

Three Couplets of Gospel Truth

By Dick York



A conversation with a couple of “evangelists” from Brooklyn (The Watchtower Society) was a reminder of how much religion is based on works and how natural it is for people to relate salvation to something they can do to make points with God. According to most religions, salvation is something one earns. This is definitely an example of building one’s house upon sand.

Unfortunately, many Christians who, in theory, subscribe to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith reveal by their conversation or by questions they ask that their understanding of the basis of salvation is a little fuzzy (too much subjectivity and not enough objective consideration of the exclusive, finished work of the Lord Jesus himself). It is hard, even for some believers, to escape the natural logic that a certain standard of performance is required to earn salvation by faith. This is not exactly building on the rock—more like sandstone. Let’s discuss what I am going to call the three couplets of Gospel Truth.

What Is a Couplet?

According to the dictionary, a couplet is two rhyming lines of poetry in the same meter; or, a pair of similar things. For our purpose, a couplet is a pair of facts so related that one without the other is relatively meaningless.

The first couplet: Death and Resurrection

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”¹

According to the Scriptures: This phrase, as used in this verse, could be misunderstood. There is a difference between “according to the Scriptures Christ died” and “Christ died according to the Scriptures.” The first simply asserts that the Scriptures inform us that Christ died; the latter tells us that in dying he fulfilled something forecast in the Scriptures.

His Death

The whole Bible is the revelation of God’s plan of redemption. It begins with creation, including that of man; then describes Adam’s plunge into sin and death; and before the end of the third short chapter informs us that “the seed of the woman” would crush the serpent’s head, and in so doing he himself would be bruised.² Though not always obvious to the first time reader, that is the first prophecy of the coming Savior and of his atoning death.

Reading on, we discover who Jesus was, his lineage, and his place of birth. We learn also the carefully chronicled details of his death. Isaiah 53 tells us *why* he died. Zechariah 12 and 13 tell us *how* he died. Psalm 22 gives details of his death, even

to the words he would utter on the cross. And Jesus, in his death, fulfilled every detail of those prophecies. There is no doubt that this Jesus is the Messiah and that his death was no accident. Even though he died at the hands of wicked men, he was delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God.³ He died exactly according to the Scriptures.

Paul notes also, in I Corinthians 15: 4, that Jesus was buried—a detail we may be inclined to take for granted. But the Holy Spirit, who inspired Paul to write, deemed it important.

One fifth of the world’s people claim Islam as their religion, which also teaches about Jesus. To Muslims he is a prophet. However, because, according to the teaching of Mohammed, no man can die for another man’s sins, Jesus did not die on the cross. He was rescued by his friends and nurtured back to strength. His disciples, subsequently, invented the story of Jesus’ resurrection to give credibility to their claim that he was the Son of God. God then took him to heaven from whence he will come again to take vengeance upon Christians who have blasphemed Allah by making Jesus his Son. This, Muslims consider blasphemy.

Paul, however, emphasizes the death and the burial of the Lord Jesus as essential to the gospel message. If Jesus did not die, the sin penalty has not been paid. And if indeed he was not buried, perhaps he did not die. But Jesus himself declared that he would die and be buried for three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth

just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale.⁴

His Resurrection

There are those who speak of *spiritual resurrection*, as though there were such a thing. In fact *resurrection* means the returning to life of that which died. The physical body died, therefore *resurrection* refers to the physical body. In the Scriptures Job prophesied the resurrection of his redeemer.⁵ In Psalm 49: 15, as in Psalm 16: 9,10, David wrote of God not leaving Christ in the grave. In Acts 2: 29-32 the Apostle Paul confirms that David's prophecies refer to the Lord Jesus and not to himself. In Isaiah 53: 10-12, after describing Jesus' death, Isaiah tells us, "...he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied...he shall divide the spoil with the strong..." This is a reference to Jesus living again in victory after his death.

Lest to some, these Old Testament prophecies seem oblique, Jesus himself clarified them prior to his death. "Destroy this temple," he said, "and in three days I will raise it up...but he spake of the temple of his body."⁶

Our first couplet, then, is the **death** and the **resurrection** of the Lord Jesus. The death of Christ without his resurrection is not the Gospel (in a moment we shall see why), and resurrection without death is an impossibility.

The Second couplet: The First man, The Second man

"For since **by man** came death, **by man** came also the resurrection of the dead. For as **in Adam all die**, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive.**"⁷

The First and Last Man Adam

"...the **first man Adam** was made a living soul; the **last Adam** was made a quickening spirit."⁸

How important is it that we recognize the deity of the Lord Jesus? **Extremely so.** The Scriptures identify him as The Word by whom all things were created. It is by his authority that all things exist, and by which his redemptive plan was initiated.

How important is it that we recognize his 100% humanity? **Equally important.** In the outworking of God's plan, it is upon the humanity of Jesus that our salvation rests. There was a reason why the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. As God he could not die for us because he is immortal. As the Savior of Adam's race he must of necessity identify with Adam—indeed he must partake of Adam's very nature. Jesus was born into the earth to be the **last** (terminal) **Adam**. He was born of a woman,⁹ in the likeness of sinful flesh,¹⁰ in a mortal, natural body,¹¹ to be tempted as we are tempted.¹² He came as the same kind of man that Adam had been created to be. Indeed, he came to join Adam's race and endure Adam's temptations. When it was over, he stood as an Adam without sin. All of Adam's descendants stood bracketed between the first Adam who was the beginning of

the race, and the last Adam who was the end of it.

Jesus, in his identity as the terminal member of Adam's race, took upon himself all the sin of every generation and pleaded guilty before God. With that gross curse upon him he gave his hands and feet to the nails, his head to the thorns, and yielded his soul to the stern judgment of God. Like a lightning rod in a thunderstorm, he absorbed the full force of God's judgment against Adam's race and died. The quarrel with Adam was over. The last Adam was dead.

That's how God reads history. The Apostle Paul said it this way, "...we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."¹³ Therefore, if a death certificate had been issued in heaven when Christ died, it would have had your name on it, and mine, and, in fact every member of Adam's race. Jesus, in God's view, was the last (terminal) Adam.

