed crackdown is an attempt to bring religious believers under the control of the authorities prior to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Whatever the cause, it certainly does not appear to be that "*paradigm shift in China's religious policy*" promised back in October.

A Heartwarming Letter from a Brother in India

Thank you so much for sending me The Word and Work every month. I am writing once again just to tell you that I enjoy and benefit from reading the magazine. Indeed, each issue of the magazine is packed with rich Biblical information. Particularly, the special issues on the inter-testamental period, church history, the spiritual gifts, etc. are so informative and enlightening on a wide range of vital topics.

Doctrinally, I still have reservations about the truth of premillennialism, to be sure. Nevertheless, I have gained a better understanding of the premil position and I do not consider it to be a soul condemning false doctrine! In the anti-premil camp that I've been in, the common accusations made against premillennialism is, the premils deny the spiritual nature of the kingdom as set forth in Matt. 16:19; Col. 1:13, etc. But now, I have come to realize that premils do not deny these scriptures. In any case, the question of whether or not Christ will reign a literal 1000 years on earth at His second coming has nothing to do with one's salvation, and is clearly a non-essential —one area in which Christians can have differing views which need not (should not) lead to a breach of Christian fellowship.

Please continue sending me the Word and Work. It is a great help to my Bible study and teaching. I am also very thankful for the study books you sent me, such as the books on Daniel, the Kingdom of God, Revelation, Romans, Prayer and others. In fact, I am using the Lessons on Romans by R. H. Boll as a basic reference work in the adults' Sunday morning Bible Class which I teach in my congregation of 40 members. The booklet "How To Understand and Apply The Bible," by R. H. Boll, is better than any other booklet on the topic I have ever seen. It is a brief, clear presentation of the topic of how to understand the Bible.

The March 2004 issue of Word and Work on unity is so clear and enlightening, and I learn a lot about the nature and scope of Christian unity from reading it. It presents a message that is timely and sorely needed in today's divided, sectarian world. I can see that your doctrinal views are well-balanced, carefully avoiding extremes. And I am convinced that this is the right course. Sadly, in the majority of churches of Christ it seems we have become legalistic in our interpretations of Scriptural truths which makes us so divisive and judgmental.

Elsewhere in India

Ken Grimm from the Westminster (Maryland) Church of Christ has been ministering in India for some months now. (He served a former term there some years ago, too.) He had ministered to churches in various parts of the land when the tsunami struck. Then he was asked to help lead in relief efforts, which consumed his schedule for some time. After some days he was able to conduct an already-planned training conference for church leaders. They studied in depth Paul's letter to Titus, and the principles contained there. Afterwards brother Ken resumed helping with tsunami relief for a while. Pray for this brother, that the Lord by His Spirit will guide and sustain his efforts there.

David Moldez

Manila, Philippines

Feb. 2, 2005

Central Bible College continues to train disciples of Jesus Christ. This second semester 2004-5, we had 75 students enroll. I pray they will become better equipped as they serve the Lord in many different parts of the Philippines. We are encouraged by former students and graduates like the following: Jun Caculba began a pioneering and pastoral ministry at Aparri (the far *north* of the country). Abraham Tenerife went to Leyte (in the *central* Philippines), also to pastor a church. Noel and Pat Pueblos are in Mindanao (the *southernmost* island), where they started a local church. Please pray for us as we aim to have at least 100 students every semester who can continue to fulfill the command of going and making disciples for Christ.

[Brother Moldez went on to describe eight congregations on Luzon, the island where Manila is located. He helps mentor the leaders and teachers in at least seven of those churches. One has a regular attendance of over 100; at least two have 40-50 people, another around 30, and two have 20 or so at present. In one village a lady owns a garment factory with 25 workers.

She asked Brother Moldez and/or two of his co-ministers to hold a Bible study with her workers every Saturday. She and her husband even set aside a place in the factory to be used for the Bible studies and worship time.

Pray for these and others who are active in evangelistic outreach and shepherding of believers in various places. Remember the downtown Manila church too; one of the brothers serving there died suddenly of liver trouble. He was only 31, and leaves behind a young wife and four children. —avw]

Athens Greece:

Emie Galanis-Paschos

I would like to inform you that since the 20th of December my mother (Sophia Galanis) is back to her house with a Bulgarian lady taking care of her. This lady is a church member and a very blessed individual. I would like to thank all of you who have been faithfully supporting my mother since my father's (George Galanis) homegoing last year. I wish to all of you a Happy New Year, with lots of blessings from the Lord.

