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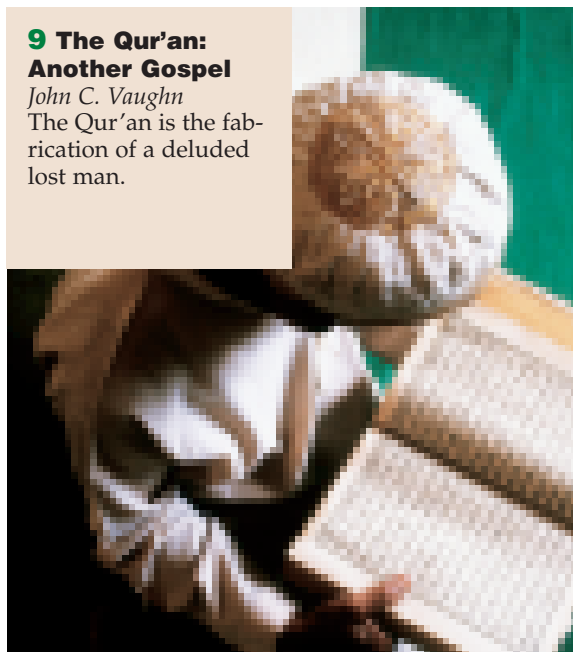
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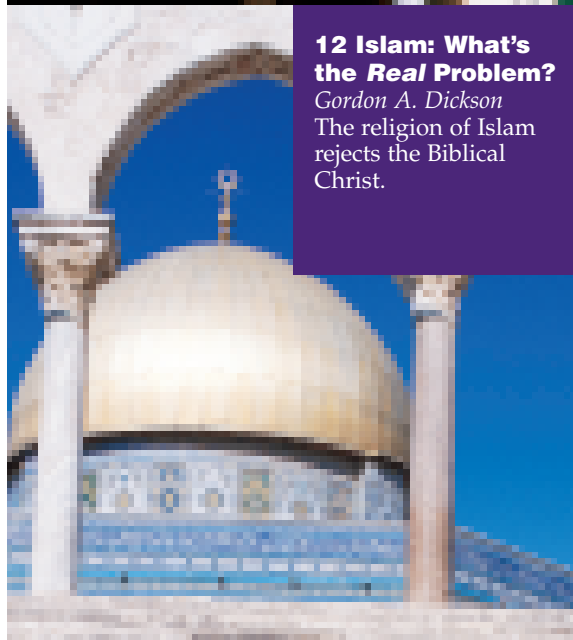
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# Mail Bag

**T**hanks for all your hard work and your labor of love at *Frontline*. It is a blessing to us all.  
*Gayle Thompson*  
Greenville, SC

**T**hank you very much for your ministry to fundamental Baptists across America. *Frontline* is one of very few nationwide publications touching the heart of issues facing our schools, churches, and homes.  
*Eric Lovik*  
Bellefonte, PA

**I**n the November-December 2001 issue, there appeared an article "The Falashas," by Mr. Stephen Caesar. In this article, Mr. Caesar proposes that Bible prophecy, specifically Zeph. 3:10, has been wonderfully fulfilled. As proof, he cites the "return" of thousands of Jews from the continent of Africa. We are told that this "is a spectacular example of God's faithfulness as well as of the reliability of Old Testament prophecy." When study of the prophetic Word is done, great care should be exercised, lest we find "nuggets of truth" that are not really there. This particular article is a good example of finding "nuggets of truth" not really in the context of the passage. . . .

*Pastor Gary D. Freeland*  
Boone, IA

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You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.

**T**he magazine is looking great, and I appreciate the excellent articles you are producing.

*Pastor Doug Wright*  
Berryville, VA

**A**s I read this magazine I couldn't help but give thanks to the Lord. . . . I really praise God for this truthful magazine. I pray that God will continue to bless this magazine to illuminate the hearts of believers who love the truth.

*David Mang Sum*  
Yangon, MYANMAR

**I**n the September/October [2001] issue of *Frontline* there was an article written by Pastor Tim Bell, "The Penalty." In this article he promoted a book, *The Bondage Breaker*, written by Dr. Neil T. Anderson. Perhaps your author is not aware that in Dr. Anderson's book as well as his ministry, Freedom in Christ, Dr. Anderson

holds to some very questionable viewpoints on demon possession of a Christian. The Christian Research Journal as well as the Reformation & Revival Journal offer some very solid Biblical evidence against Dr. Anderson's beliefs on this topic. I thought Pastor Bell as well as your readers might want to know this.

*Rick Huntress*  
Greenville, SC

**W**e are a small, new work, and I want to encourage our people to purchase this tremendous magazine. I appreciate *Frontline* and look forward to receiving it.

*Pastor Ken Foster*  
Waukegan, IL

**I** still use the September/October 2000 issue to further my study on Biblical foundations for music.

*Michael Schmal*  
Greenville, SC

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### If You Like *Frontline*, You Might Like the FBFI!

**Y**ou are holding in your hands the premier magazine of Bible-believing Christianity in general and of Baptist Fundamentalism in particular. Recently one of our board members was with the *Frontline* display at a large Christian educators' conference. Someone said to him, "I'm not a Baptist; would I enjoy *Frontline*?"

He replied, "Sure, it might even make you wish you *were* a Baptist!"

As you can see from the "Mail Bag" section of *Frontline*, the vast majority of the letters we receive are enthusiastically supportive. We are thankful for that, of course, just as we are for the gracious criticisms we receive and even the "other kind" that can point out weaknesses we have not seen. Whether you are a subscriber or just reading a copy of *Frontline*, I hope you are finding the articles timely, informative, and inspirational.

*Frontline* magazine is a publication of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International. We are not an association of churches, a denomination, or a "network" of churches or pastors substituting for a denomination. Anybody who says otherwise has either bad information or a bone to pick. We are a fellowship of individuals seeking to glorify God through holding fast the heritage of historic, Baptist Fundamentalism. Our regional moderators organize regional meetings annually, and our national meeting is held each year in June, hosted at the church of one of our members. Each year we print a directory of all current members. You

don't have to be a pastor to join the FBFI; we welcome all who stand where we stand.

Our directory and meetings help us to stay in contact and encourage each other. With the many winds of doctrine sweeping over us today, it is important that those who take a stand for the Word of God continue to encourage one another in the faith and to remind each other of what those fundamentals of the faith entail. We are well aware that there are various "camps" even

within Baptist Fundamentalism. We are not in competition with anyone, nor are we trying to bring everyone together. There is a sweet spirit of fellowship among us that you may be looking for.

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Perhaps you should consider joining us. Our doctrinal statement is posted on our website at [www.fbfi.org](http://www.fbfi.org). If it expresses what you sincerely believe and you want to enjoy the fellowship of other like-minded fundamental Baptists, the annual membership fee is still just \$29 and includes a one-year subscription to *Frontline*. You will be listed in and receive a copy of the next FBFI directory, where you will be able to find friends who live in your area or churches of like faith wherever you travel. You can even list your e-mail address if you like. Within two weeks of the 9-11 attack the e-mail directory enabled us to notify thousands around the country about the "Christ for the Crisis" rally. Funds were

raised, and soul winners flocked to New York City in droves.

Maybe all you are looking for is in your hands right now. *Frontline* is certainly worth the price of a subscription. But, if you know, like we do, that you need fellowship with others where "iron sharpeneth iron," then maybe the FBFI is for you. We are not an inclusive group because we are separatists, but we are not "exclusive" either. Since we are not an association, we endorse no school or mission board. Pastors who list their church addresses in our directory testify by identification with us that they believe what the FBFI stands for.

Years ago I was taught not to test the waters or check to see which way the wind was blowing in order to take my stand, but just to run my flag up the pole and let those who support it rally around it. We're old-fashioned Baptists who don't worship fashions. We are Fundamentalists who don't follow fads. Pastors who love the FBFI are neither dictators nor puppets. We fellowship around the fundamentals of the faith and try to be charitable on non-essentials. The news and entertainment media would love to define "Fundamentalist" as "fanatic," but Baptist Fundamentalists are just what all true Baptists used to be.

Don't let the name scare you; whatever we call ourselves, those who don't love Christ won't like us. But if you long to have your heart encouraged and your head informed, you might find a home in the FBFI. At least come to a meeting and see for yourself. We'd like to meet you.

*Maybe all you are looking for is in your hands right now.*



DR. ROD BELL

# Islam— A Religion of Peace?

Doug Kutilek

**I**n spite of the murder of several thousand innocent civilians on September 11, 2001, in the name of Allah by Islamic “fundamentalists”; in spite of the fact that a long and bloody series of international terrorist incidents stretching back in one continuous stream through the 1970s and beyond has been perpetrated by zealous adherents of Islam in America, Germany, Scotland, Greece, France, Russia, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, and more; in spite of all of this, we are told that Islam is a religion of peace. Perhaps we should ask for the definition of peace!

As I worked through in my mind the international terrorist acts of the past three decades—the Munich Olympics in 1972; the attack on the Athens airport in

the mid-1970s; the 1984 murder of over 200 Marines in Beirut by a suicide bomber; a similar incident involving U.S. airmen in Saudi Arabia in 1996; Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland; the murder of 60 German tourists in Egypt near the fabled “Valley of the Kings” in the mid-1990s; the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993; and many others—one fact stood out starkly: *in every single case* of international terrorism that I could recall, the perpetrators were adherents of the Islamic faith. Yes, there have been many cases of *domestic* terror (such as the Oklahoma City bombing) that have involved non-Muslims, yet in every case of *international* terror, the Islamic religion of those who planned and executed these barbaric acts has been most likely the chief





motivating factor that brought them to commit such heinous acts.

Such brutality in close association with Islamic devotion should not be a source of surprise to us, for it is perfectly consistent with the conduct and teaching of the founder of Islam, Mohammed, and the repeated admonitions of the "holy book" of Islam, the Qur'an.

Consider the following quotes from noted church historian Philip Schaff (*A History of the Christian Church, vol. IV*), written more than a century ago. (He gives requisite documentation.)

"What a difference in the means employed and the results reached! Christianity made its conquest [of the Roman Empire] by peaceful missionaries and the power of persuasion, and carried with it the blessings of home, freedom and civilization. Mohammedanism conquered the fairest portions of the earth [between A.D. 622 and 732] by the sword and cursed them by polygamy, slavery, despotism and desolation. The moving power of Christian missions was to love God and man; the moving power of Islam was fanaticism and brute force" (p. 150).

"Mohammedanism has inflamed the . . . African tribes with the impure fire of fanaticism and given them greater power of resistance to Christianity. Sir William Muir, a very competent judge, thinks that Mohammedanism by the poisoning influence of polygamy and slavery, and by crushing all freedom of judgment in religion has interposed the most effectual barrier against the reception of Christianity. 'No system,' he says, 'could have been devised with more consummate skill for shutting out the nations over which it has sway, from the light of truth. *Idolatrous* Arabs might have been aroused to the spiritual life and to the adoption of the faith of Jesus; *Mahometan* Arabia is, to the human eye, sealed against the benign influences of the gospel. . . . The sword of Mahomet and the Coran are the most fatal enemies of civilization, liberty and truth'" (p. 153).

"At first [Mohammed] proclaimed toleration: 'Let there be no compulsion in religion'; but afterwards he revealed the opposite principle that all unbelievers must be summoned to Islam, tribute, or the sword. With an increasing army of his enthusiastic followers, he took the field against his enemies, gained in [A.D.] 624 his first victory over the Koreish with an army of 305 (mostly citizens of Medina) against a force twice as large, conquered several Jewish and Christian tribes, ordered and watched in person the massacre of six hundred Jews in one day, while their wives and children were sold into slavery . . ." (pp. 165-6).

"Among his last utterances: 'The Lord destroy the Jews and the Christians! . . . Let there not remain any faith but that of Islam throughout the whole of Arabia. . .'" (p. 166).

"[Mohammed] believed in the use of the sword as the best missionary, and was utterly unscrupulous as to the means of success" (p. 169).

"Mohammed was a slave of sensual passion. . . . The motives of his excess in polygamy were his sensuality which grew with his years, and his desire for male offspring. . . . He had at least fourteen legal wives, and a number of slave concubines besides. At his death he left nine widows. He claimed special revelations which gave him greater liberty in sexual indulgence than ordinary Moslems (who were restricted to four wives) and exempted him from the prohibition of marrying near relatives. . . . Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, was his especial favorite. He married her when she was a girl of nine years, and he fifty-three years old" (pp. 169, 170).

"To compare such a man with Jesus, is preposterous and even blasphemous. Jesus was the sinless Saviour of sinners; Mohammed was a sinner, and he knew and confessed it. He falls far below Moses, or Elijah, or any of the prophets and apostles in moral purity" (p. 171).

"'The sword,' says Mohammed, 'is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of Allah, a night spent in arms, is of more avail

than two months of fasting or prayer: whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven'" (p. 171).

"The death penalty was suspended over every attempt to convert a Mussulman. Apostasy from the faith is also treason to the state, and merits the severest punishment in this world, as well as everlasting damnation in the world to come" (p. 173).

"But the Bible is the genuine revelation of the only true God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; the Qu'ran is a mock-revelation without Christ and without atonement. Whatever is true in the Qu'ran is borrowed from the Bible; what is original, is false and frivolous. The Bible is historical and embodies the noblest aspirations of the human race in all ages to the final consummation; the Qu'ran begins and stops with Mohammed" (p. 181).

"War against unbelievers is legalized by the Qu'ran. The fighting men are to be slain, the women and children reduced to slavery. . . . The violation of captive women of the enemy is the legitimate reward of the conqueror" (pp. 190, 189).

That practices of modern-day Muslim terrorists are perfectly consistent with the Islamic religion of Mohammed is obvious from these quotations. It is the peaceful, non-bellikose Muslim who does not fully and faithfully follow the religion of Mohammed.

We freely acknowledge that the great majority of Muslims are not terrorists or a violent threat to their neighbors. We further recognize, and with great sorrow of heart, that Muslims one and all are enslaved

*It is the peaceful, non-bellikose Muslim who does not fully and faithfully follow the religion of Mohammed.*

to a soul-condemning religion of man that offers no redemption, no forgiveness, no salvation, and no hope. They are blinded by sin and Satan, as we ourselves once were. We love the Muslim in Jesus' name, but hate the religion of Islam because of the unspeakable barbarism it inspires in many and the eternal condemnation it guarantees for all who follow it.

There is only one plain and compelling conclusion: Islam is "the focus of evil in the world"—to borrow a phrase used by Ronald Reagan to describe the Soviet empire of the 1980s. Let us fervently pray and diligently work for the similar destruction and overthrow of this present-day "evil empire" by the truth of the gospel, which truly and alone is "a religion of peace."

Doug Kutilek is a commuting missionary to Romania who is based in Wichita, Kansas.

Some suggested and readily accessible sources of information about Mohammed, Islam, and the Qur'an. Each of these has helpful bibliography.

Philip Schaff, *A History of the Christian Church*, vol. IV, pp. 143-202. The best I have found.

George W. Gilmore, "Mohammed, Mohammedanism," in vol. 7, pp. 436-44 of *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of*

*Religious Knowledge*, ed. by Samuel Jackson.

Robbie Orr, "Islam," in *New 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. by J. D. Douglas, pp. 442-45.

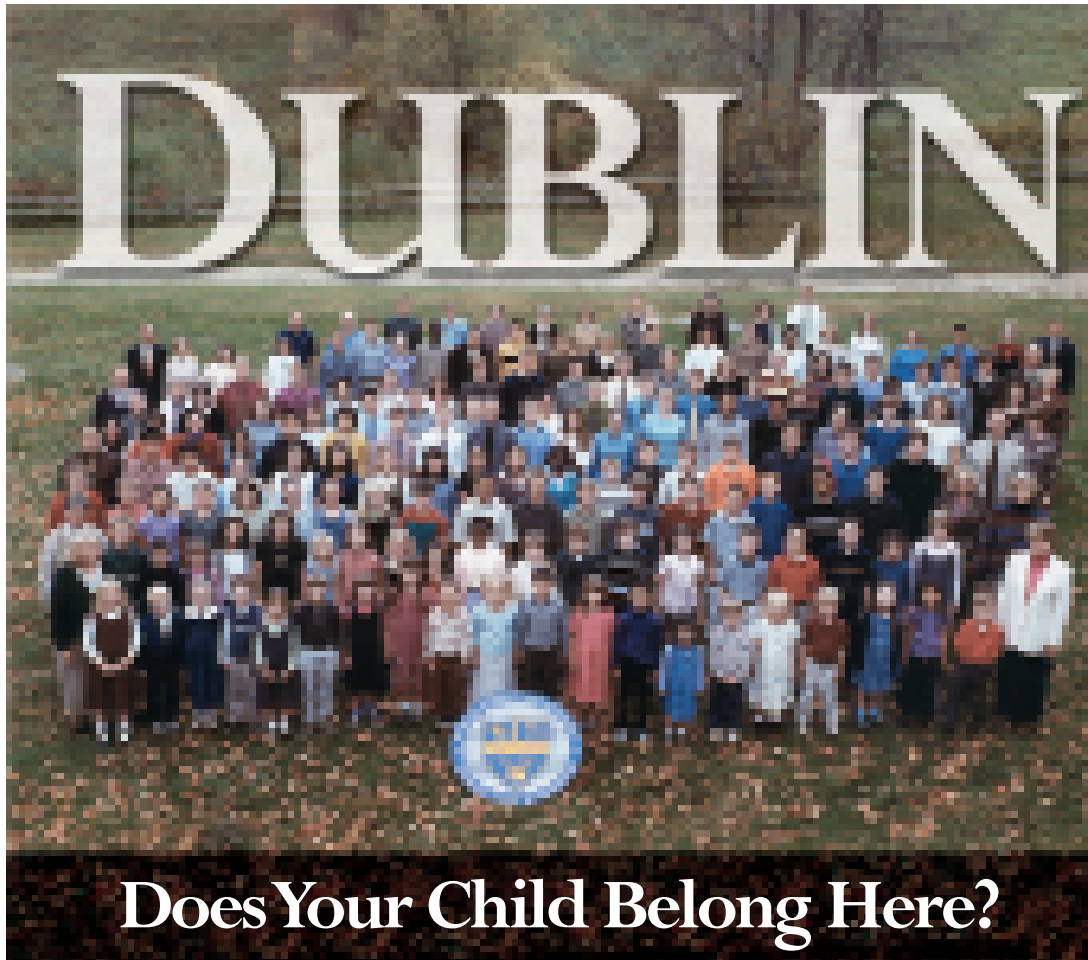
John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *The Facts on Islam*. Recent but with a few factual errors.

