

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

# OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 6

## THE VOICE OF THE BROTHERHOOD

By RONNY R. WADE

What is the brotherhood, and how does it speak? This question, though controversial, deserves a bible answer. The scriptures plainly teach that there is a brotherhood, for we are commanded to “love the brotherhood” 1 Peter 2:17. In a similar vein Paul commanded “do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith Gal. 6:10. From these and other passages, it seems evident that Christians are bound together by a tie that does not bind them to other men. We are to have an affection for the entire brotherhood of Christians, that is, the entire body of believers world-wide. But the question is “how does this world-wide body speak?” What is its voice? How does it function? Often we hear such phrases as “the brotherhood has spoken,” or “the brotherhood will not accept that,” “that is our brotherhood paper,” or “you should check out our brotherhood web-site.” In reality I don’t believe there is any such thing as a brotherhood paper, web-site, not even a brotherhood church directory. Now I think I know what people mean when they say that, however, the idea is neither realistic nor scriptural. Anyone can have a religious paper, but no paper represents the thinking or beliefs of the entire body of believers. Any person can have a web-site, in fact many do, but none of them represent the thinking or work of the entire brotherhood. Church directories are very helpful. However, none of them contain all the congregations who serve the Lord world-wide. In fact it is possible that some who really belong to the Lord have been omitted, and some who have been included do not measure up to the divine standard.

If the brotherhood doesn’t speak through these avenues, then how does it speak? The truth is the brotherhood has no voice. The church in its universal sense is only a spiritual relationship and not an organization. The church universal has no earthly headquarters, no earthly head, no ruling body of men (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Timothy 3:15). On the other hand the local church is not only a relationship, but an organic body as well, and this is the only organic form or existence Christ has given His church on earth Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23. In other words, the bible recognizes no organization larger than the local church. Hence

the only way for the church to speak or its voice to be heard is through local churches.

Whatever problems may arise, and whatever solutions we may use in an effort to settle them, cannot in any way violate the scriptural teaching about the basic organization of the New Testament church. That means we cannot create an organization larger than the local church to deal with these problems. A few years ago when a preacher for the Assemblies of God denomination got into moral difficulties he was called before the “general council” of the church and stripped of his right to preach. They took away his credentials. The church of Christ has no “general council.” If a gospel preacher gets out of line either morally or by preaching false doctrine and thereby disrupts churches, the congregation to which he belongs is responsible for disciplining him. If they fail to do so then each congregation as an independent organic body has to deal with this individual in a scriptural way in order to protect the flock of God in that place. There is, however, no brotherhood “council” or “organization” for dealing with such matters. In the same way, if a congregation over steps the limits of bible teaching and practices those things not authorized, when such becomes known, other congregations, need warn their own members of the unscriptural practices of the wayward church. If such were to happen, would all churches do as they should? Probably not. As an individual I cannot control what other individuals or churches do. I can only control what I do, and as an individual have a say in what the congregation to which I belong does. We must always remember, however, that in all our dealings both individually and collectively, we must manifest the spirit of Christ. We never have the right to misrepresent any person or church. We never have the right to be mean-spirited or vindictive. We must deal honestly, fairly, and objectively with all men.

In some situations a congregation may call a group of men to come and examine their particular situation. This often occurs when a division has taken place. The men who are called go and examine the evidence presented and usually make some kind of statement as to how they view the situation. Is this a scriptural procedure? Do these men represent some type of organizational function unknown to the scriptures or do

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## Editorial

## UNHAPPY WITH GOD'S PLAN

By DON L. KING

This title really describes the general attitude of many today in the religious world. There would have been no reason for so many changes through the years if this were not the case. The truth is men have been unhappy with God's plan almost from the beginning. There is one example after another through the Old Testament. Naaman was not willing to accept the plan of God for his cleansing (II Kings 5) and turned away in a rage upon learning he was to simply wash and be clean. He is famous for saying, "Behold I thought..." In fact, that is usually the problem with men today. Upon learning what the plan of God is, they have their own thoughts and desires and prefer them rather than the will of the Lord.

In the New Testament the list continues. Those people often preferred their own way also. The fellow usually styled as the "Rich Young Ruler" (Matthew 19, Mark 10 and Luke 18) had the very same problem. He wanted to please the Lord and was willing to do some "good thing" in order to have eternal life. His idea was to do something good, perhaps a kind deed, etc. and then receive the reward promised to the faithful. When he learned from Jesus what he had to do, he turned away sorrowful because he had great possessions. Oh, he thought he loved God, but he soon discovered his money meant more to him. What was his problem? He was unhappy with God's plan.

Many modern-day people are also unhappy with the plan of God. The atheist dislikes the teaching and even the very thought of God. Some denominations are unhappy with the fact that God's Word is complete and finished. They want people to believe their latterday "revelations" are a part of God's inspired Word. However, God's Word has been finished far too long for their writings to have any claim to inspiration. Jude said, "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" (Jude 3) Jude said "the faith" had already been delivered to God's people. This means that anything subsequent to that time must be identified as counterfeit. The point of all this is that the Bible is now with us, complete and finished. It is futile to search for other sources of knowledge about the church.

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## BASIC DOCTRINE

By GEORGE BATTEY

### Question: How does grace relate with obedience?

“Grace” means “unmerited favor” and that simply means undeserved favor. The Bible teaches men are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8). This means no one can live so flawlessly and so perfectly that they merit (deserve) heaven. No one deserves to go to heaven because “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

The grace of God makes it possible for imperfect people to be forgiven and have another opportunity for heaven. Even the worst sinner can be saved by the grace of God (1 Tim 1:15-16). More about this in a moment.

Here are three things everyone needs to know about grace:

#### 1) Grace is not free for God.

While grace is free to the sinner, this does not mean grace is totally free to everyone concerned. Grace is very expensive. Remember the old saying, “**There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch.**” This means that, while one person received a free lunch, someone else actually had to pay for the lunch. While grace is free to sinners, it actually cost somebody something; it cost God the death of His only begotten Son. “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal 4:4-5).