No More Dealings With Adam's Race

There are no more expectations for Adam's race on God's part. No remorse, no tears, no altered behavior, no good works on the part of individuals can ever change their state because the whole race has been declared dead. Judgment is settled, sure and final, fully accomplished at Calvary. In Adam all die.

The Second Man

"The **first man** is of the earth, earthy; the **second man** is the Lord from heaven."¹⁴

In I Corinthians 15: 45 we read of the first man Adam, and the last Adam. It is unmistakable that *the first man Adam* is a reference to Adam himself; *the last Adam* is a reference to Jesus. The first man Adam was made a living soul. Having a potential to sin and die, he soon fulfilled it and was, as a consequence, unable to pass spiritual life on to his children. The last Adam (Jesus) was made a life-giving spirit.

"Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; afterward that which is spiritual."¹⁵ So Jesus, in this sequence, must first be, in a physical sense, a natural man in order to taste death for every man.

When asked to compare verses 45 and 47, most readers agree that *the first man Adam*, in verse 45, and *the first man* in verse 47, are a reference to the same person, namely Adam. They would also agree that the last Adam in verse 45 and the second man in verse 47 are a reference to the same person, namely Jesus. But although the last Adam and the second man are the same person, they are definitely not the same thing. The last Adam bore Adam's name, was related to Adam's race, and was born to die according to the Scriptures. The second man does not bear Adam's name. He is the first begotten from the dead; the beginning of a new creation, the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest, and is alive forever more.

Beginning of a New Race

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."¹⁶ This is not a reference merely to a changed lifestyle,

a new mind-set, or a renovated behavior pattern. It is a reference to the execution of Adam's fallen race and every member of it. The only escape from Adam's eternal demise is to be born again into the new creation, the second race of men, regenerated through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This is a new creation not bearing Adam's name, but that of its progenitor, Jesus Christ. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. No longer are we sons of Adam trying our best to behave as sons of God: now, in Christ, we are sons of God. That is not the result of our behavior. On the contrary, our new behavior is the result of who we have become.

As in Adam All Die, In Christ Shall All be Made Alive

In Adam all die. That is the best we could hope for as sons of Adam. It was our heritage. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.¹⁷ Just as we received that distinction by no merit or effort of our own, but by "virtue" of the first man Adam, so we were made righteous by the obedience of one man, not by any merit of our own. That man, of course, was the Lord Jesus Christ, the second man, whose resurrection life we share.

The Third Couplet: Reconciliation and Salvation

In the minds of many, reconciliation and salvation are synonyms, but in reality that is not the case. According to Scripture, God was in Christ reconciling **the world** unto himself.¹⁸ Throughout the Old Testament, the priests of Israel made sacrifices for the reconciliation of the nation to God. The people had nothing personally to do with it, but they were reconciled as part of the nation. The apostle John tells us that Jesus is the propitiation (sacrifice that makes reconciliation) for the sins of **the whole world**; but we know that the whole world is not saved.

Reconciliation

The dictionary definition of reconciliation is 1. To bring back to friendship after estrangement 2. To settle or adjust, as a quarrel.

That is the meaning of what transpired at Calvary. There, on the cross, Jesus made the conciliatory sacrifice that brought God's grievance to an end. Justice was fully satisfied; and the offender, from God's perspective, was dead. Nothing else can be demanded; nothing else can be expected. The quarrel is over. This is precisely the point of the first half of each of our couplets: the dying of the Lord Jesus according to the Scriptures, the putting to death of the last Adam, thereby bringing reconciliation of the sin problem. God has reconciled the world to himself by the death of his Son.

Salvation

"If, when we were enemies, we were **reconciled to God by the death** of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be **saved by his life**."¹⁹ Reconciliation is not salvation. Reconciliation was effected by Jesus' death while we were

still enemies of God. We, along with the whole world, without our consent or understanding, were reconciled to God, not by what we did, or even desired, but by what God himself did by exacting what justice demanded from someone representative of all who were in Adam—the final Adam.

By this act, the impenetrable barrier that stood between God and the human race was dissolved. Salvation, then, became possible for as many as would receive the life-giving Spirit of Christ. In that case, though they died in Adam, they would be born again in Christ; and all that are in Christ have eternal life. Delivered from the condemnation of death, which is the eternal lot of all who are in Adam, good and bad, those who are in Christ, by virtue of his righteousness, are declared justified.

Performance

Is not the uncertainty that some Christians feel about their eternal salvation based upon the inconsistency of their performance—their doubt that the quality of their righteousness is adequate?

Performance is not a factor that determines our eternal pedigree. Everything in the Gospel speaks of what **He** has done. There is no suggestion that God is expecting our ability to match his required perfection. That's precisely why he put us to death as Adam's children and raised us up in Christ. There is no reformation here, but a substitution. More than that, he has promised that in the final act of resurrection all who are in Christ will be as he is, even to the point of having a body like his glorious body.²⁰ Every bit of this work is totally beyond our ability even to contribute to its conclusion.

So while religious folks are struggling to produce their own righteousness in order to be rewarded with salvation, the true believer is resting and rejoicing in that which Christ alone has done to reclaim him from the condemnation of Adam's judgment. With the impartation of the nature of Christ comes the ever increasing manifestation of his character and the growing evidence of his righteousness, until, at the end we shall be like him. Only by faith is one established on the Rock. **Salvation is of the Lord.**

(Endnotes)

¹ I Corinthians 15: 3,4

² Genesis 3: 15

³ Acts 2: 23

⁴ Matthew 12: 40

⁵ Job 19: 25,26

⁶ John 2: 19,21

⁷ I Corinthians 15: 21,22

⁸ I Corinthians 15: 45

⁹ Galatians 4: 4

¹⁰ Romans 8: 3

¹¹ I Corinthians 15: 46

¹² Hebrews 2: 17,18; 4:15;

James 1: 13

¹³ II Corinthians 5: 14

¹⁴ I Corinthians 15: 47

¹⁵ I Corinthians 15: 46

¹⁶ II Corinthians 5: 17

¹⁷ Romans 5: 19

¹⁸ II Corinthians 5: 19

¹⁹ Romans 5: 10

²⁰ Philippians 3: 21



Jim Lucas' Column

False Prophets

In **Matthew 7: 13-27** Jesus warned us about false prophets.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”¹ Let us look at this statement in its context.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at. Many people that enter into the broad way believe they are on the straight and narrow.

