



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Official Newspaper of the Church of God International

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"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13)

Summer 2017

Populism: Is It the Calm Before the Storm?



Bill Watson

Who would have ever "thunk" a resurgence of populism—or as some would say, nationalism—would emerge in the face of the globalist movement? Could this be the calm before the storm?

by Bill Watson

In some parts of the world there seems to be a revitalized interest in "sovereign state" politics. Throughout Europe, it appears trends toward centraliza-

tion—a one-world order—are *slowing down*, and an increased interest in the "Brexit approach"—*detaching* from the globalists' way of doing things and revisiting sovereign state independence, or *nationalism*—countries WITH BORDERS—is on the rise. The idea, "it takes a village"—the more socialistic approach—appears to have been infringed upon.

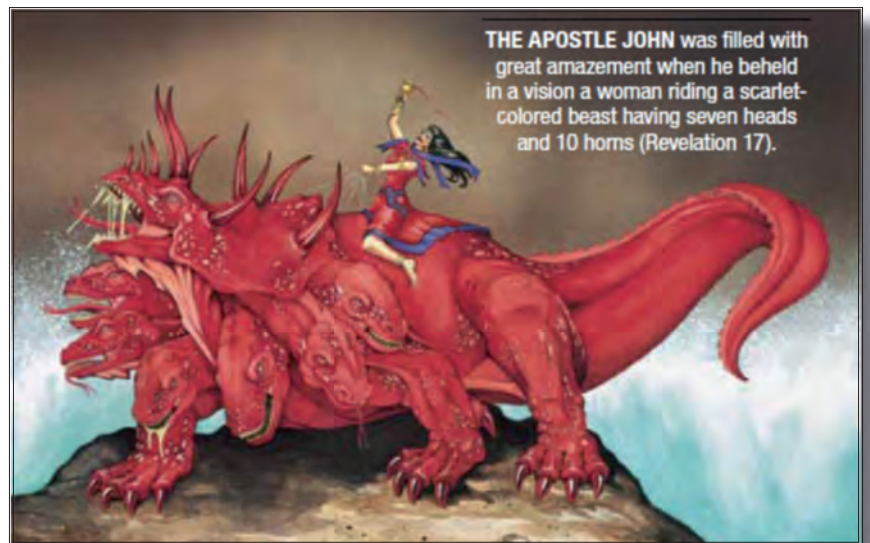
Today, the United Kingdom and United States, along with Austria, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, even Mexico, India, and the Philippines, are all experiencing *varying degrees* of political movements within their countries that provide populist candidates for consideration. Surprisingly, populism seems to be experiencing a *renewed resurgence* in today's geopolitical community.

Just to be sure, for the sake of clarity: What is the definition of populism and/or nationalism? According to the dictionary, it's defined as follows:

"The political doctrine that supports the rights and powers of the common people in their struggle with the privileged elite. The political

doctrines advocated by the Peoples party. It's the political principles and policies of the populists (population)."

The Brexit movement in the United Kingdom and the election of Donald Trump in the United States are reflections of this populist movement and is proof of this growing trend, which now includes other European Union nation states— *Populism, continued on page 3*



THE APOSTLE JOHN was filled with great amazement when he beheld in a vision a woman riding a scarlet-colored beast having seven heads and 10 horns (Revelation 17).

The Beast of Revelation

Clifton J. Buchanan

South Central Regional VICE PRESIDENT for the Council of Prison Locals

Knowledge Is Power, but Correctly Applied, It Is Priceless.



Clifton Buchanan is a champion for the rights of our federal employees. Every day he makes sure their rights are protected!
Photo by Gwen Juarez

In 2000, while working at the Federal Detention Center Houston (FDC Houston), an event occurred that violated Clifton Buchanan's rights. From that day forward, he made it his mission to represent others and fight for their rights. Clifton, Desert Storm veteran, pastor, devoted husband, and caring father, has used his values of trust, faith, and respect as a guiding force in his quest to represent others. He started his career in 1994 as a correctional officer for the state of Texas, followed by a move in 1998 to the Federal Bureau of Prisons at USP Beaumont as a Cook Foreman, before joining the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) in 2000. Clifton made his way through the ranks before becoming South Central Regional Vice President of the Council of Prison Locals. This is a position he currently holds in addition to Vice President of the Texas American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). His current position allows him to represent the people and effectuate positive change on a large scale. "I teach people the basics of how to build knowledge but also how to correctly apply it, so they can stand up and exercise their rights," Clifton remarks.

But the ability to effectuate positive change in people's lives may never have happened. Clifton was part of the field artillery unit during Desert Storm where fatalities were notoriously high, but with the Lord's blessings, Clifton, who was stationed in Baumholder, West Germany at the time, never saw any action because the President called a cease fire, and he returned home in 1992. Later in 1994, Clifton would start his career working for the State of Texas as a correctional officer. He worked for the W. F. Ramsey III Unit, which is a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institution. Thereafter, he transferred to Atascocita State Jail before moving to the Federal Bureau of Prisons at USP Beaumont in 1998.

Living in Houston, Clifton had a daily commute to Beaumont and back. During this time, he applied for a transfer to the Federal Detention Center in downtown Houston. It was accepted, and he was now eligible for paid administrative leave, despite already residing in Houston.

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Open Church Policy

The *Church of God International* is an open church.

We have many people attending who are new in the faith. Some will not always keep each of God's laws as they should, and some will not believe everything we teach. We pray that they may be strengthened through the services we render and the examples we set as they come to a closer walk with their God. We request that you be neither judgmental nor base your standard for obedience on what you see your brother do. Christ is our standard, not weak and sinful men. Always remember that you will be judged for what *you* do, not what others do. Your job is to pray for them, set the right example, and please the Father in all that you do. Ω

God's Holydays 2017

New Testament Passover

April 9, 2017 (Observed at sundown)

Feast of Unleavened Bread

April 11–17, 2017

Pentecost

June 4, 2017

Feast of Trumpets

September 21, 2017

Day of Atonement

September 30, 2017

Feast of Tabernacles

October 5–11, 2017

Last Great Day

October 12, 2017

Holydays are observed beginning sundown the previous evening and end at sundown on the days listed. Passover is observed at sundown on the day listed.

Download the *Holy Day Calendar 2015–2017*

Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if *you*, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800–1000 words in either .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson@cgi.org or lloyd Cary@gmail.com or, preferably, to *both*.

DEADLINE for the *next* issue is **Aug. 15th 2017**.

We look forward to seeing you soon... *in print!*



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The *Church of God International* sponsors the *Armor of God* telecast, provides written material on a wide range of biblical topics, and has congregations in the United States, Canada, Jamaica, the Philippines, and Australia, with affiliates in other parts of the world. We invite you to find out more about us, our purpose and mission, our beliefs, and our customs. Send for our newly revised booklet, *Welcome to the Church of God International!* Simply send your request to:

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3900 Timms Street
Tyler, TX 75701**

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Our Great Commission

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19–20).

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the very *epicenter of globalism*—that are actually beginning to consider referendums to exit!

Without a doubt, the “globalist elites” took a *hit on the chin* when the United States rejected the election of Hillary Clinton as President, thereby removing the momentum so critical to the financial energy and political goals driving this initiative and goal toward a “One-World Order.” Had Ms. Clinton been elected, the globalists would have obtained a position for better control of the agenda so obviously steered by the “global elites” such as Saul Alinsky and Hillary Clinton (Reference) <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/388560/why-hillarys-alinsky-letters-matter-stanley-kurtz> Carroll Quigley, George Soros, Bill Gates, the Bush’s, the Koch brothers, even the House of Saud, and yes, also the Pope, to a certain degree, along with many private interest organizations and lobbyist groups.



George Soros, the globalist financier

Yes, as many have said, “the cat is out of the bag” or “the genie has left the bottle”—and it’s there, in the *open* now, for all to see it for what it is. No longer are these nefarious, confidential, hideous, and destructive acts considered *conspiratorial*—no, not at all. Due to information from WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden, and a court martialled transgender named Bradley Manning (a.k.a. Chelsea Manning), who provided inside information

from political and intelligence operatives, not normally accessible to the public—these disclosures *prove* a level of corruption that by all standards of ethics, honesty, integrity, and fairness, along with law and order, is horrifically handicapped, shameful, and outrageously unconscionable! It’s *no secret*, if you *follow the money*, it will lead you to who is in control of what is indeed going on.

Even James Madison knew this as early as the late 1700s when he said: “History records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and its issuance.” Napoleon Bonaparte, in 1815, said: “When a government is dependent upon bankers [e.g., perhaps, the Federal Reserve?] for money, they and *not the leaders* of the government control the situation, since the hand that gives is above the hand that takes... Money has no motherland; financiers are without patriotism and without decency; their sole object is gain.”

This is what globalists like George Soros and many of his organizations are all about (Ref: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/people/george-soros>) **His mission is to finance anarchy** and undermine the stability of incumbent government administrations. He is known for causing this kind of chaos and disruption. (Ref: <http://humanevents.com/2011/04/02/top-10-reasons-george-soros-is-dangerous/>) What we are seeing today is not a battle between the Democrats and Republicans, or Progressive Socialists against Conservatives—no, not at all—instead, it’s about globalism versus free market sovereign state populism. This is the world we live in today.

It’s a *Brave New World* that is fast becoming more vulnerable to political control by a *FEW* who have tremendous amounts of money, and through government controlled surveillance, espionage, extortion, and orchestrated anarchy—in combination with those believing government should provide social opportunities and services as *entitlements without accountability* for the public’s well being—concede their freedoms and liberties incrementally.

Where Is This Leading?

Those who have seen this before know globalism is *relentless*—**it is not going away!** Man’s ambitions have always been focused around *centralization*—how can a certain group, or individual, socialistically *CONTROL* the world. Since the days of Babylon, Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, or Napoleon Bonaparte—and in more modern times, the Third Reich and the United Nations—world dominance, or globalism, has been an underpinning objective that has driven humanity to the brink of total destruction on multiple occasions. And it will be this *healed wound*—that of world influence and dominance—like Rome—according to the Bible, that ultimately leads to a “One World Order” in the end times represented by a system labeled *Mystery Babylon*, which becomes this global benefactor to all nations worldwide, unfortunately culminating in the tyranny of a dictator and false prophet, empowered by the dragon himself—Satan the devil (Revelation 13, 17, 18)!