#### 2) Grace is conditional.

This means grace is actually given only to people who meet certain conditions. The grace of God, is available for all the world: “For *the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men*, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Tit 2:11-12). According to this, God’s grace which “brings salvation” is offered to all people. But not all people will actually be saved. Most sinners will be lost. Jesus Himself said, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and *there are many who go in by it*. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and *there are few who find it.*” (Mt 7:13-14). Since grace is offered to everyone, and yet most people will be lost, this means salvation is not by “grace only.” If it were by grace only, everyone would be saved, but clearly this is not the case.

Grace is conditional. To receive the “grace which brings salvation” (Tit 2:11), a person must meet certain conditions. Many churches would probably agree with this, but unfortunately they teach the only condition is to believe in Jesus. While this is a popular idea, it simply is not true. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and *not by faith only*” (Ja 2:24). This is the only place in all of the Bible which uses the term “faith

only” and clearly it says men are *NOT* saved by faith only. Besides faith, God has attached the conditions of repentance (Lk 13:3), confession (Mt 10:32), and water baptism. Notice: “He who believes *and is baptized* will be saved” (Mk 16:16). “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is *born of water* and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:5). “Repent *and let every one of you be baptized* in the name of Jesus Christ *for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38). Baptism in water is as much of a condition as faith, repentance and confession. All of these conditions must be met before one freely receives the “grace which brings salvation.”

#### 3) Grace is not a license to continue sinning.

This means that even after someone has been saved by God’s grace that person must obey God’s word. Salvation by grace is conditional from start to finish. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Rom 6:1-2).

Men may not ignore God’s law and just say, “It doesn’t matter whether we obey or not because God’s grace will take care of us.” Men cannot “put God to the test” (Mt 4:7) like this. Making a mistake and asking God to forgive is one thing, but to recklessly or purposefully neglect His revealed will and to purposefully violate what is written is to “sin willfully.” The Bible says, “For *if we sin willfully* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, *there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*” (Heb 10:26). Simply put: The free gift of “grace which brings salvation” may be forfeited and the “latter end is worse than the beginning” (2 Pet 2:18-22).

When members of the church of Christ preach to people about the need to worship and serve God according to the scriptures, this is not a suggestion that men are able to “earn salvation.” It is impossible to earn salvation. All have sinned and all need grace. But this does not mean men may therefore purposefully violate the law of God and expect His grace will unconditionally cover willful rebellion. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 Jn 1:6).

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## THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL AND “THE TOMB OF JESUS”

### PART 2

By GEORGE BATTEY

In part 2 of this study the evidence offered by the Discovery Channel, that the tomb and bones of Jesus have been discovered, will be examined.

There are four basic problems with the evidence offered and the resulting conclusions based upon that “evidence.”

#### 1st) **The multiple bones problem.**

The tomb under consideration contained the bones of about 35 different individuals. Half of these bones were in ossuaries and there was considerable contamination of the site. The Discovery Channel does not present this information to its viewers. The facts are being manipulated and the evidence is contaminated.

#### 2nd) **The name problem.**

Many experts are not convinced the actual names on the ossuaries are the names given by the Discovery Channel. One critic writes:

Are Cameron and Jacobovici correct about the names they assert are on the ossuaries? Not according to many experts. Some were written in Aramaic, others in Hebrew, and another in Greek. This indicates they were not buried in a similar time period. It is not even clear that “Jesus” is named on any of the ossuaries. Dr. Evans’s personal examination of the ossuary was inconclusive. Stephen Pfann, a biblical scholar at the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, is also unsure that the name “Jesus” on the caskets was read correctly. He thinks it’s more likely the name “Hanun.” Ancient Semitic script is notoriously difficult to decipher. (*The Jesus Family Tomb: Fact or Fiction?* [www.y-zine.com/tomb](http://www.y-zine.com/tomb))

Dr. Evans, mentioned here, has a PhD and is author of the book, *Jesus and the Ossuaries*. He is very qualified and he personally examined the ossuaries themselves. The point to be emphasized is this: No name on any of the ossuaries was clearly the name of Jesus.

Furthermore, the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph were extremely common names in the first century. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua. Joshua was the name of an Israelite hero. Many parents named their sons Joshua at this time. Dr. Evans pointed out in his book that approximately 100 tombs have been discovered in Jerusalem with the name “Jesus” (Joshua); about 200 tombs with the name “Joseph”; the name “Mary” was on far more than that.

So the Discovery Channel is misleading on the information about the names written on the ossuaries.

#### 3rd) **The statistical problem.**

The statistical support that the tomb of Jesus has been found rises and falls on the question of Mary Magdalene.

Does the name Mariamene e Mara mean “Mary Magdalene” as Cameron and Jacobovici claim? The film-makers themselves offer the following proof: Mariamene is the name given Mary Magdalene in an ancient book called “the Acts of Phillip” which dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, 300 years after Jesus, one document is found which links the name of Mariamene to the name Mary Magdalene.

Andrey Feuerverger, the statistician hired by Cameron and Jacobovici, admits himself that his numbers (1 in 600 odds that this is the tomb of Jesus) is based on assumptions disputed by the majority of scholars. He admits the assumptions were given to him by Jacobovici himself - the biggest assumption being that the name Mariamene e Mara means Mary Magdalene.

Feuerverger defends his role in an interview with Scientific American: “I did permit the number one in 600 to be used in the film-I’m prepared to stand behind that but on the understanding that these numbers were calculated based on assumptions that I was asked to use.” (Fact or Fiction?, *ibid.*)

The Discovery Channel leads people to believe that statistically, this must be the tomb of Jesus. Furthermore, the Discovery Channel does not tell the mathematical odds of modern film makers discovering the tomb of Jesus, while the Jewish and Roman authorities of the first century could not find it. What are the odds of this happening?

