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Ignorance and Knowledge, Darkness and Light

by Dick York

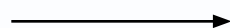


The apostle Peter wrote, “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (life-style); because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy.**”¹

What fashioned our philosophy—our worldview—before we were saved? Ignorance.

What dictated our priorities and governed our desiring? Again, ignorance.

What alienates the unbeliever from the life of God? The same answer: the ignorance that is in them.



That is not a bigoted point of view, it is what the scriptures say. Also the apostle Paul exhorted us, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.”²

This has been the case since the serpent in the Garden of Eden persuaded man to declare his independence from the leading of God’s holy Spirit to try his hand at choosing good over evil as a way of life. From the first generation of human history, it didn’t work. The reason is two-fold: first, because there is nothing good in man’s flesh,³ and second, because man’s perception of good and evil is skewed by the lust of his flesh and of his mind.⁴

The world’s agenda, its reasoning and its values are dictated, for the most part, by men of fleshy mind: men whom Paul describes as having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;² and he exhorts us not to walk as they walk.

We are warned that evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse.⁵ So we understand that the later it becomes in the course of history, the worse evil men will be. Seduction also will be more virulent. Since we are arguably nearing the end of the age, it should seem obvious that the world’s standards and values will be greatly at odds with those that the church should be expected to embrace.

What separates the church from the world is the great difference between ignorance and the knowledge of God. They of the world are natural men, born of corruptible seed, the flesh. Those who make up the church are spiritual creatures, born of incorruptible seed by the word of God.⁶ As a consequence, the church and the world are two distinct entities, as different as darkness and light.

In the very early beginnings of the New Testament church, the world stood in awe of the saints, but it dared not join them, or enter into their activities. The only way they could be added to the church was to be added to the Lord.⁷ They knew

from what they were seeing that God is holy and so are his people. The whole history of God’s people, whether it be of Israel in the Old Testament or of the church in the New, is one of separation. In the case of Israel, they were distinct from all other nations. That is still true. It is the reason that they are hated everywhere. Although they are not godly at this time in their history, they are still separate.

In the case of the church, she is commanded to be separate from the world around her—not isolated, but separate. There is no record in the scriptures that anyone from the world was ever invited into the assembly of the saints. There is a reason for that. Paul instructed the Corinthian church, which was hindered in its growth by worldliness,

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial (the Devil)? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”⁸

But for the most part, this is not the message we are hearing today. We are being taught that we must be very much like the world in order to attract sinners into our meetings so that they can hear the Gospel. But why would the church want to incorporate into its worship or its program customs or behavior that has developed from the ignorance of a blinded society? Because we make the effort to look like them, sound like them and act like them, perhaps they will interpret that to be love and identify with us. That may happen; but what is missing is the awe and the fear of the Lord that was generated by that early church. So now that the unsaved identify with us, and we identify with

What separates the church from the world is the great difference between ignorance and the knowledge of God.

them, it is very difficult to find the line between the professing church and the society of the world. But why, after all, would the church want to incorporate into its program or into its worship customs and behavior that has developed as a result of the ignorance of a blinded society?

And what was it that Jesus said about reaching sinners with the Gospel? Did he have a method? He did. It was to take the Gospel to the world. He said nothing about attracting sinners to the church. There is no indication in the word that the church was ever made attractive to sinners. Jesus said,

*"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*⁹

The church was to go and attack the world with the view of teaching those who would listen everything that Jesus taught his disciples. When they had embraced the word, they were to be baptized. We know from the rest of the New Testament that baptism is reserved for those who have believed, repented of sin and confessed Jesus as their Lord. When, in response to the Gospel, they had been added to the Lord, they became part of the church; they weren't just invited to it.

There are also other parts of the message that many of us are not hearing today. Jesus told his disciples to teach all things that he had taught them. That would include life-style instructions that would lead us to have right priorities.

*"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."*¹⁰

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put

*on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?...your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*¹¹

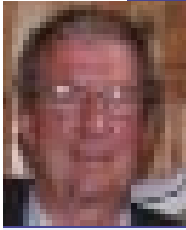
There are contrary instructions issuing forth from prominent men who purport to teach the scriptures, which corrupt the message of the word. They teach spiritually hungry believers around the world to lust after material things as if that would solve their problems and satisfy their hearts. Jesus and his apostles taught us to give, not to get; to die, not to live; to go, not to become comfortable. They taught us not ease, complacency and comfort, but the cross. Jesus said that he must suffer, be rejected, slain and raised the third day. Then he said to them all, (and surely that "all" would include us) *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall save it."*¹²

We need to pay attention to what Jesus said. If we are not attentive, we will miss it.

We need to pay attention to what Jesus said. If we are not attentive, we will miss it. The "wills" and the "shalls" are of great significance. *If any man will ... whosoever will*: these speak of intent—this is what one has in his mind and will to do. *Shall lose it ... shall save it*: these speak of absolutely certain consequences—this will surely be the consequence of that intent.