[Note: This does not mean no more financial help is needed, for Sis. Sophia who has long had Parkinson's Disease -- avw]

Ministry Trip to Zimbabwe

Alex & Ruth Wilson

Lord willing, Ruth and I will leave March 22 for about 3 weeks in Zimbabwe with Robert and Joy Garrett. Tentative plans call for us both to teach in a camp for "school leavers"—those who are from about 18-30 years of age and unmarried. Then I will teach in meetings in some church(es?) in the capital city of Harare, and Ruth will teach some ladies' classes. Hopefully we will minister in some provincial congregations too, before returning home by April 13.

We ask prayer that we may teach God's Word and uplift Christ with the full empowering of the Holy Spirit. Also that the Lord will both guide and guard. The national elections are scheduled to be held on March 31. Keep praying for protection from robbers for the Garretts (and us). There have been no more incidents during the past few months, but in a land estimated to have 80% unemployment, no doubt some people are tempted to resort to desperate measures.

Moving to Africa: Prayer Needed! Martin and Susan Brooks

It has been my experience that whenever my family starts to make plans to do something bold for the Lord, the Enemy steps up his attacks. I remember being awakened in the middle of the night back in 1995 when we had made a commitment to go to Mozambique. I was frightened and anxious in an unexplainable way. My chest was tight as though I was having a heart attack. Nothing was in the room that I could see, but I had the distinct impression that my family was under a spiritual attack. I began to pray for deliverance and sing songs of praise, all the time not wanting to wake up Susan for fear she might question my sanity. Looking back, I am confident the restless night came from the Enemy.

Once again we are on the path toward Africa and I have the distinct impression that we have attracted unwanted attention in spiritual realms. As the Lord opens doors for housing and contacts and fruitful ministry, I am experiencing unexplainable bouts of anxiety and discouragement. Having been here before, I know the answer is to rally the troops, you, to pray. My family needs prayer warriors that will lift us up daily or as often as the Lord places us on your heart.

I am reminded of Moses telling the Lord not to send him to the promised land unless He plans to go with the children of Israel. In my flesh, I could go to Africa, but apart from the Lord nothing of substance would be accomplished. This is a call to prayer.

The Plan for Ghana and West Africa

June 6, 2005 my family plans to take six summer interns to Accra, Ghana. The interns will stay until August 8, 2005, but my family will stay to open a sending base of operations for Team Expansion.

The churches have been well established in southern Ghana for a number of years. Ghana Christian University is nearly forty years old and has done a wonderful job of training ministers and evangelists. They are expanding their programs to equip these evangelists to reach into North Africa.

Our goal is to find these qualified church workers and help them become missionaries to the least reached parts of West and North Africa. Because of my background of working in Africa, I was asked to tackle this challenge. The interns will spend the summer traveling to the established churches of Ghana, encouraging them to own a vision for world evangelism. It has been hard for this impoverished country to dream about reaching out to the nations that surround them when they are not able to support their own ministries.

Why mobilize national missionaries? Brazil and South Korea are sending more missionaries than the USA is sending. The more comfortable English speaking countries already have a significant Christian presence. Islam is working its way south across the continent of Africa. National missionaries are willing to go to places that many western missionaries are not, and are best equipped to meet this challenge. Most West Africans are already bilingual or trilingual. They understand the culture intuitively when it would take a western missionary years to understand the nuances of life in Africa. To place an American missionary in Africa costs much more than placing a West African in a neighboring country or group of people. Our brothers in Christ are prepared and willing to go; we need to help them get there.

Some Specific Issues We Face:

1. We need transportation in Ghana. Vehicles to travel the roads to Ghana need to be reliable. A good used vehicle is around \$15,000.
2. We need housing in Ghana. We have been told rent is between \$500 and \$1500 per month. We have one option we have heard of for \$200 per month, but there may not be electricity.
3. We will need to make arrangements for our house here. Perhaps someone from Team Expansion's office can live in it while we are gone. [Also the schooling of their son Joseph.]

The Tsunami—"What shall we say to these things?"

Every Day!

"We have all been shocked by the awful devastation of the tsunami on Dec. 26th, with the death toll [exceeding] 150,000. The world has mobilized to meet this disaster, but we must be much in prayer, that the hearts of those who have lost so much would be open to hear of the hope that can only be found in Christ.

"However, more than 150,000 people die every single day in this world. Most of them do not know the Lord. Should we be any less concerned for these people?"

--ACSI International Ministries Newsletter

"The Deadly Tsunami Should Drive Us to Our Knees"

Thus wrote John Piper in *World* magazine (1/15). He continued, "The point of every deadly calamity is this: Repent. Let our hearts be broken that God means so little to us. Grieve that He is a whipping boy to be blamed for pain, but not praised for pleasure. Lament that He makes headlines only when man mocks His power, but no headlines for 10,000 days of wrath withheld. Let us rend our hearts that we love life more than we love Jesus Christ.