#### 4th) **The DNA problem.**

According to reports, DNA testing was done on residue found inside the ossuaries assumed to be the ossuaries of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Notice an assumption is being made right here. Mitochondrial DNA testing was used to see if those buried were related. The results proved negative indicating the two people were not related maternally. One critic asks this important question:

“If ‘Jesus’ and ‘Mariamene’ weren’t related matrilineally, why jump to the conclusion that they were husband and wife, rather than being related through their fathers?” (Fact or Fiction?)

In other words, all the DNA testing demonstrated was that the two people buried in these ossuaries did not have the same mother - but no test was done to see if they had the same father. Furthermore, an assumption is being made that if two unrelated people are buried in the same tomb, they must be husband and wife - even though 33 other bodies were buried in the same tomb.

#### SUMMARY

In summary, what is the Discovery Channel showing the public? They are allowing two film-makers to present “evidence” which is skewed and built upon assumptions. Evidence which contradicts their conclusions is suppressed. It all amounts to the same thing which motivated the book and movie *The Da Vinci Code*: MONEY.

The Washington Post, a liberal newspaper, published an article on February 28, 2007 entitled, *‘Lost Tomb of Jesus’ Claim Called a Stunt*. Here is part of the report:

Leading archaeologists in Israel and the United States yesterday denounced the purported discovery of the tomb of Jesus as a publicity stunt.

Scorn for the Discovery Channel's claim to have found the burial place of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and -- most explosively -- their possible son came not just from Christian scholars but also from Jewish and secular experts who said their judgments were unaffected by any desire to uphold Christian orthodoxy.

"I'm not a Christian. I'm not a believer. I don't have a dog in this fight," said William G. Dever, who has been excavating ancient sites in Israel for 50 years and is widely considered the dean of biblical archaeology among U.S. scholars. "I just think it's a shame the way this story is being hyped and manipulated."

Later in the same article appears this:

Dever, a retired professor of archaeology at the University of Arizona, said that some of the inscriptions on the Talpiyot ossuaries are unclear, but that all of the names are common.

"I've known about these ossuaries for many years and so have many other archaeologists, and none of us thought it was much of a story, because these are rather common Jewish names from that period," he said. "It's a publicity stunt, and it will make these guys very rich, and it will upset millions of innocent people because they don't know enough to separate fact from fiction."

Similar assessments came yesterday from two Israeli scholars, Amos Kloner, who originally excavated the tomb, and Joe Zias, former curator of archaeology at the Israeli Antiquities Authority. Kloner told the Jerusalem Post that the documentary is "nonsense." Zias described it in an e-mail to The Washington Post as a "hyped up film which is intellectually and scientifically dishonest."

### OTHER QUESTIONS

Besides the above mentioned problems with the "evidence" presented by the Discovery Channel, there are other pertinent questions which deserve an answer.

#### **1st) Why do Cameron and Jacobovici not cite scholars who disagree with their conclusions?**

For example, in 1996 when the BBC aired a short documentary on this same subject, the vast majority of archaeologists disputed their claims. Why will the Discovery Channel not tell it's audience this information?

#### **2nd) Why would Mary and Joseph's family tomb be in Jerusalem?**

Neither Jesus nor His family lived in Jerusalem. They lived in Nazareth of Galilee. There was never a "Jesus of Jerusalem" mentioned in scripture. It is always "Jesus of Nazareth" which readers find in the Bible.

Everyone knows Jesus was buried in a tomb near

Jerusalem after He was crucified. "The place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby" (Jn 19:41-42). But why would the entire family (Joseph, Mary, James) be buried there? Remember, all these people were supposedly buried in this "tomb of Jesus," in the Jerusalem vicinity, according to the Discovery Channel. None of these people lived in Jerusalem. They lived in Nazareth. Furthermore, archeological evidence shows people who lived in Jerusalem were called by their first name followed by their father's name (e.g. "Jesus, son of Joseph"). But people who lived in Galilee were named by their first name followed by the place where they lived (e.g. "Jesus of Nazareth"). The tomb in Jerusalem supposedly bears the name "Jesus - son of Joseph," but if this was the Jesus of scripture, the name should read, "Jesus of Nazareth."

#### **3rd) Why did Jesus' enemies not expose the tomb?**

When Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost, he preached that Jesus resurrected.

"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses." (Acts 2:29-32).

If Jesus had not actually resurrected, the Jewish leaders could simply have gone to the tomb and produced the body. If the tomb on the Discovery Channel was the family tomb of Jesus and ten ossuaries are contained therein, this was a prominent tomb of a prominent family in Jerusalem. Everyone would have known about its existence.

#### **4th) Why did the Roman soldiers not expose the tomb?**

Scripture records:

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Mt 28:11-15)

Roman soldiers would not have told this story if Jesus' body had merely been moved to another tomb. They would have found the new tomb and exposed what happened. Sleeping on guard-duty was an offense punishable by death. These soldiers would not have freely told this story if Jesus and all His family were buried some elaborate tomb near Jerusalem.

**5th) Why would a poor family have such an elaborate tomb and ossuaries?**

Only prominent families had tombs carved out of solid rock. Only rich families used ossuaries. Poor families buried their dead in common graves. Jesus' family was poor. When they came to Bethlehem, there was no room in the inn and they had to stay in the stables (Lk 2:7). If Joseph and Mary had been prominent citizens the inn keeper would have made room for them. When Mary offered an offering, she offered what poor people offered (Lk 2:22-24). Jesus said He had no where to lay His head (Mt 8:20) - indicating His poverty. Joseph, Jesus' adoptive father, was merely a carpenter - a "blue-collar worker" - not a prominent citizen.

**6th) Why did contemporary Roman or Jewish historians not write about the tomb?**

Not one single contemporary historian mentions the tomb in question.

**7th) Why did the disciples all suffer persecution for something which was untrue?**

Jesus warned, "They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake" (Lk 21:12). Paul wrote, "And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased" (Gal 5:11). All the apostles died violently maintaining their testimony that Jesus resurrected from the dead. Why would they all do this if they knew it to be false?