If one's intent is to follow Jesus, self-denial is an imperative; there is a cross to bear. The gospel does not promise ease, prosperity and visible success. If one's intent is to save his life for his own purpose, it is a certainty that he shall lose. If on the other hand, his intent is to lose his life, i.e. follow the example of Jesus and of his apostles,¹³ he shall gain the abundant life that Jesus promised.¹⁴ Even the most material-minded of modern faith preachers teach us to give all right—even sacrificially, but with the view of getting something material in return, equating material possessions with the abundant life. But Jesus said, *"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the*

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Jim Lucas' Column

The keen desire of every normal born again believer is to grow in the grace and knowledge of God. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled."¹ A newborn baby always cries for food soon after birth and continues to do so daily for many months. I have one granddaughter that is three years old and she is always saying, "I am hungry," and she always eats and we truly enjoy her great appetite.

Peter, when called to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile: "Opened his mouth, and said. Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." In December and January we spent seven weeks ministering in Kenya and Uganda, we found many hungry for the word of God. One of them a demonized wild man. Others were old, sick, and hurting; Christians that felt deprived of good teaching. One twelve-year-old boy in Nairobi, Kenya never missed a meeting and was there daily for five hours of teaching for a week. March into May we were in Mexico and Costa Rica. We found many Christians who have been saved for a long time still hungry for the ministry of the word of God. Last week I was back in Mexico in Monterrey and found some lovely Christians hungry for information about missions and the work of God in the world. Certainly God is no respecter of persons and in every case above, the faith of Christ, the love of God, and the grace that can be found in Jesus, were the things that we talked about most. Not always the theme for the day but these things were always brought to our attention. No wonder, for the Bible always speaks of them.

Faith, just how important is it anyway? It must not be too important in the hearts of many

of Gods' children. It appears that most think it is something optional that we can take or leave. The last thing you do when nothing else seems to work is pray. How many times have you heard someone say "I had to go by faith" meaning there was no other means by which to go, but if there had been he most certainly preferred doing it some other way: it was displeasing to him to go by faith. Just how serious was the Holy Spirit when he said in his word "Without faith it is impossible to please God"² or when he said: "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin"³ I believe it would

Faith, Love

do many of us good to examine our hearts and see just what our attitude is concerning this. If it pleases God for us to walk by faith and we are truly in love with him, we will rejoice in opportunities to walk by faith.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; if we truly fear him we will choose to walk in faith as much as possible, knowing we do not want to sin against him. Quite often we hear Christians saying that they have a lot of faith, they believe God can do anything. This may seem good to you, but I don't believe it; most of us have very little faith. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus said unto them, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Spiritual pride is a problem. We need to humble ourselves like the man whose son was possessed and Jesus said unto him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him

that believeth.” And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

When Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, “Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him,” the boy was healed. We are not required to have a *lot* of faith, but we are required to *have* faith. We don’t need a lot of faith because Jesus is the Author and finisher of our faith,⁴ and “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”⁵

Jesus is the source of our faith so we have a wonderful amount of it at our disposal. We don’t need a great amount of faith but we need Jesus who is our life. He is not only the author of our faith but the finisher also, meaning that he is ever present to work out this faith in us. When we feel like we have a lot of faith then

we don’t sense our need for Him and begin to act on our own independently from Him. I see this a

lot, people rebuking evil spirits that are not even present, or claiming great things that are not the will of God. Some claim if you have enough faith God will bless you with a lot of money. This is a lie, first of all what is enough? It only takes the grain of a mustered seed to move mountains. We know it is not the will of God to make us all rich. We just need simple faith in Jesus and let Him lead us by His Spirit to pray and live the way that is pleasing to Him. I am rich because Jesus is in me, he is my exceeding and great reward. I am content with Him, if I need any thing He will provide it, and I don’t want to be deceived by seeking for any thing that he has not authored. It’s the faith of Christ that is needed, not for us to have a great amount of faith independently of Him. The Bible teaches us that it’s important to believe God. Many claim they believe *in* God but few today are *believing God*.⁶ he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.