"This is the point of all pleasure and all pain. Pleasure says: 'God is like this, only better; don't make an idol out of me. I only point.' Pain says: 'What sin deserves is like this, only worse; don't take offense at me. I am a merciful warning.'"

"His Ways are Past Finding Out"

Joel Belz: "When someone exclaims to us in bewilderment, 'I don't understand this. How could God do this?' there's nothing at all wrong with saying 'Neither do I. His ways are past finding out.'The Bible includes no record of Jesus' responding harshly to anyone who came wrestling honestly with the hard issues of 'why?' The 'why' word appears nearly 100 times in the Gospels alone. Along the way, Jesus was tough with the Pharisees—but that was because of their hypocrisy and pretense. They had everything all figured out. But to those who came with quiet tears, Jesus typically offered gentle and patient responses." (*World* magazine, 1/15/05)

Remembering Eugene Pound

Buford Smith

The memory card read in part, "Eugene W. Pound, ... entered this life, December 2, 1921 ...entered Eternal Life, December 2, 2004." The man who kept meticulous records would appreciate the focus. The beginning of life is exciting for parents and extended family. The beginning of Eternal Life is excitingly personal! For us, Brother Eugene left memories. Memories of life lived "unto the Lord." Life lived watching for His Coming!

When Maude and I moved to Dugger, Indiana in June of 1967, we received a note from Brother Eugene. He introduced himself as the preacher for the Summerville Church of Christ, and though we had never met, he welcomed us into this area, expressing hope that we would share many years of joyful experiences serving our Lord. Thirty-seven years later, we praise God for allowing us to enjoy the friendship of Eugene and Allene Pound.

For the record: Brother Pound attended Portland Christian High School in Louisville, Kentucky, where he met Allene Hart. He graduated from Portland in May, 1942, and entered the United States Army in August, 1942.

Eugene received medical training at Fort Sam Houston Army Hospital, San Antonio, Texas. He attained the rank of Sergeant while serving as a medical technician with the 78th Station Hospital in Northern Africa, Italy and France. He was discharged on November 11, 1945.

In January 1946, Brother Eugene enrolled in Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas. On the ninth day of August, 1946, Allene Hart became the bride of Eugene Pound. (Allene enjoys remembering that while at Portland, they were known as the "Pounding Harts"). In the Spring of 1949 Brother Eugene graduated from Harding with a B. A. degree in Bible and History.

WW II gave Brother Pound a view of the ugly side of the world. His decision now, was to live a life that would show the love of God to a world desperately in need of a Savior. After graduating from Harding, Brother Eugene began what became a fifty year ministry, by moving his family to Bryantsville, Indiana, to minister to the Church of Christ. Five years later, he heeded the call of the Lord to move to Linton. Here, he and Allene ministered for nine years.

In 1962, Brother and Sister Pound began ministering to the congregation in Summerville, Indiana, and continued until he became ill in early 2003. In his early years at Summerville, [with boundless energy] he would go up the road to Jasonville for "early church" and hurry to be at Summerville for their ten o'clock morning service.

When I met Brother Pound, he was teaching sixth grade in elementary school (29 years); serving full-time as minister at Summerville; and serving as secretary for the Woodland Bible Camp Board (for fifty years). He, and Brother Overman spent most of their "spare time" and money preparing Woodland Bible Camp, so that children and adults could learn about the glorious God of Love.

Brother Pound was at once a man of great dreams, yet a man with simple needs. He was multi-gifted. He served delightful meals on short notice. While we enjoyed the results of his efforts, he, Allene and Maude compared recipes, remembering some past experience.

Brother Pound told stories about war, college life, preaching, and elementary students, to illustrate a point, or lead into another observation that led to an appreciation for the love God had for His people.

He dreamed of a week of camp for senior citizens. He offered to "do the work." He put together the program, advertised, bought food, cooked food, and helped clean in preparation for the week. He enjoyed observing the group as they enjoyed the rest, the food and fellowship.

I taught two years in the high school where he taught in the elementary. I observed his reputation among school personnel. He enjoyed the confidence of the faculty and the staff. I was impressed.

Brother Pound had charisma. He loved people, and it showed. He led people, and it showed. But the most impressive thing about him was his confidence in his Lord. Brother Pound believed God. He trusted God. He knew he was a child of the King, and it showed! We remember him, and rejoice in his good fortune!