**CONCLUSION**

Contrary to what the Discovery Channel produced and presented to the public, the bones of Jesus have not been discovered. Evidence was manipulated. Other evidence was suppressed. Statistics were calculated based on unproven assumptions. The DNA testing was incomplete and the conclusions drawn were likewise based on assumptions. Most scholars reject the idea that this tomb is the tomb of Jesus.

One person made the following pertinent observation:

William Dever, an expert on near eastern archaeology and anthropology, who has worked with Israeli archeologists for five decades, said specialists have known about the ossuaries for years. **"The fact that it's been ignored tells you something,"** said Dever, professor emeritus at the University of Arizona. "It would be amusing if it didn't mislead so many people." (Fact or Fiction?, *ibid.* - emphasis added - GFB)

Most importantly, the facts from the scriptures disagree with the claim that this tomb is the tomb of Jesus. There is a reason the bones of Jesus have not been found - because He resurrected and ascended back into heaven.

One day, those involved in the production of the movie, *The Da Vinci Code* and the present production of the Discovery Channel, *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*, will stand before God in judgment. All the actors and actresses, the producers and publishers, the advertisers and sponsors, the television and film-makers - everyone involved in the

production of these works will all stand before God to give an account for what they have done. Then will come to pass the words of the Book of Revelation:

The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:15-17)

**SOURCES**

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The Jesus Family Tomb: Fact or Fiction? [www.y-zine.com/tomb](http://www.y-zine.com/tomb)

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**PAGES FROM THE PAST**

**FROM RELIGION ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER**

by *Carter E. Boren*  
1968 publication, Page 88

A quotation from the Firm Foundation of October 1886 in regard to organization of auxiliaries in the Churches.

I am at Lockhard. Bro Bush closed a meeting here some time ago with more than thirty added, and also organized a "Women's Aid Society." I did not learn what this aid society was for, not to sound out the gospel I am sure, for that is the duty of the Church at Lockhart, not to do good works, for the Bible furnished unto all good works, and we read of no such society there. Also, the Bible says; "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of Christ", and how is it that Bro. Bush can claim to take the Bible as his guide and then organize a society that he has no example or command for doing, and then by his practice change the Bible to read, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the 'Women's Aid Society'", is something hard for me to understand.

I talked to some of the leaders of the Church of Christ at Lockhart, yesterday, who said they wanted to sound out the gospel if it took a society just like the Methodist Conference to do it; that they had no systems or plans of government, and they had talked about the Bible plan so long, till the Methodists and Baptist were doing more work than they, and therefore they must have a society through which they could work. To say the least of this it is nothing less-than legislative rebellion against the law of God, who has said his word would furnish unto all good works. . .

- Submitted by *Richard DeGough*

## THE VOICE OF THE BROTHERWOOD

*continued from page one*

they only represent an effort on the part of individuals to help in the resolution of a difficult matter? In Acts 15 we have a case where Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders in order to resolve a problem that had arisen over circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses. After much discussion the meeting there resulted in a letter being sent and read to the church in Antioch. The letter was joyfully received and its recommendations accepted. Even though some of the men involved in this matter were inspired, the incident itself emphasizes that through collective study and consultation it is possible to resolve very difficult problems. I personally see nothing wrong with a congregation asking faithful, objective brethren for help in the assessment or resolution of difficult situations. However, we must remember that men today are not inspired. Because of this, there is no guarantee that the decisions reached will be correct. Church autonomy therefore demands that each church decide for itself what they believe to be right, based on the facts of the case and the teaching of God's word.

Some argue that church autonomy allows them to make their own decisions and that no church has a right to tell them what they can or cannot do. While it is true that we must respect the autonomy of another congregation, we must also remember that autonomy is a two way street. Other churches have the right to determine for themselves if they feel a church has gone too far and stepped out of line. For example, suppose a church begins to teach that one is saved by grace alone and that baptism is not necessary for salvation. When challenged they claim that autonomy gives them the right to teach what they view as being right. Does this mean that other churches must accept their teaching? Does it mean they cannot be challenged for teaching such an idea? Certainly not. They not only can, but should be opposed. When they are opposed that doesn't mean those opposing have violated the autonomy of the teaching church. The fact that each church is independent of all others so far as their government is concerned, gives no church the right to teach and disseminate that which is contrary to the scriptures. Autonomy was never intended to allow or protect any church when they do that which is wrong. When differences arise between individuals and/or churches, often information intended to accurately portray the situation becomes misinformation as it passes from one person to another. This is regrettable. Every situation deserves to be correctly represented. A failure to do so greatly hinders the possibility of resolution. May God help us to approach all such problems in the spirit of Christ, in a way that respects the organizational structure God has given the church, and at the same time seeks to save those who may have disobeyed the Lord.

## UNHAPPY WITH GOD'S PLAN

*continued from page two*

When we hear of brethren tampering with Holy things, the question comes to mind of whether some of us are unhappy with God's plan. No one has the scriptural right to tamper with the worship of the church by inserting Bible reading, teaching, singing, chanting or anything else between the loaf and the cup in the Lord's Supper. As long as the world stands, it will remain unscriptural for women to speak in the church; and we still need to know those who labor among us. When, and if, a preacher has become unfaithful in doctrine, brethren should be warned so they may stop using him. What was wrong in the days of the apostles is still wrong today since God's Word is the same today and forever. The worship of the Lord's church has stood the test of time and remains as scriptural today as when the church began on Pentecost. The church Jesus died to purchase has borne the intense scrutiny of our enemies in debates for untold years. No one has ever been able to successfully point to our worship and say it is unscriptural. Their arguments are of necessity that while we are indeed scriptural, it is possible to do differently and still be pleasing to God. Suppose a claim is made that edification may take place by some new practice never used before? We must remember that the proponents of the class arrangement for teaching also claim edification takes place in their Bible Classes. However, we continue to oppose them on the grounds that whether or not edification is present the Bible pattern for edifying the church is violated! The truth is that Bible Classes are wrong on two counts: First, because there is no Bible example or pattern for them; and second, because they violate the pattern that is given for a public assembly in one place while one male speaker at a time edifies the assembly. (1 Corinthians 14; 1 Timothy 2, 11, 12, etc.)