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. The false prophet will not walk the straight and narrow way.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. False prophets lead us away from the straight and narrow way and make it difficult to find. There are many false prophets, just as in the days of Elijah and the prophets of Baal.² Don’t be surprised if a false prophet has influenced you. Jesus said; *“Many false prophets shall rise, and deceive many.”*³

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? We can know them if we learn to look for the fruit of the Spirit. What is the fruit of the Spirit? Is it miracles and signs and wonders? Apparently not. Jesus said, *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*⁴ We know that our God is the Almighty God and that nothing is too difficult for Him. That is an indisputable fact; it is not in question. The question is what is the fruit of the Spirit? The word of God reveals to us that *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*⁵

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Every tree will produce according to its nature; we

cannot call the tree good if its fruit is bad. If we pick all the bad fruit off the tree, what kind of fruit will it produce the following year?

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. A false prophet cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said, *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*⁶

Some will talk very smoothly, cry real tears; they may even make an attempt at being humble, preach with great enthusiasm, sing like a canary and look really good. They may have an impressive title and a degree in theology or psychology; they may do all kinds of signs and wonders; but if they don’t have the fruit of the Spirit, beware this is a false prophet.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. He may boast of his successful ministry and how God has blessed him with many riches, but don’t be deceived by that, for his end is not good and eternity in hell is a long, long time.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. In order to know the fruit of the Spirit you must love the fruit of the Spirit. Those who love the fruit of the Spirit automatically look for it in others. Love for the fruit of the Spirit is a true love for God. If we don’t love the fruit, then we are despising everything that God is. *“(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”*⁷

Love for truth is paramount. How can we say that we love God if we don’t love the truth? Jesus is the way, the TRUTH, and the life.⁸ Why do multitudes of people follow the false prophets? Because they love not the truth, they will believe a lie. Paul speaks about them when he describes those who will be deceived by the coming anti Christ. *“Even him, whose coming*

is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”⁹

Sin is very deceitful and robs us of the blessing of God. People who love the wrong things are easily led astray by wicked men. They ensnare them in their covetousness and fleshy lust causing them to love a lie. Once they love the lie, they don’t have ears to hear the truth. The Israelites were in this same shameful condition when God spoke to them by his prophet Jeremiah.

“Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”¹⁰ (A similar new testament example can be found In 2 Peter 2: 1-3.)

This is a good question: what will ye do in the end thereof? I don’t know about you, but for me I pray that God will give me a genuine love for the truth, goodness and righteousness, that I may learn to love what he loves and to hate what he hates. Then I will be able to continue on the straight and narrow way that leads to eternity with Jesus. The love for the fruit of the Holy Spirit will give me the discernment I need to not be deceived by wicked men.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. For natural man to do the will of God he must first deny himself and take up his cross and follow Jesus. Most false prophets speak very little about the cross.

Paul said, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”¹¹ The saved know that in order to do the will of God self must be crucified. The fruit

of the Spirit will not be seen in those who walk in the flesh.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”¹²

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? They may be real popular and well received by great multitudes, but Jesus also warns us about that. “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”¹³

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

This is the teaching of Jesus concerning false prophets; this is not my doctrine but His, and I believe it with all my heart. If anyone refuses His doctrine, they cannot say in truth they are following Jesus Christ. I will finish up with the words of the Apostle John.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”¹⁴

(Endnotes)

¹ Matthew 7: 15

² 1 kings 19: 22

³ Matthew 24: 11

⁴ Mt 24: 24

⁵ Gal.5: 22,23

⁶ John 15: 4,5

⁷ Ephesians 5: 9,10

⁸ John 14:6

⁹ 2 Thessalonians 2: 10

¹⁰ Jeremiah 5: 25-31

¹¹ 1Corinthians 1: 18

¹² Galatians 5: 22-25

¹³ Luke 6: 26

¹⁴ 1 John 4: 1

Decisions or Disciples?

by Steve Montgomery

The group of young Christians had prepared well. They were to proclaim the Gospel in a town where there was no church and where the Good News of Jesus Christ had only recently been presented for the first time, so they were aware how serious this presentation was. They had prepared a mime, a karate demonstration, music and a short skit. By the time the young man who was to speak stepped forward, 150 people were listening.

“You may not be a drug addict or an alcoholic,” he told them, “but you may be addicted to work, to sex, to money or the approval of others. Jesus wants to free you from these things.” He then told them that Jesus had died on the cross to give forgiveness and new life.

“Now I’m going to ask you all to pray,” he then said. “I want everyone to bow their head.” Virtually everyone in the plaza did so. “Repeat the words I say.” He then led them in a short prayer.

As heads came up, he gave them his final words to dismiss the audience. “All of you who prayed that prayer this evening are saved. If you repeated that prayer with me, your sins are forgiven and you have eternal life.”

What I heard that night is a typical presentation of the Gospel in many places, yet I was far from elated at the message. My genuine fear was that we were inoculating a crowd against the message of Jesus Christ by preaching a less-than-Biblical Gospel and by substituting the response for the message.

God does not save people due to our presentation of the Gospel. We dare not think that our sharp reasoning or clear explanation is the key upon which our hearer’s destiny turns. God, in His grace and mercy, can use a weak message based on an obscure text questionably applied and poorly explained. His power is not dependent on our ability and need not be limited by our ineptitude.

Having said that, we must also recognize that faithfulness requires that we be diligent. Paul told the Corinthians, “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”¹ Paul said that he and those with him sought to be approved in all things as the ministers of God.²

As bearers of the most important message in the universe, we should study to show ourselves approved to



God,³ assuring that, to the best of our ability, we are holding forth the Word of life.⁴

Now, let us go back to the concern I am expressing about a less-than-Biblical Gospel message.

There are two things of which we must be certain when we present the Gospel:

1. That our message is the Gospel presented in the Bible.
2. That we invite people to respond to the Gospel only after they know what the Gospel is.

THE MESSAGE

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 gives us a summary of the Gospel. Paul states:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

Note the four key elements Paul presents here:

1. Christ died for our sins
2. According to the Scripture
3. He was buried
4. He rose again the third day.

Let’s look at each one of these.

Christ died for our sins. Note these important presuppositions. For a person to believe the Gospel, he must know what or who a “Christ” is, and he must know what sin is.