(A reader from the south requested we reprint this important article)

THE LOSS OF FIRST LOVE

R. H. Boll

A Good Church's Fault

The church at Ephesus had, as the Lord viewed her, but one fault, and that fault only in its first beginning. Ephesus was a church that worked--nay, she toiled, and that with endurance and in steadfastness. She bore burdens for His Name's sake and did not grow weary. Moreover, she had a determination to keep herself pure: she could not bear evil men. She knew the truth also, and could and did test certain pretended apostles and convicted them of fraud. The works of the Nicolaitans which the Lord hated, she hated as heartily.

For all these things the Lord commended her, and had He stopped with this praise Ephesus would have been a model for all other congregations of Christ. But there was one thing the Lord Jesus had against her: *"Thou hast left thy first love."* If we think the criticism but a slight one; if we estimate that her labor and toil and rectitude and doctrinal soundness would make up for a lapse so slight, it would only prove the falseness of our own standards. This was so serious a failure in the Lord's eyes that unless remedied, despite all her work, toil, strictness in morals and doctrine, the Lord must remove her candlestick.

When Love Fails

The first love of the church at Ephesus was gone. It ought to have remained and grown broader and deeper. All love had not vanished, of course, but an awful meaning lay in the fact that love was going. The farmer who sees his crop shrinking, shriveling, withering, gets little comfort from the fact that all the green has not disappeared. The end and issue of it is all too certain. Thus it was with the church at Ephesus. The decline once begun and unchecked, would gain speed till love was lost. Then only a certain sort of works, toil, endurance, discipline, and "sound doctrine" would remain. Moreover, these had also begun to lose their value and were becoming wholly worthless. For "if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2, 3).

It has been said that you cannot love without giving; but it is as certainly true that you can give without loving--yes, and work, and toil, and preach, and contend against error, and fight sin. All this and much more commendable work can be done, and often is done, from motives other than love for God and for men. And what is it worth? For without love nothing is right, nothing is done as it ought to be, nothing is real and genuine. Into the work and labor creeps self-righteousness and legalism; into the discipline mingles hatred and prejudice; zeal becomes mere party-interest; contending for truth is turned into proud contempt and condemnation of others, bitter denunciations of offenders, or even of such as have been less favored than ourselves in their opportunities to see and know the truth. In any case, when love departs all things spoil. Christianity itself loses its distinctive nature, and ceases to be Christianity. Like the conclave of the Pharisees (for Pharisaism in its bad sense is religion without love), so the professed church from which love has fled, becomes but a synagogue of Satan.

The Remedy

The Lord's remedy for the restoration of love is this: "Remember whence thou art fallen;" "Repent;" and "Do the first works." The first reminds and recalls the first devotion to Him who loved us and redeemed us. The contrast between the then and the now may bring the yet tender heart down in shame and humble penitence. Was there not a time when we sang,

How happy are they who their Savior obey,
And have laid up treasures above;
Tongue cannot express the sweet comfort and bliss
Of a soul in its earliest love.

Have times changed since then? Has a sense of distance, of coldness, of estrangement come over us? Has the joy, the sweet confidence, the unquestioning hope, the tender piety vanished? We are apt to think He has withdrawn His face. We may yet sing, but in the minor keys,

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?

But there is help already in this step. Just as the Prodigal son's recollection of the good home he had left was the beginning of his restoration, so if this sense and pain of loss is duly followed up by a return to Jesus, it means healing. For there has been a departure somewhere. Some earth-born cloud has risen up -- alas, by our per-

mission! – and has hid His face from us. Search now and see what is the sin, what went wrong, what the doubtful thing, you have tolerated in your life, or what new and unworthy affection of things below has crowded out the love of Jesus. Put it away. Repent. Come back to Jesus your Lord. Tell Him all. He will not look in anger upon you nor upbraid. And then –start over. “Do the first works.” Works they had in full plenty at Ephesus; but the Lord brushes them aside. He wants a new beginning. He wants new works of the old sort—the first works done in the simplicity of the first faith and love. Back of these is the first of the first works: “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent.” (John 6:29)

Why the Candlestick Must Go

The failure of the church to return to the first love would result in the loss of her candlestick, the Lord declared. This was not arbitrary: it was inevitable. The candlestick represents the church’s testimony to Jesus Christ in the night of this age. A true, loving church, a true loving Christian—these are proofs to the world of the life and character of our Lord. In us only can the world see Christ. The church’s life and conduct in love is the gospel translated into action, the testimony of Christ in living pictures. It is the living representation (and therefore the offer) of Christ to the world: it will attract all who will be attracted by Christ. The church shows forth Christ, manifest in men. For He alone is the Light of the world; it is only as He shines in the church and in each of its individual members, that the church can shine. She has no light of her own; she is only the lampstand, the light-holder.