Brethren, do not be discouraged when you hear of problems or unrest here or there. Through the years, the Lord's church has weathered many storms and has stood the test. She can stand any test or challenge hurled her way. We enjoy the blessings of God because we are His. He cares for His own and will ever be with us. May God bless us all to heed what Paul wrote in Romans 14:19, "*Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*" Let us actively work for that which will cause, or bring about, real peace and seek only to build one another up as we continue to "fight the good fight of faith." (1 Timothy 6:12) Think on these things. DLK



## HEAVEN'S MOURNING

*How the Father must hav suffered  
As His Son hung on that cross.*

*Were there teardrops on the face of God,  
When He heard His Son give that cry?*

*Did He almost send those angels?  
Did He almost change His mind?*

*Was there darkness in Heaven  
Throughout that dreadful time?*

*Did the angels mourn?  
Do you think that angels cry?*

*If they do, then there were surely  
Tears in their eyes.*

*As they watched the crucifixion of that one,  
And they beheld the death of Heaven's own Son*

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## Announcements

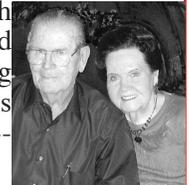
### MY APPRECIATION

It is with great pride that every family of the congregation meeting at Woodlake, CA has received a copy of "Footprints on the Sands of Time," by Brother Ronny Wade. Several times I sat down and shed tears of joy as I read the list of preachers, some of whom I knew as a young person, and was privileged to hear preach the gospel. Chapter 13 was especially interesting to the church here. Our brethren have not moved an inch from the ancient landmarks that have made us a unique people. Many

preachers have labored among us in meetings and since the church came about here in the early forties, we have remained faithful. Thank you, Ronny, for adding chapter 13 in your book. I had to laugh at the poem by Brother E.H. Miller "I once was a two-cup man." As a young man of 27, Brother Lynwood Smith came through here and quoted that poem in one of his famous sermons. With God's help, the Woodlake congregation will continue to hold the line. Sincerely, Brother Buddy Brumley

### 65 YEARS TOGETHER

On April 4, 2007, Daddy and Mother, Louis (Mike) and Irene Hopkins of Sentinel, OK. celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Daddy was born in Port, OK. October 7, 1921, Mother was born in Elk City, OK. January 10, 1925. They both were baptized in 1946 by Bro. Paul Nichols. They have made Sentinel, OK. their home all these years. They have three daughters who are all faithful members of the church. Patsy Everett of Altus, OK, Linda Harris of Tuttle, OK, Gayle Hanson of Newcastle, OK. They are blessed with 7 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, and 1 great-great grandchild. We are so thankful for them and for the sincere Christian example they have always set for us. God has truly blessed us to have been raised in such a fine Christian home. They are loved so much. They always enjoy hearing from their friends. Their address is P.O. Box 235, Sentinel, OK. 73664- Tele.-(405)393-4454. Linda Harris



## Bonds of Matrimony

On March 3, 2007, at 2:00 P.M., a large congregation gathered at the Crestview church in Birmingham, AL to witness the betrothal of Matt Martin and Lauren Howell. The setting was picturesque and lovely. Everyone was happy and upbeat. The beautiful music contribution was rendered by Tim Prince, Sydney Prince, Larry Thompson and Kevin Presley, and was beautifully done. This handsome couple sweetly exchanged their troths thus becoming husband and wife, and as the old song says, "vowed to love each other evermore." Matt is the elder son of Brother and Sister Ricky Martin of Marietta, GA, a leader of the church there and a faithful gospel preacher. Lauren is the daughter of Brother and Sister Ryan Howell of Birmingham and member of the Crestview church there. Both these young people have been raised in their home congregations. Matt is an able teacher at home and at other places. We wish for them a life of prosperity and happiness and that the Father will crown their earthly sojourn with only enough clouds to make a perfect sunset. -M. Lynwood Smith

## Our Departed

**McGOWND** - Deborah Jane (Hoffarth) McGownd was born February 2, 1905 in Belle, MO and passed away April 27, 2007 in Houston, MO. At the time of her passing Deborah was 102 years old. Deborah was married to John "Sandy" McGownd on February 13, 1932 and they had four children. She was preceded in death by her husband and one son, Delman McGownd. Deborah is survived by her children, John and Helen McGownd of Mountain Grove, MO, Mary Ellen and Dean Gentry of Houston, MO, and Erma Jane and Larry Williams of Fulton, MO, and a daughter-in-law, Paulene McGownd of Denver, CO, nine grandchildren, fifteen great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. Deborah was a member of the Bendavis congregation until she moved to Houston in 1991. She was a member of the Houston congregation at the time of her death. During the last years of her life she was unable to attend services regularly, but always remained interested in the growth of the Church. Services were conducted in Houston, MO on April 30, 2007 with congregational singing led by Marty Baker of the Houston congregation. Deborah was buried alongside her husband at the Fowler cemetery. The writer was honored to be able to conduct the funeral attended by a large group of family and friends. - Ed Williamson

**MYERS**- Myrtle Marie Myers was born Feb. 29, 1920 and passed away peacefully in her home due to heart failure on April 13, 2007 at the age of 87. She was a member of the Pleasant View congregation in Springfield, MO, the oldest member of the congregation at the time of her death. She had been a Christian for 75 years, having obeyed the gospel at the age of 12 under the preaching of Homer King. On Dec. 14, 1940, she was united in marriage to Lawrence Myers, who preceded her in death on Dec. 14, 1993 (their 53rd wedding anniversary). To this union were born three daughters, two sons, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren who loved her dearly. Leroy Myers, a son, is a member of the Jamesville, MO congregation and Neva Fuller, a daughter, attends at Pleasant View. Myrtle was a faithful member of the Lord's church. Her quiet and humble spirit will continue to influence the lives of those who knew and loved her. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15). I was honored to have been asked by the family to conduct the service. - Billy D. Dickinson