To know who Christ is, he must know something of the Lord Jesus’ life. To be saved, a person must know that Christ is the unique Son of God and that He lived a sinless life.

To know what sin is, a person must know what God calls sin. In Romans 3: 19,20, Paul declares:

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become

guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

The divinely-designed tool to bring a knowledge of sin is the Ten Commandments.

Paul wrote:

"But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." ⁵

The law is good, if it is used correctly. It is not for the one who, by faith in Christ has been made righteous, but rather, it is for the lost, those that walk contrary to the Gospel, that they can know what sin is and of what they can be forgiven.

For a person to understand and desire forgiveness of sin, he must know what sin is and what the consequences of sin are. As we proclaim the Good News, it is essential that we tell the people something of the promised Christ and His perfect life and that they understand sin and its penalty.

According to the Scriptures. One of the prevailing attitudes today is a passive indifference to truth. The view is that truth, if it exists, is unknowable and unimportant to one's daily life. There is no right or wrong, no ultimate authority to tell man what he should or must do. Truth is relative. To many, external truth is non-existent. Thus, people say "Well, that's your truth, but for me, the truth is..." All truth, according to this view, is subjective; the final authority being whatever the individual decides is most helpful or convenient at the time.

As we talk to others about Christ, it is essential that we not only communicate a Biblical message, but that those listening also understand we are presenting the Bible message. We are not giving our opinion or something that we *feel* is true. This is "true truth" that exists outside of human opinion. In the myriad philosophies, fads and religions that appear and disappear around us, we must make certain that those who hear the Good News from us understand that this is a message from outside of me, a message from the Book of God. The Lord said, "He that believes in me as the Scripture has said, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water." The promise is not for those that believe in Christ as they feel or as they think convenient or even as they have heard. The promise is for those who believe in Him as the Scripture teaches. It is

imperative that the Gospel be presented not only in accord with the Bible, but also as the message of the Bible. It is imperative that we establish the authority of God's Word. Peter said that we are born again by the Word of God.⁶

An additional observation needs to be made here. When Paul said, "according to the Scriptures," he was referring to the Old Testament prophecies. In establishing the authority of God's Word, we should refer to the prophecies concerning Christ. At the fall, God promised that One would come to crush Satan and open the way for man to come back to God. In Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, prophecy explains how that One will crush Satan's head. These portions and others not only help listeners understand the Gospel. They also affirm the inspiration (and thus, the authority) of the Bible.

That He was buried. This short affirmation leaves no room for a simple "swoon," as some have postulated, or for a substitute on the cross, as Islam claims. No, it was Christ who died; and it is Christ Who was put into the tomb.

And that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is, perhaps, the single element of the Gospel most often left out in our day. Yet Paul says that if Christ did not rise we have no message! He declared that if Christ is not risen from the dead, then our faith is vain, we are still in our sins and there is no hope after death. In short, without the resurrection, there is no Gospel. For the unbeliever, the resurrection is the central element of the Gospel.

Though we explain to them the significance of His death, to tell an unbeliever that Jesus died is not impressive. After all, everyone dies, and it may sound to them as if we are only attaching a symbolic significance to His death. Christ's death on the cross grows in importance and impact for the unbeliever as he understands that the same Jesus who was crucified rose physically from the dead, came out of the tomb alive and victorious. Paul wrote that Jesus is "declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."⁷ The resurrection provides the proof that He is who He said He is.

When Christ died for our sins, we died with Him. As Divine judgment came on all of Adam's race,⁸ we received the death penalty on the cross of Calvary. If this is our only message, it is not good news. But God's Good News is that three days later Christ came out of the tomb alive! He spent more than a month with His disciples, showing Himself alive from the dead with many infallible proofs.⁹ When He died, He tasted death for every man.¹⁰ When He rose from the dead, He rose with eternal life.¹¹ When a person puts his trust in Christ alone, his sins are blotted out by the payment made on the cross; and he becomes a participant of Christ's eternal life. Because He lives, we live.

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.”¹² The resurrection is the heart of the Gospel of God.

We conclude, then, that a presentation of the Gospel to a person who has never heard that message should contain the promises concerning the coming Christ, something of His life, what sin is, which can be understood through the Ten Commandments. And it should include the facts of the death, burial and physical resurrection of Christ.

You may be saying, “But I have led people to Christ without all that and those people were genuinely converted!” Jesus told His disciples, “I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.”¹³ We often reap where others have sown. But we also sow where others may reap, and Paul warns us to be careful what we sow.¹⁴ When we talk with people, we need to listen and discern what they already understand, so we can know what we need to add, by God’s grace. We should be aware to whom we are speaking, so we can know what foundations to lay. Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost did not start with an explanation that God is not an idol of gold or silver made with men’s hands, but neither did Paul begin his message on Mars Hill by telling those people that the prophecies of Joel had been fulfilled.

Phillip, when he spoke to the Ethiopian eunuch, “began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus.”¹⁵ He began at the point where God had sown truth into this man’s life and from there preached Jesus.

However, we dare not assume that it will always be true that the people we speak to have a large backlog of Christian information. Especially in today’s society, where ignorance of the Bible is endemic, we must be certain we are laying adequate foundations.

THE RESPONSE

When the salesman arrives at the door, hoping to sell a new vacuum cleaner, he tries to get the person at the door to the decision line as quickly as possible. He wants to give a minimum of information and get the contract signed.

It seems that the Gospel is often being presented in the same manner. The evangelist is the “salesman;” the product is the Gospel, and the decision (the prayer prayed) is the contract to be signed. The salesman moves people deftly toward the decision line, skillfully dodging questions. After all, the most important thing is the decision, isn’t it?

No, it’s not.

We are not told to make decisions but disciples. Decisions may or may not produce disciples. If decisions are the goal, we may be tempted to minimize the Gospel to get people to the decision line. We may be tempted to use persuasive techniques that will motivate a person to make a decision for the wrong reasons. With the decision as the goal, the message and the method can be adjusted.

Not so when we have our eyes set on making disciples. When I was taught to get decisions, I was told not to mention baptism, since that might only confuse or distract the listener.

When we are making disciples, we will make sure we are giving the entire message before we explain how to respond.

When I was taught to get decisions, I was told to avoid any reference to hell, since that would only “turn people off.”