It is inevitable therefore, that when the church declines in love she must lose her candlestick. An unloving church cannot represent and exhibit to the world the Lord whose mission, life, and death, is summed up in the word Love; who Himself is Love. She can only misrepresent Him. Whether it is love to God, to Christ, or to the brethren and the world, they hang together. “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19.) His love for us returns in our love to Him, and flows out to those whom He loves. Do not tell me you love man unless you love God first; nor tell me you love God if you love not men. And without this love you can shed no light for Christ. Your works may compel the world’s notice and applause; and your learning and eloquence command its admiration. Your scripture knowledge, according to the letter, may be as amazing as that of the scribes in Jesus’ time. Yet for all that you do not shine for Him; and except for the scripture words abstracted from the lips that spoke them, and considered apart from the unloving personality and motive back of them, you shed a false, delusive ray; and those that follow it will be like unto you.

Doing Right in a Wrong Spirit

Speaking of the situation at Ephesus, of her commendable works and failing love, a noted writer says:

I am quite sure that there may be right things done in a wrong spirit. I seldom find men strenuously fighting ... heterodox teaching, and in bitter language denouncing false doctrine, without being more afraid for the denouncers than for the denounced. There is an anger against impurity which is itself impure. There is a zeal for orthodoxy which is most unorthodox. There is a spirit that contends for faith which is in conflict with faith. If men have lost their first love they will do more harm than good by their defence of the faith.

Behind the denunciation of sin there must always be the tenderness of the first love if that denunciation is not to become evil in its bitterness. Behind the zeal for truth there must always be the spaciousness of first love if that zeal is not to become narrowed into hate. There have been men who have become so self-centered in a narrowness that they are pleased to designate as "holding the truth," that the very principle for which they contend has been excluded from their life and service. All zeal for the Master that is not the outcome of love to Him is worthless.... It is impossible to witness for Christ in the darkness of the world except in the power of first love. It is the first love of the saints that is the true light that shines in a dark place.

And how we have been anxious and exercised over many points and lost view of the one thing needful!

To Him That Overcometh

The Lord's final word to Ephesus is a gracious promise "to him that overcometh." Overcometh what? Even this fatal, all too common tendency to decline in love. Be sure there will be a pull here. The enemy knows too well the importance of this point not to concentrate his utmost power on it. "Because iniquity shall abound," and on account of unbelief and carelessness and the deceitfulness of sin—"the love of many shall wax cold." I fear there are some in the church who have never become so acquainted with Jesus as to let their first faith deepen into personal love. I fear there are others who once loved but let the cares of this world and the lust of other things enter in and obscure His image in their hearts—perhaps forever.

Remember—repent—do the first works. To him who overcomes—in the garden of God with his Lord he shall walk and eat at Jesus' hand

of the fruit of the Tree of Life forever. For where love is there is life, and life worth living for evermore. There is no love in hell. But those who have tasted the love of Jesus here, and in whose heart sprang up the response of true love to Him; those who have found love here, and have labored and suffered in love, love will be their portion and inheritance unto the ages of ages.

A Matter of Discussion, or Decision?

Nick Boone

The apostle Paul's sermon to the Athenians at Mars Hill is generally regarded to be one of the greatest sermons in the New Testament, outside of those given by our Lord himself. Yet, Paul's sermon received only an apathetic response. His listeners said, "We want to hear you again on this subject," and some simply mocked him, while only a few became believers (Acts 17:32-4). The Athenians were very educated people, and they knew quite a bit about religion and philosophy. That is probably why Paul's sermon is so highly regarded today: Paul worked hard to make that sermon applicable to his educated, pluralistically-inclined audience, and his words speak effectively to those of us surrounded by a hyper-educated, pluralistic society. But the Athenians weren't interested in truth; that is, they weren't interested in commitment. They only wanted to hear Paul speak again at some later date. The Athenians perfectly fit the description Bishop Fulton Sheen uses to characterize many twentieth-century thinkers: those for whom "religion is merely a matter of discussion, and not of decision."

As a college teacher, I have encountered many non-believers who know a lot about religion. Many academics know as much or more about the Bible and Christianity as most Christians do. Over the few years I have been working at a secular university, I have found myself in some conversations about religion with these academically-oriented non-believers. The results have been less than satisfying, for in the midst of discussing what I view as topics of eternal value, they feel free to joke about, or toss off, or defer to a later time. Like the Athenians, they merely want to discuss; they don't want to decide. They don't want to commit.

Religion is ultimately a matter of decision. It is a serious matter. In fact, it may be the only issue in one's life that is even graver than "life or death," since it determines eternity after life and death.