**KERR** - Elsie Mae Kerr, age 82, of Russellville, MO, died Monday morning, April 30, 2007, at the Golden Living Center in Jefferson City. She was born April 6, 1925, in Sikeston, MO, a daughter of Gus and Hattie Horn Patterson. Elsie married Merle E. Kerr on September 27, 1941, in Piggott, Arkansas. She was a busy homemaker raising eight children. She had also worked at Ralston-Purina in California, MO, International Shoe in Jefferson

City and retired from Still Hospital, also in Jefferson City. Elsie stayed on the farm, canning the produce Merle grew in his garden and enjoyed all of the beautiful flowers he planted. She is survived by her husband and seven children, Charles Wayne Kerr and wife Pat of Jefferson City; Betty Joyce Bond and husband Wendell of Dothan, Alabama; Bobby Gene Kerr of Eldon; Delbert Lee Kerr and wife Rita of Russellville; Shirley Ann Crawford of Russellville; a half sister, Hazel Murphy of Granite City, Illinois, a sister Ruth Wittika of St. Charles; twenty grandchildren, numerous great grandchildren, one great-great granddaughter, also several nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. Elsie was preceded in death by her parents, one daughter, Brenda Sue Shehorn, two sisters and two brothers. She was baptized into Christ in 1949 in Kennett, MO, and was a faithful member of the "Business 54 Church of Christ" in Eldon. The writer was honored to speak words of comfort at the funeral service.-Dan Wissinger

## Field Reports

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 carlmj@cableone.net, May 10 - I began a meeting last night at the Council Hill, OK congregation, near Muskogee. I held my first extended gospel meeting at this church in June of 1970. Some of those folks are still there and it is good to be with them and the entire congregation. I just closed a wonderful meeting at the Odom congregation near Dora, Missouri. I had the good pleasure of baptizing Bernie Watkins during the meeting. He has attended services there with his faithful wife as long as I have been going to the Odom (since 1970), but he had never obeyed the gospel. He will be 86 years-old on July 16. I was in a meeting at Lodi, CA before going to the Odom, and we had a good meeting there. It was great to be with preachers Alan Bonifay, Don King, Jim Winchester, Ron Jordan, Greg Cardosa, Matt Treat, and Buddy Brumley. My schedule for the next few months includes: Mineral Wells, TX (Memorial Day); Burkhart, MO (June 10-17); Huntington, WV (June 22-24); Midland, TX (July 29-Aug. 5); Shawnee, KS (Sept. 12-16); Wilsonville, OR (Sept. 21-23), and Fremont, CA (Oct. 21-28).

Gregory S. Robbins, 7440 Hwy 6, Apt 1012, Hitchcock TX 77563 - Since last report, I held a meeting in Ducanville, TX, I am very thankful for the opportunity to preach the gospel there in that place. It was good to meet and renew old friendships with those brethren. Next I go to Pottsville ARK, July/6-8/2007. I am looking forward to this meeting, because it will be the first time I hold a meeting as a married man. The Lord has blessed me with a loving Christian mate, Allison Wallace, she is the daughter of Ronnie and Sandi Wallace. We will be wed June/23/2007, pray for us in sending forth the gospel as well with the work here in La Marque. May we all labor for the Kingdom.

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804.

May 14 - The annual spring meeting at Birmingham, AL was a real treat. Crowds were large with visitors from several different states and a number of preachers attending. The meeting resulted in several confessions which encouraged us in believing that there are still people who will change when they are confronted with their sins. We next went to Wichita Falls, TX (Garden's Edge) where we had the pleasure of working with Brother Jimmy Cating. Jimmy has been a blessing to this area and the results of his work are clearly evident. Crowds were good with a number of outside visitors present at every service. Lord willing we go next to West Point, GA May 16-20, then on to Jacksonville, FL for the annual Memorial Day meeting May 23-27. In June we are scheduled at Greenville, SC 10-17 then Deer Park, TX July 8-17 and Claxton, MO July 25-29. Our prayer is for the strength and stability of the church everywhere.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail: old\_paths@juno.com, May 14 - We are a little late getting the paper ready this month due to just returning from a meeting at Dothan, AL. We enjoyed being with the brethren there and appreciate all they did for the meeting. It was a pleasure to stay with Kevin and Bethany Presley. We enjoyed the time together and were made to feel right at home. The Dothan brethren saw to it that we had meal appointments each day and surrounding congregations assisted also in their attendance. It was good to be with visiting preachers, Greg Jordan, Phillip Prince, and Rick Martin, among others perhaps. Although there were no visible results, we believe good was accomplished and the church strengthened. Lord willing, we are to begin at Cleburne, Texas June 6 going through the 10th. It will not be long before it will be time for the fourth of July meetings at Sulphur, OK and Lebanon, MO. If you have not been to one of those meetings you really need to go and experience the great singing and preaching. Preachers, we continue to need your field reports and articles for the paper as well as a kind word when you can. May God bless the brotherhood.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl., Richmond, KY 40475, douglast69@bellsouth.net, (606) 271-0529, May 7th, 2007 - It seems that we barely get started in one month and another one begins. I recently closed meetings in Chestnut Ridge, KY Jamesville, MO and Harrodsburg, IN in the month of April. I was very pleased with the crowds in all three places and greatly encouraged by the brethren's enthusiasm for the work of the church in all these places also. At Jamesville, it was an honor to have so many of our great gospel preachers present, but there again, the central and southern Missouri area is home to so many of our preachers. I thoroughly enjoyed being with bro. Billy and sis. Judy Dickinson and appreciated their hospitality tremendously. In Harrodsburg, the church seems to be doing very well. It was delight to be with those brethren again. Like so many places, they have brethren that faithfully serve the Lord without fan fare or applause and are faithful to keep the church going. The area congregations have been so helpful in coming to the meetings and I know everyone at

these churches appreciates that extra effort. I had bro. Jerry Woodard from Lowry, AL with me at Harrodsburg. He desires to do all he can in serving the Lord. His enthusiasm is commendable. I appreciate the brethren in the Indiana area for making him feel so welcome among them. Lord willing, I'll be in Duncanville, TX July 15-22. Plan to come if you are in the area. We would love to have you. Lord bless the faithful.