The faith of Jesus is imparted unto us by His word, “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”⁷ Many are not hearing the

word. They read it, even memorize it but fail to have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

Faith also comes from love, Paul said; “faith that worketh by love.”⁸ Christ is the author of our faith, Christ is God and God is love. Those who love God have ears to hear and are listening to His voice. The breakdown of our faith begins when we grow cold in our love for God. Our relationship weakens and we fail to hear when he speaks. Hearing His voice is monumental; it restores the broken relationship. We will not hear if we are full of pride or if our conscience is defiled.⁹ Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.¹⁰

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”¹¹ The hungry soul that loves God is not content to go on without hearing from God. Reading the word is great, but if we are not hearing from God the word becomes dry and tasteless. It’s amazing how long we can go on with so little personal revelation, walking in the light of other men’s fire. John said, “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, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.”¹²

It brings such joy and strength when we hear from Jesus directly. Although he often speaks to us through others it is as if we have heard directly from Him. Or when the word we read that we have read so many times becomes alive to us. At times we get a simple thought that we know is from Jesus, and we are able to go around the world risking all to do what he has revealed to us to do because the peace and the comfort of his presence is with us. If you haven’t been hearing from Jesus on a regular basis your love has gone cold, or lukewarm. If this is true shut yourself in a private place and stay there until he speaks to you. Sometimes we need correction or guidance; other times comfort and assurance: but we always need

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The DaVinci Code

by Steve Montgomery

Please forgive me.

You are probably thinking, “Brown’s book, *The Da Vinci Code*, and its spin-offs are everywhere, the bookstores, newspapers, television, theaters, and now I even find an article about it in a magazine dedicated to missions!”

And I know how that feels.

I was recently in the U.S. and discovered that, at least for the time, B. Daltons, Waldenbooks, Barnes and Noble and many others have ceased to be bookstores and are now Da Vinci Gimmick Stores. Brown’s various books in various editions and covers are surrounded with Da Vinci dictionaries, Da Vinci card and board games, “Explaining the Da Vinci Code” books, even an Atlas of the Da Vinci Code! I searched in vain for an “Exhaustive Concordance of Da Vinci”, but surely it’s in the making. There are also the myriad of copycat books about the Templar knights, The Priory of Sion and Mary Magdalene. Even stuffy biographies of Leonardo have been spiffed up with enigmatic-looking new covers and offered at an increased price. And then there is the new “Unauthorized Biography of Dan Brown”...

I wish only to make three simple observations about the logic behind Brown’s (for the moment) ubiquitous theories, but let me start by admitting that I am only two-thirds qualified to comment.

I thought perhaps I should read this book after a young believer told me that possibly the

extra-Biblical events in the movie *The Passion* actually happened and may appear in the “other gospels, the ones that Constantine left out.” He was shocked to hear that this old saw was without historic basis. How could it not be true? After all, it was in the *Da Vinci Code*! Later, questions in evangelistic Bible studies strengthened the idea. Finally, seeing that the book is number one in sales in Latin America solidified my decision to read it.

I wasn’t able to keep that decision, however.

I found myself so frustrated by Brown’s convoluted logic, unfounded assertions and blatantly poor scholarship that I threw the book in the garbage can when I was only two-thirds through.

Here, then, are my two-thirds qualified observations. Dan Brown, in his book [The Da Vinci Code](#), made (at least) three glaring logical errors:

1. Brown contends that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and that such a marriage proves conclusively that Jesus is not God.

Jesus Christ was not married to Mary or anyone else. Not only is there no reference or even hint of this in the Bible (Brown would say these have been removed) but there is not a single shred of historical evidence that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. Not

even the Gnostic Jesus-stories (pseudogospels like the Gospel of Judas, written two to four hundred years after Christ's resurrection), say they were married.

But forget that.

Consider what Brown is saying: Jesus was obviously not God if He was married because... Because what? Though no one who believes the Bible or studies history seriously buys into this marriage story, all Christians can genuinely ask, What is the evil in marriage that Brown concludes would negate Christ's claims? This supposition shows us more about Brown's idea of marriage than it does about Christ, the Bible or the truth.

Brown is apparently unaware that one of the reasons Christians know Jesus did not marry Mary Magdalene is that He is soon to be married!

His Bride is anxiously looking forward to the great wedding feast, and Jesus Christ looks forward also to that day, the day when He, the promised Messiah of Israel, God in the flesh, will be married in the most important marriage ceremony of all history! Marriage, according to the Scripture, is honorable, and this future marriage obviously does not negate Christ's claims.

2. Brown's second key supposition leaves us spiraling: First we hear that the proof that Jesus is not God is that He married Mary Magdalene. Then we are told that Mary Magdalene, by virtue of her marriage to Jesus, becomes a goddess! This transposition is made complete when we discover that she not only ascends from everyday Jewish girl to goddess by marrying (a "non-divine") Jesus, but is now somehow in the line of goddesses, along with Astarte, Isis, Diana and Venus!

3. Finally, Brown tells us that the truth about the goddess Mary Magdalene

has been suppressed all these centuries by the Roman Catholic Church because they are opposed to professing Christians worshipping a woman! In fact, Brown argues, they have been on the forefront of fighting all forms of worship of a woman, even criminalizing it as witchcraft.

Does anybody see a contradiction here?