Schaff specifically commends the account of Mohammed and the rise of Islam in Edward Gibbon's famous *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. That account, of which I have read only a small portion, is found in chapter 50, with subsequent events involving Islam recounted in chapter 51.

In contrast to the above, Will Durant's treatment of Islam in *The Age of Faith*, vol. 4, of *The Story of Civilization* set, is long, tedious, and practically an apologetic for Islam. (Durant is theologically incapable of accurately evaluating the subject.)

The chapter "Mahometanism in its relations to the Eastern Church" in A. P. Stanley's *History of the Eastern Church* (1861; 5th edition, 1876) paints Islam in the most glowing terms.

Likewise, C. George Fry and James R. King, *Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith* (Baker, 1980), seeks to portray Islam as though it were a great good, not all that far from Christianity, and beneficial to its adherents, in spite of the fact that it enslaves and impoverishes its devoted adherents in this life and sends them to eternal doom in the world to come.



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John C. Vaughn

# The Qur'an: Another Gospel

**T**he Christian doctrines of inspiration and preservation explain the reverence that Bible believers have for the Word of God, but there are also Islamic doctrines of inspiration and preservation that explain the Muslims' loyalty to the Qur'an. Some unbelievers are quick to argue that the "holy books" of various religions have only subjective value to the adherents of those religions, or even that they are alike. We even hear the claim that the Qur'an is the "Bible" of Islam. The Muslims consider it to be the revealed "Word of Allah" preserved without error in perfect Arabic, but it is so different from the Bible that the only thing they really have in common is that they are both books.

A recent news article reflects the widespread notion that the two are similar.

Like freewheeling fundamentalists of every religious stripe, any Muslim with an agenda now feels free to cite the Qur'an in his support. Osama bin Laden is the most dangerous and obvious example. . . . It is precisely here that the Bible and the Qur'an find their real kinship. As divine revelation, each book says much more than what a literal reading can possibly capture. To say that God is one, as both the Qur'an and the Bible insist, is also to say that God's wisdom is unfathomable. As

the Prophet himself insisted, God reveals himself through signs whose meanings need to be deciphered. Here it would seem, lie the promising seeds of religious reconciliation. Humility, not bravado, is the universal posture of anyone who dares to plumb the mind of God and seek to do His will.<sup>1</sup>

This position not only is politically correct but reflects the view of the “Muslim as peacemaker” so popular in the media today. Free thinkers welcome the “search for reconciliation” between men of diametrically opposed religions so long as no one brings up the tacky subject of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ alone. The truth is that the Bible is the direct revelation of the One True God; the Qur’an is the fabrication of a deluded lost man. The story of the Qur’an’s so-called inspiration and preservation is tragic fantasy at best and a Satanic deception at worst. In fact, the so-called “Satanic Verses” make this point precisely.<sup>2</sup>

“The orthodox believe that the original text exists from all eternity, or at least was the earliest creation and is inscribed in the highest heaven upon the ‘well guarded tablet.’”<sup>3</sup> On rare occasions Mohammed said he was actually allowed to see this huge “table” as it was lowered to earth for his inspection.<sup>4</sup> Mohammed, it is claimed, was “divinely inspired” through mechanical dictation<sup>5</sup> from Gabriel during and immediately after his many epileptic seizures or during dreams, or even as he was just thinking about them later. As he variously spoke authoritatively or muttered almost incoherently, scribes would try to capture the prophet’s words on anything handy including “pieces of papyrus, flat stones, palm leaves, shoulder blades and ribs of animals, pieces of leather, wooden boards, and the hearts of men.”<sup>6</sup>

The organizational structure of the Qur’an is as confusing as its content. Arranged in 114 “surahs” according to length, with the longest surahs at the beginning and the shortest at the end, it requires extreme diligence just to read it.<sup>7</sup> Many western scholars who have studied it as literature or for doctrinal analysis comment on the great difficulty they had in reading it. This is explained by the Islamic claim that the perfect Arabic of the Qur’an cannot be translated.<sup>8</sup> But, structure and language alone are not the only problems with this book. It makes claims for itself that are easily shown to be false or inconsistent with its own view of God.<sup>9</sup>

The Qur’an is not a revelation of God’s Person, nor does it claim to be. It is rather the recording of a system of law whereby believers hope to earn paradise. There is no security in this hope since the law is seen as difficult and strict. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam and father-in-law of Mohammed, said, “If I should have one foot in paradise, I have no assurance that Allah would let me in.”<sup>10</sup> The Muslim does not know much about Allah, except that Allah makes severe demands on him about

prayers, cleanliness, pilgrimage, and *jihad* (holy war). Attorney General John Ashcroft summed it up well when he reportedly said, “In Christianity, God sends His Son to die for you; in Islam, God asks you to send your son to die for Him.”<sup>11</sup>

The preservation of the Qur’an is as incredible as its inspiration. Robert Morey provides a concise summary of the documented examples of problems of preservation, quoting Muslim scholars who admit that “the bark crumbled and the stones were lost,” that camels and goats actually ate some of the leaves on which the prophet’s revelations were written, that reciters who were the only persons capable of remembering certain surahs were killed in battle before their portions could be written down, and that whole sections (some reports say up to one-fourth of the text)<sup>12</sup> were deleted.<sup>13</sup>

The collecting of Mohammed’s writings into a “canon” posed additional problems; with so many conflicting and embarrassing variations in circulation and with the loss of the reciters in battle, Omar ordered Caliph Abu-Bakr to appoint one “Zied” to collect the various artifacts on which the revelation was recorded and to compile a single copy. Later, in the time of Caliph Othman, with so many variant readings in circulation, Zied’s copy, which had been committed to Hafza, the daughter of Omar, was called (seriously) the “authorized

version” and was sent to the principal cities with orders that all other copies were to be burned. Thus began the claim that the originally inspired Qur’an as revealed to Mohammed is still in existence, without error, to this day.<sup>14</sup> Further, the Muslims shamelessly defend the glaring contradictions of the Qur’an with the “doctrine of abrogation,” which claims that passages revealed later “abrogate” (cancel or “cast down”) previous revelation, a doctrine not inconsistent with “the expediency [a veiled reference to the sword] which appears to be the salient feature in Mohammed’s prophetic career.”<sup>15</sup>

Muslims claim that the Qur’an is the final revelation of God<sup>16</sup> and is completely consistent with the Old and New Testaments,<sup>17</sup> which it not only is not now, but never has been. The convenient argument of Islam that the Qur’anic quotation of the Testaments is the true and the Jewish and Christian versions have been corrupted<sup>18</sup> flies in the face of the historical and geographical absurdities in the Qur’an<sup>19</sup> and the historical consistency of the text of the Bible and archeology—not to mention the well-documented parallels between the Qur’an’s quotations and the Jewish and Christian heresies known to be widespread in Mohammed’s region and time.<sup>20</sup> Among his wives were one heretical Christian and one heretical Jewish woman. Combined with the demonstration that the Qur’an is written not in a perfect, “heavenly” Arabic,<sup>21</sup> but in the Koresh dialect, from the very tribe of Mohammed’s family, these facts speak for themselves.

What then are we to make of this “Bible of Islam?” Paul said it under true inspiration, preserved for our admonition: “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus,

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is not a  
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whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (2 Cor. 11:4). The book may be revered by millions, but it was not revealed by God.

Dr. John C. Vaughn is pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina.

## Endnotes

- 1 Kenneth L. Woodward, "The Bible and the Qur'an, Searching the Holy Books for Roots of Conflict and Seeds of Reconciliation," *Newsweek* (February 11, 2002), 57.
- 2 In some of his ecstatic revelations, Mohammed was at times self-serving, as in his claim that Allah had expressed his will that Mohammed's wives stop bickering among themselves, and at other times was so offensive to the Arabians that he was forced to withdraw his revelation. The "Satanic Verses" called for the worship of the three goddesses, daughters of Allah, and were stricken from the revelation.
- 3 Henry Otis Dwight, "Mohammedanism," *The Encyclopedia of Missions, Descriptive, Historical, Biographical, Statistical*, ed. Henry Otis Dwight, et al. (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1904), 489.
- 4 This, among other things, may help to explain why the Black Muslims, a cultic branch of Islam, have succeeded in the use of literature from the Mormon Church to undermine previously held Christian views.
- 5 "The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions," a report of the World Missionary Conference, 1910, published by Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier (London) and Fleming H. Revell (New York), 145.
- 6 Robert Morey, *The Islamic Invasion, Confronting the World's Fastest Growing Religion* (Las Vegas: Christian Scholars Press, 1992), 110; quoting Guillaume, *Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, p. 57. Morey has a vast array of helpful resources on Islam and the Qur'an (although he is at times somewhat caustic) available from Faith Defenders, P.O. Box 7447, Orange, CA 92863, Ph: 1-800-41-TRUTH or online at [www.faithdefenders.com](http://www.faithdefenders.com).
- 7 Thomas Carlyle said, "It is a toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran." Quoted by H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism, An Historical Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 57.
- 8 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali argues that there cannot be a perfect rendition of the meaning of the Qur'an and that it cannot even be translated—in the preface to his English translation of the Qur'an!
- 9 In spite of popular claims to the contrary, Allah is not God; i.e., although Allah is claimed to be the One True God, and the Qur'an is the third and final, therefore explanatory and fulfilling, of three chief revelations (which include the Jewish revelation [the Old Testament], the Christian revelation [the New Testament], and the Muslim revelation [the Qur'an]), neither Allah nor the Qur'an bear any resemblance to Jehovah or His direct revelation to man. Mohammed claimed that the Qur'an was delivered through the mediation of the angel Gabriel since Allah is unknowable and cannot demean himself to make con-

tact with mere man.

- 10 Dave Hunt, "A Moment for Truth," *The Berean Call*, October 2001.
- 11 "The Courage to Tell the Truth," Posted: February 18, 2002, 1:00 a.m. Eastern, ©2002 WorldNetDaily.com: <[http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=26502](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=26502)>
- 12 The Shiites claim that "Othman struck out ten sections, or one-fourth part of the whole." John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Koran," *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, ed. John M'Clintock and James Strong (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), V:152.
- 13 Morey, pp. 111ff.
- 14 For further study, see M'Clintock and Strong, 152; Dwight, et al., 489; Gibb, 50; and Thomas Patrick Hughes, "Inspiration," *Dictionary of Islam*, particularly the 1999 reprint of the 1885 edition.
- 15 Hughes, "The Abrogation of Passages in the Qur'an," 519.
- 16 M'Clintock and Strong, 153.
- 17 Hughes, "Holy Scripture," 566.
- 18 "The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions," a report of the World Missionary Conference, 1910, published by Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier (London) and Fleming H. Revell (New York), 145, exposes claims that discrepancies represent "falsification of the original text." For a revealing discussion of this claim, see E. M. Wherry, *Islam and Christianity in India and the Far East: The Student Lectures on Missions at Princeton Theological Seminary for 1906-1907* (New York: The Young People's Missionary Movement), 195-97.
- 19 Samuel Marinus Zwemer, "The Battle of the Books," *The Cross Above the Crescent* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1941), 218.
- 20 Samuel Macauley Jackson, et al., "Mohammed," *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson, Charles Colebrook Sherman, and George William Gilmore (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company), VII: 438-39.
- 21 Hughes, "The Reputed Excellence of the Qur'an, and Its Miraculous Character," 521. Also, consider the frequent use of non-Arabic words and borrowed proverbial sayings in other languages.



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# Islam: What's the Real Problem?

Gordon A. Dickson

**A**fter the jetliners pierced the World Trade Center in fiery explosions on September 11, 2001, the whole world seemed to be asking, "Why?" What is at the root of these terrible crimes? How can whole groups of people be so devoted to killing others? How does terrorism prosper in a world that tells itself it wants peace? While much has been written recently that portrays "a kinder, gentler" Islam, the explosive problem remains. The problem is that the Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ—has been rejected. Modern religious leaders insist that there is "a" place for Jesus Christ under the big religious umbrella. But the facts are easy to find. The problem with Islam is that it has discarded the Jesus Christ of the Bible. Even today, the religion of Islam rejects the Biblical Christ.

## **Islam Rejects the Biblical Christ with Its Words.**

In 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, the apostle Paul referred to the Scriptures as "the word of reconciliation" (which believers use in the ministry of sharing God's peace). These precious words communicate that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Through these words, one comes to know the peace of God. As believers, we are called to reach out with peace to all people, including Muslims. Through His Word, God communicates His immanence (or nearness.) From the earliest moments of human existence, God has used His Words to form a personal relationship with man. Throughout the Scriptures, God has revealed Himself as a Father and a Shepherd. But Islamic teachings (as well as the



historic, liberal German theologians) teach that God is “wholly other.” This means that He cannot be known intimately. This comes as the result of rejecting the Word of God—the Word of reconciliation. Those who do so are left with only the natural revelation described in Psalm 19 and Romans 1. They also fall prey to the five-step descension into vain imaginations described in Romans 1:21. It’s easy to see why they would insist that God is “wholly other” and cannot be known. How does Islam reject the Scripture?

Islam maintains that the written Word of God was corrupted. Most of the materials produced for public viewing insist that Islam has great respect for the Christian Scriptures. A closer look is in order. Muslims view Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Jesus (along with Lot and Ishmael) as messengers of God. They make no distinction between them. They hold that Mohammed was the last of the Islamic messengers and that he alone restored the true message of God. (Where the previous messengers contradicted Mohammed, their messages are viewed as having been corrupted.) Of course, this reflects badly on Jesus Christ and the Scriptural teaching about Him. A brochure entitled *Who Was Jesus?* puts it succinctly:

The only records that have come down to us concerning Jesus are some sketchy biographical material, poorly researched and compiled, which can in no way be representative of the full and accurate Message of Jesus, the Son of Mary. The time of the final and incorruptible Message was not yet at hand. It would be left to the last prophet of God, Mohammed, to clarify the truth from man’s additions and deletions.<sup>1</sup>

This is a reflection of Mohammed’s teaching that Jesus must be included with the other prophets and the conclusion was drawn, “no difference do we make between them.” (2:125-136)<sup>2</sup> Historically, Muslims were referred to as “Mohammedans” because they viewed Mohammed as the only uncorrupted prophet. By holding this position, Islam rejects the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

Islam maintains that the Living Word of God (Jesus Christ) was merely a man. The Qur’an absolutely rejects the deity of Christ, and in so doing, rejects the Biblical Christ. Note the following teachings from the Qur’an:

1. Christ was created, just like Adam. (3:59)
2. Christ did not die on the cross, but was rescued by God. (4:157)
3. Christ was the Messiah, but was not God. (4:171; 5:75-80)
4. God would never have a son. (4:169; 19:35, 90)
5. Christ could be destroyed if Allah wished. (5:17-19)
6. The teaching of the trinity is false. (5:73)
7. Fables about Christ’s boyhood are declared to be true. (5:110)

As you can see, this is an attempt to cut the heart out of true Christianity. The current religious movement insists that Muslims, Jews, and Christians worship the same God. The Qur’an provides irrefutable proof that this is not the case. They cry “peace, peace, when there is no peace” apart from the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ. From this brief review, it is easy to see that Islam rejects the Biblical Christ with its words.

### **Islam rejects the Biblical Christ with its works.**

Near the end of His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Christ taught that a man must enter heaven through Him, “the way, the truth, and the life.” He further taught that no one

would go to heaven apart from trusting in Him. Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 insist that no one will be saved by doing good works. Salvation is a free gift given by the grace of God. The rejection of God’s gift is the rejection of God’s grace.

Islam rejects this Biblical teaching of Christ, and it does so with its emphasis on works for salvation. For the Muslim, attaining heaven (or paradise) rests upon five pillars, or five good works. These are the confession of faith, prayer (with purification), fasting, giving alms, and the pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>3</sup> The Islamic confession of faith is “there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.” The Muslim believes that this statement must be made aloud.

This is followed by praying (five times each day), fasting, giving to the poor and, at least once in the lifetime, taking a trip to Mecca. Muslim scholars were asked if doing these things would assure one of a place in heaven. They responded that they could not be certain.<sup>4</sup>

The problem for the religion of Islam is basically theological. Islamic teaching insists that Allah is a just God—giving men exactly what they deserve. But they also hold that Allah is merciful—which includes not giving men exactly what they deserve. For the Muslim, this problem can only be resolved by redefining man’s evil as something else. On one occasion, a devotee of Islam asked this author how Christians resolve this problem. What a joy it was to be able to respond, “God the Father sent God the Son to be the sin sacrifice so that everything the believer deserves was justly poured out upon Christ. Only on this basis can God be merciful—not giving the believer what he deserves.” This precious, gracious Sacrifice, the Biblical Christ, is rejected by the religion of Islam.