Kevin W. Presley, 200 Sweetwater Dr. J-108, Dothan, AL 36305. kpresley@sw.rr.com, - May 13, 2007 Greetings to all. Spring has been a busy season in the Lord's work. It has been my privilege to be with the brethren in LaGrange, GA, Wichita Falls, TX, Panama City, FL, and Joplin, MO for meetings. Each meeting was a pleasure and I hope good was done. Panama City has been the focus of a renewed effort in this area. Our television broadcast covers this area and we advertised the meeting extensively. Greg Jordan has moved there to work with the small congregation and Phillip Prince has been going there once a month for quite some time to spend several days running leads and encouraging the brethren. Their efforts paid off. We were thrilled to have 15 visitors from the community and some seemed like good prospects. Keep this work in your prayers and drop by and visit the church there when you can. They are few in number and it thrills them to have brethren visit. Things are well at home. The church at Dothan has enjoyed peace and some growth over the past several months. Most recently, a woman obeyed the gospel as a result of watching the television program. She began attending services and some began studying with her, leading her to accept the truth. She is a sweet, conscientious lady and I have no doubt she will be an asset to the church. Bro. Don King closed a meeting for us today and we enjoyed ten soul-penetrating sermons. Don's preaching was right on the mark and we were all encouraged by his preaching and presence. Lord willing, I plan to be with the churches in Collins, MS (May 23-27) and Hillcrest, MS (June 10-17). Later in the summer, I am scheduled to be at Aurora, MO and Harrodsburg, IN. Come be with us if you can.

C.A. Smith, 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714, casmith810@suddenlink.net, April 21, 2007 - March 31, thru April 2, 2007, I had the privilege of conducting a short Gospel Meeting for the brethren at Davis Oklahoma. The first night of the meeting, tornado sightings and warnings were out for that part of Oklahoma, and yet we had an excellent crowd to greet us that night. The following services saw the numbers increase from service to service, as local folk from Davis came, as well as brothers and sisters from eight different congregations in Oklahoma. Sunday afternoon, the last service of the meeting, a young man came forward as we sang the invitation song. After questioning him concerning his desires, he was found to be a believer, who was eager to repent of his sins, confess the lovely name of Jesus Christ, with his mouth, before men, and be buried with him in baptism for the remission of sins. Of course, we immediately prepared to take his confession, and did baptize him for the

remission of sins, while angels in heaven were rejoicing, the gathered crowd rejoiced as well. Though we see far too few with desires like him, it confirms to us that the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ can still prick the hearts of men, and constrain them to be obedient in baptism to His divine will. I thank God for the brethren in Davis, and their allowing me to preach in that short Gospel Meeting. The church here at home is at peace, and all members are peacemakers, which should be the way it is all over the brotherhood. May God bless all of the faithful, and may we all work together with God to the upbuilding of His kingdom, the church.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797, May 1, 2007 - For the past several Sundays, the Church here has been blessed by the presence of brethren from the mainland who worshipped with us, some of whom granted our request to preach for us, for which we are grateful: Reggie Kinser - February 25; Roger Boone - March 7 & 11; Chris Allen - April 15; Paul Wilkerson - April 22. The Church here is composed mostly of Filipinos; and it is encouraging to see brethren of like precious faith from other places, enjoying close fellowship and association with us. We are glad to inform that last Wednesday, April 25, Sis. Lilia Tapang has been added to the Church by the Lord through her humble obedience to baptism. She and her husband used to live in the Big Island, but they moved to Oregon several years ago. She came back here in Hawaii last year, so she could attend to her mother, Sis. Rita Aluntaga, who was very sickly at the time. I baptized Sis. Rita, a year ago before Lilia arrived here. Lilia always attends with her mother Sunday worship service in the morning and studies in the evenings of Sundays and Wednesdays. We are grateful for the "seed" planted in her heart, germinates and grows, bearing fruits of obedience. We pray she will continue to be faithful, hoping she could become "the bridge" in our effort to reach local born here in Hawaii. I also continue to work with our radio program aired every Saturday at 4:00 P.M. at KNDI, 1270 AM. Please mention us always in your prayers. God bless.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, May 7 - Our meeting with Doug Hawkins back in April was one of the best we have had in recent years. The crowds were consistently good throughout and we even had to put out extra chairs one night. We also had visitors from the community and the cooperation from surrounding congregations was grand. Doug did a great job preaching the gospel! My meeting in Texarkana, TX in March was a delightful experience. This is where Jerry, my brother and best friend, labors with the church and it was wonderful to be with him. It was almost like a family reunion in some ways. I'm thankful that my parents were able to attend from Houston, TX, as well as a sister, a niece, a nephew, and my son and his family. Many thanks to Wayne Fussell and the brethren who came from Shreveport, LA, as well as all those who supported us from other congregations. We also had visitors from the community. In a few weeks I will conduct a short meeting

in Shawnee, KS. I am also looking forward to the rest of my schedule for this year: Aug. 3-12 at Norman, OK; Sept. 26-30 at Ratliff City, OK; Oct. 24-28 at Little Rock, AR; Nov. 14-18 at Hill Top, KY. If you are near any of these efforts, please come and help us out!

Roger L. Owens, 16128 Grand Ridge Lane, Neosho, Missouri 64850, Greetings to the church of our Lord. It has been a few months since my last report. Things at Neosho are good having experienced the baptism of one new convert into the Kingdom. Bob & Andrea Murry, along with their two granddaughters moved back to California as of May the first. I have had the privilege to visit a number of congregations over the last three months. The ice storm of January presented many difficulties for all. The devil is hard at work attempting to split and splinter brethren in many areas. Neosho will host the Missouri Labor Day meeting this year. We hope many will make plans to attend. The Neosho area has a number of new motels and many of the members have rooms available. The work here moves forward with much zeal. Our monthly paper and articles continues to promote interest in the area and among brethren. Our meeting with Bennie Cryer was just wonderful and what a blessing to have him in our home. During the meeting a great number of preachers and visitors from other congregations supported. We had a number of local visitors as well. Please pray for us as we labor to do the Lord's work. I have a number of meetings this year and look forward to assisting the congregations that have called me. I look forward to the Forth meetings and pray much good will be accomplished for the Lord in those efforts. God bless and care for all until in heaven we gather home.