The Roman Catholic Church says that Mary (not Magdalene but the mother of Jesus) is the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven. They teach she was born without sin, ascended into heaven without dying, is co-redeemer, co-mediator, the mediator of all grace and our advocate before God. They teach that she prays for us, should be prayed to, is to be worshipped and can take us to heaven. Does this sound like a church that opposes goddess worship?

CONCLUSION:

There is nothing new (and too little true) in Dan Brown's book. Combining rumor, fraud and conspiracy theory from sources as reputable as the Flat Earth Society, he has forged a thriller that has captured attention and filled his pockets. When challenged about the myriad of factual, historical, logical or even geographical errors in his books, Brown has responded that, after all, it is just a novel.

Nothing in this novel will change the truth of the Gospel and in five years time it will be all but forgotten. You will see Da Vinci board games in garage sales by next summer.

We do, however, have an opportunity that we should take. Dan Brown and Tom Hanks have put the name of Jesus in the mouth of the man on the street. Have you considered holding a Bible study at work or in your neighborhood about The True Jesus? Take people the Original Source Documents to find out who this Jesus is.

This is the real way to break the Da Vinci Code.

Ministry Update

Jerry Skiles



The call was unexpected. An American organization trying to assist a developing Brazilian cooperative in cashew production was looking for a volunteer. They had seen my CV and were wanting

me to go. After considering my schedule and responsibilities, I agreed.

The providential hand of God was apparent throughout the trip. The first of a number of unlikely incidences occurred when I was waiting for a delayed flight in the capital city Brasilia. The airport serves over 2,000,000 people, but finding someone who spoke English was difficult. As I was trying to find information about my flight, a young woman offered her assistance. She spoke English, and she explained the flight delay, gate change etc, and then she was gone. A few hours later as I was attempting unsuccessfully to call my host using a public phone to inform him of the delay, she reappeared. I asked for her assistance, and she tried the phone but was not able to make the connection. When I commented on her English ability, she said that she had learned it while in mission training. My interest was aroused and I asked what mission group. She said New Tribes Mission. I explained that I, too, had been involved with NTM, and that I was hoping to stay at a guesthouse and visit some of the missionaries. She said that she was traveling

to her aunt and uncle, who were Brazilian and working with the NTM of Brazil. They worked in Belem where the guesthouse is, so she gave me contact information and we went our separate ways.

Brazil's national language is Portuguese, so I was required to use a translator. Marcel was a man, about 35 years old, who taught English at a school. He was tall and had a commanding personality. He also was using his vehicle for the assignment. The cooperative was 150 miles south of Belem, a large city at the mouth of the Amazon. The three hour drive gave us some time to get to know one another. As we shared our lives, it was apparent that the Lord had been working on Marcel. He was a nominal Catholic, but was not involved with the church. He had several evangelical friends who had been sharing with him. As we visited, I explained to him the Gospel of Grace, how Jesus, 2,000 years ago, bore our sins on Calvary, that the penalty of sin had been dealt with, what remained is our surrender to the Truth of the Gospel. More than once tears would fill his eyes as he struggled with his response to the Gospel.

I remember, he once said to me, "Jerry, surrender is not easy." as tears rolled down his cheeks.

My response was, "What is the alternative?"

His previous exposure to the Gospel had centered on lifestyle behavior. He had never heard the Gospel that focused on Christ's

finished work on our behalf.

It was amazing the people God brought to us during our stay. As we sat at a restaurant, a man came up and began to talk to Marcel. The man wanted to know if I was an evangelical. After hearing the affirmation, this complete stranger shared how he knew I was. Marcel was dumbfounded, and this man who had an evangelist ministry began to share the Gospel with Marcel in Portuguese. The providential crossing of people's lives was amazing.

The cooperative was a very interesting place. It took the cashews from the tree and worked them until the finished product was packaged. A catholic padre had started the cooperative to help the poor people in the area, by providing jobs for them. He had turned the responsibility of it over to the Brazilians, but the emphasis on helping the poor continued. Many of the people I worked with were single mothers. It was a very rewarding experience to help bring some simple ideas and procedures to increase their productivity and income.

On my return trip, I spent time with the missionary community that was working in the area. It was good to see these saints seeking to work with the tribes in the Amazon region. The opportunity to return was given, as they heard of my desire to see training given to believers that emphasizes stewardship of the resources God had entrusted to them, and seeing each member of the Body of Christ taking advantage of the opportunities to see the remaining ethnic groups reached with the Gospel.

As I reflect on the trip, my thoughts center on God's sovereignty. Man does plan—and we should. Yet God is orchestrating His plans, in His time. Of all the people who could have been at Brasilia's airport, he had Isabelle, a young woman who was willing to help a man with his language problem. God orchestrated circumstances to bring Marcel in contact with a series of individuals who shared the Gospel with him. (Marcel said that one of his evangelical friends had prophesied he would

become a Pastor.) The opportunity to share a vision of equipping Christians in developing countries with ideas to give them sustainable income was all from God's providential hand.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." This verse summarizes well the trip to Brazil.