So, this is the real question we face today: Is what we’re witnessing nothing more than the development of a more *powerful*, more *committed* “trigger” to *greater* and more *accelerated* globalist initiatives? Will the visionaries of globalism *ramp up* their “legal beagles” to challenge and attempt to stop those “Nationalists” who are passing legislation counterintuitive to those pursuing the One World Order? Or, will it become so *intensely hostile* that it leads to a level of violence of biblical proportions—eventually exploding onto the world stage—resulting in the demise of

billions of human beings around the world? These are now very cogent and relative questions that are *plausible* in light of the *setbacks* many globalists perceive have threatened their momentum, compounded by all the saber rattling throughout Eurasia, the Pacific Rim, and the Middle East.

Obviously, time will tell, going forward, as to who is most astute in this geopolitical chess match of globalism versus populism/nationalism. Get prepared, because according to the *prophetic script of God’s Word*, *globalism will return with a vengeance!* It is destined to take control of the world and configure itself as a *socialistic coalition* of ten kings combining their power with the Beast (the dictator) for one hour (a short time), to control, prosper, and at the same time, ravage the world and the *saints of God*—and yes, ultimately making war with Jesus Himself (Revelation 17:11–14). This will be a tumultuously *terrifying* dark time for mankind and *horrendously* challenging and destructive for God’s Church.

Notice what Daniel says about this fourth beast, which is this end time world dominating government, called *Babylon the Great*. “I beheld, and the same horn *made war* with the saints, and prevailed against them” (Daniel 7:21). Daniel continues and says: “Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, AND SHALL DEVOUR THE **WHOLE EARTH**, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces” (Daniel 7:23). Daniel continues to describe the following: “And he [the beast] shall speak great words *against* the most High and shall **WEAR OUT** [violently tear at, beat up and wear down] THE SAINTS of the most High and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and dividing of time” (Daniel 7:25). This is a very horrible period for the Church of God, and all of humanity.

However, this globe girdling system that operates as a worldwide benefactor for all nations—so beneficial, that the nations of the world are saddened to see its destruction (Revelation 18:3,11,15)—will indeed come to an abrupt end upon Christ’s return (Revelation 17:14). But unfortunately, not before it has its way with destroying many nations and people, including the saints and two witnesses (Revelation 11:7,8).

Notice what John says: “And they worshipped the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the beast... saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ...and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name... And it was given unto him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them [to successfully persecute them unto death]; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13:4–7). This substantiates what Daniel said some 500 to 600 years before—it’s the same story that God is now giving to the apostle John for future generations and *confirming Daniel’s visions* at the same time.

Compared to what we see described in the Bible, it would appear what *might* be happening is a “Providential anomaly” right before our eyes. But *why*, is the *real* question—and do we recognize it as such? Or are we suspiciously questioning what our Bible is telling us? Do we really believe nationalism is destined to fail and ultimately be subdued by a demonic *One World* agenda that imposes unification of global trade and control over many kindreds, nations, and tongues? If we don’t believe this, let me remind you—your Bible is clear: “Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, AND SHALL DEVOUR THE **WHOLE EARTH**, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces” (Daniel 7:23).

We need to embrace this fact: We are part of something much bigger than ourselves—a plan is indeed being worked out here below. And though God is sometimes *subtle* about His involvement in human affairs, history and fulfilled prophecy has proved He can be overtly *obvious*, even plainly frightening, when and if necessary!

Remember, it’s **His-Story**. He reserves the *sovereign right* to make course adjustments along the way when *He* determines it’s *necessary*.

It would appear, considering the scope and magnitude of this most recent wave of nationalism spreading across the world’s geopolitical landscape—even threatening the very existence of



Barack Hussein Obama at the United Nations



Brexit
Populism, continued on page 4

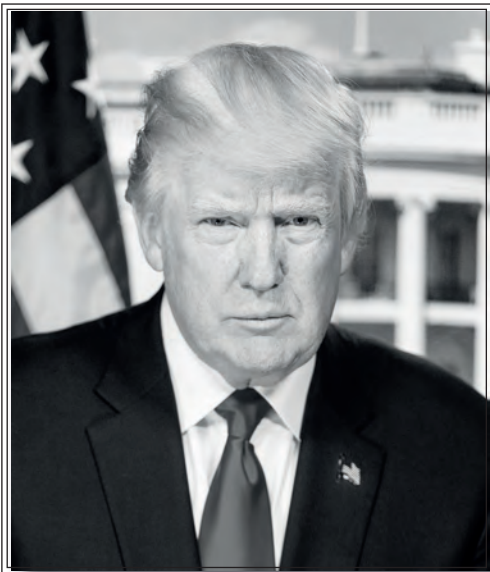
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Al Gore's Environmental Project

the E.U.—that this just may be an abrupt course adjustment along the way. Time will tell. We just need to allow God the “space and time” to have His way.

But For Now



Donald J. Trump
President of the United States

It's quite obvious the “Internationalist” movement has had threats, and is still getting hit with additional threats that are causing it to “wobble” from this populist setback. This has been a *major* “sucker punch” for the globalists to absorb. It was undoubtedly an enormous surprise—completely *unexpected* and very *disappointing*, both with Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, and now the continuing “threats” of other nation states experiencing populist movements around the world, including the E.U. It's quite stunning to see the effect it's having

on much of the media and political progressives favoring a “world without borders.”

It's causing many of these globalists to “gnash their teeth” over the thought of building walls, restricting immigration, pulling out of international trade deals like NAFTA and TPP, or international organizations like the U.N., the WTO, or the IMF, countries belonging to NATO, paying their portions of the bill, or abiding to work within the rights and limitations of respecting sovereign nation intents and objectives to retain their national identities. These are tremendous setbacks—limitations that impinge upon the globalist agenda. This wasn't supposed to happen! These are internationalists who were well on their way to constructing a one world government, one world economy, and one world religion, controlling a socialistic utopia where war, poverty, and environmental damage is managed or eliminated. The only compromise for achieving that is to allow for *your* freedoms to be encroached upon and *your* lives to be *micro-managed* by *GOVERNMENT POLICY*. What's so bad about that, right?

Notice what your Bible says about what ultimately will result in the end times. “I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: ...he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he does great wonders... And deceives them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” Now notice what is said next:

“And he causes all, both small and great, rich, and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in the right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:11–17).

This reference of a “mark” is a *clear indication* of some kind of mechanism or process that allows for some sort of surveillance, vetting, and controlling or tracking of our lifestyle. In so many ways, if you don't have this *MARK*, you will not be able to integrate into the system and become a viable and useful citizen. Ten or 20 years ago, I never thought I'd be talking like this, but the technology has arrived. We *NOW KNOW* the government can listen to you in your homes through your smart TV's, I-phones, and computers, just by “hacking” the software these products are installed with. **THIS IS NOW A FACT!!**



No longer is there a question about this, nor is it considered “conspiratorial jargon” anymore! *It's confirmed*: We're living in a “Brave New World.”



International Monetary Fund Meeting

Even the *New York Times* recently used the term “globalist” in a headline story titled: *Besieged Globalists Ponder What Went Wrong*.

I want you to notice the operative in that title—“Ponder.” They are intent to return to the position of *control* they were beginning to enjoy, targeting for achieving their international, world ruling goals by reorganizing their strategy, which is devoted to the development of *new tactics*.

What underscores much of this is simply that globalism is fundamentally at odds with free sovereign democratic forms of government. Nationalism is *counterintuitive* to the internationalist agenda for a one world order. George Mason University Law School Professor and author, Jeremy Rabkin, of the 2004 book, *The Case for Sovereignty: Why the World Should Welcome American Independence*, said this, when referencing the globalist agenda: “It's basically saying ‘we are going to organize the world in a way that establishes an artificial consensus.’ It's not enough to say it's undemocratic. It's threatening; it's almost demonic. It is a world organized independently of people's fundamental religious convictions.”

However, keep in mind, ultimately this is exactly where we're headed—into a one world order, ruled by a tyrant and false prophet controlling the assets of a 10-king coalition. Notice what John describes: “And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength [they will concede, or submit] unto the beast*” (Revelation 17:12–13).

But When Shall These Things Be?

We are well aware our Lord said, “no man knows the time, or the hour of the Son of Man's return.” And though we may not know the time schedule—*His ETA* (estimated time of arrival)—it's very clear we are on track. The route we are traveling is now becoming plainer and more defined for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Clearly, the truth of the matter is all political parties are *on the same side*. They are *all* favoring in varying degrees throughout the world a *One World Order*, which is in conflict with the present rise in nationalism.

In Revelation 17:12–13, we see a very plain description of what kind of world governing system will come into play. The explanation is quite detailed as to its arrangement and where it comes from—its roots (Revelation 13:1–2). But there are still some major obstacles in its way, preventing it from coming to fruition. Do you know what those obstacles are? To be brutally honest, it's the United States, the United Kingdom, and needless to say, Israel—the one nation on earth that personifies a nation *with borders!*

These three national pillars of what has become defined as “nations with borders”—sovereign states—stand as the antithesis to the globalist agenda. Considering what has recently been going on, the juxtaposition of these contrasting ideologies represents a real threat to the world's fragile peace and security. Tension is building among many of the internationalists. They don't like what has happened recently in many of the elections of other nations and are not enamored over the risk of the European Union being jeopardized. After all, that was the engine of their socialist endeavor, and was the “lynchpin” of the globalist movement and its agenda of amalgamating the world into a One World Order.

It would appear one thing is for sure: these three pillars must be removed, or at least neutralized in some way to reduce their influence and contrarian effect upon the rest of the world, before this populist *virus* infects and captures the attention of additional nations around the globe. Many of the voices of the prophets describe that to be exactly what happens—they will be taken out! As a matter of fact, Israel (Judah) is to be invaded and occupied again. Compare Daniel 11:40–41 with Joel 3:1–2. Notice the *context* is the *latter days*, prior to Christ's second coming.

What is really eye opening, and frankly a stunning reality check, are the comments from a few political forefathers of the United States. They had so much foresight! Listen to what James Madison said: “The day will come when our Republic will be an impossibility because wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few.