Joe Hisle, 18975 CR 1580, Ada, OK, May 9 - Greetings to the brethren everywhere. I am thankful to report that my meetings for this spring are going really well. Just closed at Northside in Springfield, MO. It was like a home coming to be with these brethren. I have many lifelong friends in this area. It was a pleasure to work with Bro. Irvin Barnes and Bro. Kent May the elders of the congregation. My thanks to the many brethren in area congregations who supported the meeting. Your presence was encouraging to me as well as the congregation. I am also appreciative of my preaching brethren who attended one or more times: Billy Dickinson, Jimmie Smith, Ronny Wade, Brad Shockley, Smith Bibens, Dan Wissinger, Roy Lee Criswell, Dan Paulson and Ron Alexander. I am always glad to have preaching brethren in the assembly. While in Springfield I made my home with Daniel and Supriya May a couple that I have known all of their lives. This is one of the many "perks" that I enjoy as a result of preaching for over 40 years. I am the first preacher to enjoy their hospitality. They made me feel right at home. I could not have been treated any better. I have saved the best for last. During the course of the meeting we baptized a young woman into the body of Christ! My next effort will be with the congregation in Houston, MO.-May 20-27 followed by White Bluff, TN. -June 3-10. Brethren I sincerely request your prayers for me and my family.

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## THE BACK PAGE...

### ATHEISM IS IN TROUBLE

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Atheism is in trouble and it knows it. Atheism knows it is in trouble when liberal rags such as the **New York Times** begin bashing the works of its most eloquent spokespersons. Atheist Richard Dawkins recently authored a scathing attack upon all religion in a book called **The God Delusion**. In his book review for the **Times**, Editor Jim Holt observes that Dawkins obviously did not put forth the “intellectual hard work” required to deal with the compelling evidence of the existence of God.

Instead of grappling with the classic arguments for the existence of God, Dawkins resorts to namecalling and fear-mongering. He implies that religion has been responsible for all the evils in history, and that Islamic terrorists are typical of all religions. He hypothesizes that all religious people will end up strapping dynamite to themselves, and that such insanity has got to be stopped.

Many critics even in the liberal media have taken Dawkins to task for his refusal to examine the arguments for faith, and his efforts to paint all religions with the broad brush of Islamic radicalism.

Atheists began to lose significant ground to the intellectual community when heroic, life-long unbelievers such as Anthony Flew made the blockbuster admission that arguments supporting the existence of God such as “intelligent design” are valid.

Grasping at straws in an effort to salvage lost ground, some atheists have tried to resurrect the claim that Jesus of Nazareth never really existed on earth as a man. Atheist Judith Hayes recently wrote a book entitled, **In God We Trust: But Which One?** She says, “Just whether or not Jesus was an actual, historical figure is the subject of much scholarly debate. St. Paul, who was the real founder of the religion known as Christianity barely discussed Jesus as a person, and made no references to his family. Jesus must remain a puzzle, historically speaking. He may have existed, and then again he may not have” (119).

19<sup>th</sup> Century German historian Bruno Baur was the first critic to deny the historical existence of Jesus, and his views were rejected by the scholarship of his day. Later, Albert Schweitzer who was influenced by Bruno wrote a book entitled, **Quest for the Historical Jesus**. Schweitzer argues that there may have been a man named Jesus who lived in Palestine in the first century, but it was not the Jesus of the New Testament.

Over the years, however, even the most radical critics of Christianity have had to concede that there is irrefutable evidence that the Jesus of the Gospels did exist in fact. French humanist Ernest Renan (1823-1892) was certainly no friend of Christianity, but in his book **The Life of Christ**, he says that “all of history is incomprehensible without him,” and “to tear Jesus’ name from this world, would be to shake its foundations” (26, 212).

The late Dr. Joseph Klausner, a devout Russian Jew and professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem wrote two landmark books about Jesus: **Jesus of Nazareth** and **From Jesus to Paul**. Although Klausner did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, he offers irrefutable arguments based upon ancient sources that Jesus was indeed a genuine historical character. Significantly, no ancient adversary ever disputes Jesus’ existence.

The question of Jesus’ historical existence has been so settled that Dr. Bruce Metzger of Princeton University said back in 1965, “Today no competent scholar denies the historicity of Jesus.”

Another sign of panic among atheists is the mean-spirited rhetoric they have begun to use. In the past, atheists were often condescendingly tolerant of their “less-enlightened” fellow citizens. While they disdained religion, they treated us as good people even though they believed us to be ignorant. While they made up a small percentage of the American population, they tended to dominate elite institutions. However, their attitude is now changing as they learn of religious vibrancy all over the globe, and that the best philosophers in the world are taking seriously arguments about the existence of God.

Author Hayes seethes with hostility toward the Bible. You do not have to read very far into her book to see that she is obviously ignorant of the most fundamental Bible matters, but she compensates for her lack of knowledge with venom. In addition to the fear-mongering mentioned above in his book, Dawkins also calls religious education “brainwashing” and “child abuse.” At a recent forum sponsored by the **Science Network** at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, atheist Melvin J. Konner suggested that it is time atheists quit pussyfooting around with believers as he asked, “Should we bash religion with a crowbar or only with a baseball bat?”

One of the time-honored convictions held by debaters is that you should never let your opponent see you sweat. When a disputant ignores his opponent’s arguments and responds with angry name-calling, and even threats of physical violence, it becomes obvious that the debater knows his own arguments are no good and that he is in trouble. Modern atheism is showing all the telltale signs. Atheism is in trouble and it knows it. carlmj@cableone.net