Christianity ought to affect every aspect of our lives. If Christ is the Truth, then we are truly blessed; but if he is not the Truth that he claims to be, then we must agree with the apostle Paul that we are "to be pitied more than all men" (1 Cor. 15:19). But in the conversation of some people, religion is just like politics or sports—something to discuss, but nothing to get serious about. We can laugh and joke about it. After all, does anyone really think it matters that much what a person believes, or how a person decides to worship God?

This flippant attitude is prevalent even amongst Christians. After church at the dinner table or in restaurants, how many times have we heard worship discussed with a sort of dissipated mirth? How many times in our conversation has the most holy hour of the week been treated as if it were a mere amusement among the other amusements of our lives like sports or the stock market? How many times in our conversation are we critical of the worship, distancing ourselves from the event as if we have no real part to play in it? It seems to me that many of our conversations regarding religion do nothing but cheapen it. We use it as a point of discussion, and we refuse to engage it as a matter for serious reflection. What would non-believers wonder if they happened upon our typical talk regarding our religion? Would they think it a matter important enough for them to investigate, or would they go away comfortable that they spend Sunday morning watching football pre-game shows? We must remember to treat our religion with reverence: it is ultimately a matter of decision, of commitment—not merely discussion.

However, this is not the whole story. If religion is seen only as a matter of decision, and not at all a matter of discussion, we can too easily slip into the convenient attitude that talking about religion, especially to non-believers, is like "casting your pearls before swine" (Matt. 7:6), and is, therefore, to be avoided. However, we must be able to discuss our beliefs with others who may not be ready or willing to take it seriously enough at first. This is a very difficult task since we must avoid compromising our religion, making it seem less holy than it is in order to be more palatable to our listeners, while at the same time remaining open and approachable.

The biblical example we should hold in tension with Paul's sermon at Mars Hill in Acts 17 is John 4, when Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. Here we see our Lord breaking with stereotypical views about who was and was not worthy to discuss religion. Interestingly, we see that Jesus does not force the subject of religion on the woman, nor does the woman force Jesus to discuss it. Instead, it grows naturally out of their conversation—in a non-threatening way. In fact, it is Jesus' respect for the dignity of this woman

that allows her to ask him a question which then opens up the possibility for a religious discussion. After Jesus asks the woman for a drink, she says, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (John 4:9). The door is now open for Jesus to discuss religion with her, and she takes him up on the offer. As a result, many people in this woman's village come to know the Messiah.

John 4 teaches us that we must be ready to discuss religion with anyone we meet. We cannot know what wonderful things God may have planned for what we, in our limited human understanding, may see in a conversation with a colleague or even a stranger. However, Acts 17 shows us that many times our pearls will end up being trampled by the swine; some people will continue to view religion as merely a matter of discussion and not at all a matter of decision. In these cases, we must simply continue to pray for God to open the hearts of these people to the faith. For religion is not ultimately a matter of discussion. Being willing to discuss religion with anyone we meet is necessary for us—Christ gives us a great example. However, discussion must eventually progress into decision, or we risk cheapening our religion—that which should be most precious to our hearts. We must keep our religion holy in word (conversation) as well as in deed.

So finally, what is it? Is religion a matter of discussion, or decision? Obviously, to truly practice our religion we must have both. If we leave decision out of the equation as we discuss our faith with those around us (whether believers or non-believers) we risk debasing our religion by making it merely a matter of discussion. It becomes merely one of many topics that can be discussed for our amusement, but nothing more. On the other hand, if we guard our religion overmuch, thinking it too serious a matter to ever bring up in conversation, then we risk burying our treasure in the ground, like the one-talent man (Matt. 25). We will never share our faith with anyone, and we do not allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to bring others to the faith. Therefore, we must be ready to discuss our faith, but we must be on our guard to make sure that we keep it holy as we speak to a generation all too eager to engage in prolonged discussions, but rarely ready to make ultimate decisions.

Evangelical Evangelist & Defender of the Faith Speaks at the Mormon Tabernacle

At the invitation of over 50 churches and institutions under the banner of Standing Together (an evangelical ministry), Ravi Zacharias recently gave a three-part lectureship "In the Pursuit of Truth" at two universities in the Salt Lake City area and at the Mormon Tabernacle there. The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported, "For the first time in 105 years, a preacher of another faith was at the pulpit of the Tabernacle on Temple Square on Sunday night, urging evangelical Christians and Mormons to turn to Jesus Christ." Dwight L. Moody was the last evangelical to speak there in 1899.