### **Islam rejects the Biblical Christ with its warfare.**

This final aspect has received the widest attention since the tragedies of September 11, 2001. The religion of Islam rejects Jesus Christ, Who is “the Life.” In Proverbs 8:36, the

*For the Muslim, attaining heaven (or paradise) rests upon five pillars, or five good works.*



Lord taught "all they that hate me love death." The preoccupation with suicide and death is merely a symptom of Islam's rejection of the Biblical Christ, the gracious God of peace and life. While a large number of Muslims would not agree with using terrorism, the fact remains that Islamic terrorism exists on a global scale. This grieves the Sunni (peaceful) faction of Islam, as indicated by recent public statements. Nevertheless, the "jihad" (or "holy war against the infidels") continues. Again, the problem is theological. In love, the God of the Bible sent His Son to give others life. In the Qur'an, Allah sends his sons to kill those who will not convert to Islam: "And when the sacred months are passed, kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them; and seize them, besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush: but if they shall convert, and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way, for God is gracious, merciful." (9:5)<sup>5</sup> As a recent issue of *Newsweek* put it, "Though few in number, these aggressive verses have fired Muslim zealots in every age."<sup>6</sup>

Muslims have historically applied this warfare theology. When the conversation turns to "the Crusades," it's important to ask "which Crusades?" Islam has made many converts at the point of a sword. After the death of Mohammed, Islamic expansion reached across the Middle East and into Europe. In 711 A.D., Spain fell to the Muslim armies. Finally, in 732 A.D., the armies of Islam were turned back at the Battle of Tours (France). The "Christian Crusades" of 750–1258 A.D. were an attempt to recapture the "Christian sites" of the day. This article is not attempting to justify the Islamic or Christian crusades. However, it is important to note that the theological principles of Islam were practiced historically.

Politically, the religion of Islam has insisted upon uniting religion with the state. The result is that many nations include the Islamic star and crescent in their national flags to show their devotion to Islam.<sup>7</sup> (The official name of Pakistan, for instance, is "The Islamic State of Pakistan.") The existence of these "religious states" explains why there is no religious freedom in these nations. This further explains why Christians are persecuted and tortured in these countries.

Currently, this Islamic warfare is continuing. At this moment, "dozens of militant Palestinians . . . aspire to become martyrs by blowing themselves up. Their goal: to kill or injure as many Jews as possible."<sup>8</sup> From all indications, there is a new generation of terrorists coming. "In Hamas kindergartens, signs on the walls read: 'The children of the kindergarten are the martyrs of tomorrow.'"<sup>9</sup> This "love of death" has reached epidemic proportions. "The world has seen a university campus on the West Bank mark the first anniversary of the *intifada* with a scale model of the Jerusalem pizzeria where 15 Israelis perished in a suicide bombing, an exhibit replete with imitation body parts suspended from the ceiling."<sup>10</sup> This is horrible, but it is merely a symptom of the real problem—the rejection of Jesus Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life."

The religion of Islam rejects the Jesus Christ of the

Bible. It does so with its words, its works, and its warfare. Don't be fooled by the talk of "a kinder, gentler" Islam. Do be faithful to tell others, including Muslim friends, about the Prince of Peace who brings real peace.

Dr. Gordon A. Dickson is pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio. He also serves as Research Secretary for the FBFI.

## Endnotes

- 1 Emerick, Yahiya, *Who Was Jesus?*, Islamic Circle of North America (Jamaica, NY) n.d.
- 2 Rodwell, J.M., (translator) *The Qu'ran*, (Ballantine Books: New York), 1993, p. 12 (This same passage, by the way, instructs Muslims not to become Jews or Christians because this is not the true religion of Abraham. This flies in the face of the current ecumenical view that all worship the same God.)
- 3 Some say there are six pillars. Islam is divided into three groups: the majority of Muslims are Sunni (peaceful), roughly ten percent are Shi'ite (violent) and a very small number are Sufi (mystical). The Shi'ites insist that there are six pillars instead of five. For them, the sixth pillar is "jihad" or "holy war." More about this is discussed in the third section of this article.
- 4 Website address: [http://www.carm.org/islam/notes\\_dialogues.htm](http://www.carm.org/islam/notes_dialogues.htm)
- 5 Rodwell, p. 112, (*The Qu'ran* 9:5)
- 6 Woodward, Kenneth L., "In the Beginning There Were the Holy Books." *Newsweek*, February 11, 2002, p. 52
- 7 Algeria, Azerbaijan, Comoros, Maldives, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- 8 Kelly, Jack, "Wired for Death," *Reader's Digest*, October 2001. p. 79
- 9 Ibid. p. 80
- 10 Freedman, Samuel G. "Will Arafat Father a Country?" *USA Today*, October 16, 2001, p. 15A

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# A Comparison of Islamic Doctrine, Mormon Doctrine, and the Bible

M.J. Bardon

	Islam	Mormon	True Christianity
<b>Bible</b>	Some of the Bible respected and accepted, but the Bible has been corrupted through the centuries and is only correct in so far as it agrees with the Qur'an.	Believe the Bible is the Word of God but has been corrupted through the centuries and is only correct insofar as it agrees with the writings of Joseph Smith and Mormon doctrine.	The Bible is God's only complete and perfect revelation to men and is preserved for us accurately today by the Lord.
<b>Prophet and Authority</b>	The last and greatest of all prophets is Mohammed and the Qur'an is the greatest of all inspired books.	The last and greatest of all prophets is Joseph Smith and his writings are without error and the most correct of any inspired writings on the earth.	The Bible is our only and final rule for faith and practice.
<b>God</b>	God is known as Allah. Allah is one person, a strict unity. The Trinity is a false doctrine.	God is known as Heavenly Father. Heavenly Father is one person, a strict unity. The Trinity is a false doctrine.	God is a Trinity. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three separate eternal and co-equal persons. Each one is fully God but there is only One God.
<b>Deity of Jesus Christ</b>	Jesus is not God but was a great prophet.	Jesus has not always been a God. He did not fully become a God until after the resurrection.	Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He has always been God.
<b>Original Sin and Man</b>	Children are not born with a sin nature and are sinless until they rebel against God. Man is basically good.	Children are not born with a sin nature and are sinless until they come to an age of accountability (age 8). Man is basically good.	Men are born with a sin nature and sin personally at an early age. We are born spiritually dead. Men are basically evil and cannot redeem themselves.
<b>Heaven</b>	Paradise for Muslims, a place of unimaginable bliss where the passions and desires of faithful Muslims, including wine and women, are met.	A place of unimaginable bliss where faithful Mormons continue to procreate with the women they were married to in the temple.	A place of holiness, joy, and service where those saved by grace alone will dwell in the presence of the Lord.
<b>Judgment Day</b>	God will judge all people at a general judgment. Good Muslims go to Paradise. All others go to hell.	God will judge all people at a general judgment. Good Mormons go to the highest heaven. Others go to lesser heavens or to hell.	Believers are forgiven because of their acceptance of the judgment of their sins on Christ. They will be judged for their works but not their sins. All the unsaved from all dispensations will be judged at the Great White Throne judgment and be cast into the Lake of Fire.
<b>Salvation</b>	Belief in Allah and that Mohammed is his prophet and follow the commands of the Qur'an. It is a salvation of faith plus works.	Belief in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and that Joseph Smith is his prophet and follow the commands of Mormonism. It is a salvation of faith plus works.	Eternal salvation is only through a personal faith and trust in the sacrifice and person of Jesus Christ by grace alone apart from any works we can do.

## *What You Need to Know About Islam and Muslims*

by George W. Braswell Jr.

Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000, 183pp., \$9.99.

Reviewed by Tim Locke

For most of us in western civilization, the religions and religious conflict of the Middle East seems far away and unrelated to our daily lives. Since September 11, 2001, however, millions of people have been awakened to the reality of Islam and the Muslim community living amongst us. To many of us Islam seems like a contentious religion consumed with world domination. But up until now most did not consider Islam a threat to the Christianized American way of life we enjoy. Islam, at 1400 years old, is the second largest religion in the world, boasting a following of more than one billion people, five million of whom are in North America. This is not a religion we can ignore. Even where I live, rural America, there is a growing Muslim population, especially surrounding the Mosque 30 minutes away in Toledo, Ohio. But where do we begin to understand this religion, and then how do we confront it? I suggest two courses of action. First, begin by reading the first three chapters of Romans in order to understand what God relates as the foundation of all alternate religious systems erected by man. Second, go to your Christian bookstore and pick up this book by Braswell, *What You Need to Know about Islam and Muslims*.

Mr. Braswell is well-qualified to speak on these matters, having lived in Iran for seven years studying Islam and the Muslim community. He serves as Professor of World Religion and as director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The book begins with the founding of Islam through its prophet Mohammed and follows with a more detailed history of Islam's fight for world domination. The author moves from history to Islamic beliefs and culture, introducing the different varieties of Muslim traditions. The last half of the book focuses on the differences between Christianity and Islam, how to witness to a Muslim, and the history of Islam in America. The author's intent is, as he says, "to help you to understand the Islamic world and

Muslim peoples and explain how to witness, evangelize, and begin Christian fellowship among them."<sup>1</sup> Particularly helpful in accomplishing this purpose are the book's many charts that detail definitions, historical events, Islamic populations, dates in American Islamic history, and the chart detailing key differences between Islam and Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

In witnessing to a person involved in the Muslim community, it is important to understand the culture of the community as well as the foundational beliefs of the religion. Having lived in their midst for so long, Braswell understands the culture well and relates their view of women, other religions, abortion, westernization, and personal piety. As the author explains, Islam is a religion of works that denies any need of salvation or a Savior. A person gets to heaven through the works of repeating the

Great Confession ("There is no god but Allah. Mohammed is the messenger of God."), offering prayers (five times a day toward Mecca), almsgiving (2.5 percent of one's wealth), fasting during the month of Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca during one's lifetime. True followers of Mohammed will engage in holy *jihad*, which means "strive" and communicates their desire to make the world Muslim. As a political and religious movement they are committed to making all men submit to Allah, voluntarily or by force. Mohammed was as much a religious zealot as he was a national leader. Islam does not recognize a separation of religion from the government.

Anyone living in a Muslim state must be submissive to Allah and his prophet Mohammed; anything less is treason and apostasy.

The casual reader will benefit greatly from the general information given in the book. He will learn how to relate effectively to a person of Muslim descent. The author draws clear lines of differences between the two religions and encourages thoughtful evangelism to the Muslim community. However, he does not encourage direct evangelism but rather relating to the Muslim the personal experience one has had with Jesus Christ. In a missionary situation the Christian is encouraged to establish a place of worship that does not contradict the Muslim tradition. He encourages the replacement of pews with kneeling carpets; praying toward Jerusalem instead of Mecca;

Continued on next page

offering times of prayer consistent with Islamic prayer times; encouraging fasting during Ramadan but in the name of the Lord; and he favors calling Jesus by the Muslim name for Him, Isa.<sup>3</sup>

This advice raises a major concern of not counteracting the man-centered, human effort of Islam with the grace of God given through Jesus Christ. This resembles the syncretism of other movements that allow both religions to exist together, or the new religion to take on the traditions and values of the pagan religion. He even states that most Muslims are sincere followers of God—just uninformed or untaught in the truth of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> This goes against the statements the apostle Paul makes in Romans 1–3 concerning man’s alternatives to Jehovah worship and God’s response to those alternatives.<sup>5</sup> The author goes on to

state, “Jesus and Mohammed are the founders of two of the world’s largest religions.”<sup>6</sup> But Jesus is not the founder of Jehovah worship. He *is* Jehovah, and the conflict is not a matter of competing religions with a contest over which religion is bigger. This is a matter of truth versus error. The apostle Paul calls it a war against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places.<sup>7</sup> It is the responsibility of every Bible believer to seek the reconciliation of the Muslim to the well-articulated claims of the gospel, without apology, compromise, or devaluation.

Tim Locke is pastor of Grace Bible Church in Tecumseh, Michigan, and is a member of the FBFI.

1 Braswell, George W., Jr. *What You Need to Know About Islam and Muslims* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), p. 8.

2 Pages 26, 54, 68, 138, and 175.

3 These and other suggestions can be found on page 156.

4 Ibid, p. 131.

5 Consider these excerpts from Romans 1:21–25: “when they knew God, the glorified him not as God . . . their foolish heart was darkened . . . and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more [or rather than] the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”

6 Ibid, p. 133.

7 Ephesians 6:11, 12.

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in whose bondage we are truly free.

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## Olson Resigns as FBFI Vice President

Beginning at Commencement this May, FBFI board member and Northland Baptist Bible College president Dr. Les Ollila will become NBBC's Chancellor. This role will expand his speaking and teaching ministry both on campus and in the camp ministry. Dr. Matt Olson, pastor of Tri-City Baptist Church in Westminster, Colorado, for more than 20 years, will assume the presidency of NBBC. Olson resigned as FBFI vice president in order to take the new position. He will remain as a member of the board.

## E-mail Address Change Reminder

Please note that the e-mail address for *Frontline* and the FBFI has been changed to [info@fbfi.org](mailto:info@fbfi.org).

## 2002 Meetings

### April 8-10

**Southeast Region**  
Bethany Hills Baptist Church  
11701 Leesville Road  
Raleigh, NC 27613  
(919) 846-5483

### April 8-11

**Mexico FBF Meeting**  
Bacilio Alfaro  
Apartado 1500, Culiacan  
Sinaloa 80000 MEXICO  
52-6716-9949

### June 11-13

**National Meeting**  
Bethel Baptist Church  
200 N. Roselle Road  
Schaumburg, IL 60194  
(847) 885-3230

### July 30-August 1

**Alaska Region**  
Hamilton Acres Baptist Church  
138 Farewell Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
(907) 456-5995

### October 7-8

**Southeast Satellite Meeting**  
Landmark Baptist Church  
116 Landmark Court  
Easley, SC 29640  
(864) 859-0793

### October 28-November 1

**Caribbean Region**  
Calvary Baptist Tabernacle  
P. O. Box 3390  
Carolina, PR 00984  
(787) 750-2227

### October 29

**Mid-America Region**  
Pillsbury Baptist Bible College  
315 S. Grove Avenue  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
(507) 451-2710

### November 4-5

**Satellite Meeting**  
Northwest Valley Baptist Church  
4030 W. Yorkshire Drive  
Glendale, AZ 85308  
(602) 581-3115

### November 11-12

**Arizona Satellite Meeting**  
Hosted by Dr Kevin Schaal  
Location still to be determined  
(623) 581-3115

### November 19

**Northeast Region**  
Trinity Baptist Church  
80 Clinton Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 225-3999

### November 14-15

**Northern California**  
Hosted by Dr John C Mincy  
Camp Lucerne  
PO Box 487  
Lucerne, CA 95458  
(707) 274-1164

### November 19-20

**Southwest Region**  
Fundamental Baptist Church  
1111 N. Ash St.  
Escondido, CA 92027  
(760) 743-1600

# Criminal Justice Chaplaincy Training



## **FREEdom Flyer MINISTRIES**

is offering Criminal Justice Chaplaincy Training this summer. This course is accredited by the National Sheriff's Association and the American Correctional Association and will give you greater acceptance and accreditation in the Criminal Justice System. The training will equip you to work within the system without compromise, while helping you to better understand those involved in all levels of the criminal justice system. This same course is taught in Baptist Bible Colleges throughout the U.S. by Mark W. Rizzo and can be applied to your Continuing Education.

### **The course gives certification in the following:**

- Law Enforcement I & II
- Corrections I & II
- Gangs & Organized Crime
- Police & Law Enforcement
- Drug & Substance Abuse
- Witchcraft & Occult
- Court Service System
- Hostage Negotiations

### **Certificates awarded by National F.B.I. Academy**

### **Upon completion, the student will be able to:**

1. Explain current trends in America's Judicial System
2. Perform ministerial duties of a correctional and law enforcement chaplain
3. Differentiate between the secular approach to rehabilitation and a Biblical approach to changing lives.
4. Describe the attitudes and behavior of criminals, inmates, families of offenders, police/law enforcement officers, and the victims of crime.
5. To instruct the membership of local churches in ministry acceptance and credibility.
6. Understand legal issues and the Biblical approach to the Criminal Justice System.

## **WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW MUCH?**

Cost of Materials: \$450.00 (Late Registration cost: \$600.00)  
(Registration must be received 30 days prior to date of class)

South West	May 13-17, 2002	Abilene, TX
South Central	May 27-31, 2002	Springfield, MO
Rocky Mountain States	June 10-14, 2002	Fort Thomas, AZ
Midwest	June 24-28, 2002	Altoona, IA
Mid Central	August 5-9, 2002	Terre Haute, IN
North Central	August 26-30, 2002	Ypsilanti, MI

**Accredited Curriculum** for Certification by:

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**National F.B.I. Academy**

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# SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

## First Partaker

### That Incomparable Treatise, *The Reformed Pastor*

Imagine, if you can, a young Charles Haddon Spurgeon weeping late on a Lord's Day evening at what his wife reads from an old book. In her tender account of the scene, Susannah relates reading "page after page . . . interrupted now and again by his stifled heart sobs."

The preacher's busy day had finally drawn to its close. But in the little front parlor of their simple home, Spurgeon had been "sorely depressed in spirit." "Oh dear," Susannah recalled his saying, "I fear I have not been as faithful in my preaching today as I should have been; I have not been as much in earnest after poor souls as God would have me be."

"Go dear," he had continued, "to the study, and fetch down Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*, and read some of it to me; perhaps that will quicken my sluggish heart." And so she had. When she had read "page after page of solemn pleadings," her voice failed from emotion and sympathy with her stricken husband's "smitings of a very tender conscience towards God."

It was not the first time that Richard Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor* had ministered such an effect. An eighteenth-century Scottish preacher once remarked respectfully that he knew no minister who could read it without "being covered with shame and confusion, except Mr. Wesley." But even Wesley himself seems to have taken instruction from Baxter. On one occasion he asked the early Methodist preachers, "How can we further assist those under our care? . . . By instructing them at their own houses. . . . Can we find a better

method of doing this than Mr. Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract entitled *Gildas Salvianus [The Reformed Pastor]* is well worth a capable perusal."