When that day comes, we must rely upon the wisdom of the best elements in the country to readjust the laws of the nation.” Notice what Ben Franklin mentioned: “Any society that will give up a little liberty to

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gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both.” And consider Thomas Jefferson’s warning in 1816—it’s prophetic: “The end of democracy and the defeat of the American Revolution will occur when government falls into the hands of lending institutions and moneyed incorporations.”

In so many areas of our culture today, the handwriting is on the wall, especially here in the United States and Canada. Yet, so many Western leaders don’t see our troubles with clarity because they have lost their way. They have become reprobate in their judgment! Consequently, the endangerment of the frail peace and security we have as developed nations, are being jeopardized, surrounded by so many destructive forces, even from within, which sadly is not surprising!

Unfortunately, some of this is due to what some pundits, media, and political operatives claim is an embedded “deep state.” This is a sobering reality when one considers the very foundation of our national framework here in the United States—the “rule of law”—is compromised and actually contributing to some of the causes underscoring the chaos we see around the world and *within* North America. Yes, the very *underpinning fabric*, which is the adhesion of social structure—*TRUST*—is suspect in this over-sensitive environment of “fake news.” Frankly, you don’t know who to trust, and it seems it’s going to get worse before it gets better!

Undoubtedly, over the next few years, we stand a very good chance of having our lifestyles disrupted by the emergence of more confusion and chaos from many potentially different sources, which are determined to cause more distraction and disorder from both within and outside of our countries. Clearly, we can be assured the times we’re living in are destined to grow more uncomfortable and disruptive, especially for Christians in this day and age.

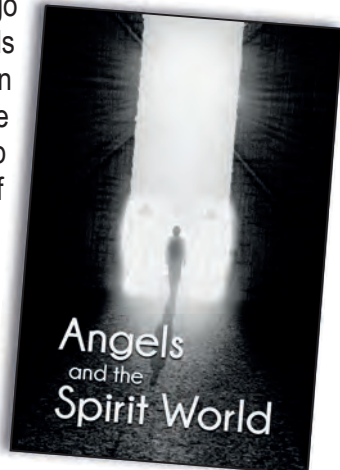
The only real rest and assurance we have as Christians—where there is sanity in and amongst so much insanity—is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. He assures us, if we come to Him, that He will give us rest. The time is upon us to respond to His personal invitation. Take a moment and *read slowly* for yourself, Matthew 11:28–30. These are His words, and it is your personal invitation from Him. He assures you of *rest*, or *renewal*, if you will just model your life after Him. *The choice is yours.*

Ω

New Booklet: Angels and the Spirit World

Our new Bible study booklet, *Angels and the Spirit World* asks and answers: Who, what are angels? Where did they come from? What do they look like? Do they have wings? How do they compare with human beings? How many are there? Do humans go to heaven and become angels? If angels can’t die, why do they sometimes engage in furious battle? Are all angels good? Do we have guardian angels? What is their job description? What are the different kinds of angels? What is their destiny? Do Christians have the authority to command angels? Who is the Angel of the Lord? What does the Bible *really* say? Should we seek the spirit world? You may be amazed and shocked!

Ω



A Good Answer

A sermon in a sentence! (Feel free to use it.)

A couple of times a door-to-door religious visitor knocked on my door, and after awhile asked me what church I go to. I told him, “I’m a Sabbatarian.” He looked a little blank and asked, “What’s a Sabbatarian?” “Somebody who keeps the seventh-day Sabbath,” I told him. “Why do you do that?” he asked. “I’m a simple person,” I told him. “I just keep the same days Jesus Christ and the early first century church kept, that’s all. I figure I can’t go wrong doing that, do you?” After an awkward silence, he wished me a good day and went on his merry way. As Benjamin Franklin supposedly said, “Sometimes a person will stumble over the truth, but gets up, brushes himself off, and continues on his merry ways as though nothing had ever happened.” Amen?

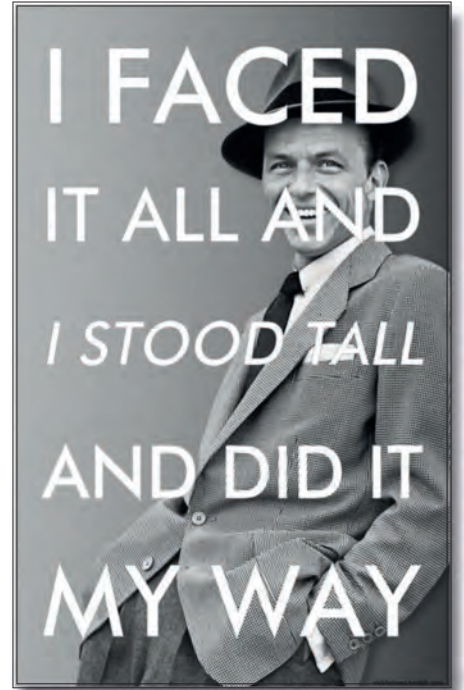
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Let’s Do It *God’s* Way!

Frank Sinatra said it well in his popular song, “I Did It My Way.” It seems all mankind has made this their theme song as well—and look how it is turning out!

Shortly before His crucifixion, Christ’s disciples stood marveling at the beautiful buildings of the temple Herod had recently erected. Christ warned of perilous times ahead, and vividly described several of them (Matthew 24:1–21, KJV). “...the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world” (Matthew 24:3)? Christ warned, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Finally, He warned, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22).

Repeatedly, God said, “...for thou art a stiffnecked people...” so much so that God threatened to consume them in a moment [a brief space] (Exodus 33:3, 5; Numbers 16:45). Mankind has been stiffnecked, strong-willed, and contemptuous from the time of Adam and Eve. Our rebellion comes in large part from an intense desire to do things *our* way instead of *God’s* way. When we pridefully choose to forsake God’s path for our lives, we do ourselves a great injustice—and we are penalized because of our great stubbornness. The book of Judges concludes with this epitaph: “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Are we blindly going the way of our forefathers?



Think of it! It seems we go to great lengths to do the diametric *opposite* of what God *says* we should do. God commands us to keep the seventh day holy to Him, but we collectively say no, we have a better idea—we will keep Sunday, the first day of the week, instead. God says, “Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jeremiah 10:2). But mankind says, “No, we have a better idea. Instead of observing the holydays You have commanded, we will keep Christmas, Easter, and Halloween instead! God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14), but man rationalizes, “Oh, come on! Be real! This is the 21st century! Everybody’s doing it.” (Besides, he/she is too good looking to resist.) God says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). Man argues, “But, Lord, don’t you know all those laws are done away and nailed to the cross?” But God, taking away all our excuses, replies, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17–18). Quick! Look out your nearest window! Have the heavens and earth passed away? No? Then neither have God’s laws and commandments! Be not deceived (Matthew 24:4–5, 11, 24). Prayerfully read and believe all of Psalm 119 in your own Bible.

God’s Word warns us to be humble, not prideful or contrary. God instructs us to be obedient, not rebellious. “For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:2). God wants us to do things *HIS* way. When we do, we reap a bountiful harvest of blessings—more blessings than we can ever count. But when we pridefully overrule and rebel against our Creator as though we know better than He, we sow the seeds of our own destruction and reap a sad, sparse, bitter harvest of pain, sorrow, regret, and ultimately, death. God laments for us, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever” (Deuteronomy 5:29)! Resolve to spend a few quiet moments each day in silence and prayer. And most of all, “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” (1 Thessalonians 4:11).

We strongly encourage you to request our free booklets, *How to Study Your Bible* and *How to Be More Effective in Your Prayer Life* and begin doing things *God’s* way. You’ll be glad you did.

Ω *lwc*



Doctrinal Dilemmas?

If there is any subject that gets otherwise peace-loving Christians into snarling fighting-mad combatants, it is the subject of doctrine. It seems political correctness and sensitivity training go out the window when doctrinal issues arise. Why is this? Should we even discuss doctrinal issues? What did Christ and Paul think about doctrine? You might be surprised.

by Lloyd W. Cary



Lloyd W. Cary

There is one subject most of Christendom shies away from. Most hesitate to even discuss it. In fact, in many circles, it is a “taboo” subject. “Don’t talk about doctrine,” many protest, “because it will upset and divide people! Mercy! You’ll get into arguments and offend someone! Tell us *s-m-o-o-t-h* things! Prophecy deceits” (Isaiah 30:10). Preach love. Preach Christ and Him crucified—but don’t talk doctrine to me.”

Oh, really? Let’s break the cycle. Let’s take the dare. Let’s talk about doctrine. OK?

Doctrine has become a controversial word these days. Comparatively few Christians wish to discuss the dreaded topic of doctrine. It may not be “politically correct.” Perhaps it is because so many are unsure of themselves. Many, who do not even know the Scriptures, are unwilling to look into them to see what the Bible really says.

The word “doctrine” is not something to be feared or avoided. Doctrine simply means a “teaching,” or that which is taught by a religion or political party.

The word comes from the Latin *doctrina*, meaning a codification of beliefs or a body of teachings, especially when used in a religious sense. We derive our word “doctor” from this word. The Greek word *didache* [διδάχη did-akh-ay] is translated “doctrine” 51 times, and “doctrines” five times in the KJV (Other versions may vary).

It is unfortunate that doctrine has been made out to be the “bad guy” in many Christian circles today. A sure way to cloud true doctrine is to bury it in *false* doctrine. Some view the word “doctrine” as almost a “curse” word. “Doctrine divides,” they parrot. “Don’t get into a doctrinal discussion, or you’ll get into an argument.” It would be difficult, indeed, to get them to sit down at a table with open Bibles and discuss various teachings of the Bible. People, by nature, do not want to change—they want to believe what they want to believe.

Perhaps the most frustrating challenge a Christian faces is trying to teach the Gospel to a person who has a closed mind. All too often we meet a person with an attitude that shouts, “Don’t confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up!” In other words, “It does not matter whether or not what you say is true, I am going to believe and do what I want.” Or, “What would my friends or family think if I suddenly change my beliefs?” Some appear to have minds like concrete—all mixed up and permanently set. You can point to many scriptures; you can provide examples from the New Testament; you can quote the very words of Jesus, yet such a person will remain unmoved. Such an attitude would be almost humorous if it were not so sad. We need to understand this is the way of the world, so learn not to be discouraged. It is a true saying regarding the devil, “... that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.”