On Nov. 14 Ravi spoke on "Who Is Jesus? Defending Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life" to over 7000 people who filled the Mormon Tabernacle and an overflow setting. His message was followed by a standing ovation. He addressed the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ and noted that there are deep doctrinal differences between Christianity and Mormonism. As the *Tribune* observed, "His hour-long sermon emphasized aspects of Christian doctrine for which Mormons have a different understanding, such as sin, salvation through the cross, and the Trinity. But his overarching message—that Jesus Christ is the answer to the longing in all human hearts—was one that resonated with both evangelical Christians and Mormons."

The previous evening Zacharias addressed students at the University of Utah, where he spoke on "The Basis For Truth: Defending the Notion of Absolute Truth." His lectureship concluded at Weber State University with the message, "The Loss of Truth: The Crumbling Moral Foundation." Both forums were followed by standing ovations and a time of answering questions.

[Note by avw: The above information is from Ravi Zacharias' website. Further information can be found on *Christianity Today's* website at christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/146/11.Q.html

A growing number of Mormons, including some professors at their Brigham Young U., now have serious doubts re: *The Book of Mormon*. Partly this is due to DNA testing which proves that, contrary to that book, American Indians are not descended from ancient Israelites. Pray that multitudes of the Mormons' millions of members worldwide will turn to the Bible and the genuine Lord and His way of salvation. Ravi Zacharias preaches Christ and Him crucified; his books and tapes are very helpful.]

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, BHill40482@aol.com

LADIES INSPIRATION DAY – Coming Soon Theme: “Spring Cleaning for Heart and Soul.” Where: Sellersburg, Ind. Church of Christ. When: April 2, 2005; registration starts at 8:30. Lunch will be provided. More information later.

Tsunami Relief: The Church of Christ Worldwide has set up a separate account to receive funds for the tsunami victims and their families. After a few weeks, monies received will be sent to Jim David Yarbrough to forward to Lanka Bible College. They are coordinating efforts to get relief assistance to Christians in Sri Lanka. They have contacts to take a Christian Mobile Clinic to minister to those in need.

If your church desires to help, you can send gifts to:

Church of Christ Worldwide
P.O. Box 54842
Lexington, KY 40555

Please designate: **Tsunami Relief**

FLASH: “I don’t see how you can be President without having a relationship with the Lord,” President Bush said the week before his inaugural ceremony. However, he added that he is always mindful to protect the right of others to worship or not to worship.

5th Sunday Singspirations are designed to increase fellowship between churches. Did you take advantage of any of the following opportunities on Jan. 30? Sellersburg, IN Church of Christ; Dugger, IN Church of Christ, Ebenezer

Church (Central KY). The next 5th Sun. won’t be till April 29.

Portland Ave., Louisville: Bro. David Johnson from Tell City, IN held a revival on Sunday, January 16th through Tuesday, January 18th on the theme, “Spiritual Athletes for Christ.”

Joint Mission Meeting was held at Lilly Dale Church of Christ (IN) with Tell City Church of Christ (IN) on January 26th at 7:00 p.m. with Bro. Earl Mullins Sr. David Johnson and Eddie Olberding plan to go on separate ministry trips to Kineshma, Russia in coming months. One will go with Earl Mullins Sr., the other with Paul Kitzmiller.

Truths to Live By--

“We have substituted the spirit of power for the power of the Spirit. . . . Have we forgotten that the Holy Spirit is the true administrator’ of the church? . . . Today we depend too much on human ingenuity and human agencies. . . . Every program in the church -- education, preaching, prayer, missions, evangelism, spiritual growth, etc. -- should be programmed and powered by the Holy Spirit. We . . . quench the Holy Spirit when we omit Him from the sequence of events that we orchestrate on our own.” (Victor Knowles, in *One Body*; www.poeministries.org).

Congress Passes Doomsday Plan! With no fanfare, the U.S. House passed a controversial doomsday provision that would allow a handful of lawmakers to run Congress if a terrorist attack or ma-

major disaster killed or incapacitated large numbers of congressmen.

Thank God for Crabs (crabby people, that is)

"The church as we know it, so far from ideal,' does in fact turn out to provide the ideal environment in which these virtues can be cultivated. How could I learn patience or forbearance without Brother Sam, who talks too much and demands just a little more attention than I am ever ready to give? How could I develop kindness if the Reynolds family didn't bring their autistic child to our small group - where little Mikey's autism elicits from me a kindness I never experienced before? How could I develop self-giving if I didn't follow through on my commitment to attend that meeting last night, even though I had a long hard day and was so tempted to make an excuse and stay home to 'save' myself rather than give myself? How could I develop forgiveness if I had not been misjudged and gossiped about by the faction in our church led by Mary Ellen Graves? How could I learn courage unless I had to confront Mary Ellen for her divisive attitude - with all due gentleness and humility? Where else would I be stretched in my compassion and generosity if I weren't part of this community of flawed, needy, broken people - who, I must realize,

include me in their list of flawed, needy, broken fellows?" (Brian McLaren, "A Reply to Silas Bishop . . ." www.anewkindofchristian.com .)