Ed and Abby Drysdale with their family have been in Oregon for a few weeks prior to going to a new location in the Jalisco Highlands in Mexico. Following is a report from Ed.



Steve and Linda Montgomery agree that apparently the Lord is leading us in that direction. The area that we have been praying for is Valle de Juarez and Santa Maria de Oro. With the Lord's leading and counsel from Steve, Linda and Richard McDaniel we will be attending the Fellowship in Jilquipan with brother Cliff and Mary Huffimire. The Town Valle de Juarez being about 30 minutes away from Jilquipan, we will be plugging in there for fellowship until the Lord raises up a work in Valle de Juarez and Santa Maria de Oro. Santa Maria de Oro is a neighboring town nestled in the mountains and really isolated. We thought it would be best if we were closer to some other believers. As a result we will be moving to Valle de Juarez with the intent to reach Santa Maria de Oro as well. We would appreciate prayer for

the Lord's leading, that he would light our path and that we might find grace in his eyes to be used by him for his glory.

Steve and I have taken Dick York's book *God's Eternal Purpose* to a professor here, with the view of having it translated into Spanish but he hasn't really done much with it. This professor has kind of dropped the ball in translating it. Please pray for someone who would be faithful to take on the task of translating the book. I do my best in translating what I can but it needs to be done by someone who is a Mexican and bilingual. I know it would be a blessing if we had this book in Spanish. In Christ Jesus
Ed Drysdale



Remember the Ball family as they labor in Loreto, Zacatecas, Mexico. We have no report from them for this issue

From time to time, when space allows and when we receive things that we believe we should be concerned about, we publish news from other sources. This has caused some to ask if we are connected with those sources.

We feel a connection to the whole body of Christ, but we have no official connection with the many organizations whose news we may pass on.

The use of news stories from the various organizations that generate them is for information and prayer. It does not constitute an organizational connection or, in some cases, even an endorsement of the sources.

But remember, we are related by Jesus' blood to every redeemed believer, and the battle is not only theirs, but ours also.

News From Other Sources

Persecution, Anti-Conversion Bills Plague Christians in Indian States

So-called "Religious Freedom" bills have been passed in the Indian states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh with the expressed intent of stopping people from receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Gospel for Asia regional leader M.A. Lalachan said the bills in the two states were passed to "make conversion tougher, targeting Christian missionaries and their activities."

The Chhattisgarh government, run by the fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), pushed for the bill "penalizing those who change their faith without informing the authorities."

In fact, national BJP chief Rajnath Singh ordered all state governments where his party has a majority to bring in "legislation forcefully punishing conversions." He even admitted that the purpose of the anti-conversion laws was "to destroy the plans of Christian missionaries."

According to the bill, people wishing to change religion must inform the district collector one month in advance. The penalty for those violating the law, including those who convert people forcibly, could be a 20,000 rupee (US\$430) fine and imprisonment for up to three years.

Under the law, the district collector will have the discretion to reject applications for conversion, while those "returning to their ancestors' religion or original religion will not be treated as conversion." So applications by non-Christians to become Christians can be rejected, but anyone turning from Christianity to Hinduism or other traditional religions would be free to do so without government interference.

Anyone converting to Christianity and failing to report it to government authorities faces imprisonment up to a year and a fine of 10,000 rupees (\$215). Although freedom

of religion has been enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the Chhattisgarh government contends that the law “is not against the provisions laid down in the Constitution.”

In Madhya Pradesh, the new legislation states that a person wishing to convert and the church leader conducting the baptism will have to inform the authorities in advance. The prior law on religious conversions passed in 1968 did not require that the authorities be notified.

“Conversion is a major political issue in the state,” a BBC article reported, “with the right-winged Hindu political parties accusing Christian missionaries of converting tribal people and low-caste Hindus through ‘force and allurements.’”

While seven Indian states have anti-conversion laws, the governor of Rajasthan recently sent a similar bill back the State Assembly without signing it, and the new government of Tamil Nadu recently repealed its anti-conversion law.

Lalachan has asked Christians around the world to pray for believers in these states as they face increased persecution.

“Please pray for God’s grace and protection for our 660 missionaries and 224 churches in Chhattisgarh, that they may stand firm in their faith and work,” Lalachan said. “Pray also for the 224 students studying in Bible college there.”

At the same time, he asked for prayer for the state governments, that they will “do justice and grant constitutional rights to all in the state.”

Scholars: Muslim ‘End-times’ Beliefs Fuel Middle East Conflict

Middle East experts say that Muslim beliefs about the “end times” are fueling the conflicts in the region. Scholar William Wagner, a professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, says, “Both Islam and Christianity have a very well-defined eschatology, or doctrine concerning the period of the last days.