*Gildas Salvianus*—that's to us a bewildering handle for a book. But Gildas, a sixth-century British historian, had spoken boldly about the sins of his medieval nation. Salvianus, a zealous fifth century ascetic, likewise chastised public morals. And therefore, Baxter explained, "I entitled the treatise *Gildas Salvianus*, because I imitated Gildas and Salvianus in my liberty of speech."

Baxter's fuller title boldly announced the subject about which he intended to speak with such liberty. The 1656 first edition title page announced,

*"The husbandman  
that laboreth must  
be first partaker  
of the fruits"  
(2 Tim. 2:6)*

*Gildas Salvianus;*

#### THE REFORMED PASTOR

Shewing the nature of the Pastoral  
work; Especially in Private Instruction and  
Catechizing.

With an open CONFESSION of  
our too open SINS.

What Baxter meant by "reformed" was not a Calvinistic theology but a revitalized ministry. He explained, "If God would but reform the ministry, and set them on their duties zealously and faithfully, the People would certainly be reformed. All Churches either rise or fall as the ministry doth rise or fall (not in riches or worldly grandeur) but in knowledge, zeal and ability for their work." And though he spoke plainly, he spoke humbly. "By their unworthy fellow-servant," he prefixed above his name on the title page.

Too many books are called "classics." Few deserve that superlative recommendation. But *The Reformed*

### Inside

Bring . . . the Books—Key books for the pastor's study . . . . .	.5
Straight Cuts—An exegetical study . . . . .	.6
Windows—Themed sermon illustrations . . . . .	.7

Pastor, in the judgment of Spurgeon, Wesley, and many others, is one of those few. Their view is confirmed by the fact that even just shortly after its printing pastors were responding to it with heartfelt praise.

"O man greatly beloved!" one correspondent wrote. "The Lord hath revealed his secret things to you, for which many a thousand soul in England shall rise up and bless God for you." Another, writing to thank Baxter for both *The Reformed Pastor* and his other deservedly called classic, *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, confided, "I desire these with my Bible may be ever before me. O happy souls, happy ministers, that can walk according to these rules." And Stephen Street, minister in Buxted, related in a letter dated August 25, 1656, what a providence even the book's publication date was. He had been meeting with some "great and leading men" to draw up a uniform approach to pastoral work. "The week after came out your *Reformed Pastor*, for which many of us do bless God and are very thankful to you. . . . I could not but let you know this much, it being a work that hath more warmed my heart . . . than all my preaching ever did."

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**Few books deserve to be called classics. The Reformed Pastor is one of them. What Baxter meant by "reformed" was not a Calvinistic theology but a revitalized ministry.**

### **Richard Baxter: A Remarkable Pastor**

Though acclaimed to this day for other ministries and accomplishments, Richard Baxter remains most notable as a seventeenth-century English pastor. His best years in this kind of work (1641-42 and 1647-61) were spent among the 800 homes and 2000 or so people of the Worcestershire town of Kidderminster.

Upon arrival he found "an ignorant, rude and reveling people." His frank exposure of their sins stirred them into a hornet's nest. A rabble of them railed on him in the streets, especially during the town's annual parade. Later some ignorant persons deliberately misrepresented him as having preached that God loathed infants. It took a stout sermon to subdue them. Then several drunken beggars slandered him, one saying that he had seen him under a tree with a woman. The actual facts were that on a rainy day Baxter took shelter under an oak growing up through a thick hedge. A woman did likewise on the other side of the hedge. Neither saw the other. But Baxter was constrained to use the court to force out the truth.

Then when Parliament ordered the demolishing of all statues used for worship, a crew of drunken journeymen took it upon themselves to defend the images.

Swarming through the town on the hunt for Baxter they happened instead upon two of his supporters. Both were knocked down in the street and beaten so severely that neither ever fully recovered.

It was shortly after this that the war between Charles I and Parliament interrupted Baxter's pastoral work. For several years he accompanied the Parliamentary armies as a chaplain. But upon his return to Kidderminster in 1647 he had a plan.

He spread his preaching through the week, speaking now just once on the Lord's Day but a second time on Thursdays, the weekly market day that compelled the country folk to come to town. Every Thursday evening he also opened his home near the church to anyone who wished to discuss the sermons. In these smaller sessions they sang psalms, and Baxter answered questions, resolved doubts, and taught the people to pray. Some of the younger people he encouraged to meet in smaller groups for additional fellowship, especially prayer. And for others, Saturday nights became times of group preparation for the Lord's Day to follow.

But it was his personal pastoral labors that really turned the tide. Baxter and his assistant set aside two days a week for privately counseling the people. They did so systematically, averaging 14 families every week. In this way every person in the parish was individually pastored by a minister once every year, the assistant visiting the families more widely scattered and Baxter dealing with the nearer townspeople. Between them they undertook the care for nearly 4000 souls.

Their household calls were truly *pastoral*. "The assistant delivered a copy of the catechism to every family and urged them to 'read, mark and learn,' and he reminded them that in six weeks he would call again and carry out the questioning, taking special care 'to deal with everyone.'"

Baxter himself received the people by appointment in his home. These appointments, prearranged by the church clerk, included private questioning of every member of the family as to his spiritual condition. Upon profession, each was then examined concerning his soundness in the faith. Each was in addition counseled according to his need. Sins were diagnosed; rebuke and exhortation freely dispensed.

It was an immense undertaking, so much so, that the innate scholar in Baxter bemoaned the staggering loss of time for pulpit preparations. It was, as he called it, a "trouble of mind" that he so often found himself delivering "the message of God so rawly and confusedly, and unanswerably to its dignity and the needs of men's souls." But he said, "there is no remedy: unless we will omit this personal instruction. . . . And to omit this we dare not—it is so great and necessary a work."

Perhaps most remarkable of all was the fact that all of this was done by a man notorious for his grievous illnesses. Several times he was brought to death's door.



Often he was plagued with coughs, unrelieved indigestion, insomnia, lameness, tumors, and migraines. "In my labors at Kidderminster after my return, I did all under languishing weakness, being seldom an hour free from pain," he testified. No wonder, then, that he lived and preached "in some continual expectation of death, supposing still that I had not long to live." But it was this, he confessed, that "made me study and preaching things necessary, and a little stirred up my sluggish heart to speak to sinners with some compassion as a dying man to dying men."

The result was that the town was transformed!

When I came thither first there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name, and when I came away there were some streets where there was not passed one family in the side of a street that did not so, and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious. On the Lord's days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear an hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through the streets.

The services grew to be so full that five galleries were constructed on the building's south side, giving it a seating capacity of near to a thousand. All this among a people who had once thirsted for their minister's blood.

Even more blessed, the work was fruit that remained. Baxter wrote of it joyfully.

Though I have been absent from them about six years, and they have been assaulted . . . with threatenings and imprisonments, with enticing words, and seducing reasonings, they yet stand fast and keep their integrity; many of them are gone to God, and some are removed, and some now in prison, and most still at home; but not one, that I hear of, are fallen off, or forsake their uprightness.

When George Whitefield visited the town a full three-quarters of a century later he related to a friend, "I was greatly refreshed to find what a sweet savour of good Mr. Baxter's doctrine, works and discipline remained to this day."

Even to this day, at a distance of nearly three-and-a-half centuries, the town preserves Baxter's memory. The galleries of the church have long since disappeared, but on one of the north pillars a plate marks the spot on which Baxter's pulpit stood. The beautiful, ornately carved octagonal pulpit itself, along with its spacious canopied sounding board, are proudly displayed a few hundred yards away in a second church, and in still a third, Baxter's old communion table is safely sheltered.

The most visible monument, however, is the towering statue unveiled in 1875 just down the hill from the

church. The saintly pastor stands, right arm extended above his head, with his index finger pointing to heaven. Two years ago a church history tour I was leading traveled down from Scotland through the middle of night in order to reach London's Gatwick airport early the next morning. We detoured to Kidderminster and compelled the coach driver to drive up onto the street's curb in order to shine his headlights on the statue. There, about 2 A.M. on that chilly night, our group stood around Baxter in the dark and marveled over the ministry of this nearly one-of-a-kind pastor. As Edward Dargan concluded in his *History of Preaching*, "It is one of the most notable instances of pastoral work and success in all history."

## ***The Reformed Pastor: A Classic on Pastoral Care***

In 1652, after more than five years of this kind of ministry at Kidderminster, Baxter spearheaded the formation of a ministers' fraternal called the Worcestershire Association. It included 57 ministers. Together they drew up a Catechism and an Agreement that they would visit and instruct their people after

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***Several years ago a little reading fellowship of which I'm a part read The Reformed Pastor. None of us will easily forget the effect of some of its passages. For instance, he pled with his fellow ministers not to allow their example to contradict their doctrine. "You may unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours," he warns.***

Baxter's example. A day was determined for fasting and prayer, after which Baxter would preach. But one of his old serious illnesses prevented his going. He therefore enlarged and published the sermon he had prepared for his brother ministers. That treatise was his *Reformed Pastor*.

The work is an expanded application of Paul's admonition to the Ephesian elders as recorded in Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Not surprisingly, then, the first two major sections concern *The oversight of ourselves* and *The oversight of the flock*. A third and last section, titled in typical Puritan fashion, *Application*, pointedly presses home the lessons of the first two.

Several years ago a little reading fellowship of which



I'm a part read *The Reformed Pastor*. None of us will easily forget the effect of some of its passages. For instance, he pled with his fellow ministers not to allow their example to contradict their doctrine. "You may unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours," he warns.

This is the way to make men think that the Word of God is but an idle tale. . . . He that means as he speaks, will surely do as he speaks. One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing.

Continuing in that same vein, he probes his readers' ministerial values.

What! Do you regard the success of your labours, and yet will not part with a little to the poor, not put up with an injury, or a foul word, nor stoop to the meanest, nor forbear your passionate or lordly

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***This is the way to make men think the Word of God but an idle tale.... He that means as he speaks will surely do as he speaks. One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon.***

carriage—no, not for the winning of souls, and attaining the end of all your labours! You little value success, indeed, that will sell it at so cheap a rate, or will not do so small a matter to attain it.

And then, to move ministers to real action, he gets leverage from drawing a parallel between holy living and careful sermon preparation.

It is a palpable error of some ministers, who make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living; who study hard to preach exactly, and study little or not at all to live exactly. All the week long is little enough, to study how to speak two hours; and yet one hour seems too much to study how to live all the week. They are loath to misplace a word in their sermons . . . but they make nothing of misplacing affections, words, and actions in the course of their lives.

Any man who could challenge his brethren so unsparingly, without fear of drawing the charge of


hypocrisy, was clearly an unusual leader among leaders. What fueled his single-mindedness? Among other things, it was the sheer *privilege* of pastoring.

. . . what an excellent privilege is it, to live in studying and preaching Christ! to be continually searching into his mysteries, or feeding on them! to be daily employed in the consideration of the blessed nature, works, and ways of God! Others are glad of the leisure of the Lord's day, and now and then of an hour besides, when they can lay hold upon it. But we may keep a continual Sabbath. We may do almost nothing else, but study and talk of God and glory, and engage in acts of prayer and praise, and drink in his sacred saving truths. Our employment is all high and spiritual. Whether we be alone, or in company, our business is for another world. O that our hearts were more tuned to this work! What a blessed, joyful life should we then live! How sweet would be our study to us! How pleasant the pulpit! And what delight would our conference about spiritual things afford us!

Truly, Samuel Wesley (father of the better known John and Charles) was right when he observed that Baxter "had a strange pathos and fire in all his practical writings." Wesley lamented his having lost his copy of *The Reformed Pastor* when his rectory at Epworth burnt down in 1709 (a fire, by the way, in which young John nearly lost his life). I understand. I can honestly say that if I could not procure another, I wouldn't take \$500 for my own copy. For several years now I've resorted to it frequently—and at that, not as often or as humbly as I should.

In the preface to his 1939 abridgment of it, John T. Wilkinson wrote that its last reprinting had been nearly 80 years earlier and that "only an occasional copy can be found upon second-hand bookstalls." Happily, Banner of Truth has been reissuing William Brown's fuller 1862 edition of about 250 pages since 1974. It can be purchased from Cumberland Valley Bible Book Service (1.800.656.0231) for less than \$5. I should mention that it is also included in a Soli Deo Gloria hardcover reprint that includes several of Baxter's other practical writings and runs to over a thousand two-column pages. But that will set you back nearly \$40.

Philip Doddridge, author of our beloved hymn *O Happy Day*, published a sermon in the 1740s entitled *The Evil and Danger of Neglecting Souls*. It included the recommendation that *The Reformed Pastor* "should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care; and I think, the practical part should be reviewed every three or four years."

Doddridge argued for his recommendation in words just as applicable today. "Nothing would have a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which, many good men are but shadows of what, by the blessing of God, they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in that *incomparable* treatise were strenuously pursued." 



Dr. Mark Minnick is pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

# Bring . . . the Books

*Plunged beneath the Flood • the life and work of William Cowper*

Some years ago while sitting at breakfast with a fellow minister of the gospel, I inquired as to the nature of his personal devotional time with the Lord. In addition to daily devotional reading of the Scripture and prayer, he would frequently take out his hymn book and sing through the words of one of the old hymns of our faith. His advice introduced me to a rich aid to spiritual devotion—hymnody.

More recently, I was introduced to William Cowper while reading *The Hidden Smile of God*, a work on men of God from ages past. Stimulated to read more, I discovered a small work on the life of Cowper that is the subject of this month's column: *William Cowper: The Man of God's Stamp* by British biographer George Ella. This work, published by Joshua Press in Ontario, Canada, specifically examines Cowper's contribution to hymnody and is a companion volume to Ella's more exhaustive biography of Cowper, *Poet of Paradise*.

Born in 1731 into a long heritage of poets, Cowper traced his ancestry to the well-known bard John Donne (1572-1631). Despite this noble lineage, his was not an easy life. Five of his brothers and sisters died before his fifth birthday; his mother died shortly after giving birth to his brother, John. As a six-year-old boy, William was well acquainted with sorrow. Loneliness and misery became his ever-present companions when he was separated from his father and family and sent off to boarding school as a child to endure the torments heaped upon him by older students. These memories indelibly marked his soul. Some 53 years later one can still sense the reality of the emotional turmoil still raging inside him when he composed the following lines upon receiving a portrait of his mother.

Oh that those lips had language! Life has pass'd  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?

Cowper was also disappointed in love when, engaged to his cousin Theodora, her father broke the engagement and, with it, William's heart. All of this perhaps contributed and exacerbated the ongoing bouts of deep depression he suffered throughout his life. More than once he attempted to take his life. After one unsuccessful suicide attempt, Cowper was committed to a mental institution where he became convinced that he had become "twice more condemned than Judas!" Slowly the darkness began to lift as a close friend began to encourage him with the gospel. After reading the account of Christ's raising of Lazarus and, later, Romans 3:25, he was converted: "I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fullness and completeness of His justification." From this experience came his well-known hymn

"There is a Fountain Filled with  
Blood."

Sadly, Cowper struggled with depression on and off throughout his entire life. During these times, God used his good friend John Newton to minister to Cowper. Together they published *Olney*

*Hymns*, a collection of original hymns (many of which we still sing) that has greatly blessed the church of God.

Cowper came to the end of his life still struggling with the dark cloud of depression. The minister at his funeral attempted to make some sense of Cowper's difficult life: "His constant wrestling with God produced some of the most delightful and Spirit-filled poetry ever written by human hand. And his language is so timeless that his verse still has the power to cheer endless numbers as he spreads the glorious gospel of the divine delight afforded to those heaven-blessed sinners who seek to praise God and make him known." This is certainly seen in the wisdom set forth in Cowper's classic hymn. Read it slowly. Savor the truth behind each verse and seize for yourself the comfort that countless fellow pilgrims have discovered while wandering in the shadowy side of earthly life.


God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain:  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain. 

"... when  
thou comest,  
bring with thee  
. . . the books"  
(2 Tim. 4:13)

Dr. Sam Horn is Executive Vice President of Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin.

### Christ as Firstborn (Colossians 1:15)

One of the most important doctrines of our Christian faith is the deity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus must be God to save us (Isa. 45:21, 22). Jehovah's Witnesses, among others, deny this Biblical truth. One passage that they twist in an attempt to deny Christ's deity is Colossians 1:15. In this verse Christ is called "the firstborn of every creature." It is claimed that this expression indicates that Christ is a creature and not fully God. However, the context clearly refutes this assertion.

#### Christ's Deity in Colossians

We must not construe the expression "firstborn of every creature" in a way that contradicts the repeated clear teaching elsewhere in the same book. Paul clearly asserts the deity of Christ in the book of Colossians. In the same chapter (Col. 1), Paul uses descriptions to indicate that Christ has the same divine nature as the Father. God is uniquely the Father of Christ (verse 2), and Christ is uniquely His Son (verse 13) and the actual "image of the invisible God" (verse 15a). Elsewhere in the New Testament, references to Christ as the Son of God means that He is God, equal to God the Father (John 5:17, 18; 10:30–36). In chapters 1 and 2, Paul explicitly teaches that Christ is fully God, stating that "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (1:19), and "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9).

Also, Paul clearly ascribes unique divine power and activity to Christ by ascribing the creation and maintenance of the universe to Him. Paul declares, "For by Him were all things created" (1:16a), and "by Him all things consist" (1:17b). Since all things were created by Christ, He could not be a creature. He could not create himself. He could not be the highest heavenly angelic creation as Jehovah's Witnesses claim, because He created "all things . . . that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, . . . principalities or powers" (1:16). Angels are heavenly beings, invisible, and spiritual powers, all of which are ascribed to creation by Christ.


#### The Meaning of Firstborn

The Greek word for firstborn in Colossians 1:15 is *prototokos*. Had Paul wanted to express the idea that

Christ was the first created being, he could have used another Greek word, *protoktistos*, which means "first created" (see John Ankerberg, *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions*, p. 167). For several reasons, "firstborn" (*prototokos*) in context primarily refers to priority and preeminence.