Strangely, many people do not know or even want to know what their own church teaches! Theirs is more of a “Christian” fellowship group. Instead of being taught sound doctrine, they would rather have their church, priest, pastor, or teacher provide them with music, meals, or entertaining stories. They would rather be told how Jesus loves them, that all they have to do is say the sinner’s prayer and be assured they are saved now and forever as long as they pay, pray, stay, and obey. And yes, it is true; Bible doctrine DOES divide. Correct doctrine divides *truth* from *error*! Many were astounded at Christ’s doctrine: “And it came to pass,



Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (Matthew 7:15)

when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his DOCTRINE (Matthew 7:28; 22:33; Mark 1:22; 11:18; Luke 4:32; John 7:16).

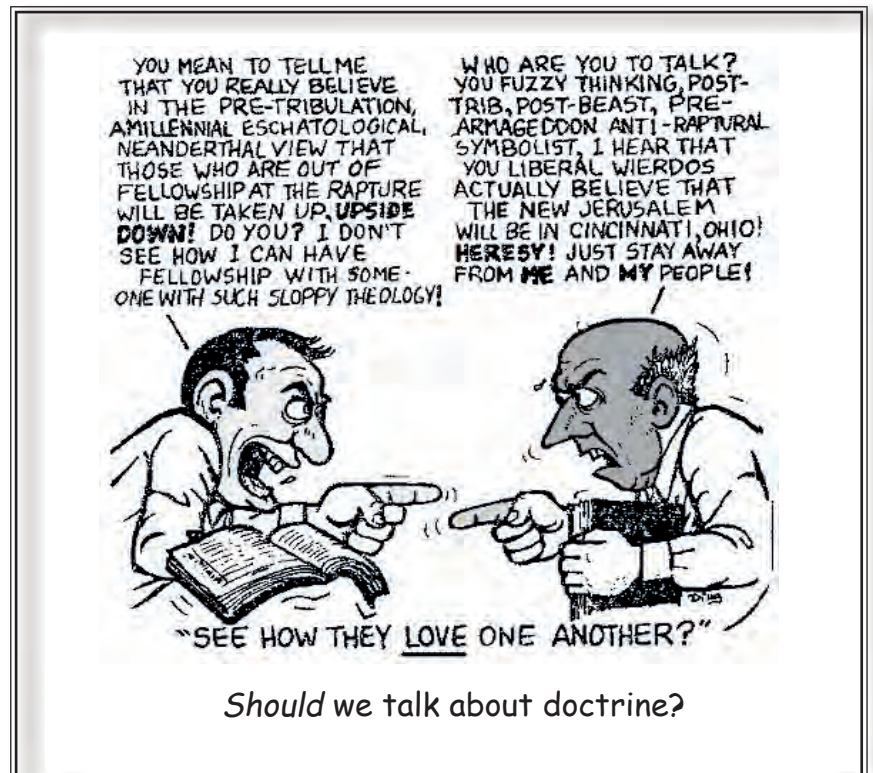
Christ said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34, KJV throughout). This is because following true biblical doctrine will set you apart from commonly believed teachings about God and the Bible. It might even set you apart from the false teachings of your congregation.

The buzzwords of this generation are *experience, feeling, and perception*. “If it feels good, do it” is the criteria. “If it tastes good, eat it. If you feel like it, say it.” However, the Bible teaches, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

For example, as the “charismatic wave” sweeps over country after country, these or similar words are often parroted: “I’ve been baptized in the Holy Ghost and you haven’t. I have spoken in tongues, and you haven’t. So don’t talk to me about doctrine, because I know! I’ve been under the power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost teaches me all I need to know about doctrine. He shows me what is right and what is wrong. It’s experience that counts, not some outdated doctrine.”

It’s time we set the record straight on the vital issue of doctrine! So, let’s talk about doctrine.

Why Is Doctrine So Important?



Doctrine is indispensable to Christianity. True Christianity cannot exist without it. True doctrines are simply points of truth from God’s Word, as opposed to the convoluted reasonings and traditions of men. We must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23–24). The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the value and importance of sound doctrine, sound instruction (1 Timothy 6:3), and a pattern of sound teaching (2 Timothy 1:13–14). The apostles defended the faithful proclamation of the Gospel (Galatians 1:8). They couched Christian faith in DOCTRINAL terms, then called for its preservation.

God asks through the prophet Isaiah, “Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts [spiritual babes.] For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:9–10).

Your Bible reveals there are the doctrines of Christ (Hebrews 6:1) and doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1). In other words, there are true doctrines and false doctrines! We should always *prove* what we *think* we know.

Studying true doctrine is nothing less than a study of the law, mind, and character of God Himself. We are to put on the very mind—teaching, doctrine—of Christ Himself (Philippians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16). That is, we are to learn to think and act as Jesus Christ thinks and acts.

Turn to 1 Timothy, chapter four, verses one through four in your own Bible. It reads, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly [distinctly], that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and DOCTRINES of devils Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding

Doctrine, continued on next page

to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”

A few more man-made beliefs or doctrines we see dividing Christians today include the rapture and the timing of the rapture, young-earth vs. old-earth creationism, charismatic vs. non-charismatic, premillennialism vs. amillennialism, speaking in tongues, women preachers, did fallen angels have sex with women and produce giants, is homosexuality a sin, eating in a restaurant on the Sabbath, Sabbath vs. Sunday, the world's holidays vs. God's holydays, “soul-sleep” vs. the immortal soul, when is one born again, did Mary have other children, who, what, is the devil, does God know all things in advance, is Jesus merely a created being, is Jesus God, is God a trinity, or a divine family, and many more.

Believe it or not, these are *all* doctrines held by various professing Christian groups! Everyone wants to express *their* opinions.

The doctrines of the *Church of God International* are summed up in our “Statement of Beliefs,” and are taken from the Bible itself. (Send for your free copy of our *Statement of Beliefs* today.) Our beliefs are explained in capsulated form and are backed up by many, many scriptures. You may wish to copy or chain reference them in your own Bible. The Bible alone is God's written revelation to man, not feelings, not tradition, not doctrinal creeds of men! No doctrine is based on a single scripture. “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). Be sure to request our free booklet, *How to Study Your Bible* for the rules of Bible study and information on how to mark your Bible.

Bible doctrine is so important that the apostle Paul warned, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel [or any other DOCTRINE or teaching]: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert [change] the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel [teaching] unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6–9). Isaiah 8:20 tells us, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to *this word*, it is because there is no light in them.” 2 John 10 confirms, “If there come any unto you, and bring not *this DOCTRINE*, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.”

Teachers who attempt to siphon off some of God's people must first open the door of their minds. They often come under the guise of “new understanding,” “new truth,” conviviality, and ecumenism. Political correctness has conditioned the majority of people to defend this supposed “open-mindedness” by saying we should not “judge” others but should have a spirit of “love” and “be more Christ-like,” etc. The basic idea is that we should seek fellowship among various groups and compromise—i.e., by ignoring differences in doctrine and practice, by putting everything we believe “on the table.” *Beware!* Do not become so “open-minded” that your brains fall out!



Andrea Yates

The Deadly Dangers of False Doctrine

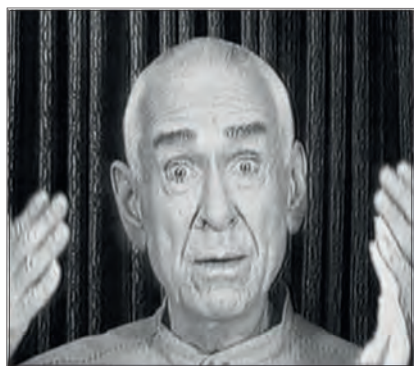
Let's test our memories:

Has anyone followed the case of **Andrea Yates**—the woman who drowned her five children in a bathtub because it was “God's will”? The foundational issue she was grappling with was a false understanding—false doctrine!—of who and what God is! She stated that her desire was to kill her children so they would be kept from falling into Satan's hands if they grew up, and to punish herself for being a bad mother. What else would cause this if not FALSE, or FAKE, DOCTRINE—a false understanding of God and His Word?

Or take the case of **Jim Warren Jones**, leader of the Peoples Temple Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. On the evening of November 18, 1978, in Guyana, Jones ordered his congregation to drink a concoction of cyanide-laced, grape-flavored Kool-Aid. In all, 918 people died, including 276 children. It was the greatest single loss of American civilian life in a non-natural disaster until the events of September 11, 2001. What was the basic error? False belief! FALSE DOCTRINE! Or, following a *man* instead of God's Word.



Jim Warren Jones, leader of the People's Temple cult



Marshall Herff Applewhite, Jr. head of the Heaven's Gate religious group

Or the case of **Marshall Applewhite, Jr.** of the Heaven's Gate group, who led 38 of his followers to wear purple clothing and eat the poisoned purple pudding of death! He preached that suicide would allow them to leave their bodily “containers” and enter an alien spacecraft hidden behind the Hale-Bopp comet. Again, the culprit is misinformation—FALSE DOCTRINE!

Or take the case of mother Eve: She listened to the subtle voice of the serpent and was persuaded to take of the forbidden fruit. Why? Because she listened to the devil's lie. He promised her additional *benefits*. She gave way to FALSE DOCTRINE!

Christ warned repeatedly about false teachers, false prophets, and false doctrine:

Matthew 24:5: “For many shall come *in my name*, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” In verse 11, He said, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”

Also Matthew 24:24: “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.” How? By lies—by false doctrine!

Yet again, Christ warned His followers, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15).

Honest and sincere students of God's Words change their beliefs to match the Book, but arrogant and dishonest people change and wrest the words to match their beliefs.

Note that these false teachers come *in disguise*. They do not *appear* to be false teachers—they do not appear to be ravening wolves. Verse 22 shows that they don't even necessarily deny Christ—they call Him “Lord, Lord.” They appear to be godly, sincere, good, moral people. Never forget: the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44). “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [yes, the devil has ministers—many more than God!] also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13–15). The devil will go up to 99 percent truth to slip in his one percent error, because he knows that, like leaven, false doctrine will spread and grow until it consumes entire congregations. What is the methodology? By craft, speculation, presumption, supposition, and guesswork, they plant “new” ideas into people's minds—in other words, false doctrine!