Both of them cannot be correct.”

A majority of Muslims believe the “12th Iman” or Mahdi, an Islamic messianic figure, was placed in hiding until the Day of Judgment. There is much dissent among Muslim factions as to who this savior figure will be and where and when he will return. Some factions even believe this Mahdi may be Jesus. However, almost all Muslims agree that in order for this day to arrive, Israel must be destroyed.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has been cited by various news sources as not only believing in the eventual return of the Mahdi, but that the return is near and that it is the responsibility of the Iranian government to prepare the country for his return. To this end, Ahmadinejad has vowed to rid Iran of Christianity and all other offensive non-Islamic influences and practices. Persecution against Christians has increased under his direction.

Jim Elliott wrote the following as a 21 year-old college student at Wheaton College. He was later speared to death in 1956 by Auca Indians in the Equadorian Jungle, along with Nate Saint and three other missionaries, Roger Youdarian, Jim McCully and Pete Fleming, who gave their lives to bring the Gospel of Christ to the very gates of hell.

“We are so utterly ordinary, so commonplace, while we profess to know a Power the 20th century does not reckon with. But we are harmless and therefore unharmed. We are spiritual pacifists, non-militants, conscientious objectors in this battle to the death with principalities and powers in high places.

“We are ‘sideliners’ — coaching and criticizing the real wrestlers while content to sit by and leave the enemies of God unchallenged. The world cannot hate us — we are too much like its own. Oh, that God would make us dangerous!”

continued from page 5

Jesus and the strength of his presence and assurance of his love for us.

Love is the root of all things. Faith worketh by love, and love is contagious. John said, "We love him, because he first loved us." Paul said, "Love beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things and it never fails." Yet we do fail and we fail often. Obviously we need grace to love God and our fellowman.

Grace, how sweet the sound. We do love grace, we found grace to repent of our sins and come to Jesus. However now we still need much more of his grace to live in this present evil world and to carry out all that he has commanded us. According to what we preach, grace is acquired by faith.¹³ It sounds good, but how can we find the abundant grace we will need if our faith is faltering? Peter sheds some light and great hope for us. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."¹⁴ Grace is given with the revelation of Jesus Christ. I believe the greater the revelation the more abundant the grace will be. Jesus has promised us life and life in abundance, but this is only found in knowing him. "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Beloved friends, we will discover that God is love when Jesus is manifested to us and with eyes of understanding we see his great love for us. When we are truly convinced that he loves us, even with all our failures, then we will find this grace to believe God and live in a way that pleases him. May we all walk in the abundance of his love and grace.

(Endnotes)

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| ¹ Matthew 5:6 | ⁸ Gal. 5: 6 |
| ² Hebrews 11: 6 | ⁹ James 4: 8-10; 1 John 3:21 |
| ³ Romans 14: 23 | ¹⁰ Matthew 4:4 |
| ⁴ Hebrews 12: 2 | ¹¹ John 10: 27 |
| ⁵ Colossians 1: 27 | ¹² 1 John 2:27 |
| ⁶ 1 John 5:10 | ¹³ Ephesians 2: 8 |
| ⁷ Romans 10: 17 | ¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:13 |

continued from page 3

abundance of the things which he possesseth."¹⁵

The message of positive thinking has captured the minds of vast numbers of professing Christians, causing the definition of sin and of its horrible consequences to be largely muted. But Jesus' message of hell-fire would not be considered positive, nor his denunciation of hypocrites.¹⁶ Paul's condemnation of false teachers and heretics,¹⁷ and his exhortation to preach the word, reproof, rebuking with all longsuffering and doctrine,¹⁸ would have seemed less than positive. The modern message has made many in the church tolerant of sin and disobedience to the word, even encouraging behavior and activities that disparage aspirations to holiness. Turning the church meeting into an "evangelistic" enterprise has cost dearly in terms of accomplishing the task assigned the church.

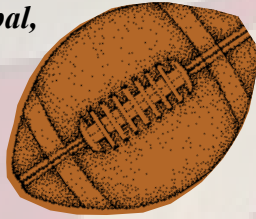
There are growing needs around the world, but among the great numbers of potentially available workers, because of the message that has inundated the churches and distracted the saints, there are few who are ready to lay down their lives and their fortunes for the kingdom of God. The great falling away, which is prophesied for these end times is perhaps, even now, in progress, facilitated by a crossless message of self-indulgence, induced by emulating the ignorance of a darkened society. But there is another great number, who are listening to the voice of the shepherd and who are available and ready to lose their lives and take up their cross and follow him. For these that love his appearing, there is laid up a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give them at that day.¹⁹

The choice is left with us; will we identify with the ignorance of a darkened society; or emulate the character and vision of those who walk in the light and demonstrate a knowledge of God?