When we are making disciples, we will assure that the person with whom we are speaking understands his dilemma and God’s unique solution.

When I was taught to get decisions, I was trained to place my hand on the back of a person’s neck at decision time, so that as I suggested he pray I could gently lower his head for him.

When we are making disciples, we will make certain we have not confused the message with the response.

A genuine response to the Gospel is not simply an emotional response. It is believing something. It is trusting Someone. It is understanding the facts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and putting trust in Jesus for forgiveness of sins. And you cannot believe what you do not know.¹⁶

Paul, in Romans 10: 8, refers to the “word of faith, which we preach.” The word of faith is not the Gospel. That is laid out in 1 Corinthians 15, as we have seen. Here, Paul is giving us the word of faith, the response to the Gospel. He goes on to state what response to the Gospel should be preached:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Having presented the Good News, we call on people to confess Christ as their Lord, believing He has risen from the dead. If we have laid the foundation with clarity, we can call them to a Biblical response. If they believe, they are genuinely born again; and we will see not simply a decision but a disciple.

(Endnotes)

¹ 1 Corinthians 4: 1,2

² 2 Corinthians 6: 4

³ 2 Timothy 2: 15

⁴ Philippians 2: 16

⁵ 1 Timothy 1: 8-11

⁶ 1 Peter 1: 23

⁷ Romans 1: 4

⁸ 2 Corinthians 5: 14

⁹ Acts 1:3

¹⁰ Hebrews 2: 9

¹¹ Romans 6: 9

¹² 2 Timothy 2: 8

¹³ John 4: 38

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 3: 5-10

¹⁵ Acts 8: 35

¹⁶ Romans 10: 14



Mike Ball

Loreto, Zacatecas

A sister from the congregation was beat up the other day. Her name is Esther. Her husband, Pablo, is unsaved; and they have 5 children at home. Her nieces and her sister-in-law assaulted her in the street. One of these nieces, who is 38- years-old, sent her boyfriend and a couple of her sisters to distract Pablo, who was present, attacking him with an ice pick. Meanwhile the others beat Esther on the head with a bottle, then, when it broke, tried to kill her with it. They slashed her face open and left her for dead. God kept her alive, and now she has recovered from her wounds. After much moving and shaking things they were finally able to get the law to arrest two of the ladies. But the daughter, with the help of another rich boyfriend, was able to get out after a few days. They have threatened Esther and family to do the same again. They live a few blocks from each other.

I share this with you so that you will pray for her complete healing and their safety, Pablo's conversion, Esther's growth, and for justice to be done. Also so that you can better understand the culture here.

Justice is so important to God. The lack thereof in Israel was one of the reasons for which God punished Israel. Here, unless you have the money, it is difficult to obtain justice. There is so much corruption. I know that we in the U.S. complain about our government at times, but the truth is we enjoy a system of justice that is far better than anything here. We need to appreciate and thank God for what we have in our country. It hurts so much to see people suffer wrong and have no one to defend their rights.

Another thing about the culture here is the problems in families. I have said many times that the family here is stronger and more important than in the States. At the same time, even though families stick together and live together, there are major problems in

them.

The reason for this hatred between these two families goes back to when they were kids. Adultery is very common here amongst the men. They may not divorce but they sure are unfaithful. The father of Pablo and his sister (the sister-in-law who attacked Esther) was an adulterer who left their mother. Pablo was raised by their mother, and the sister was raised by the dad. She has always hated Pablo, and there have always been conflicts between them. Now she takes it out on his wife Esther. Their mother is a Christian now, and she is afraid of her own daughter. This kind of mix-up and division in families is common here even though divorce is not. It may seem on the outside as if they have strong family ties, but inside there is still the lack of love. Without Christ in the home, it is very difficult for there to be true love in the family regardless of the culture.

Please pray. Thank-you,
your fellow servant, Mike.

mikeball@bigfoot.com
(496)962-3013
from U.S. dial 011-52 first
98800 Lista de Correos
Loreto, Zacatecas-Mexico



Dear friends:

When families or individuals come into the Highlands to announce the Good News, they are pioneers, facing a hostile community. For hundreds of years the Devil has reigned supreme in this region and he has no intention of giving up without a fight. Raul and Chely are an example.

First Chely, then Raul, then Chely again have been in the hospital in the last 12 months. Then little Eduardo, only 4, came down sick. They have had car problems and problems in the work of the Gospel.

They are in a battle, and we have the opportunity to come beside them and lift up their hands. I commend this couple to you.

Below is a letter they just sent out. I have left it in Spanish, but translated it after each paragraph.

Apreciados hermanos.

(Beloved brethren)

Damos gracias a Dios por sus vidas y su testimonio, ya que cada uno de ustedes han sido de bendición a nuestras vidas.

(We thank God for your lives and your testimonies, because each of you have been a blessing to our lives.)

Este año nos hemos propuesto algunas metas en relación al ministerio que estamos realizando en Arandas Jalisco. Una de ellas nos hemos propuesto buscar el apoyo de por lo menos 50 hermanos que nos sostengan en oración, ya que, como la mayoría de ustedes saben, la región de los altos es una de las más difíciles para el evangelio.

(This year we have set some goals in relation to the ministry we are doing in Arandas, Jalisco. One of them is our purpose to seek the support of at least 50 brothers who can hold us up in prayer, since, as most of you know, the region of the Highlands is one of the most difficult for the Gospel.)

Nuestra meta es mantener contacto cada mes por medio del correo electrónico donde por medio de una carta de oración nosotros estaremos compartiendo nuestros planes, las cosas que Dios esta haciendo y nuestras peticiones de oración.

(Our goal is to maintain contact with these intercessors by email every month, so that, by means of a prayer letter, we can share our plans, the things that God is doing and our prayer requests.)

Si desean apoyarnos de manera personal o su iglesia, por favor respondan a este correo para incluirlos en nuestra lista de oración.

(If you or your church want to be personally involved in holding us up, please reply to this letter so we can include you on our prayer list.)

Que Dios les siga bendiciendo.

(May God continue to bless you.)

Raul y Chely

If you would like to be part of Raul and Chely's Prayer Support Team, go to www.mexhighlands.org and send us a message to that effect through "Contact Us".

We will pass your email name on to Raul and Chely.

Thank you,

Steve and Linda Montgomery

There Was A Man Sent From God...