As the firstborn of creation, He exists prior to all creation and is preeminent in rank over all creation (Col. 1:15–18; see Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament with Greek Parallel*, pp. 934, 935). He is called "firstborn" because the Father desires that the Son have preeminence over all creation (Col. 1:18c). Firstborn indicates rank as the chief heir (compare Deut. 21:17; Ps. 89:27; Jer. 31:9; and Gen. 48:14–20). The Father has appointed His unique Son, Jesus Christ, as heir of all things (Heb. 1:2) and calls this heir of all things "firstborn" (*prototokos*; Heb. 1:6) and "God" (Heb. 1:8).

Finally, it is important to note in context that "firstborn" is used in reference to resurrection from the dead, not to a beginning with a physical birth or physical creation. Christ eternally preexisted (Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 1:1–3; 8:58). Christ is called "the firstborn (*prototokos*) from the dead" (Col. 1:18). The same Greek word is used in Revelation 1:5 to describe Christ as "the first begotten from the dead." Christ is the first person raised from the dead with an immortal glorified body, so that He can be described as the "first-fruits" of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20). Because Christ obeyed the Father by coming to the earth and dying for our sins and rising again, the Father has exalted Christ to the preeminent place as heir and Lord of all things (Heb. 1:2, 6, 8; Phil. 2:9–11; Rom. 14:9–11). As "firstborn" (*prototokos*) Christ has the preeminent place of exaltation in the Church (compare Rom. 8:29; Heb. 12:23; Col. 1:18).

Therefore, we conclude that "firstborn" in Col. 1:15 means that Christ is the unique and only begotten (not created) Son of God and Creator of all things, the heir of all things, the preeminent Lord of all things, and the first one raised from the dead in an immortal glorified body. He is truly God, not a creature. The ancient Athanasian Creed states, "So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. . . . The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten" (Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 2:67). As God, Christ is worthy of all of our worship and obedience. We must defend this truth from those who would attempt to lift the diadem of deity from Christ's head. 

**"Rightly  
dividing  
the Word  
of Truth"  
(2 Tim. 2:15)**

Dr. Tom Wheeler is the Academic Dean and a Bible and theology teacher at Heart of America Seminary and Bible College with Tri-City Baptist Church in Independence, Missouri.

In the late 1800s, Rowland Prothero compiled instances of how God used the book of Psalms specifically in the lives of people. Prothero divides his book into 12 chapters covering the Psalms from the “Early Ages of Christianity” until the 1900s. His book, *The Psalms in Human Life*, is the result of his efforts and offers a pastor countless illustrations on the Psalms.

Prothero’s examples are especially rewarding in the section dealing with the impact that the book of Psalms had on the Puritans. He explains,

the Psalter was, to the Puritans, the book of books. Psalms were sung at Lord Mayor’s feasts and city banquets. Soldiers sang them on the march, by the camp fire, on parade, in the storm of battle. The ploughman caroled them over his furrows; the carter hummed them by the side of the wagon. They were the song-books of ladies and their lovers; and if Shakespeare is to be trusted, they were even sung to hornpipes at rustic festivals.

In the language of the Psalms, the early progress of the first colony is recorded. “The Lord,” says Johnson in his *Wonder-Working Providence*, “whose promises are large to His Sion, hath blest His people’s provision, and satisfied her poor with bread, in a very little space.”

The Psalms were the chief instrument of Eliot in his missionary enterprises among the Red Indians. From the Psalms Eliot’s successor, David Brainerd, drew the language in which he clothed his daily thoughts (Rowland E. Prothero, *The Psalms in Human Life*, 210-11).

### John Hampden and Psalm 41:4

“I said, O Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.”

John Hampden is considered by Boreham to represent “our English Puritanism at its very best.” In *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest*, “Baxter enumerates the pleasures that he hopes to enjoy in the world to come; and, conspicuously among them, he mentions the delight of meeting the excellent John Hampden” (F.W. Boreham, *A Faggot of Torches*, 106).

His mother would teach him and his brother a verse every night. On one particular evening the verse was Psalm 41:4, “I said, O Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.”

He was only a boy in those days, and he learned the words with a light and merry heart. But there came stern and terrible days—days of tumult and bloodshed and imprisonment—in which those same words rushed back upon his mind and spoke to him in very different accents. In those selfsame simple words he

afterwards discovered wonders that, as a boy at his mother’s knee, he never for a moment suspected (Boreham, 113).

The verse that his mother taught him years before had ministered to his heart to the very end of his life. The following words are recorded on the day of his death:

“O Lord of Hosts,” he was heard to say, “great is Thy mercy; just and holy are Thy dealings with us sinful men. Pardon, O Lord, my manifold transgressions. O Lord, save my bleeding country. Have these realms in Thy special keeping. Let the King see his error; and turn the hearts of his councilors from the malice and wickedness of their designs. Lord Jesus receive my spirit!”

There was a pause. And then in a feebler voice he continued: “O Lord, save my country; O Lord, be merciful to—.” But here speech failed him. He fell back in the bed and expired (Boreham, 117).

It truly is “one of those prayers that has been offered a thousand thousand times, and never once in vain” (Boreham, 106).

### Martin Luther and Psalm 46

Luther turned to this Psalm during his trying days. He said,

When the times were dark; when the enemies of truth appeared to triumph; when disaster seemed to come over the cause in which he was engaged, and the friends of the Reformation were dispirited, disheartened, and sad, he was accustomed to say to his fellow-laborers, “Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm” (Albert Barnes’ *Notes on Psalms*, Psalm 46, 39).

Psalm 118 was another of Luther’s favorites. It meant so much to Luther that he had it inscribed on the wall of his study. He wrote, “This psalm has been of special service to me. It has helped me out of many great troubles, when neither emperor nor kings nor wise men nor saints could help” (J. Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms*, 97).

### Robinson Crusoe and Psalm 50:15

“And call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

In Daniel Defoe’s literary masterpiece, during the years that Robinson Crusoe was stranded on an island, God used Psalm 50:15 to speak to his heart on three different occasions. Crusoe explains how he found a Bible in a chest that “up to this time, I had found neither leisure nor inclination to look into. I took up the Bible and

*“To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, ‘A window shalt thou make in the ark.’”*

*Charles Spurgeon*



began to read. Having opened the book casually, the first words that occurred to me were these: 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' The words were very apt to my case. They made a great impression upon me and I mused upon them very often. . . . I asked God to fulfill the promise to me that if I called upon Him in the day of trouble He would deliver me" (F.W. Boreham, *A Handful of Stars*, 21-22).

When Crusoe first prayed this prayer, he was not asking God to deliver his soul, but to deliver him from his present crisis. God eventually used this verse to minister to Crusoe in dealing with his eternal state. Boreham writes,

When the text came to him the *first* time, he called for deliverance from *sickness*; and was in a few days well. When the text came to him the *second* time, he called for deliverance from *sin*; and was led to a crucified and exalted Saviour.

When the text came to him the third time, he called for deliverance from the savages; and the savages, so far from hurting a hair of his head, furnished him with his man Friday, the staunchest, truest friend he ever had. "Call upon Me," said the text, not once, nor twice, but thrice. And three times over, Crusoe called, and each time was greatly and wonderfully delivered (Boreham, 24).

### Mary Moffat and Psalm 99:8

"Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God. . . ."

Mary Smith, who later became the wife of Robert Moffat, wrote concerning a time in her life when it seemed as though her prayers were not being heard. It is no wonder why God blessed their missionary service in South Africa.

The sermon was so powerfully applied that I wept the whole of the time, as he described the various workings of my mind under that particular, "thou answeredst them," and sent me away rejoicing with an assurance that my prayers would yet be answered. Shortly after, you know how that sweet sermon of Dr. Jack's affected me, "Faithful is he that promised"; and very shortly after this you know how wonderfully, I may say miraculously, some of my prayers were answered. This encouraged me to go on, and that passage was as powerfully applied as any ever was to my mind, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (J. S. Moffat, *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat*, page 38).

### Josephine Butler and Psalm 120:1

Josephine Butler tells how she was blessed of God by having godly parents who taught her by their examples how to live a godly life. She tells about having a pastor who preached God's Word faithfully every Sunday. In spite of the godly influence she realized that she had to trust Christ personally as her Savior. During this time she struggled about what she believed. She wrote on one occasion:

"For one long year of darkness, the trouble of heart and brain urged me to lay all this at the door of the God whose Name I had learned was Love. I dreaded Him, until grace was given me to arise and wrestle, as Jacob did . . . who either must slay or pronounce deliverance. . . . For hours and days and weeks in these retreats I sought the answer to my soul's trouble and the solutions of its dark questioning." She felt, she tells us, like one who is leaning over a great gulf, whence none who fall into it ever return. And then—"the pride and rebellion of my heart gave way before deep and heavy sorrow; and all the sorrow gathered itself up into one great cry. In my distress I cried unto the Lord and he heard me" (F.W. Boreham, *A Faggot of Torches*, 73-74).


Years later, after losing her daughter in a tragic accident, Josephine Butler "resolved that all the prodigal daughters of the world should be her daughters; and she devoted the rest of her days to one of the most beautiful ministries that the world has ever seen" (Boreham, 79).

### Benjamin Franklin and Psalm 127:1

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

In 1787, the unbelieving deist Franklin realized the importance of Psalm 127 when he appealed to those who were assembled to frame a Constitution for the United States of America.

In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence. To that kind Providence we owe this opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance? I have lived for a long time [eighty-one years], and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." I firmly believe this, and also believe that without His concurring aid we shall proceed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel. I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service (Prothero, 212).

These illustrations should encourage and challenge all believers. May God help us to meditate on His Word and allow it a rich dwelling in our lives. 

Mike Stalnaker is pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Dover, New Hampshire.





Isaac Crockett, sophomore Christian missions major—Faith Baptist Church children's ministry

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—Henry Tita, senior  
pastoral studies major  
Sunday school teacher &  
rescue mission extension

# Ground Zero Memories

Dave Barba

**T**he November night was unseasonably warm as we walked up and down the streets and alleys of lower Manhattan. My wife, Claudia, my son, Jeremiah, and I had just completed a revival meeting in Queens, and the pastor was treating us to a walking tour of the city. As we have done so often in our family ministry, we were making memories.

New York is home to some of my most cherished memories. In the late 1800s, my grandfather, William Barba, at 10 years of age, ran away from his home in Naples, Italy, and stowed away on a freighter bound for the USA. As a young man, he sold bananas from a cart on the streets of New York. He later became a printer and had a quiver full of kids, including my dad.

In 1971 a fellow college student named Tom challenged our class to help him spread the gospel to New York City with his summer mission team. When I offered to come help him, he asked me when I had trusted Christ as Savior. On that Saturday morning, I realized that I was unsaved. It was Tom, a Greek from New York City, who led me to Christ. As far as I know, he is still preaching the good news, probably in Manhattan and beyond.

Walking the streets of Manhattan just two months after September 11 was bound to produce some new, enduring memories. Though the city continues to move at megametropolis speed, people seem willing to talk and sincerely sober when the subject turns to the twin towers. They vividly remember September 11. They remember the fire. They remember the smoke and the sirens. They remember the fear. They remember the tears and the pain. They remember those who died.

Just outside the site of the World Trade Center rubble, we came upon a temporary memorial to those who had died in the terrorist attack. It was at that memorial that I saw what would surely become a lasting New York memory.

The memorial was a tent that lovingly housed candles, firefighter and police officer hats, photos of many who died, stuffed animals, items of personal memorabilia, and notes from loved ones to “lost” ones. In the funeral-like atmosphere, one note seemed to cry out for my attention. Scrawled on teddy bear stationery in childish handwriting, with a photo of a firefighter attached, it was carefully hung for all to read.

As I knelt down to read the note by the candlelight, it seemed that the already slow-motion activity around me came to a stop. As I focused my camera lens to capture the contents of that letter, the quietness around me was disturbed by nothing but my own breathing. I quickly scanned the contents of the note. Self-consciously checking around me to see if others were watching, I wondered to myself, “Would it be fair for me to shed tears when I have not attended one funeral or memorial service this year?”

The note was written by a son and a daughter to their slain firefighter dad, whose photo was attached.

Daddy, I love you more than forever. I am glad for two reasons. One reason is that I am happy God is making you happy. My second reason is that you died in a very honorable way and the world is thankful that you saved people and you are a hero. Thank you, Dad. Love, Jane and Tom

When our trip to New York was over, I got my film developed. Flipping through my typical tourist photos of Ground Zero, Macy’s, the Empire State Building, and Rockefeller Center, I stopped when I got to the close-up shot of that letter to dad. As I carefully re-read the contents of the note, I couldn’t help but see a message in it from our Heavenly Father.

Jane and Tom proclaimed that their love for their dad is forever. Similarly does God long to love souls with His “everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3).

The kids were thankful that God is now making their dad happy in heaven. Truly the heart’s desire of Almighty God is to make souls happy forever in heaven. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

The firefighter dad was praised because he died saving people. We know that people do not save souls, but God has chosen His children to be the purveyors of the gospel! He is eager to use faithful believers to tell the lost that they can be redeemed from the penalty for sin. “But ye shall receive power . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8).

Jane and Tom proudly noted that their dad was now considered a hero. I agree. He unselfishly entered the burning towers to pull victims from the fire. He apparently considered the lives of total strangers to be more important than his own safety and comfort. That may be why God considers winners of souls to be His heroes. “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

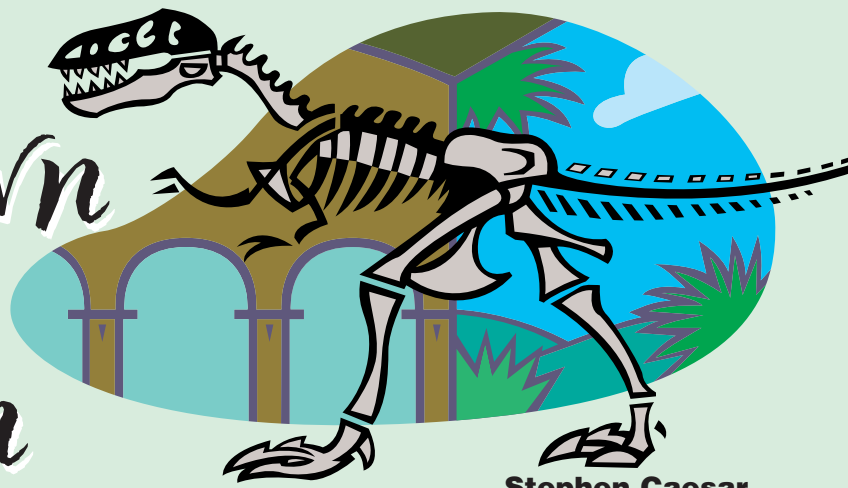
New York City still lives after the horrible September attack. Millions of souls from all around the world walk its streets daily. The city is in need of more heroes who are eager to spread God’s everlasting love—heroes like the pastors we served during our brief stay. Heroes who are willing to move to the city and plant churches that exalt Christ. Heroes who are dedicated to pulling souls from the fires of hell and the rubble of sin.

My family and I are certainly not heroes, but God has been good to use us in spite of ourselves for the past 27 years in church planting and evangelism. We have more wonderful memories than one family deserves.

God has not called everyone to New York City, but He may choose to call you. If He does, go for it. Some of the best memories will be yours to cherish and share . . . forever.

Dr. Dave Barba planted and pastored Falls Baptist Church in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, and Trinity Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee. The Barbas are now serving as team church planters in the U.S. For more information about their ministry, see [www.ipresson.com](http://www.ipresson.com).

# Piltown Chicken



Stephen Caesar

In November 1999, *National Geographic* published photographs of what it claimed was incontrovertible proof that birds evolved from dinosaurs. In an article titled “Feathers for *T. Rex*?” the magazine announced, “New Birdlike Fossils Are Missing Links in Dinosaur Evolution” (Sloan 99). The article featured a photograph, taken under ultraviolet light, of a creature “[w]ith arms of a primitive bird and the tail of a dinosaur” (Ibid. 100). The fossil, named *Archaeoraptor*, was discovered in Liaoning Province, China, and was trumpeted as “a true missing link in the complex chain that connects dinosaurs to birds” (Ibid.). The photo was accompanied by a quotation in large letters by Stephen Czerkas, who led the study of the fossil: “IT’S A MISSING LINK between terrestrial dinosaurs and birds that could actually fly” (Ibid. [emphasis original]). Czerkas also commented, “This fossil is perhaps the best evidence since *Archaeopteryx* that birds did, in fact, evolve from certain types of carnivorous dinosaurs” (Ibid. 101).

Eventually, the word got out—like so many other “proofs” of Darwinism, the fossil was a fraud. In the “Letters to the Editor” section of the March 2000 issue of *National Geographic*, Xu Xing of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology (Chinese Academy of Sciences) wrote: “I have concluded that *Archaeoraptor* is a composite. . . . Though I do not want to believe it, *Archaeoraptor* appears to be composed of a dromaeosaur [a small, carnivorous dinosaur] tail and a bird body.” *National Geographic*’s embarrassment was immense. In its October 2000 issue, it published an article by investigative reporter Lewis Simons, who uncovered the truth behind the hoax. His lengthy investigation, which took him all the way to China, revealed

a tale of misguided secrecy and misplaced confidence, of rampant egos clashing, self-aggrandizement, wishful thinking, naive assumptions, human error, stubbornness, manipulation, backbiting, lying, corruption, and, most of all, abysmal communication (Simons 128).

Simons learned that a Chinese farmer, eager to sell a fossil to foreigners who would pay top dollar, had dug two fossils out of his land and glued the parts together with homemade paste. He attached the tail from one fossil to the

body of the other and then proceeded to add on the legs and feet (Ibid. 128-129). “The result,” reported Simons, “was the ‘missing link’—the body of a primitive bird with teeth and the tail of a landbound little dinosaur, or dromaeosaur” (Ibid. 129).