Second Peter 2:1–3 warns, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [stealthily] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

Acts 20:30: “Also *of your own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” That is, to cause schism in the church or congregation in order to get a following to support them. Satan's strategy is “divide and conquer,” hence all the splits and schisms in the churches today. Beware of those who insist on a hierarchal church government (the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes referenced in Revelation 2:6,15), or that they are the “one and only” true church. Christ said, “I am the vine [singular], ye are the branches [plural]” (John 15:5). Christ said, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold” (John 10:16). The Bible definition of a Christian is found in Romans 8:9: “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” And to whom does God give His Holy Spirit? “... the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that *obey him*” (Acts 5:32). It matters not to which computer data bank one may belong to; what matters is, do you unconditionally belong to Jesus Christ?

The prophet Jeremiah predicted, “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so” (Jeremiah 5:31). Paul warned Timothy, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound DOCTRINE; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3–4).

Appreciation for Truth Requires Opposition to Error

One of the surest ways to become a victim of false doctrine is to think that it is not dangerous, and you don't need to be concerned about it. If you play with a live snake's head long enough, it *will* bite you!

Doctrine, continued from page 7

People tend to seek consistency in their beliefs and perceptions. So what happens when one of our beliefs conflicts with another previously held belief? The term “cognitive dissonance” is used to describe the feeling of discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs. When there is a discrepancy between beliefs, something must change in order to eliminate or reduce the dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance occurs when one finds that what he or she has always believed is in conflict with what the Bible *says*.

When two things are opposites, they cannot be reconciled. Things different are not the same. If we embrace true doctrine, we must be against its opposite—false doctrine. The stronger we favor a truth, the stronger we should oppose its opposite.

Examples:

If I favor a democratic republic, I must oppose dictatorship.

If I favor life, I must oppose death.

If I favor light, I must oppose darkness. The more I value the one, the more I must object to the other.

Error is the opposite of truth. If I appreciate truth, then I must oppose error. To suggest that false practices do not matter much is to necessarily imply that truth does not matter much!

Every passage that emphasizes the importance of truth, simultaneously emphasizes the danger of error. The more we care about truth, the more firmly we will oppose error.

“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate” (Proverbs 8:13). “Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” (Psalms 119:104). See parallel passages at: Psalm 119:128,163; 36:4; 97:10; 101:3; Amos 5:15; Micah 3:2; Zechariah 8:17; Matthew 6:24; and Romans 12:9.

Who, What is Behind the Deception of False Doctrine?

As we know, “... that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan... deceiveth the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). To deceive means to cause someone to believe something that is not true; to trick, mislead, falsify, dupe, defraud, or victimize.

Going on to 2 Corinthians 11:13–15, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Reading on to Ezekiel 22:25–26, “There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have HID their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.”

We are warned, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

What Can We Do?

“For there shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). In 1 Corinthians 10:12 we are warned, “Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.”

When someone tells you that false teaching is not a big problem and you don’t need to be very concerned about it—to just love the brethren and don’t worry about false doctrine—he is teaching you a false doctrine when he *says* it! It will be just a matter of time before he will try to get you to accept other false teachings! Not every false teacher will belittle the danger of false teaching. But anytime a man tells you that false teachers are not a serious danger, you can be sure he is telling you that either because he is a false teacher, or because he is under the influence of false teachers!

What should we do about it? How can we escape the danger of false teaching?

On the subject of biblical ignorance, it is indeed sad that so many people, including many professing Christians, simply don’t know what the Bible teaches or even what their own churches teach, and often hold to unbiblical or even heretical beliefs. For example, a recent study found that a mere 10 percent of Americans have a biblical worldview, despite 70 percent of Americans claiming the label of Christian.

What we must do:

(1) LOVE THE TRUTH. Don’t just “like it.” Many have died for the truth. We have seen that the people who are most likely to accept error are the people who are not sufficiently dedicated to the truth (John 17:17).

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [restrains and hinders] will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then

shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all conceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:7–11).

(2) STUDY GOD’S WORD DILIGENTLY. “Prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). If we proved a doctrine once, we can prove it over and over! The way to recognize error is to compare it to the truth (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16, 17). “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17).

Honest and sincere students of God’s Word change their beliefs to match the Book, but arrogant and dishonest people change or wrest the words to match their beliefs (Jeremiah 23:36; Romans 1:18,25; 2 Corinthians 2:11,17; 4:2). Sound doctrine cultivates moral behavior, conduct, and ethics (Romans 6:17; 1 Peter 3:8–16).

(3) HONESTLY EXAMINE EVERY DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE before you accept it (2 Corinthians 13:5). Further, if we can’t teach it to others from the Bible, we don’t know it well enough ourselves!

(4) LET GOD’S WORD BE THE STANDARD for all our spiritual decisions (Galatians 1:6–9; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Matthew 15:9; 2 John 9; etc.)

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

“For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not My law” (Proverbs 4:2).

“If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, which you have attained” (1 Timothy 4:6).

In Conclusion

What about you and me? How much do we care about truth? Do we care enough to study diligently, to remove error from our lives, and serve God faithfully? If you *know* the truth, have you *obeyed* it? Are you living a faithful life as a Christian? Or are you living a lie? (James 2:19; 1 John 5:3).

Beware the dangers of drifting! Beware of Christian compromise! They are two of a Christians’s most common and deadliest enemies.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

In this article we’ve talked about sound doctrine. We are *told* to do so (Titus 2:1). This should be our central focus, first, last, and always, testing our beliefs to see if they truly do line up with what God has said about Himself in the Bible. Read the Book! Ω



Question: What is the meaning and answer to this scripture? 1 John 5:16.

Answer: Dear Mr. J., Thank you for your question concerning 1 John 5:16. Many have puzzled over this verse. The answer is relatively simple.

This passage reads, “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.” Verse 17 continues, “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”

There are two broad types of sin. The **first** type is that which is “not unto death.” This is any sin that is REPENTED of. James, in writing of the effectiveness of prayer (James 5:17–18), explains, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19–20).

The **second** type of sin which John referred to is a “sin unto death.” John tells us not to pray on behalf of someone who has committed this kind of sin, because it cannot be forgiven. This is the “unpardonable sin.”

This “unpardonable sin” can be *any* sin that a person absolutely and steadfastly REFUSES to repent of. It is as though one would set his jaw against God’s truth and say, “I *refuse* to repent! I *will not* obey you! I love my sin more than I love you and *will not* give it up!” Such people condemn themselves. Christ came to save us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins. God forgives and forgets any sin that is repented of from the heart (see Isaiah 1:16–20; Psalm 103:11–13).

Many people fear they have committed some sin so bad that God cannot or will not forgive, and they feel there is no hope for them, no matter what they do. Satan would like nothing better than to keep us laboring under this misconception. The truth is that if a person has this fear, he or she needs only to come before God, confess that sin, repent of it, and accept God’s promise of forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). This verse assures us that God is ready to forgive any sin—no matter how heinous—

Q&A, continued on second column, next page

Buchanan, continued from page 1

A paid administrative leave entitles you to 40 hours of administrative leave to close on the purchase of a new home. Despite being eligible, the warden declined his request. Clifton, a union member at the time, realized that the warden had no right to deny him this, and approached his union leader. However, as he recalls, "The timeframe of 45 days had already passed, so I was not able to write a grievance or file an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) complaint. I'd missed my window of opportunity."

Regardless, the warden had violated his rights. From that day forward, Clifton decided to fight for the rights of others so people didn't have to experience something similar. "I worked toward the goal of justice, equality, and fair treatment for all, regardless of color, religion, race, and sexual orientation," Clifton states.

The first step he took was to join the AFGE Union in 2000. What followed was a succession of posts, giving him extensive background and knowledge of the functioning of the union. He started as Treasurer, followed by Vice President, and later President of AFGE Local 1030 for two terms. During his time as President, Clifton served as South Central Regional Legislative Coordinator where he was involved as the legislative liaison with all members of Congress in the South Central Region. Clifton would arrange meetings with Congress and the Senate, discuss legislative issues, and educate members on the safety inside the Bureau of Prisons.

Clifton was later elected South Central Regional Vice President of the Council of Prison Locals in 2010, a position he currently holds. In the 80-year history of the Bureau of Prisons, Clifton is the first African American to ever be elected to this position. He also serves as one of the Vice Presidents of the Texas AFL-CIO. As Vice President of the Council of Prison Locals, Clifton is responsible for overseeing five states (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and New Mexico).

In this position, Clifton is able to fight for the rights of others on a large scale, and has won arbitrations representing employees as a result of disciplinary actions. In addition, he has settled cases prior to formal hearings. Clifton also Co-Chairs the re-entry Joint Policy Committee (JPC) that writes national policies that covers all of the re-entry initiatives within the Bureau of Prisons. With re-entry initiatives, the Federal Bureau of Prisons is aggressively trying to curb recidivism, which is the tendency for criminals to re-offend. They're trying to give people the direction and tools to become better people because, as Clifton mentions, "You are going to see these people again. You are going to see them in your neighborhood. You are going to see them in your grocery store. You are going to see them at your church. You are going to see them in your community! With our experience, we can make sure these offenders, who are going to inevitably return to society, return as better people."

Clifton is also engaged in nationwide stewards' training. He's taught with the Council of Prison Locals and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). Recently, he taught district-wide stewards' training in San Juan, Puerto Rico for all new stewards within the AFGE in Districts 5, 10, and 14.

This process ensures they not only become better stewards, but that they know their rights. "I teach them how to interpret contracts and the statutes,"

Clifton remarks. His end goal is to not only teach stewards how to represent, but also how to apply the knowledge. He adds, "One of the things I emphasize in my training is that knowledge is power, but knowledge correctly applied is priceless."

When you learn how to exercise your rights correctly, it makes you a better advocate, and makes for a better workplace."

As a representative of the people, Clifton also makes sure he maintains his integrity and class. "They like to call me 'the Professor' because I'm always dressing the part," Clifton says. "When I'm representing people at a meeting, I'll either wear a suit or a bow tie. Sometimes, the attendees say that I look like a manager. That's good. It shows them I'm here

to do business, that we're all equals, and I'm going to demand the same dignity and respect that I will give them. That has helped me become successful." The success is evident in the number of awards Clifton has received for serving his Union. One such award is the Basil McDavitt Legislative Action Award that he has received twice for his superb legislative work in the Council of Prison Locals.