A report on Juan and Pat Guerra

(Juan and Pat Guerra are missionaries in Santa Maria del Valle, a community in the very heart of the Jalisco highlands. Many of you prayed for them in Juan's recent medical crisis. Here is the latest report.)

After a very close call and a week in the hospital, Juan is doing fine, having recuperated from a serious

reaction to a combination of medicines. When he and Pat arrived home from the hospital, they found balloons on their front door and three neighbor women, as yet unsaved, awaiting their arrival. They had made a sign which read, "His name is Juan," from Luke 1: 63.

These ladies helped Juan and Pat into the house, affectionately greeting them, then excitedly showed him what they had learned. They had wanted to find something in the Bible that was appropriate for the homecoming and had "stumbled" onto this verse in Luke and verses concerning John the Baptist in John 1:

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."

They knew the verses referred to the Baptist, but told Juan and Pat enthusiastically, "That's a perfect description of you!" Juan was embarrassed when Linda and I, visiting later in their home, found the sign and asked about it. We, however, rejoiced at this evident working of God, both to encourage Juan and Pat and to establish in these women the purpose for the Guerra's presence there and the habit of going to God's Word to learn.

Juan and Pat left for Corpus Christi a few days ago, in order for Juan to visit the military hospital there for a battery of tests to confirm that everything is indeed in order. Juan wondered what to do about the meetings during his absence; but Ruben, who had rushed Juan to the hospital on the night of the crisis and who took over all of Juan's studies, asked if he could take the responsibility for the Sunday meeting. Praise the Lord with Juan and Pat that this medical emergency brought as a side result Ruben's being thrust into ministry. Pray for Ruben as this young man, saved in the States and now back in his hometown of Santa Maria, grows in grace and understanding.

Following are two news reports from other sources concerning North Korean believers and those in the Muslim world.

We have heard the stories. Thousands of North Korean Christians have been killed for their faith. Many more are in work camps. Today we have a chilling story of the callousness of the North Korean government.

President of the World Bible Translation Center Gary Bishop says North Korean Christians are becoming increasingly uneasy about possessing a Bible. Bishop just received this sobering news from their worker there. A man that is known to be an evangelist was caught with two of our Korean New Testaments in his possession, and he was executed for that.

Another story included a woman who was washing clothes. She bent over to rinse her clothes; a New Testament fell out. Somebody reported it, and both she and her grandmother were quickly executed.

According to Bishop, there is no sign of the persecution easing any. What you have is a leader who is proclaiming himself to be god. It is prescribed that they daily worship him. And, refusal to do that and being caught worshiping God just brings that kind of governmental response. And, as best we can tell, the tempo of that is not lessening.

Bishop says it is obvious what that increasing pressure on Christians is doing to Bible smuggling. It becomes more and more difficult to get a person to risk their life to carry them in to North Korea. With rivers frozen, it is a perfect time to smuggle Bibles into the country.

Despite the oppression, there are positive signs, says Bishop; God seems to be working. In response to a very, very oppressive government (and) human injustices people are looking for an answer other than their own government. And, I believe that is awakening the resilience of believers in North Korea to say, we have another answer. There is another way to believe.

While persecution continues, World Bible Translation Center has no intention of stopping the flow of Bibles into the country. We do need to begin reprinting and get text ready as God enables people to take those in.

Excerpts from a Joel C. Rosenberg article. Rosenberg is a New York Times best-selling author. "May the LAMB that was slain receive the reward of HIS suffering." More Muslims converted to faith in Jesus Christ over the past decade than at any other time in human history. A spiritual revolution is underway throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

During the writing of *Epicenter*, my wife and kids and I lived in the Mideast for three months. During that time, I had the privilege of interviewing more than three dozen Arab and Iranian pastors and evangelical leaders throughout the region. The picture they paint is one of Christianity being dramatically resurrected in the region of its birth. A snapshot: Iraq: more than 5,000 new Muslim converts to Christianity have been identified since the end of major combat operations, with 14 new churches opened in Baghdad, and dozens of new churches opened in Kurdistan, some of which have 500 to 800 members. ... more than 1 million Bibles shipped into the country since 2003, and pastors report Iraqis are snatching them up so fast they constantly need more Bibles.

Egypt: some reports say 1 million Egyptians have trusted Christ over the past decade or so. The Egyptian Bible Society used to sell about 3,000 copies of the JESUS film a year in the early 1990s. But last year they sold 600,000 copies, plus 750,000 copies of the Bible on tape (in Arabic) and about a half million copies of the Arabic New Testament. Afghanistan: only 17 Muslim converts to Christianity before 9/11/01, but now more than 10,000. Dozens of baptisms every week. Kazakstan: only 3 known Christians in 1990, but now more than 15,000. Uzbekistan: no known Christians in 1990, but now more than 30,000. Sudan: more than 1 million Sudanese have converted to Christianity just since 2000, and some 5 million have become Christians since the early 1990s, "People have seen real Islam, and they want Jesus instead," one Sudanese evangelical leader told me.

Iran: in 1979, there were only 500 known Muslim converts to Christianity, but today Iranian pastors and evangelical leaders tell me there are more than 1 million Iranian believers in Jesus Christ, most of whom meet in underground house churches. [Update: Iranian authorities arrest 8 leaders of house church movement.]

December 2001, Sheikh Ahmad al Qataani, a leading Saudi cleric, appeared on a live interview on Aljazeera satellite television to confirm that, Muslims were turning to Jesus in alarming numbers. "In every hour, 667 Muslims convert to Christianity," Al Qataani warned. "Every day, 16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity. Every year, 6 million Muslims convert to Christianity." "Every year," the cleric confirmed, adding, "a tragedy has happened."



OUR ADVERSARY'S GENERATIONAL STRATEGY

OR: "A Troubling Specter on the Horizon"

(AN INTRODUCTON TO EMERGENT)

by Larry Gallegos

to readily embrace his very effective "sloganeering campaigns," ("Well, you did your best").

We must understand that he didn't just start this process yesterday. This strategy is developed "generationally." I have been blessed to develop a ministry based on God's generational strategy, and I also have noticed that the "great imitator" also has his own generational strategy. This is not the first time he has duped our minds into thinking that our own conclusions about life, history and morals are original and creative. (The fact is "there is nothing new under the sun"). And in our own skewed way of filtering information we easily buy into the values of the manipulated culture that surrounds us and prods us as cattle to independence, hedonism, self sufficiency, and to carving out our own little cisterns² of self reliance: and all this before kindergarten! We need help!