The doctored item was bought by a Chinese fossil dealer who “acknowledged that he often sold ‘composites’” (Ibid.). The bogus fossil eventually found its way to Stephen Czerkas (quoted above), who, along with his wife, is a dinosaur enthusiast with no scientific qualifications. Upon obtaining the fossil, the Czerkases contacted leading paleontologist Philip J. Currie of the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology in Alberta. The Canadian scientist didn’t spend a lot of time investigating the find; Simons wrote that “Currie was so distracted by other commitments around the world that he gave the *Archaeoraptor* project short shrift” (Ibid. 130).

As it turned out, Currie did have reservations about the fossil but neglected to inform the National Geographic Society’s Christopher Sloan, the driving force behind the November 1999 article. Simons referred to this as “a most damaging lapse of responsibility” on Currie’s part (Ibid.). Later, Currie and the Czerkases had the fossil examined at the University of Texas High-Resolution X-ray CT Facility in Austin. Professor Timothy Rose, who ran the examination, noticed something wrong and said “there was a chance that it was a fraud” (Ibid.). In response, Currie sent Kevin Aulenback, a fossil technician at the Tyrrell Museum, to investigate the fossil. Aulenback concluded that the fossil “is a composite specimen” (Ibid. 131).

Stephen Czerkas, meanwhile, along with Currie and other scientists, tried to submit a scholarly paper on the “missing link” to the prestigious scientific journals *Nature* and *Science*; both rejected the article due to lack of evidence (Ibid. 131-132). Simons, describing the original draft of the *Nature* submission, wrote:

On its fifth page the paper stated that the dromaeosaur-like tail on a birdlike creature suggested a previously unknown element in the evolution of birds from landbound dinosaurs. In short, this was what Czerkas would tell *National Geographic* was “a missing link” (Ibid. 131).

Despite the rejections, the November 1999 issue of *National Geographic* went ahead and published the highly doubtful fossil. Simons referred to the media frenzy that surrounded this alleged proof of evolution as "[a] dog-and-pony show for reporters" (Ibid. 132).

The following month, Xu Xing (who first went public with the fraud) e-mailed Christopher Sloan (the author of the *National Geographic* article) stating, "I am 100% sure . . . we have to admit that *Archaeoraptor* is a faked specimen" (Ibid. 132). Simons describes the less-than-honest way that Xu, who had collaborated in the blunder, tried to cover his tracks: "*National Geographic* published a cleaned-up version of Xu's letter in its March issue [quoted above], at his request changing 'faked' to 'composite'" (Ibid.).

Once the jig was up, those responsible began confessing their foolishness. Czerkas admitted that he and his wife had made "an idiot, bone-stupid mistake." Currie said it was "the greatest mistake of my life." Sloan said, "I was dragging in a monster" (Ibid.). William L. Allen, Editor-in-Chief of *National Geographic*, asked, "How did we get into this mess?" (Ibid. 128). Simons hints at the reason why so many experts fell for the hoax: "To some prominent paleontologists who saw it . . . the little skeleton was a long-sought key to a mystery of evolution" (Ibid.). In other words, they *wanted* to see evidence for dino-to-bird evolution, so that is precisely what they saw. Interestingly, the original article from November 1999 practically admitted as much (without, of course, even realizing it). The article stated that the anatomical features of *Archaeoraptor* are "exactly what scientists would expect to find in dinosaurs experimenting with flight" (Sloan 101). This is an absolutely golden example of the way in which evolutionists "see" evidence for evolution when there is none—all based on pre-determined assumptions rather than scientific facts.

Criticism of the hoax has been harsh. In its October 2000 issue, *Discover* magazine featured an article titled "Twenty of the Greatest Blunders in Science in the Last Twenty Years." One of the Top 20 was "Piltdown Chicken," a sarcastic term for *National Geographic's*

evolutionary fraud. The term derives from Piltdown Man, the greatest hoax in the history of the theory of human evolution, in which a human skull had been artificially melded with an ape jaw and "discovered" in England in 1912 (Newman 80). For half a century it was used as "proof" of human evolution. The epithet "Piltdown Chicken" was actually coined several months earlier by *U.S. News & World Report*. In February 2000 it reported:

Imaginations certainly took flight over *Archaeoraptor liaoningensis*, a bird-like fossil with a meat-eater's tail that was spirited out of northeastern China, "discovered" at a Tucson, Ariz., gem-and-mineral show last year, and displayed at the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. Some 110,000 visitors saw the exhibit, which closed January 17; millions more read about the find in November's *National Geographic*. Now, paleontologists are eating crow (Lord 53).

Storrs Olson, curator of birds at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, had warned the editors at the National

Geographic Society about the possible fraudulence of the fossil back in November 1999, when the article was first published. "The public is being completely bamboozled," he said when the scandal broke (Ibid.). Just as earlier paleontologists had embraced Piltdown Man because they were dying for evidence of human evolution, more recent scientists embarrassed themselves by gullibly embracing *Archaeoraptor*—a gullibility stemming from their overwhelming desire to prove a theory that is incorrect from the start. Yes, Dr. Olson, the public is indeed being bamboozled.

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- Stephen Caesar is currently pursuing his master's degree in anthropology/archaeology at Harvard University. He is the author of the e-book *The Bible Encounters Modern Science*, available at [www.1stbooks.com](http://www.1stbooks.com).

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How shall we take our stand beneath the cross and  
continue to love the selves that put Him there?  
—Elizabeth Elliot

He who has God and everything has no more than he  
who has God alone.  
—C. S. Lewis

At first laying down as a fact fundamental, that nothing  
with God can be accidental.  
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait  
of the entire twentieth century . . . I would be unable to  
find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat  
once again: "Men have forgotten God."  
—Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

It has been said that when human beings stop believing  
in God they believe in nothing. The truth is much worse:  
they believe in anything.  
—Malcolm Muggeridge

If God is dead, then all things are lawful.  
—Fyodor Dostoevsky

It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose  
your common sense, and can't see things as they are.  
—G. K. Chesterton

Of course it's the same old story. Truth usually is the  
same old story.  
—Margaret Thatcher

Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its  
pupils.  
—Hector Serlio

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.  
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Conformity is not morality.  
—Charlotte Bronte

Don't just do something; stand there! —John Goetsch

God did not tell us to follow Him because He needed  
our help, but because He knew that serving Him would  
make us whole.  
—Irenaeus

If Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is too  
great for me to give for Him.  
—C. T. Studd

Spiritual maturity is not reached by the passing of the

years, but by obedience to the will of God.  
—Oswald Chambers

It is altogether in accordance with our pilgrim character  
to see how much we can afford to give to the poor or to  
the work of God in every week.  
—George Mueller

Everyone loves himself most, but wants others to love  
him more than they love themselves.  
—Allan Bloom

Today is a tomorrow we worried about yesterday.  
—Unknown

Seek not to be great, but to be truly useful.  
—Charles Spurgeon

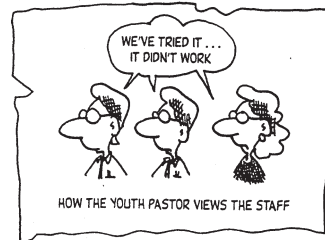
Don't let your longing slay your living.  
—Jim Elliot

When things go wrong, don't go with them.  
—Unknown

The victorious Christian neither exalts nor downgrades  
himself. . . He believes that he has been crucified with  
Christ and he is not willing either to praise or deprecate  
such a man.  
—A. W. Tozer



**MEET  
YOUR  
CHURCH  
STAFF**  
BY DICK LA PINE



Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.

## You Can't Be Too Kind

Sharon Thomas

Lynn Jones? Oh, yes, I know who she is. She's in my Sunday school class. Her brown hair is short and very straight—looks like she never uses a hair dryer or a curling iron. She has a crooked smile that somehow makes her charming.

That's what I would have said if anyone had asked me about Lynn the first few months after I met her. Then she and I somehow wound up walking downstairs together after Sunday school, and everything changed. (I've moved away and lost touch with "Lynn," so I'm not using her real name.)

Lynn and I, for some reason, were the last to leave class that morning. The classroom was a corner of the church balcony, and we had to descend a steep set of wooden stairs to go to the sanctuary for the 11 o'clock worship service. Lynn was a little ahead of me, and she hesitated at the top of the stairs.

"I'm afraid I'm going to tumble down these stairs some day," Lynn said.

I smiled at her as I answered, "I know what you mean. They are awfully steep, and my short legs don't handle stairs gracefully." Then I stepped carefully onto the first tread going down.

My high heels clattered on the bare wooden treads. Nearing the bottom of the stairs, I stopped looking at my own feet. As I looked up, I saw a tall man watching Lynn come down the stairs, a worried look on his face. When I stepped out of his way, he reached out a hand to Lynn and she took it, breathing an obvious sigh of relief.

Watching the two of them walk away, I noticed for the first time that Lynn limped. She must have thought I was an insensitive clod when we started down the stairs together and I ignored her need. I blinked back tears of shame. Lynn had truly needed help coming down the stairs, and I had been so self-centered that I hadn't even noticed.

*Oh, God, forgive me for not seeing Lynn's need, I prayed as I listened to the organ music at the*

*beginning of the church service. And please help me not to be so insensitive from now on.*

With an effort on my part and by the grace of God, I did become more sensitive to the needs of my friends. I was at Lynn's house many times as our friendship developed, and I learned when to offer help and when to let her struggle to accomplish something that was meaningful to her.

Sometimes in the early days of our friendship, I tried to help too much. When the class social was held at Lynn's house, I went early to see what I could do to help. "Just sit and talk to me," Lynn said, "while I mix up this cake batter." By then I knew that Lynn was partially paralyzed on one side as the result of a stroke. I watched apprehensively as she hooked her weak left arm around the mixing bowl and stirred the batter with her right hand. But I needn't have worried. Lynn didn't spill any ingredients or break the mixing bowl. And the cake was delicious!

After Lynn and I became friends, I changed the way I related to her. I offered my arm and walked slowly downstairs with her and watched for other times when she might need help. But I also learned to recognize her abilities as well as her disabilities. And I changed my response to people who asked about her. Here's what I said:

"Lynn Jones? Oh, yes, I know her. She has a 'can do' spirit." Lynn. My friend.

Recently, I discovered the following poem by an unknown author. Every time I read it, I think about my experience with Lynn, and I remember that you can't be too kind.

I have wept in the night  
For the shortness of sight  
That to somebody's need  
Made me blind,  
But I never have yet  
Felt a twinge of regret  
For being a little too kind.

Sharon Thomas, the creator of Joybeams—A Happy Site to See ([www.homestead.com/joybeams/index.html](http://www.homestead.com/joybeams/index.html)), resides in Orange Park, Florida.



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# Dr. Ehud's E-mail

## OCCASIONAL CONVERSATIONS OVERHEARD ONLINE

**D**r. Ehud, an anonymous friend of Dr. Bell's, explains to Hude (Hootie) how he came to write this column.

**Hude:** "Hey, Ehud, where'd you get a name like Ehud, anyway?"

**Ehud:** "From my Ma and Pa. All us kids got Bible names, 'cept Ethyl. Daddy named her when he was working' at the fillin' station. Wanted his girls to have the best, but she married a regular guy. Ehud was a feller in the Bible. Made hisself a dagger, a regular Arkansaw toothpick. Only got to use it once though."

**Hude:** "I remember that. You got you a dagger?"

**Ehud:** "Naw, but since I learned to write I got me a part time job at the newspaper. I write a column, see? I was gonna call it 'Ehud's Dagger.'"

**Hude:** "How come?"

**Ehud:** "Well, Hude, it bein' a gossip column, I was aimin' to use me a subtitle that said, 'And the Dirt Came Out.' Editor shot me down, though. Said he had a bad gut feelin' about it."

**Hude:** "So what do you call it?"

**Ehud:** "Well, since we jest got a small paper, read by mountain folk, we just call it, 'What's Happenin' Up the Holler.'"

**Hude:** "You like it there in the mountains don't ya Ehud?"

**Ehud:** "Wouldn't live no where else. You know, ol' Dr. Bell from the FBF used to live up this away."

**Hude:** "That's what I heard. Ya know, I heard him preach one time."

**Ehud:** "You been to his church?"

**Hude:** "Naw, but when I first moved out the mountains, I was drivin' by one day."

**Ehud:** "What was he preachin' about?"

**Hude:** "From my watch and chain, I'd say about two hours."

**Ehud:** "Sounds right. You know since I got this here computer, I been sending him some e-mail. Said he was going to print it in his magazine. Calls it Frontline."

**Hude:** "Another gossip column?"

**Ehud:** "Naw, preachers wouldn't read no gossip. What're you thinkin', Hude?"

**Hude:** "Well, what kinda column you gonna write then, Ehud?"

**Ehud:** "I'll probly just forward some e-mail to him. That's what most folks that has computers seems to do. Say, he asked me if we got spell checkers up here, you ever hear of 'em?"

**Hude:** "Naw, since they run the cable up through here, and computers has got so cheap at the Wal-Mart, folks don't hardly even play checkers no more."

**Ehud:** "Well, I figger if a man sends me some e-mail it don't need checkin' anyway. These computers fix the mistakes all by theyselves."

**Hude:** "What about stuff that ain't so? Do they fix that?"

**Ehud:** "Why Hude, you cain't lie on the Internet!"

**Hude:** "Wouldn't think so. What kind of e-mail ya gonna put in that magazine column?"

**Ehud:** "Religious stuff, mostly."

**Hude:** "I heard a feller on the radio th'other day was thinkin' about

starting his own religion; was gonna name it after his wife, Judy."

**Ehud:** "They already got that one."

**Hude:** "Well, there ain't no Judyism up here in the mountains. It's mostly a city religion from what I hear."

**Ehud:** "I might write about that Islam."

**Hude:** "Ain't that the one the boys is fightin'?"

**Ehud:** "They aint' fightin' the whole religion, Hude, just them Fundermentalists."

**Hude:** "Mean bunch, from what I hear."

**Ehud:** "Yep, Ol' Sammy Bin Hidin' give the rest of us a bad name."

**Hude:** "I hear he's some kinda cave man, a real trouble-maker."

**Ehud:** "That's what the paper sez. But, Hude, they's lots of folks sez that Islam is a religion of piece."

**Hude:** "Hear they's tryin' to get a piece of Israel, now that ya mention it."

**Ehud:** "They jest want the part where the Jews live from what I hear."

**Hude:** "You gonna straighten all that out in your column?"

**Ehud:** "Naw, I better not take that dog by the ears. I'd better jest stick to stuff that folks are writing me about."

**Hude:** "I'd like to read yore column, Ehud; can you get me a prescription to that Frontline?"

**Ehud:** "Why shore, Hude, that's a good idear. Bible sez 'a merry heart doeth good like a medicine!' Ol' Dr. Ehud'll write you a prescription today."

**T**his edition of "At a Glance" is designed to introduce a mini-series on the centerpiece of God's written revelation to man. The Gospels are the centerpiece of God's written revelation precisely because they focus on the centerpiece of God's self-revelation, Jesus Christ. In order to appreciate the Gospels adequately, however, one needs to understand their place and function in the progression of God's revelation.

Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible. . . . The unifying principle which makes the Bible a living whole . . . is Christ Himself (F. F. Bruce, *Books and Parchments*, pp. 88-89).

A previous edition of this column presented the providential structure of Scripture, showing how each major division of the Bible progressively contributes to the whole (January/February 1994). Without recreating that entire column, I'd like to recover just enough to provide the proper setting for these Gospel gems as a whole.

### The Literary-Theological Setting of the Gospels

*The Old Testament divides into four major, distinctive literary segments.*

*The Pentateuch* (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the first segment of the Bible, which consists of a historical introduction (Genesis, describing the creation and fall of man, and the initiation of God's plan to redeem man), followed by four books of **laws** (to govern sinful man's relationship to God and to one another) and **sacrifices** (to atone for man's inevitable failure to keep those laws). The central issue and concern throughout (e.g., Ex. 19:3-6; Lev. 19:1-2) is **holiness** (noun and verb forms occur nearly 275 times). The recurring problem throughout is man's sin at every turn. No sooner is the divine-human relationship underway than is it broken by sin (Gen. 3). No sooner is the law given to govern and curb that sin than it is broken by sin (Ex. 32). No sooner is the sacrificial system to repair these breaches in place than it is corrupted and marred by sin (Lev. 10; Num. 16). The function of the Pentateuch, then, is *to show the need for a Perfect Priest who can offer a perfect sacrifice that actually takes away sin and makes the worshipper holy* (cf. Gal. 3:19-24; Heb. 7:23-27, 10:1, 11-14).

*The Historical Books* (Joshua-Esther) record the history of God's people and their land—how they got it, how they lost it, and how they got it back. The contents comprise an unending cycle of **blessing/victory** when they obeyed God and **judgment/defeat** when they disobeyed God (cf.

Josh. 24; 1 Sam. 12). The central issue and concern throughout is the **leadership** of God's people. Again the recurring problem was sin, but more specifically **iniquity** (an innate tendency of character that repeatedly showed itself in both leaders and people). The function of the historical books is *to show the need for a Perfect King who will never fail, who can effectually secure the submission and fealty of His subjects, and whose kingdom is unconquerable and without end* (cf. Mt. 21:5; 1 Tim. 1:17, 6:15; Rev. 15:3, 17:14, 19:16).

*The Prophetic Books* (Isaiah-Malachi) consist of **preaching** (exhorting, correcting, encouraging, wooing) coupled with **prediction** (warnings and promises; 456 prophecies of Messiah). The central issue and concern throughout is one of **loyalty** to God and to His Word (cf. Hos. 4:1; Mic. 6:6-8). But still the recurring problem was sin, particularly what the prophets often described as spiritual **adultery** manifested in disobedience to and defection from God (cf. Is. 6; Jer. 1; Ezek. 2; Hosea; Malachi). More often than not the people refused to listen to God's prophets. The function of this body of material, then, serves *to show the need for a Perfect Prophet with grace to effect repentance and obedience to His message, authority to administer predicted blessing and judgment, and power to fulfill all of God's purposes—because the Messenger is God* (Mal. 3:1-6; Heb. 8:8-12).