Trust and respect have also been crucial for building relationships along the way. Clifton firmly believes trust and respect are important for relationships of all types, whether it is a social, working, or a personal one such as marriage. Indeed, Clifton's marriage has been built on these values. Together with his wife, Demetra, they have a beautiful daughter, Mykala, who is 10 years old. Clifton and Demetra's devotion for one another is evident in their lasting marriage of 19 years.

Clifton shares the same devotion towards his faith. Now a pastor, Clifton was baptized into the Body of Christ by the Church of God International in 1996. He began his Ministerial Apprentice Program in 2006 before becoming an ordained pastor of the Church of God International in 2012. He's been faithfully serving his brethren ever since. In addition, Clifton and Demetra have traveled the U.S., Australia, Canada, and Jamaica to serve church brethren and minister to them. Clifton exercises this faith not only in words but in actions. "I never go around telling people I'm Christian," he says. "I want them to be able to look at me and notice my character through my actions."

It's Clifton's faith that serves as his moral compass and keeps him grounded, especially when he is traveling regularly throughout the year. "I'm traveling to over 122 facilities of the Bureau of Prisons, across all states," he remarks. "Because I'm away from my family a lot, my character must match my actions. I am always in the spotlight. I meet many people, people who are always looking for that smile. I greet people with a smile because I be-

lieve that the cup is half full and not half empty. I believe in staying positive and not dwelling on the negatives of the past."

Clifton also believes that if you look for greatness in people you will find it. He says, "I teach and inspire people to unlock their greatness and reach their highest potential. I take people with the smallest voice and those who struggle standing up for themselves. I teach them to not only stand up for themselves, but also others. I do it from the standpoint of my three key pillars of representation: education, legislation, and representation. I help them build and apply this knowledge so they know their rights, stand up for their rights, and exercise their rights."

Helping people exercise their rights is something Clifton has been doing since his rights were violated in 2000. It has been a long journey that nearly didn't start due to his involvement in Desert Storm. With the Lord's blessings, a cease fire allowed him to return home before he was involved in combat and begin his career in corrections in 1994. From the days of working as a correctional officer to his extensive involvement as South Central Regional Vice President, Clifton has had a long, distinguished career, and he doesn't show any signs of slowing down, either. With fierce determination, he continues to fulfill his mission of helping and inspiring others by educating them and showing them how to use their knowledge to exercise their rights. After all, knowledge is power but, correctly applied, it is priceless! Ω

Submitted by Nick Darlington

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Q&A, continued from bottom of previous page

if we come to Him in repentance. If you are suffering under a load of guilt today, God is waiting with His arms open in love and compassion for you to come to Him. God always recognizes heartfelt repentance, and will never disappoint or fail to pardon those who do (Romans 8:1).

We hope this helps. Please request our free booklets, *What Is the Unpardonable Sin?*; *Ten Facts You Should Know About Repentance*; *How You Can Be An Overcomer* [HBO]; and *How To Be More Effective In Your Prayer Life*. They are free for the asking and will give you a much deeper understanding of these verses.

Thanks again for writing, Mr. J. If you have any further Bible questions, do not hesitate to send them in. That's why we are here, to help you. May God bless and be with you as you study His Word. Ω

Personal Correspondence Department



At the center of Clifton's heart and the passion for all he does is his unwavering support of his family. He is seen here with his daughter, Mykala, and his lovely wife, Demetra. (Photo by Gwen Juarez)



Clifton presents at many union and AFL-CIO conferences. He is seen in this photo reporting on federal issues for the leadership of the Texas AFL-CIO at the C.O.P.E. Convention. (Photo courtesy of Clifton Buchanan)

Where Have The Young Adults Gone?

by George Roper

The median age of churchgoers has continued to rise as young adults (18 years to 35 years) fail to replenish aging parishioners. Today, in the body of Christ, many congregations are composed of senior members with the young adult demographic sorely missing. Attendance of young adults at Sabbath services has become a niche activity. So where have the young adults gone?

Honestly, they didn't go anywhere. They had simply not been adequately recruited. The preceding generation's marketing strategies were not effectively articulating the necessity of church attendance to the younger audience in a way they could understand. It is the onus of the preceding generation to impress upon the younger generation this assertion. Yet, if this is not properly conveyed, it mitigates the ability for it to be received. Despite the affluence of technology in young adult culture, still many of the older generation have failed to incorporate these tools in their attempts to resonate with the youth demographic. The advent of smartphones, smart TVs, fire TV sticks, web/Internet ready cars, social media and other digital components, has assumed dominance in the market place, commanding that these platforms are utilized in reaching young adults. Retrospectively, failing to employ these modalities has contributed to their absence.

One such paradigm is that of Blockbuster Video. The company did not adjust their marketing strategy soon enough to account for the changes in technology. They failed to establish an online presence and failed to address the introduction of the DVD in a timely manner. Failing to do so was their demise.

In the past, a night of classical music was once the premier leisurely pastime of royalty and nobles. Classical music was a principal means of entertainment. By 1937, surveys of attendees at orchestral concerts in Los Angeles determined that the median age of listeners was 28. By 2008, the median age of classical concert goers was 49. Today, in New York, the average age of listeners who tune in to classical music station WQXR FM is 73. The genre of classical music has resisted the encroachment of technology over the years. In efforts to preserve its integrity, classical music abstained from utilizing music videos during the height of the MTV era, frowned on using amplified sound during live renditions, and resisted relaxing the formal dress code at orchestral performances. In so doing, classical music does not resonate with younger audiences on par with mainstream music.

Though major league baseball was once America's pastime, it now has the oldest following of the major league sports in the United States. The average age of viewers of Major League Baseball is over 50. Major League Baseball was slower to embrace social media and other digital services than their counterparts. The league is paying for it now as MLB is steadily hemorrhaging the youth demographic. The league has rejected notions, from introducing a time clock to quicken the pace of the game, to the use of instant replay. Baseball is now lagging behind other sports that have become more popular.

The promotion of the Gospel and this way of life is no more immune to the necessity of the accentuating properties of technology. Embracing digital platforms is paramount in reaching the young men and women of today. The knowledge of God needs to be conveyed to young adults using the same means that they exchange ideas with each other. Failing to do so or simply adhering to traditional means of marketing and outreach will not adequately reach the youth target market. If it is the church's intent to resonate with the young adult audience, why insist on speaking to them in a manner that will not move them? Simply waiting for young adults to organically gravitate to a local congregation is not enough. Some see it as sacrilege to embed technology into the outreach practices of the church, to promote the objectives of the church through web and mobile based resources. Yet, would it be prudent to return to the use of horse and papyrus, akin to the mailing routes of Asia Minor to extend the Gospel? Of course not!

Paul acknowledged the persuasive benefit to approaching someone from their perspective to enlighten them to the truth. He stated, "That is, with Jews, what I did was put myself in the position of a Jew, in order to win Jews. With people in subjection to a legalistic perversion of the *Torah*, I put myself

in the position of someone under such legalism, in order to win those under this legalism, even though I myself am not in subjection to a legalistic perversion of the *Torah*. With those who live outside the framework of *Torah*, I put myself in the position of someone outside the *Torah* in order to win those outside the *Torah*—although I myself am not outside the framework of God's *Torah* but within the framework of *Torah* as upheld by the Messiah. With the 'weak' I became 'weak,' in order to win the 'weak.' With all kinds of people I have become all kinds of things, so that in all kinds of circumstances I might save at least some of them" (1 Corinthians 9:20–22, COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE). We too must put ourselves in the position of a "young person" and acclimate ourselves to the digital properties that they use, so that we may effectively relay the knowledge of God to them.

Fortunately, the *Church of God International* has continued to become more tech savvy, by incorporating social media into its outreach in order to produce youth centric media on digital platforms. Local congregations are also accountable, and many have begun to recognize the benefits of utilizing digital media in promoting their own presence locally. Although employing this transition may be intimidating for some, it's necessary. In so doing, these efforts will subsequently lead to fostering a greater response from the young adult audience. What we do now has a residual effect on tomorrow. The efforts that we invest in will shape aspects of the audience 10 years from now. As these seeds of God's truth are planted via various digital properties, the results of these efforts will soon come to fruition as more young adults respond to God's calling. "And herein is

that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did" (John 4:37–39 KJV). Let's become personally familiar with using these mediums today and look forward to those God will call tomorrow.

Ω



George Roper, 45, works in New York. He is a baptized member of the New York CGI congregation. He has been attending with the *Church of God International* since the congregation's inception three years ago. He was raised in the church and began attending with the *Worldwide Church of God* in New York, at the age of 12. His family did not attend with him. He was baptized upon turning 18. Subsequent to the restructuring of the church, he attended with the *United Church of God* and is pleased to be a part of the *Church of God International* today. He contributes to the local congregation with the assistance of Mr. Herb Hanson, from the Detroit CGI congregation. He maintains a New York CGI web site, the CGI New York Facebook page, and a New York CGI app, all of which have been very promising and productive for the congregation. Thank you, George. Keep up the good work!

Ω



Church News



On February 4, 2017, the Church of God in Auburndale, Florida was blessed to welcome a new member of God's church with a baptism. **Martin Perry** was baptized by Pastor Morgan Pinkerman, assisted by Ray Wendle. Martin's mother had been a long time member of the church and introduced Martin to our beliefs and teachings. The entire congregation was able to gather at a local lake, and we fortunately had good weather for the event. Ω

Submitted by Pamela Barnes



"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20)



In loving memory...

Linda Darnell Biggers
(September 22, 1951 – March 31, 2017)

Mrs. **Linda Darnell Biggers**, age 65, of Holladay, Tennessee, fell asleep on March 31, 2017, at her residence, leaving her devoted husband, John, along with several children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to mourn her passing. Funeral services were on Sunday, April 2, in the chapel of Oakdale Funeral Home, with Elder Bill Russ officiating. Burial was in Suttles Cemetery.