Frances Schaeffer, a generation ago, prophetically warned us of our present fix: "We are following our own form of existential methodology if we put what the Bible

says about the cosmos, history, and absolute commands in morals in the realm of the culturally oriented. If we do this, the generation that

follows will certainly be undercut as far as historic Christianity is concerned. But also, if we ourselves bear the central mark of our generation, we cannot at this moment in history be the voice we should be to our *poor and fractured generation*; we cannot be the restorative salt which Christians are supposed to be to their generation and their culture if in regard to the Scriptures we, too, are marked by the existential methodology"³ (italics mine).

This "existential methodology" (a belief that Scripture is true only when relating to certain areas) has slowly moved from general culture to infiltrate even the evangelical consensus and has begun to undermine absolute truth. It has begun to substitute a false confidence in experience for our trust in the Word of God and to promote a focus on our own personal perspective (perspectivalism). My belief is that any influence that undermines God's safety net of sound

How many times have we heard the phrase, "Well, you did your best; that's all you can do." But is it really true in most cases, or is it just a slogan that allows us to get off the hook?

I recently made some choices that at the time seemed correct. Both Peggy and I thought we were doing God's will; and I think we probably were. However, we have seen that those choices resulted in some human suffering that might have been avoided.

But the phrase comes back to me, "Well you did the best you could." But did I? I do know that I had some alerts about the situation. Our decision was probably okay; but if I had responded to the alerts and dealt with some personal issues in their infant stages, perhaps some pain could have been avoided.

Here is my point. There were various influences that affected me during that process. I was influenced by a general consensus among Christians that what I was doing was correct. But how much of the consensus in general Christianity is actually influenced by standards that are no longer Biblical?

And finally, I was just worn down. I had dealt with a lot of relationship issues and was weary. I just didn't have the strength to deal with another. Besides, I was trying to be "loving" and think the best of the brother. Actually, the truth is, it was just easier to sweep the stuff under the rug. The conclusion: I was sincere about God's will, but I probably did not do my best!

I believe there is an intentional strategy here at work behind the scenes. Satan's strategy often is simply to wear out the saints (Daniel 7:25). So as we work through the major issues of life, we must also recognize this truth.

Another danger is that we also live in a "bent" society. From our youth, our frail psyches and our human tendencies for self-preservation have responded willingly and even affectionately to the "Great Schemer" and through the relentless manipulation by the "god of this age"¹ we are "groomed." We have a natural "bent"

I believe there is an intentional strategy here at work behind the scenes.

generational growth is to be suspect! (See Malachi 4:6)

Let's look back and trace the process a bit. What burst onto the scene in the Baby Boomer 60's in psychedelic fluorescent greens and oranges and challenged all our parents' norms was foisted on general culture on the back of a philosophy that when embraced not only resulted in a "generation gap" but also has now fostered what some have described as an even more overarching "paradigm shift." This shift, if believed, produces a great divide between the modern age of my generation and the so-called post-modern age of the next generation. And if not understood and addressed, it will continue to have a devastating effect not only on culture in general (producing a great sense of alienation and unconnectedness), but also on the church in particular.

Having lived through the tumult and the rhythms of the 60's I am a primary witness to the manipulative tactics and lies of those times. All of higher education was permeated with and influenced by the slogans of the times. As Edith Schaeffer so clearly pointed out, "Voices seem to be chanting behind the music, 'Only do what you want to do – Don't do anything that is hard– Fight for your own rights, even if it means destroying everything – Pay the other person back– Get even – Do your own thing – Express yourself. Get fulfilled one way or another – Be free – Get rid of old norms and customs – Break out of the prison of social opinions... Everything is relative anyway.'"

A Troubling Spectre on the Horizon

These phrases became our rallying cry, and the confusion of our generation was one of the main reasons I came to Christ. Reading C.S. Lewis brought some balancing reason to the instability sown by Sartre, Camus, Rogers, and Hegel. And in the midst of the very volatile value systems that we all bought into (all roads lead to the same place) a few intrepid travelers planted their flags against that current and declared their serene and very intolerant stand that Jesus was indeed "the way the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Him."⁴ What a primitive position! But there was no denying the sincerity of those "Jesus People." And in the forlornness of evening campfires, I wondered about those whom I had seen change and the certainty of their position. Could it be true? So I too, out of that relativistic ooze and confusion, finally came home.

Now time has passed. Our more than 20 years on the field have been productive. We have given years

to helping others escape from their own "bentness" produced, in part, by religious systems. God has blessed us with children who have been reared in the stability of love, faith and action. We expect great things from this new generation of workers. It is good. But all is not well and a troubling spectre looms on the horizon.

Change, of course, can be good, but it also can lead down a slippery slope, so we must be watchful!

I started detecting a danger in the US church when we returned from the field a few years ago. I noticed it in some of the phrases used by friends of my college-aged children. Then I read some of the "edgy" books they were reading. I read articles in popular Christian magazines and something felt eerily familiar. Even some prominent Christian leaders began to mouth phrases I thought I had heard before. Casually, and as if quoting a proven fact, I heard them repeat "We can't really trust history because it was written, for the most part, by white European males." Then it started coming back to

me: the lectures, the propaganda, the self-satisfied elitism expressed by professors and students in my college days. But, it seemed strange to hear those same old arguments now being repeated by young Christians.

But now, 'Pied Pipers' were challenging the church to be 'scandalously inclusive' and 'generously orthodox.'⁵

What was going on?

At the same time I noted that there seemed to be a concerted effort to promote our acceptance of groups that had been traditionally recognized as in need of hearing the Gospel. But now, "Pied Pipers" were challenging the church to be "scandalously inclusive" and "generously orthodox."⁵ And if one listened closely to the comments and descriptors applied to evangelicals, they were oftentimes couched in negative terms. Even the Bible seemed to be continually surrounded with negative images. It was always Big and Black and in danger of "being shoved down people's throats." I even noticed that many were no longer encouraged to bring the Bible to church. Maybe they feared that the Big Black King James might get lodged in someone's throat and that would be "like, so totally uncool!"