ANSWER TO ISLAM -- According to respected columnist Dennis Prager, about one million non-Muslims have been murdered in Sudan during the last 15 years, simply because they resisted the government's violent imposition of Islam. It is politically correct today to say that Islam is a peaceful religion, and no doubt many Muslims--particularly in the West--do denounce violence as a means for spreading their religion.

However, with one billion world Muslims, if only one percent theoretically believes otherwise, and if just ten percent of those personally took up arms, we have a terrorist army of one million soldiers. The Christian answer is not counter-violence or greater human force. It is the truth and light found only in Jesus Christ. Let us pray daily that God will open the hearts of Muslims everywhere to the glory of his Son Jesus Christ, whom Islam says Mohammed has superceded as God's final spokesman. --Edward Fudge in GraceMail

Editor Goofs Again!

But a Great Opportunity is at Hand

“I, the W&W editor, erred again!” (Gasp!) I, Alex Wilson confess, “Our announcement in the Jan. '05 W&W about the School of Biblical Studies' Seminar correctly stated that it will be on a Fri. night (7:00-9:00) and Sat. morning (9:00-11:30). But it gave the wrong dates. The correct ones are **March 11-12**. Don't blame Bennie Hill, our News & Notes editor. He usually gets things right--though he doesn't claim to be infallible.”

This will be a **very important** seminar, on *improving the quality of family living*. We urge all to take advantage of it. There will be Biblical principles, current examples, humor, graphics, practical applications--via a power-point presentation. The presenters, Bob Ross, Ph.D and Ann Cook, M.S., are fulltime family counselors. On Fri. night the Portland Christian High School chorus will sing, also.

This is “a seminar *for everyone who is married, or wants to be married, or wants to know why anyone in their right mind would ever get married.*” Where: Buechel Church of Christ, 2105 Buechel Bank Road in Louisville.

The seminar is free but space is limited! So call SBS at 502: 499-2704 to make your (free) reservations...before we reach our seating capacity. If no one is there to answer the phone, tell the answering machine your name, phone number and the number of people coming. Child care will be provided.

The Sat. morning session is especially for church members, workers and leaders concerned to **learn how your church can build strong families via counseling before marriage and mentoring after marriage.** What can be more important than that? Prevention is better than cure.

How Often Does Your Family Eat Together?

“Over the past 2 decades, the number of families that eat dinner together at home has declined 33%. One major cause of the decline is the **increased pressure parents feel to enroll their kids in every imaginable activity**. In my hometown there’s even a football league for 1st-graders, with practice 2 nights a week! Add choir rehearsal, gymnastics, and quiz team, and it’s no wonder we don’t eat together. The irony is that in trying to do what’s best for their kids, many parents deprive their children of basics like family time around a table.

“Studies show that preschoolers who eat dinner with their families develop superior language skills, and teens who regularly eat with their families are less likely to use drugs and have pre-marital sex than kids who gulp a Big Mac on the way to soccer practice. And it’s not just families who benefit from eating together. Church communities should be places where empty nesters, single people, and families with kids mix and mingle and live a common life—one that includes breaking bread together, not just at Communion but also around our kitchen tables.” —Adapted from Lauren Winner in *World* magazine

Report from Haiti

Etienne Prophete of Haitian Christian Mission reports; "Everyday in Haiti many people get shot. Everyday businesses close because of violence. One of our teachers had his vehicle taken away from him by force. One of the principals of our school is in hiding because of kidnapping threats. Thugs come to our schools and ask for money to buy bullets all the time. A businessman was charged \$10,000 by the thugs. He paid it and closed the business. We would be disheartened by the situation if were not for Christ. Only Christ makes a difference in our lives here."

The above report is taken from ChristiaNet 21, a news e-report of the World Convention. This ministry seeks to build up fellowship, understanding and common purpose within the Christian - Churches of Christ - Disciples of Christ family of churches, now serving and witnessing as part of Christ's church in no less than 178 countries. You may learn more by contacting World Convention at 4800 B Franklin Road, Nashville TN 37220-1199, USA, or at worldconv@aol.com or at www.worldconvention.org The General Secretary is Jeff Weston, who recently succeeded Lyndsay and Lorraine Jacobs. Lyndsay and Lorraine accomplished much through their years of loving, hardworking leadership. They have now moved back to their native land of New Zealand.