*The Poetical Books* (Job-Canticles) primarily consist of **wisdom** (skill in living life God's way) and **worship** (proper perspective throughout life's experiences). The central issue and concern throughout is the **fear of the Lord** (as a consistent way of life). Once again, the recurring problem is sin—in this case, the injustice and idolatry that surround and effect us. Even David and Solomon, the predominant authors of the poetic literature, failed to live up to their own counsel. The function of this portion is *to show the need for a Perfect Counselor (Shepherd of Souls), whose own example unfailingly exhibits all that His wisdom advises* (cf. Is. 9:6, 40:10-11; Ezek. 34:1-6, 11-16, 23-24).

In short, the OT is an *anticipation* and a *preparation* for a Perfect Person; the NT is the *realization* and *manifestation* of that Perfect Person (cf. Mt. 12:6, 41, 42; 22:41-46).

*The New Testament divides into four major, distinctive sections.*

*The Gospels* (Matthew-John) serve as the **introduction** to the NT and present the **manifestation** of the Person and Work of Christ.

*The Acts* provide the primary **history** of the NT and record the **proclamation** of the Person and Work of Christ (Acts 1:1, 8, 2:36, 10:34-43, 28:31).

*The Epistles* (Romans-Jude) furnish the theological **explanation** of the NT and impart the **interpretation** of the Person and Work of Christ.

# INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST

*The Revelation* constitutes the major **prophecy** of the NT and portrays the **consummation** of the Person and Work of Christ.

The Bible, then, is Christocentric. That is not to say that Christ is in every verse, but that every verse ultimately leads to Him. The role of the Gospels within this larger framework becomes apparent and central. Let's examine the makeup of this segment of NT revelation a little more closely.

## The Gospels—The Heart of the Bible

The Gospels are the heart of the Bible, with their four-fold introduction of the One anticipated in all that precedes it and the One proclaimed and explained in all that follows. The Gospels, many insist, are *not biography*. That's true . . . sort of. If a "biography" is a written history of someone's life, then the Gospels certainly qualify as biography. Nevertheless, it is true that the Gospels are not normal biographies in the sense to which we are accustomed.

- None is a *complete* record of Jesus life.
- Two are organized thematically, not chronologically.
- All have an underlying purpose beyond relating the story of an individual.

The Gospels are a unique Biblical and literary genre—biography with a distinctive theological aim; what one might call "theography." Each Gospel includes, usually at the outset, a statement of purpose.

- **Matthew is explicitly apologetic.** It is "the book of the generation [genealogy] of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (1:1)—a declarative defense of the identity, origin, and history of Jesus Christ.
- **Mark is explicitly annunciatory.** It presents "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (1:1)—a record of how the good news about Jesus Christ started.
- **Luke is explicitly edificational, confirmatory.** Luke explains that he had accurately traced out the facts and composed a chronologically sequential narrative of the life of Christ, in order that the reader "mightest know the certainty of those things" (Luke 1:3-4).
- **John is explicitly persuasive and evangelistic.** John reveals that he has written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (Jn. 20:31).

## The Passion—The Heart of the Gospels

Where do most of the Gospels concentrate most of the attention? The Gospels do not primarily concern Jesus' birth (only a total of four chapters in two of the Gospels), Jesus' early life (a handful of verses only in Luke), Jesus' teaching (it has been estimated that all the recorded teachings of Christ combined would amount to only 6 average length sermons), nor Jesus' miracles (35 are recorded,

scattered throughout 89 chapters).

Instead, the focus of the bulk of the Gospels' material devoted to a single topic or time-span is as follows: Matthew 21-28 (8 of 28 chapters, or one-third of Matthew) on one week of Jesus' earthly life; Mark 11-16 (6 of 16 chapters, or one-third of Mark) on one week; Luke 19-24 (6 of 24 chapters, or one-fourth of Luke) on one week; John 12-20 (9 of 21 chapters, or nearly one half of John) on one week. In fact, John 13-19 (7 of 21 chapters, or one-third of John) actually focus on one single 24-hour period out of the entire life of Christ! You can see why the Gospels are not "normal" biography; this is not a "normal" person or life. In other words, 29 of 89 Gospel chapters (or one-third of the Gospel record) focus on one week in the entire 33-year life and three-year ministry of Christ. "It is no wonder," wrote I. Howard Marshall, "that . . . Kahler described a Gospel as a passion narrative with an extended introduction" ("Jesus in the Gospels, *EBC*, I, 518).

If the Gospels are the heart of the Bible, then the heart of the Gospels is the Passion of Jesus Christ, the central feature of His work. That means the heart of the heart of the Bible is the sacrificial, substitutionary, redemptive work of Christ on the Cross, and His victorious resurrection conquering death.

## The Bible's Four-Chambered Heart

Why are there more than one Gospel? Why do we need four?

- Multiple testimonies establish credibility ("In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established").
- Two Gospels are by original apostles (Matthew and John) and two are by "second generation" converts and believers (Mark and Luke).
- Multiple accounts encompass and express more of the truth by approaching it from different perspectives (as with diamonds, more facets allow the fuller and more multi-faceted manifestation of the Light).

As the heart of the Bible, the Gospels function as the introduction to the Person of Christ. Like the human heart, the heart of the Bible has four "chambers" that fit and work together beautifully. Two "chambers" focus on complementary aspects of the *position* of Christ—Matthew emphasizes His rank as King, while Mark underscores His role as Servant. And two "chambers" focus on contrapuntal aspects of the *person* of Christ—Luke accentuates His humanity, while John highlights His deity. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John form the four-chambered heart of God's self-revelation to man in the person of Jesus Christ.



# What of America's Future?

David Cummins

From the time of my early maturity, I have studied the Word of God and read extensively in Baptist history. Out of my perusing of Baptist history, the history of our great republic has attracted much attention. As a pastor and Bible teacher, I have often been asked of America's role in prophecy, and I have come to the following conclusion: the United States of America is not found in the end-time picture of prophecy as set forth in God's Word. It simply is not there.

Israel, of course, is center stage in the prophecies of the last time. The nations that will threaten Israel in the last days are seen in the wings. We read of nations such as Russia, China (with the kings of the East), Egypt, and the Arab countries surrounding Israel. And Bible prophecy students easily discern the existence of a rebuilt Roman Empire, out of which the Antichrist shall come, in today's European union. But the United States of America is just not to be found in the prophetic picture of the end times.

I have come to the conclusion that our republic's place in history exists primarily during this dispensation of grace. God, in His sovereign will, purposed to use America in a special way to disseminate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ around the world. After all, it was in a great revival that our nation came into being. The Great Awakening of the early 18th century provided the catalyst for America's declaration of independence. Since that time, America has been used of God as no other nation in history for evangelizing the world. Perhaps 80 to 85 percent of all foreign Christian missionaries have been Americans. These sacrificial emissaries of the gospel have circled the globe and preached the gospel on every continent. Tens of millions have come to Christ through the sacrificial efforts of these valiant soldiers of the cross.

But what of America? There are several alternatives I believe we must consider. First, even with all of the spiritual apostasy, political corruption, and moral collapse in this once-honored republic, we are convinced that multitudes of our citizenry will be raptured when Jesus Christ comes again for His own. Perhaps this will so weaken our nation that she will be powerless. Of course, the world will soon enter into the tribulation period, and the Antichrist will establish his ruthless seven-year reign. Or secondly, because of the permeation of evil in American society, perhaps God will allow heathen nations to obliterate our land and render it helpless. From time to time in the Old Testament, God did that to Israel. God called Assyria "the rod of mine anger" (Isa. 10:5); Babylon He referred to as "my sword" (Ezek. 30:24), and Nebuchadnezzar He nicknamed "my servant" (Jer. 27:6). But because Israel was the covenant-promised nation, God retained a remnant with which to rebuild. But ours is not a covenant-promised land. Our nation has only been blessed as our population has personally sought the Lord.

Our land is today honeycombed with godless infidels

who have denied God, His Son, and His Word. Our people bow to the god of materialism. No longer can we in reality speak of ourselves as "One nation, under God, indivisible." Our Western society has traded our great heritage for a hodgepodge of relativism, pluralism, and multiculturalism. Our time-honored Constitution was written from a Judeo-Christian perspective, and surely John Adams was correct when he said, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people, and it is inadequate to the government of any other." Again I must concur with Patrick Henry, who wrote, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not on religionists, but by Christians . . . not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Multitudes in our land now bow to the many gods of the heathen. Allah is worshiped in mosques throughout America, and Mohammed and the Qur'an are honored as being divine. Hinduism boasts its throngs of followers in our land today, and select areas of America are being overrun by the followers of its pagan gods. Spiritism continues to be on the rise, and newspapers feature the horoscope. The growth of Eastern religions in America is a phenomenon that cannot be denied.

We are told that special privilege and honor must be given to various "alternative lifestyle" groups, such as homosexuals. However, one minority group is totally ignored—special treatment must never be allowed to religious oddities such as Bible-believing, fundamental Christians.

Our society has been and is being overrun by those who are hell-bent for destruction. It has repudiated the God of heaven. He has been ruled out of public schools. It has been declared illegal to acknowledge God in any public gathering, whether it be a sporting event or an opera. But when disaster struck last September 11, men cried, "Where is God now?" Isn't it interesting that God has been ruled out of national life in America as long as prosperity seemed to be ours? But when disaster beset us, Americans fell on their faces to the Lord. Even congressmen united in imploring heaven in song as they sang "God Bless America!"

America has been given a wake-up call. It is time to repent! I have heard great Bible teachers state that there will never be another great spiritual awakening before the rapture, but I personally believe the only hope of America is for such a revival, and I believe it is possible! Whenever God's children repent and meet the conditions, I believe the Lord will hear humble petitions and respond. The most important question that can be asked is this: *how will genuine believers respond to the need?* The gods of the heathen are merely tools of Satan to deceive, but the God of heaven is still on the throne, and He is the Ruler of the universe. Let us humbly seek His face. He only is able to turn the tide in these fateful days.

Dr. David L. Cummins is Deputation Director of Baptist World Mission in Decatur, Alabama.



## Hybels Invites Muslim Cleric to Explain Islam

Pastor Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church recently invited Muslim Imam Faisal Hammouda to explain the religion of Islam to 17,000 churchgoers over four services. During the speech, the Imam criticized the United States for its support of Israel. Hybels noted, "There are some Americans and some Christians spreading rumors and half-truths that the Qur'an encourages violence. Well, you take some stuff out of context and we've got major problems." After the service, Hybels explained that Hammouda's appearance "gave us a greater sense of assurance that maybe, despite all of our differences, we can get along." (TVC News, 10/26/2001)

## Pope Says Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God

"From this place, I invite both Christians and Muslims to raise an intense prayer to the One, Almighty God whose children we all are, that the supreme good of peace may reign in the world," Pope John Paul II said at an outdoor mass where some 50,000 people gathered in the central Asian nation of Kazakhstan on September 23, 2001. (Christian News, 10/1/2001)

## Bin Laden Linked with Christian Persecution

Paul Marshall, British-born author of *Their Blood Cries Out* and a senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom in Washington, D.C., sees a connection between the Osama bin Laden terror network and persecution directed against Christians in a host of countries. "He's tied in with a lot of persecution," Marshall told ASSIST News Service. "In many settings it's radicals within his network who are carrying out persecution. . . . This is going on in the Philippines, Indonesia and to some extent Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and, of course, Afghanistan." Meanwhile, he added, bin Laden is allied with other terrorist groups in Algeria and Nigeria that have been killing Christians. Persecution also continues in Muslim countries without ties to bin Laden, Marshall noted, adding, "You get persecution in the Islamic world apart from bin Laden. Most notably are the Saudis—who are [bin Laden's] enemy number one. They have arrested 15 Christians in the last two months. In the [first week of October], they have tortured at least three of them." (Baptist Press, 10/11/2001)

## Sudanese Christian Convert Tortured

A young Sudanese student was recently arrested

and severely beaten and tortured in Khartoum when he refused to recant his new Christianity and return to the Muslim faith. Mohammed Saeed Mohammed Omer was studying economics at an Indian university near New Delhi when his family in Sudan learned that he had abandoned Islam. They ordered him to come home and threatened to disinherit him before a lawyer and the entire family. Feeling he had little choice, Omer returned home but continued to attend Christian meetings in Khartoum. His family warned that they would turn him over to the security police if he did not recant. When his uncle threatened to kill him, Omer moved in with a friend but was picked up by security officials a few days later. The police beat the young man and pulled off several of his fingernails with pliers in attempts to force him to return to Islam. He refused to renounce his faith in Christ. He is currently recovering and is being kept under house arrest by his family. (K-House eNews, 10/9/2001)

## Christians Arrested in Algeria

Police in Algeria recently arrested 16 young people for possessing Bibles and other Christian literature. Those arrested ranged in age from 16 to 31 and are members of a Christian denomination

from central Algeria. They had approached vacationers, one of whom alerted the authorities. Proselytism by Christians is considered a crime in predominantly Muslim Algeria. Muslims who convert to another religion risk a death sentence. (Christian News, 9/17/2001)

## Indonesian Christians Target of Jihad

On Sulawesi Island in Indonesia, Muslim warriors attacked several small towns, burning several churches and hundreds of homes. Thousands of Christians have fled under attack from Islamic fundamentalists armed with firearms and grenades. "It seems that Muslim leaders have a double standard," said Voice of the Martyrs spokesman Gary Lane. "They demanded the U.S. halt bombing in Afghanistan during Ramadan, but it is apparently okay for radical jihad warriors to terrorize Indonesian Christians during the Islamic holy month." Around 9,000 people have died in Muslim-Christian clashes since 1999 when self-proclaimed "jihad warriors" moved in from the neighboring Maluku province. (K-House eNews, 12/4/2001) Perhaps as many as 63,000 Christians are trapped in the predominantly Christian city of Tentena. One missionary in Indonesia fears the "jihad warriors" will break through to Tentena and

massacre the Christians who have taken refuge there. Afghans and other foreigners are fighting alongside the Muslim militias in Sulawesi, according to news services. A policeman said he saw Muslim fighters stopping civilians at roadblocks and executing those found to be Christians. The attacks are part of a campaign by Muslim extremists to drive out Christians from the parts of Indonesia where they are a majority and to turn Indonesia into a strict Islamic state. The country's constitution guarantees freedom of religion. While 88 percent of the population is Muslim, Christians constitute an 8 percent minority and in some places are the majority. (Baptist Press, 12/5/2001)

### Malaysian Jihad

Islamic clerics in Malaysia are urging all Muslims to rise up in jihad, participating directly in the fighting or indirectly with financial support. Abdul Ghani Samsudin, head of the Ulema Association of Malaysia, lectured, "Jihad in the form of sacrificing one's life or material is required of all Muslims." (*The Federalist*, 12/7/2001)

### Arafat Doubletalk

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat continues to deliver two very different sets of messages—one for media and Western consumption, another for the Palestinian people. In a recent speech, Arafat called for an end to suicide bombings and armed attacks against Israelis. This speech

## NOTABLE QUOTES

**W**e are not afraid of death because martyrdom is a great gift of God. Every man has to die one day, but we pray that we should die a martyr.—Mohammed Omar, the Taliban's supreme ruler

**T**he secular West does not understand the Bible, much less radical Islam, which is increasingly embraced with America's detriment in mind. While secular and moderate Muslims do not appear threatening, the growing number of extremists who take the Qur'an as a declaration of war against all non-Muslims has become a clear and present danger, not only overseas, but increasingly in our own country.—Cal Thomas

**W**hat happened on September 11 was terrorism, but what happened during the Gulf War was also terrorism.—William Keach, professor of English at Brown University

**B**erkeley has always been an island of sanity in terms of the war madness that has prevailed in this country. The U.S. is now a terrorist. According to the Taliban these are terrorist attacks.—Dona Spring, member of the Berkeley (CA) City Council

**I**t's a symbol of terrorism and death and fear and destruction and repression.—University of Massachusetts physics professor Jennie Traschen telling the Amherst, Massachusetts, town board what the Stars and Stripes actually represent.