Linda was born September 22, 1951, in Lewis County, Tennessee, to the late James Hardy Cobb and Frances Christine Buchanan Cobb. She was also preceded in death by one brother, James Cobb, and one sister, Arlene Potts.

Survivors include her husband, John Biggers of Holladay; sons, Stanley (Amanda) Biggers of Holladay, James (Virginia) Biggers of Madisonville, Kentucky, and John (Tammy) Biggers, Jr. of Troy, Tennessee; daughter, Jessica Michelle Biggers of Quincy, Florida; brother, Jim Cobb of Clarksville, Tennessee; sisters, Rita K. Mauck (Roger) and Darlene Mummert, both of Clarksville; grandchildren, Jeremy Nichols, Noah Biggers, Logan Biggers, Mary Brown, Autumn Brown, and Jamie Spivey; and four great-grandchildren.

Linda was baptized into the Body of Christ along with her husband, John, at the Feast of Tabernacles in 1999. She attended services with CGI in Jackson, Tennessee, and on occasion with the congregation in Nashville, Tennessee. She was a self-employed truck driver. Ω



James Winston Traywick
(April 25, 1933 – March 7, 2017)

Funeral Services for **Mr. James Winston Traywick, 83**, of Alexander City, Alabama, was Tuesday, March 7, 2017, at the Chapel of Radney Funeral Home. Minister Stephen Glover officiated. Burial followed at the Old Fishpond Primitive Baptist Church.

James was a member of the Montgomery, Alabama, CGI congregation.

Mr. Traywick passed away on Saturday, March 4, 2017, at his residence. He was born on April 25, 1933, in Autauga County, Alabama to Artemus, Sr. and Henrietta Lee Traywick. Mr. Traywick worked for over 31 years at the Embassy Mobile Home Facility, which later became Guerdons until its closing, where he was faithfully known as "Coosa." He spent his last working years at the Russell Corporation Coosa Plant before retiring. In his retirement years, Mr. Traywick enjoyed working in his woodworking shop and spending time with family and grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Louise; daughters, Linda Gilmore (Bates) of Dothan and Lisa Champion (Daniel) of Alexander City; sons, Lynn (Debra) and Donald (Tammy), both of Alexander City; grandchildren, Leanna, Madison, and Zach Champion, Ethan Gilmore, Anna Traywick, Camaryn, Savannah, and David Traywick; sisters, Willie Cohen of California, Juanita Boirum of Phoenix, Arizona, and Mary Foster (Ronnie) of Opelika, Alabama.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers, Artemus, Jr. and Daniel Traywick. Ω

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. (Psalm 116:15 KJV).

Church News

Ian Boyne Celebrates 30 Years of Service

by Alecia Smith (March 8, 2017)

The following article is reprinted by permission of Jamaica Information Service. Veteran journalist Ian Boyne, who recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of his inspirational television program *Profile*, is a Church of God International elder who serves congregations in Jamaica.



Ian Boyne

For the past 30 years, he has been inspiring the nation as he shares remarkable stories of adversity, stories of triumph, resilience and excellence.

Through his personality interview television programme, *Profile*, aired on Television Jamaica (TVJ) each Sunday, veteran journalist Ian Boyne has been captivating the attention of his audience with riveting tales of successful individuals, who have risen to the top of their fields despite incredible odds.

With his probing and incisive interview style, Mr. Boyne has skillfully unveiled the raw, real life stories of his countless guests from all spheres, who have ranged from Prime Ministers, sporting sensations, international icons, movie stars, scholars, business leaders, to ordinary Jamaicans.

Few television programmes have had the resounding impact as has *Profile*, which is the longest running non-seasonal show on local airwaves, and one of the longest internationally.

It has earned the reputation of being an institution that stands ably on its own—and is a particular brand of “positive journalism” that is yet to be matched in the Jamaican media landscape.

Many are in awe of the yeoman task this media stalwart has undertaken since he was in his 20s when he set out to “make a difference in the lives of people,” as he revealed in one interview.

Among the throng of individuals whose lives have been touched by the show is Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, who noted that *Profile* has had a “profound impact” on a generation, including himself, sharing that he has been an avid viewer of the programme since he began tuning in at 14 years old.

The Prime Minister said it was admirable that *Profile*, which he said represents “the power of good journalism,” is still going strong after 30 years, when internationally, successful programmes rarely pass 25 years.

He pointed, for example, to the *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, which ended at 30 years; and *Larry King Live* and the *Oprah* show, which both ended after 25 years.



Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left), is greeted by veteran journalist, Ian Boyne, when he arrived at King’s House on February 28 to join in the 30th anniversary celebration of Mr. Boyne’s inspirational television programme, *Profile*. (Photo by Yhomo Hutchinson)

“The longevity of this programme Sunday after Sunday... confirms that people are discerning and we can combat negative information with positive information,” he said, as he joined in the shower of accolades from well-wishers, family and friends who gathered at King’s House on Tuesday (February 28) for the 30th anniversary celebration of *Profile*.

The Prime Minister further noted that Mr. Boyne, who is also host of *Religious Hardtalk* on TVJ, stands on his own as “a world leader in your class.”

“You are a national asset and we are very proud of your work, and Jamaica is the better off for having you,” Mr. Holness said.

Also a former guest of *Profile*, Mr. Holness, who brought greetings, set the tone for the light, celebratory atmosphere filled with ripples of laughter; serenades from beautiful voices, including Mr. Boyne’s daughter, Kelly-Ann; broad smiles; and moving words of high praise.

Adding her words of admiration, Leader of the Opposition, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, thanked Mr. Boyne for consistently pursuing wholesome and constructive journalism that has been contributing immensely to nation building.

“Ian Boyne has opened and explored the pages of many interesting human books, and the Jamaican public have been avid readers of his stories of inspiration, challenges and triumphs for all of 30 years. This is a remarkable achievement in media, in public discourse and in the life of our nation,” she said.

Mrs. Simpson Miller, also a guest on *Profile*, was among four former Prime Ministers who came out to celebrate with Mr. Boyne. The others are the Most Hon. P.J. Patterson, Hon. Bruce Golding, and the Most Hon. Edward Seaga, who have all been *Profile* guests.

Also showing his support was one of the country’s most prominent businessmen, Chairman of Sandals and the *Jamaica Observer*, Gordon “Butch” Stewart, who has had the most appearances on the show.

Business tycoon and former *Profile* guest, Michael Lee-Chin, who was the keynote speaker, said it is no easy feat to remain at the top of one’s field for 30 years.

“It is not easy to be consistent with your initial inspiration, much less for 30 years. It was not easy to have had over 1,400 episodes and not show signs of fatigue. It is not easy to be in a competitive environment and keep a business relevant for 30 years. It was not easy to be passionate for 30 years,” he said.

He noted, however, that Boyne, who embodies all the characteristics of an exceptional leader, had the right recipe for success with the three main ingredients of integrity, intelligence and passion.



Veteran journalist Ian Boyne (centre) and his wife, Margaret (third left), share a photo opportunity with Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left), along with four former Prime Ministers, who came out to support Mr. Boyne as he celebrated the 30th anniversary of his inspirational television programme *Profile* at King’s House on February 28. They are (from left) the Most Hon. Edward Seaga; the Most Hon. P.J. Patterson; the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller; and Hon. Bruce Golding. All, including Mr. Holness, have been guests on *Profile*.

“Ian, thank you very much for the leadership of distinction that you have provided to us here in Jamaica... May you have another infinite number of years to maintain and further your passionate work,” he said.

Special Advisor to the Governor-General, Ambassador the Hon. Burchell Whiteman, and General Manager of TVJ, Claire Grant, also gave glowing tributes. Obstetrician and gynaecologist, and comedian, Dr. Michael Abrahams, with his witty piece entitled ‘The Profile of a Profiling Profiler,’ emitted peals of roaring laughter, the loudest of which came from Mr. Boyne.

In his response, the man of the moment commented that it was “an honour to be eulogised before one’s death,” and pointed out that the work of *Profile* is important “because culture matters, inspiration matters.”

Continued on next page

Church News

Continued from previous page

“People have to see what it is to build a life of success. How do you deal with obstacles, how do you deal with the down times? How do you deal with things when the prospects seem grim? We need to tell those stories and people need to see where others have gone and what they have achieved—that is what we have been doing on *Profile*,” he said.

He noted that while journalism has the job to “ferret out corruption and to speak truth to power,” he also strongly believes that media has a developmental role to play—to empower people.

“The media must inspire, the media must strengthen people’s confidence in their capacity to make a difference—that has been my commitment,” he said.

“I am doing my part, and it is a part that all of us must do—the inspiration continues,” Mr. Boyne said.

Also host of the Jamaica Information Services’ (JIS) flagship interview programme, *Issues and Answers*, Mr. Boyne thanked all who have supported him throughout the years, which allowed him to “keep on going at this task of excellence.”

He specifically mentioned the unwavering support of his “biggest fan,” his wife, Margaret; his children; his extended TVJ, JIS and church families as well as the backing of his sponsors—Jamaica Broilers, Jamaica Money Market Brokers (JMMB), National Commercial Bank (NCB), Sagicor and Massy Gas Products, which helped to keep the show on air.

The list of attendees who came out to celebrate 30 years of compelling story-telling also included former Governor-General, Professor Sir Kenneth Hall; Chief Executive Officer of JIS, Donna-Marie Rowe; Chief Justice Zaila McCalla; Director of Public Prosecutions, Paula Llewelyn; Opposition Spokesperson on Finance, Dr. Peter Phillips; and Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Ruel Reid.

All who have come to know this respected media practitioner, whether personally or professionally, are aware of how driven and passionate he is in maintaining his hallmark of excellence, since entering the profession in 1975.

This was duly recognized by the Government, when in 2009, he was conferred with the Commander of the Order of Distinction (CD) for his outstanding contribution to journalism.

Mr. Boyne is also the Deputy CEO of JIS, a Minister of Religion, author, and a columnist for the *Sunday Gleaner*.

What started as a dream for Mr. Boyne, *Profile* is now a staple, much-loved programme reflecting three decades of journalistic prowess.

Not one to entertain complacency, Mr. Boyne told a *Jamaica Observer* interviewer that he intends to surpass the longest-running interview show worldwide, which is a Japanese programme that ran continuously for 39 years. “I aim to achieve that 40-year milestone,” he said.