(Endnotes)

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ¹ 1 Peter 1:14-16 | ¹¹ Matthew 6: 24-33 |
| ² Ephesians 4: 17,18 | ¹² Luke 9: 23,24 |
| ³ Romans 7: 18 | ¹³ 2 Corinthians 4: 8-12; |
| ⁴ Ephesians 2: 3 | 1 Peter 2: 19-23; |
| ⁵ 2 Timothy 3: 13 | 1 Timothy 6: 6-10 |
| ⁶ 1 Peter 1: 23,24 | ¹⁴ John 10: 10 |
| ⁷ Acts 5: 13,24 | ¹⁵ Luke 12: 15 |
| ⁸ 1Corinthians 6: 14-18 | ¹⁶ Matthew 23: 1-33 |
| ⁹ Matthew 28: 18-20 | ¹⁷ Romans 16: 16,17 |
| ¹⁰ Matthew 6: 19-21 | ¹⁸ 2 Timothy 4: 2-4 |
| | ¹⁹ 2 Timothy 4: 8 |

This is a statement that was read over the PA system at the football game at Roane County High School, Kingston, Tennessee, by school Principal, Jody McLeod.



“It has always been the custom at Roane County High School football games, to say a prayer and play the National Anthem, to honor God and Country. Due to a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, I am told that saying a Prayer is a violation of Federal Case Law. As I understand the law at this time, I can use this public facility to approve of sexual perversion and call it “an alternate lifestyle,” and if someone is offended, that’s OK.

An Announcement of Interest to Many High-School Football Fans

I can use it to condone sexual promiscuity, by dispensing condoms and calling it, “safe sex.” If someone is offended, that’s OK. I can even use this public facility to present the merits of killing an unborn baby as a “viable means of birth control,” If someone is offended, no problem. I can designate a school day as “Earth Day” and involve students in activities to worship religiously and praise the goddess “Mother Earth” and call it “ecology.” I can use literature, videos and presentations in the classroom that depict people with strong, traditional Christian convictions as “simple minded” and ignorant” and call it enlightenment.

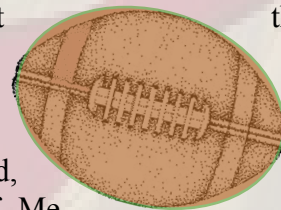
“However, if anyone uses this facility to honor GOD and to ask HIM to bless this event with safety and good sportsmanship, then Federal Case Law is violated. This appears to be inconsistent at best and at worst,

diabolical. Apparently, we are to be tolerant of everything and anyone, except GOD and HIS Commandments. Nevertheless, as a school principal, I frequently ask staff and students to abide by rules with which they do not necessarily agree. For me to do otherwise would be inconsistent at best, and at worst, hypocritical. I suffer from that affliction enough unintentionally, I certainly do not need to add an intentional transgression. For this reason, I shall “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s,” and refrain from praying at this time. “However, if you feel inspired to

h o n o r ,
praise and thank GOD
and ask HIM, in the name of
JESUS, to bless this event, please feel free to do so. As far as I know, that’s not against the law----yet.”

One by one, the people in the stands bowed their heads, held hands with one another and began to pray, They prayed in the stands. They prayed in the team huddles. They prayed at the concession stand and they prayed in the Announcer’s Box! The only place they didn’t pray was in the Supreme Court of the United States of America – the Seat of “Justice” in the “one nation, under GOD.”

Somehow, Kingston, Tennessee remembered what so many have forgotten. We are given the Freedom of Religion, not the Freedom of Religion. *f r o m* that His *r e m n a n t* remains! Jesus said, “If you are ashamed of Me before men, then I will be ashamed of you before my Father.”



The 2007 Discipleship/Missionary Training Program

On Monday, January 15, 2007 the next session of the Training Program will begin.

The Lord Jesus told his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. We pray that way, and I am sure that many of you do too. It was the same people that were encouraged to pray that Jesus sent. Apparently the vision precedes the call. This may be the opportunity to further equip yourself to serve in one of those places that have need of workers.

In the Shield of Faith Missionary Training Program, along with basic discipleship we address four areas of development:

1. *The Mission* 2. *The Message* 3. *The Method* 4. *The Man*

The Mission

We must know what we are about. What is it we are expected to accomplish? Our mission is carrying the Gospel of redemption to, and making disciples in all nations. Jesus said, "When this Gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, then shall the end come." We know, then, what our mission is. When we have obeyed, the King will come.

The Message

The message is a powerful one. It is more than four spiritual laws, or sharing the contents of a discipleship booklet. Those who are sent must know what the Gospel is, and they must also know what the church is as it is presented to us in the New Testament.