Then, during that time, I was introduced to the "Emergent Church." I quickly recognized that a whole new generation of youth were also being introduced to this same movement. And this, at a time when I felt compelled to share the very clear values and the positive message of what I have called the "Three Generation Harvest Vision": the dynamics of which

continued on back cover

Conference News

Greetings again, and welcome in advance to the Annual Memorial Day Conference of the Shield of Faith Mission International. This year is the 54th anniversary of the mission and the 46th annual conference. We are looking forward to a very special time with you and your family on the beautiful Oregon Coast.



We are preparing to welcome **Brother Moses Osho, Director of Ethnos Christian Mission of Nigeria** and alumnus of the SFMI Missionary Training Program (1981). Brother Moses will be the keynote speaker, and we have no doubt that what he will say will greatly impact those who hear him say it. Many encouraging things have transpired in Nigeria in the past twenty-five years; many spiritual battles have been waged and won. But the battle for Africa continues. I am absolutely sure that we will be stirred by what we will learn.

As many of you know, we are almost certain to max out the facility of **Twin Rocks Conference Center at Rockaway Beach, Oregon**, so we encourage you to register as soon as possible. Fill out the registration form on the next page and mail it or fax it to the SFMI office right away. If you have friends that you would like to encourage to attend, feel free to make as many copies of the registration form as you need and send them in ASAP.

As the conference grows, so does the need for an increasing number of **volunteers** to make light work of keeping everything functioning smoothly. Consequently, our registrars, Mike Williamson and Chrissie Wise, have submitted a list of jobs and responsibilities that are covered by volunteers. It is better that there should be too many than not enough, so if you find on the following list things that you would like to help with, please make note of your availability on your registration form or call the office number, **(541) 382-7081**, and leave a message for Mike or Chrissie.

Volunteer positions needed for Memorial Day Conference:

- Help set-up (arriving early)
- Books table set-up
- Nursery overseer/helpers for meetings
- Children's ministry overseer/helpers
- Youth ministry overseer/helpers
- Family campfire overseer
- Run the sound system (will have to arrive early)
- Recreation overseer/helpers
- Communion set up
- Communion servers

Annual Northwest Conference 2007

Shield of Faith Mission International

Registrars: **Mike Williamson** and
Chrissie Wise

Mailing address: **P.O. Box 144**
Bend, OR 97709

Phone: **1 (541) 382-7081**
Fax: **1 (541) 382-4471**

Twin Rocks Friends Campground Rockaway Beach, Oregon

May 25-28, 2007

How it works: Arrivals begin at 5:00pm Friday, May 25. The first meeting begins at 7:00pm. There will be no meal served Friday night. Please feel free to bring snacks. Saturday breakfast is our first meal, and Monday lunch is our last meal. We have spaces available for tents and RVs. There are family cabins and lodging for others. Bring your own bedding, or bedding can be provided for those in need. Twin Rocks Friends Campground is a **non-smoking** facility. Pets are **not** allowed. Copy as many forms as you need. Mail or fax completed forms to Shield of Faith office. We look forward to seeing you this year. **Register early!**

Family Registration:

Last name: _____ First: _____ Home phone _____ - _____ - _____

Address: _____ 2nd phone _____ - _____ - _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

E-mail: _____ @ _____

Spouse: _____ please include infants

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Circle Choices

Nights staying: Friday night Saturday night Sunday night

Accommodations: Room Tent RV

Meals: Saturday breakfast Sunday breakfast Monday breakfast

Saturday lunch Sunday lunch Monday lunch

Saturday dinner Sunday dinner

Special requests or needs:

would like to work with children's ministry would like to work with youth ministry

Please mail or fax completed form to the Shield of Faith Office.

cut on line and mail ASAP

continued from page 13

seemed to be at odds with the values of Emergent. And as I read more and became conversant with the issues, I realized I had been here before. The difference was that now members of the “evangelical community” were teaching what I had heard from many of my professors at secular Fairhaven College. The packaging was more contemporary, but the existential message was the same but had now “seeped” into the church.

I could see that the “Great Arranger” had been at work in this new postmodern milieu to orchestrate a values system that would support and facilitate his goals for this age, and I became concerned that the philosophers in cahoots with our media and with this kosmos were just developing one big info-commercial for his agenda.

In my daily reading, I saw how Paul recognized the prophetic words of Isaiah and applied them to his generation regarding the “dull of hearing” Jews (Acts 28:25-27). And I wondered whether we too were not in danger of being manipulated in the same manner and perhaps destined to become that generation that is: lawless,⁶ dishonouring of parents,⁷ dulled with the disconnect of passivity, alienated from our elders and our roots, and habitually taking actions which effectively demonstrate that our love is growing cold.

In Conclusion: The combination of postmodern philosophers and the power of the slogans sown in popular culture produce error that is systematized. The slogans get sown first and repeated, and then they become accepted values. The ones for our age are similar to the slogans of the 60’s but now are repeated by “edgy” 25-year-old Christian authors who seem to need to spend a lot of time talking about their times in the pubs.

Again: What is the point?

When error is systematized like this, it is orchestrated. My concern is who is now the force behind the music? And the question is: will we be led by the “Pied Pipers” or will we march to a different drummer? In my case many of us got fed a socialist agenda by our unsaved college professors. We heard all about white man’s flawed history. Truth of course was relativized, and conservative Christians especially were looked down on by these elite because of our perceived intolerance.

Now, as a new generation comes of age, they are primed to be duped. These new ones have been raised in a culture where the world’s framework and values have already seeped into the church so it is relatively easy for them to embrace the new “hermeneutics” that surround them. These now “adjustable truths” are already familiar to them. They think their values are their own because they have been grounded in them since grade school by that same group of people who went to college with me but never did get saved. And sadly now the “neo-evangelicals” are doing what Schaeffer said they would do: “The Bible is bent to the culture instead of the Bible judging our society and culture.”⁸

(

Endnotes)

¹ 2 Corinthians 4:4

² Jeremiah 2:13

³ Francis Schaefer, *How Shall we Then Live* (page 255)

⁴ John 14: 6

⁵ Brian McLaren

⁶ Matthew 24:12

⁷ 2 Timothy 3:2

⁸ Francis Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical isaster* (ch.2)

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