**T**he American flag stands for intimidation, censorship, violence, bigotry, sexism, homophobia and shoving the Constitution through a paper shredder. Whom are we calling terrorists here?—Author Barbara Kingsolver

**T**here are several million Muslims in the United States, many of them citizens professing their love for and loyalty to this country. But I have yet to see a bumper sticker that says "Allah Bless America."—Lyn Nofziger

**T**he phenomenon of religious fundamentalism is not to be found in Islam alone. Fundamentalist Christians in America . . . and extreme nationalism have formed deadly combinations in these decades, impervious to reason.—*New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis

**T**hey who have been so eager to greet Allah in Heaven may soon discover that their everlasting host is not Allah, but the smiling innkeeper at Hell.—R. Emmett Tyrrell

was not well-received by his own people and resulted in unusually strong criticism from the Arabic Press. A poll conducted by the independent Jerusalem Media and Communications Center showed that before his speech more than half his people were against a cease-fire—including 64 percent backing suicide bomb attacks against Israelis. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine all said that they would not abide by Arafat's cease-fire order. In Ramallah two days after the first speech, Arafat told the crowds, "I am willing to sacrifice 70 martyrs to kill one Israeli," and in response, the crowd chanted, "One million martyrs are already marching to Jerusalem." Arabic-language publications and broadcasts continue to condemn the United States. In a sermon delivered December 7 at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and broadcast by the PLO-controlled Palestinian Radio, America was referred to as "infidel," "Crusaders," and "head of world terror." The deliverer of the sermon told Muslim worshippers that there is no place for America in the world. According to Palestinian Media Watch, themes of hatred towards the U.S. are an integral part of Palestinian ideology. (*K-House eNews*, 12/18/2001)

### Warlike Islam

"Mohammed was a prophet, but he was also a warrior wounded twice in battle," said James Chancellor, the W.O. Carver Professor of

World Religion and World Missions at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "He was a political ruler and while full-blown theocracy has been rare in Islam, the use of political force and violence for legitimate needs for achieving goals remains an aspect of Islamic tradition." The idea of mixing violence and religion is foreign to Americans, said Chancellor, who holds a Ph.D. in Islam and world religions from Duke University. (Baptist Press, 11/30/2001)

### War with Islam

"Why must we constantly repeat that we are not at war with Islam? We never declared war on Islam. It was Islamic fanatics who, killing 4,000 Americans in the name of God, declared war on us. Why then are we the ones required to continually demonstrate our religious tolerance and respect for others? Shouldn't that be the responsibility of the Islamic world, of those in whose name this crime was perpetrated? Imagine if 19 murderous Christian fundamentalists hijacked four airplanes over Saudi Arabia and, in the name of God, crashed them into the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, destroying the holy Kaaba and killing thousands of innocent Muslim pilgrims. Could anyone doubt that the entire Christian world—clergy and theologians, leaders and lay folk—would rise as one to

denounce the act and declare it a sacrilege? And yet after September 11, where were the Muslim theologians and clergy, the imams and mullahs, rising around the world to declare that September 11 was a crime against Islam? Where were the fatwas against Osama bin Laden? The voices of high religious authority have been scandalously still."—Charles Krauthammer

### California Public Schools Teach Islam

Attempting to reconcile a lack of understanding of Islam, several California public school districts have adopted a seventh-grade curriculum for the study of Islam which includes learning about historic Islamic martyrs, wearing a robe, adopting a Muslim name, memorizing verses from the Qur'an and learning to pray "in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful." "We could never teach Christianity like this," protested Elizabeth Christina Lemings, a teacher in Byron's Union School District, whose child came home with homework to memorize 25 Islamic terms, 6 Islamic phrases and 20 Islamic proverbs. "We can't even mention the name of Jesus in the public schools," Lemings complains. "Can you imagine the barrage of lawsuits and problems we would have from the ACLU if Christianity were taught in the public schools, and if we tried to

teach about the contributions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Apostle Paul?" (*The Federalist*, 1/14/2002)

### Churches Being Demolished in Nigeria

Nigeria's Zamfara state has adopted new measures to enforce Islamic law (*shari'a*), first adopted two years ago, CNSNews.com reported January 30. Fourteen church buildings have been slated for demolition by the state government. Lands and housing commissioner Hassan Nasihu told state radio there were too many churches in Zamfara and there was need to drastically reduce the number as well as to prevent the opening of new ones. Zamfara was the first of Nigeria's 36 states to introduce *shari'a* law, in January 2000. One-third of the country's states have followed suit. Christians in these states claim the move aims to wipe out Christianity. About half of Nigeria's total population of around 123 million is Muslim. (Baptist Press, 1/30/2002)

### Spying on Churches?

Civil liberties have been some of the first casualties in the war on terrorism. Unfortunately, many Americans have stated that they are willing to give up some of their liberties in order to step up the war against terrorism. While the government needs to have the power to root out terrorist groups, it is

important to beware any legislation that oversteps the lines drawn by the Constitution. Recently U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft expressed a willingness to expand the FBI's wiretapping powers to include churches and political organizations, and many Americans are justifiably concerned. Limits on the FBI's surveillance powers were imposed in the 1970s after the death of J. Edgar Hoover, who used the bureau to spy on civil rights, anti-war, and Klan leaders. The rules disallowed undercover agents in churches, synagogues, or mosques unless there was a "probable cause or evidence" that someone in them had broken the law. (*K-House eNews*, 12/4/2001)

### No Blessings at School

After a teachers' union representative questioned whether the parents' association of Beach Channel High School in Queens may constitutionally enact their First Amendment rights of "free speech" and "free exercise of religious faith" by posting a "God bless you" sign, the New York City Board of Education banned the phrase "God bless you" from school property. (*The Federalist*, 1/30/2002)

This news is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International.



# It's Better To Burn Out Than Fade Away

**I**t's better to burn out than fade away"—the lyrics from a rock song ran through my head. That was all I was thinking about as I wrapped the ceramic coffee mug in my leather jacket, preparing to crush it with the heel of my boot. I had to be careful to get out of the view of the camera. I didn't want the police to see me or stop me from killing myself.

It was February 8, 1993, and I was in a holding cell after being questioned for a murder in the south suburbs of Pittsburgh. I couldn't believe this was happening to me. How could I have been so stupid . . . so naïve . . . so deceived? I kept asking myself why? How could I face my family after this? The shame and the guilt were more than I could bear. Just by one senseless act I had brought so much pain to so many people. What was I thinking? I guess I wasn't really thinking at all.

All I knew was that I didn't want to live anymore, and I was preparing to cut my wrists with a piece of the broken coffee mug. As far as I was concerned my life was over. I didn't want to be around to face the music. I just wanted to end it all in one cowardly act.

I began slicing and tearing at my wrist with the broken coffee mug as I sat in the corner of the cell out of view of the camera. As the blood began to spill upon the floor I felt nothing—nothing emotionally, that is. I was totally empty inside. I wanted out of this life. I was determined to die. It wasn't long before the police figured out that I was up to something. An officer appeared at the cell door and noticed the blood on the floor as well as the blood pouring from my wrist. I had managed to dig a pretty deep hole in my arm by then. I wanted to die. But that wasn't going to happen.

The officer who found me quickly called for help, and I was taken to a local hospital where I was stitched up and given a soft cast for my wrist, since I had severed a tendon in my arm. I was hurried back to the local police station where I was to await transportation to Pittsburgh to be brought up on charges for murder.

After being fingerprinted and photographed I was booked in to the county jail where I was put in the mental health unit because of my suicide attempt. I still wanted to die. It was all that I could think about. My remorse for what I had done was more than I could bear.

After not sleeping for three days, I was given something to help me sleep. I remember thinking to myself how terrible this place was that I was in. It was filthy and had cockroaches running around everywhere. The screams from the insane people were enough to drive you mad if you were not already crazy. There was a man in the

cell across from me drinking out of the toilet like a dog lapping water out of a bowl. There was another man who was restrained upon his bunk, his arms and feet bound. He was repeatedly given injections against his will. Every time he yelled and screamed. I remember being absolutely horrified by where I was, and I still didn't want to live.

I slept an entire day when I finally fell asleep. During that time I had the worst nightmare I've ever had. In the dream I was in hell. I was restrained by shackles on both arms and legs as I was engulfed up to my neck in flames. My mouth was wide open, screaming from the pain of burning that never stopped. Tears rolled down my face as I cried in total torment. The worst part about it all was that it was forever, and I knew that no matter what, I was there forever!

I awoke from my dream covered in sweat, but yet I was freezing because I was not allowed to have a blanket for fear I would hang myself with it. I remembered the dream. I thought about it that entire day. But even after the dream I still was bent on committing suicide. I wanted to die—I thought even death would be better than this. My life was ruined, I thought, and there was no point in living anymore.

A few weeks later I was released from the mental health unit. I had fooled the staff into believing I was all right and that I really wasn't going to kill myself. I was placed in the main population of the jail. At first I was a bit nervous about it all. I had never been in jail before. The people in the prison population were just as nuts as those in the mental health unit. I was assigned a cell at the very top of a multi-tier unit with the cell being at the very end of the block. I went to my cell and lay there on a canvas cot that folded up so that you were able to use a toilet that was under it in the back of the cell. The cell was about eight feet wide and ten feet long, with a sink that ran only cold water. It was filthy, and roaches scurried along the walls and floors. There were even rats the size of cats running around!

The rats and the insects were the least of my worries. There were all types of men in the prison who were there for all types of unspeakable crimes (not that I was any better than any of them). There were men there for crimes as simple as shoplifting to crimes as serious as what I was in there for. There were the gangs—the Muslims, the skin-heads. It was a violent world that I was thrown into.

I was still wearing the same clothing I was given when I first entered the jail. All my other clothing, even my shoes, were taken from me because the detectives wanted them for evidence. I had been wearing the same pair of



underwear for weeks, and all I had on my feet were a pair of socks that were filthy because I didn't have any shoes. The jumpsuit I was issued provided little warmth, but at least I had a blanket.

It wasn't long after I arrived to my cell that another inmate stopped at my cell door to ask me how I was doing. He was a big biker-type fellow, and at first I thought I was in trouble. He could tell that I was a little uncomfortable, so after he saw that I was all right he left me a booklet and walked away. I picked up the booklet and checked it out. It was the Gospel of John from the Bible. I wasn't a religious person. My beliefs were based on what I could see, touch, taste, and smell. I didn't believe in a God at all. I thought that if there were a God, why was there so much pain and suffering in the world? I thought that religion was fairy tales, and I couldn't imagine myself believing in any of it. To me there was no God, no heaven, no hell, and the Bible was just a book. Nevertheless, I began to read the booklet.

As I started reading it I became more and more interested in this Jesus. As a boy I was told about Jesus by my mother, but as I grew older I stopped believing in Him. But here I was sitting in the county jail, facing charges for murder, borderline suicidal, and reading the Gospel of John. I couldn't put the booklet down. The more I read about Jesus the more I began to feel drawn to him. He talked about love, forgiveness, faith, and much more. He talked about peace and salvation. I couldn't get enough.

It didn't take me long to read the booklet, and at the end of the booklet was an invitation to accept Jesus as my Savior. I was in tears as I thought about how I had ruined my life. I didn't even want to live anymore. I couldn't face the consequences that awaited me. My burden was unbearable, and my guilt and remorse made it hard for me even to face myself in the mirror. How could anyone forgive me?

As I lay there sobbing in my own self-pity, I recalled the dream I had had when I was in the mental health unit. The nightmare seemed so real. The hell in my nightmare was someplace I didn't want to go, and I knew that unless I accepted Jesus as my Savior I was surely going there. The concept of being born again really appealed to me. I recalled what Jesus said about being born again: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

I began to realize that God loved me. He loved me so much that He sacrificed His only Son for me: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

I got down on my knees that cold

night in February 1993, in that cockroach- and rat-infested place, and cried out to God. I explained to Him how I ruined my life and how sorry I was. I told Him I believed that Jesus died on that cross for my sins. The tears rolled down my face as I was on my knees crying out to God, asking for forgiveness, asking Him to come into my heart. I felt as though a heavy load was taken from me. My tears of sorrow turned into tears of joy that night.

Since that night my life has not been the same. There were many times I believe that God was calling me to Him before I went to prison. But it took my going to prison for me to finally give my life to Christ.

Today I am serving a life sentence for second-degree murder. I don't know for sure if I will ever be given a second chance to live in the free world, but I do know that through Christ I have already been given a second chance. I will continue to serve Him no matter where I am, in prison or out. Jesus has changed my life, and I am trusting in Him to live His life through me every day. God's love is so real to me now as I am being conformed to the image of His Son. It is my prayer that you too are already in His love as I am. God can change your life no matter where you are or who you are. He loves us all. If you have not accepted Jesus as your Savior, I plead with you to consider my testimony. God will change your life forever if you will repent of your sin and accept Jesus into your heart as your Savior and Lord. Won't you bow your head right now and ask Him to save you?

The author's name has been withheld to protect privacy. He is incarcerated in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

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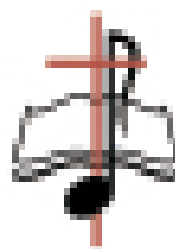
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## The Fear of Man Bringeth a Snare

**T**he strength of Islam is the fear of man. This religion gives the lie to the wisdom of Gamaliel, for here is error that has not yet come to naught. Our purpose here is not just to expose the errors of Islam, but to help fundamental Baptists understand the crying need of these hundreds of millions of souls. As more light is shed on what this religion really teaches, it will become increasingly difficult to defend reasonably.

The literature is vast. One scholar said that it would take multiple volumes just to list the names of the commentaries that have been written on the Qur'an and the Hadith. Honest men will have a hard time taking seriously the claims that Adam was 90 feet tall (Hadith: Burkhari vol. IV, no. 543) or that "Satan stays in the upper part of the nose all night" (Burkhari, vol. IV, no. 516). How many Muslims would defend their doctrine that "believers have one intestine, whereas non-believers have seven" (Muslim vol. III, nos. 5113-5120), or that the "sun sets in a pond of murky water" (Qur'an: Surah 18:86)?

Consider the fear in which a man must live who has been taught "Yawning is from Satan" (Hadith, Vol. IV, no. 509). Grieve for those poor ladies who read three times (Burkhari, vol. I, nos. 28, 301; vol II, no. 161) that most of the inhabitants of hell are women. Marvel at the hopelessness of Mohammed himself, who said, "By Allah, even though I am the Apostle of Allah, yet I do not know what Allah will

do to me" (Burkhari, vol. V. no. 266). Yes, "the fear of man bringeth a snare."

Nor will the urbane cynic escape, though unbelief will have its day. It will point out that after all, if Oral Roberts can see a 900-foot Jesus, why can't the poor Muslim believe in a 90-foot Adam? If Joshua can make the sun stand still or if the shadow of the sundial of Ahaz can go backward ten degrees, why

shouldn't we allow the Muslim sun to set in a muddy pond. A smile, a smirk, and so it goes, "How sad that the Fundamentalists of the world have to take such quaint things literally."

But, those who take the Bible literally may rest in what it says. Men will continue to attack it and those of us who believe it, but "The Bible Stands!" The evangelical who strives for social relevance is in for a rough ride. It is not unusual to find him being branded a "Fundamentalist" in the media today. By the time this issue of *Frontline* is out, his "Bible-du-jour," the NIV, will be joined by the new feminist Bible, "Today's New International Version," a gender-neutral twist on the text.

But, we have our own fish to fry. May I point out a denominator common to error? "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25). It is no feigned naiveté to claim that I not only don't understand most of what I read on the textual controversy, but I don't really understand

why it is being written, and I'm not afraid to say so.

Are we really in danger of losing the Bible? Didn't Christ promise us that we never would? I'm sure there must be some earnest contending for the faith, but I wonder sometimes if some of this is not an attempt to steady the Ark while the oxen of our own faithlessness stumble. I grieve too for those dear ladies who read the ever increasing number of books that insist they must take their stand with this Ph.D. or that, or who must follow a man who diverts attention away from his own scandals by claiming "this is all an attack on the precious Word of God."

Since the day I got saved, I have never doubted that my King James Bible is the Word of God. It is all I read and all I use. I believe it, love it, and by the grace of God, strive to live it. Now, I'm being pressured to chime in with the latest fad and claim something for manuscripts that I wouldn't recognize if I saw with my own eyes. Nonsense. Must I believe my Bible by proof, by scholarship, or by faith?

Yes, "the fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." And again, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and

ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:27)." It is as foolish to merely follow a man on this issue as it is to follow Mohammed.

*Must I believe my Bible by proof, by scholarship, or by faith?*



DR. JOHN C. VAUGHN

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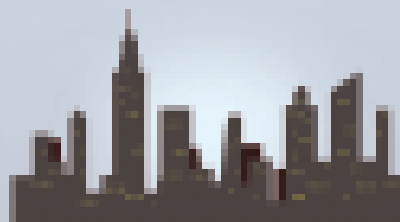
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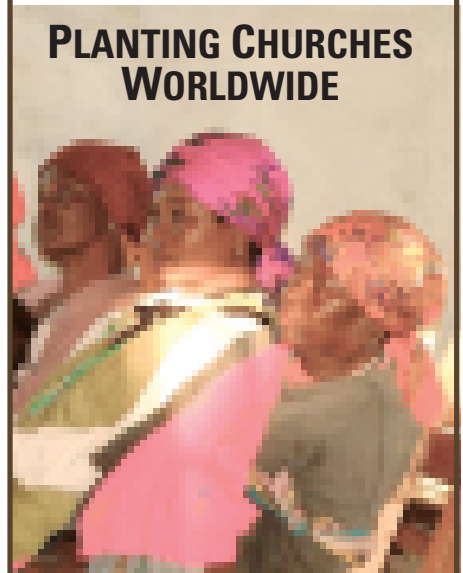
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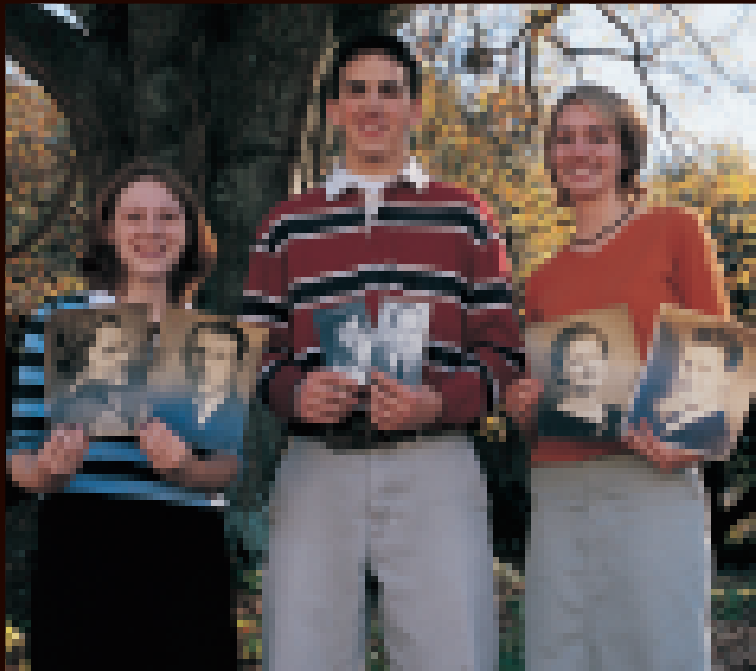
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