The Method

Is there, in fact, a method? There are, no doubt, many methods that are effective for transmitting the Gospel and for establishing churches. However, transcending all methodology is the ability to know, and be led by the Spirit of God. But we do teach guidelines by which to approach the work. We refer to the guidelines as "The Five Point Program."

The Man

This is the bottom line. Jesus spoke wonderful words and did marvelous works; but it was not just his words and his works that bespoke his identity as the Son of God: It was his character. Therefore, the Man is most important. We may teach others to do what we do, but we are also inadvertently teaching them to be what we are. Our life is our message. If we talk about faith, but live our lives by the same principles as those who have no faith, we teach others to live without faith. We bring forth fruit after our own kind.

Whether you are a young believer needing basic foundational teaching in order to be a disciple indeed of the Lord Jesus, or if you are a mature Christian preparing to answer a call of God, there will be classes and curriculum designed for you.

For details and/or for application form, contact:

The Shield of Faith Mission International, P.O. Box 144, Bend, OR 97701,
or email sfmi@sfmiusa.org,
or phone (541) 382-7081

Q Hello Missionary Dick York
I am Benjamin in Korea. While I read the bible I have several questions I hope you
t to answer.

1. In Genesis chapter 6, who are the sons of God that saw the daughters of men. Are they saved people or angels? And what is the difference between Noah and the sons of God. Only Noah and his Family were saved, so does it mean that the sons of God were destroyed during the flood?

2. In early Leviticus, there are several kinds of offerings. However I couldn't comprehend trespass (guilt) offering. Also in Isaiah Chapter 53:10, it says: But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting [Him] to grief; If He would render Himself [as] a guilt offering, He will see [His] offspring, He will prolong [His] days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. So I want to know about trespass offering deeply.

Thankyou, sincerely.

A First the Genesis 6 question. There is much here to instruct today's saints. In Matthew 24 we are told that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.

I believe that the sons of God in Genesis 6 are those who called upon the name of the Lord in Chapter 4. "All that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That was no less true in the time of Noah than it was in the time of Paul or in our time. The church is admonished to "Come out from among them and be separate," to not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. But the church today, as in the days of Noah, is sometimes disobedient to this command with disastrous results. I believe the message of Genesis 6 is a warning to us today.

The reason I believe that these sons of God were men and not angels, as some teach, is because Jesus taught us clearly that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. They are not sexual beings and do not reproduce. Also, we understand from Jesus' teaching that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in our time. If we look around, we do not see angels marrying women, but we definitely do see the sons of God (the church) marrying itself

to the customs, traditions and ways of the world around it.

I believe that many who died in the flood were sons of God. The apostle Peter addressed that issue. In 1 Peter 3:18-20 we read that "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust...being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison." Verse 20 tells us that they were those who were disobedient while God waited patiently for Noah to prepare the ark in which only eight souls would be saved.

Physically they suffered along with the world as a consequence of their choice to live like the world. But in 1 Peter 4: 6, (which is in the same context as chapter 3) we learn that they were "judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." I would take that to mean that because they lived like the world, they died like the world. But their spirits were saved.(It compares with 1 Corinthians 5:5).

Now the second question about the offering for sin in Isaiah 53:10,11. "Yet it pleased the LORD (the Father) to bruise him (Jesus); he (the Father) hath put him (Jesus) to grief: when thou (Benjamin) shalt make his (Jesus') soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He (the Father) shall see the travail of his (Jesus') soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

The purpose of the sin offering was to satisfy the Father's requirement of death for sin. The Old Testament sacrifices, could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). Read Hebrew 10:1-10. But those sacrifices were a picture of the real sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ. His sacrifice would satisfy the Father for ever. He bore the iniquities of the whole world, thereby justifying all who would make (or acknowledge) his soul was the offering for their sin. God then sees us as his seed, or offspring. We became children of God by faith in that atoning sacrifice. All of the sacrifices that God prescribed under Moses' law were pictures of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. His sacrifice, once for all, fully satisfied all of God's requirements.

The Real Cause Of Failure In Marriages

(Friday Church News Notes, July 21, 2006,

The following is from Life in the Spirit by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

The real cause of failure, ultimately, in marriage is always self and the various manifestations of self. Of course that is the cause of trouble everywhere and in every realm. Self and selfishness are the greatest disrupting forces in the world. All the major problems confronting the world, whether you look at the matter from the standpoint of nations and statesmen, or from the standpoint of Industry and social conditions, or from any other standpoint—all these troubles ultimately come back to self, to “my rights,” to “what I want,” and to “who is he?” or “who is she?”

Self, with its horrid manifestations, always leads to trouble, because if two “selves” come into opposition there is bound to be a clash. Self always wants everything for itself. That is true of my self, but it is equally true of your self. You at once have two autonomous powers, each deriving from self, and a clash is inevitable. Such clashes occur at every level, from two people right up to great communities and empires and nations.

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