With no signs of slowing down after 42 years in media, a still-passionate Ian Boyne is sure to continue his legacy of positivity, motivation and change.

The inspiration continues. Ω

Spring Holy Days Celebration

The Spring Holy Days were fun filled days of church activities, worship, and fellowship. We had one of our largest Passover services, attended by 38 individuals, 35 of whom were baptized members. The following night we observed the Night to be Remembered at a local restaurant, with 36 people present. On the First Day of Unleavened Bread, we had an offertory message from Ray Wendle, offertory music by Brenda Pinkerman on the saxophone, special music by Beth Hester, and the sermon by Pastor Morgan Pinkerman. After services, we enjoyed a lovely unleavened potluck with an abundance of food, a chocolate fountain for dessert, and much fellowship. We were especially blessed to have friends from the Atlanta church join us for the Holy Days this year.

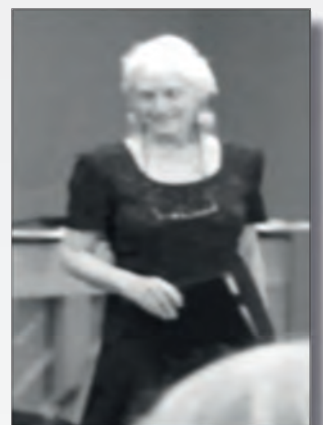
On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, the Auburndale church hosted the Church of the Sovereign God, with 46 in attendance. We had an offertory message from Daniel Pickett and music by Sunny Faulkner. A duet of special music was performed by mother and son, Brenda and Jennings Pinkerman. Our spiritual food was provided by Pastor Ben Faulkner. Another delicious potluck followed the service, and old friends were able to break unleavened bread together. We are looking forward to Pentecost, when we will host Church of the Sovereign God again with the Church of God, Miami. Ω

Submitted by Anna and Paul McIntyre from Atlanta

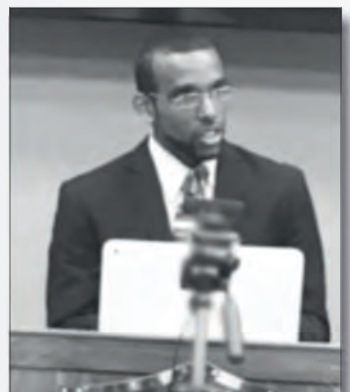
Accompanying pictures in next column →



Ben Faulkner



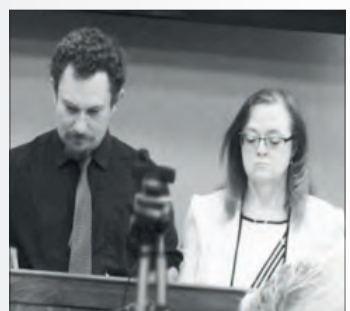
Sunny Faulkner



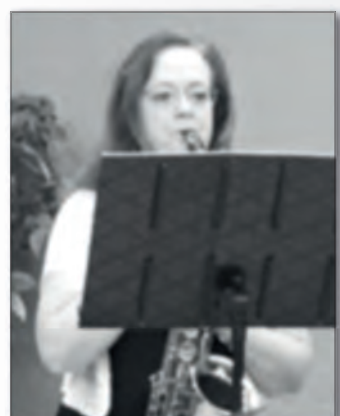
Daniel Pickett



Morgan Pinkerman



Jennings and Brenda Pinkerman



Brenda Pinkerman



Beth Hester



Paul and Anna McIntyre



Ray Wendle



Great Fellowship



Yum-m-m-m-m!

Church News

The Future of Evangelism in Canada



Horane Smith

The Church of God International, Canada, has been building a vibrant evangelism programme since its establishment in the late 1980s. Since then, CGI Canada has been holding its own reaching out to all and sundry with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His coming kingdom.

The church has been holding campaigns and public Bible Studies from that time until now. These outreach initiatives contributed to growth and the establishment of new congregations across the country, especially during the mid-nineties and early 2000. The *Armor of God* television programme complemented these initiatives and paid off well as far as numerical growth was concerned.

However, in recent years, we have been noticing a new shift in the impact of our evangelism initiatives. This stems from a number of factors, namely, the decline in viewership of cable television, the main medium we were using for airing our Gospel programmes, because of the introduction of the Internet, and subsequently widespread accessibility to this new medium for information and entertainment. The truth is, the Internet has changed our world; it has changed people's listening and watching habits and subjects of interest, including religion, and the time they allot to priority areas of everyday living. The change has been immense, almost revolutionary; it continues to evolve into uncharted territory. The rate of advances in communications technology means we may be looking at a different picture 5–10 years from now.

What does this mean for CGI Canada as it continues to fulfill its mission of preaching the life-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and His coming Kingdom? How does the church address the changes that are affecting people's lives whether they want to accept them or not? It means the church has to modify and sometimes change its strategies to reach people. With an aging population, if we don't make adjustments, we will have serious decisions to make on whether we can survive as an organization.

Recognizing the need for such changes, CGI Canada established a National Evangelism Department two years ago to continue to pursue the commission of Matthew 28:19. This was in keeping with the church's 2015 Canada Strategy Roadmap (CSR), which aims to nourish God's people with the Word; to provide healthy, safe, and joyful congregations; to be effective in preaching God's word; and to become financially viable.

As the National Evangelism programme enters its third year, we have put together a five-year strategy aimed at addressing the changing dynamics of people's interests and listening and watching habits. We preach that God is calling many people at this time, although only few are responding. Nevertheless, we have to reach as many people as possible, because among them are those whom God is calling. They may be surfing the Internet, listening to the radio, or continuing to be avid readers of books and magazines.

The Internet and word of mouth are becoming the two biggest effective means in drawing people to church, according to the data we have gathered. While our campaigns have not attracted people to church as they did in the past, they still play an integral role in spreading the Gospel, and will not be abandoned. However, when the research shows that generally 75–80 percent of newcomers to all churches nowadays come through word of mouth—through a friend, relative or co-worker—you know it's an area we cannot ignore. When two out of every five people we see visiting at some of our congregations are coming via the Internet, we realize, too, that it's a development we cannot ignore.

In that vein, our five-year strategy will pay a great deal of attention to the Internet and personal evangelism. CGI is not alone in this, as other churches have already come to this realization. Social mediums such as Facebook and Twitter, which many of our members use daily, will play an integral role in the success of our web evangelism programme. Members are encouraged to join the church's "member site," and general sites sharing posts such as advertisements and commentaries, with their friends and participate in the exchanges. Think about a member who has 300 friends and decides to share a commentary on one of the biblical Festivals or whether Jesus Christ nailed the law to the cross. Do you see the potential reach if every member decides to do that? That would be a combination of personal evangelism and use of the Internet, two of the most effective ways of reaching people.

Those are just a few of the strategies we will be pursuing in the coming years. We hope to establish an Internet radio station at some point, which will run 24/7 carrying sermons, campaigns, discussions, livestreaming of church services, Bible Studies, Feast of Tabernacles activities, and so on. We need to build web content as we explore all avenues of the Internet to reach people. If you have the ability, and are willing to help in this area, please don't hesitate to contact us. We need you! Members are encouraged to carry a business card with contacts for each congregation, which will be made available to you. The department will provide opportunities for you to learn more about personal evangelism through workshops and seminars coming up shortly; the cards will help to promote and invite friends and relatives to an outreach or regular church services. Each congregation will now have a major campaign to try to boost their impact in the community. We want people to be aware of CGI's presence there. We also plan to have a representative from each congregation on the National Evangelism Team to keep their congregations informed on what is happening with evangelism.

The National Evangelism programme can only succeed with God's help, and yours too. We are depending on you. You will hear more about it in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you would like a copy of this strategy, please email me at fairtalk@gmail.com. God bless. Ω

Submitted by Horane Smith

Armor of God Magazine

Did you know?

There is a new resource of written material for our people to study and gain much good and useful information. It is the *Armor of God magazine*. You can see the magazine on the web page at: www.cgi.org.

The story of the Church of God down through the annals of history is quite a saga. It is written in the blood, sweat, and tears of literally tens of thousands of God-fearing devoted people simply caught in the *crossfire* of so-called "Christian" religious persecution. Over the centuries, this *true story* develops into an epic that is sometimes stranger than fiction when considering who was responsible for inflicting what some considered a merciless genocide on quiet, hard-working, God-fearing family communities—all in the name of Jesus Christ and Rome's Universal (Catholic) Church.

What is the truth concerning these historical benchmarks that discolor and blister the alleged Christian Church? How is it that a "work of charity" in the name of Jesus Christ can continue to be so revered in our modern day and yet be responsible for so much innocent bloodshed and not be held accountable, but instead remain believable? Is it because most of today's secular society and culture is unaware? Perhaps they just don't care, because *pop culture* has them too distracted. Maybe they really are too busy to take the time to search out the information disclosing these atrocities and changes. Or perhaps many have just simply lost a love for God's truth.

Whatever the reason, this issue of the *Armor of God* has assembled a variety of in-depth, hard-hitting articles revealing information which for some will be extremely eye opening regarding Christian church history. You will be exposed to an assortment of particular specifics concerning so-called cherished *Christian* traditions and beliefs that will explain there is nothing Christian about them; and furthermore, Jesus, His apostles, and the New Testament do not mention them at all.

We have attempted to make it easy for you, the reader, to obtain some of this basic fundamental information that should be easy for you to evaluate, and if you choose, to access additional information for further education in this segment of ecclesiastical history. So pay particular attention in the course of the articles and sidebars for recommendations for more *FREE* material designed to improve your awareness of just how much of our Lord Jesus Christ's teachings have been compromised and abandoned. If you are sincerely seeking the truth, this issue should be of particular value to you. Remember, our Lord said, "I am the truth and the light..." and yes, the truth will indeed set you free! Ω

Church News

7 Baptisms, 283 attendance at Days of Unleavened Bread in Jamaica

The 283 persons who crammed into the Kingston congregation of the Church of God International on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread were coming at the end of a most exciting Passover season which started with the baptism of seven persons, a Passover attendance of 195 persons, and a First Day of Unleavened Bread attendance of 223.

On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, the Kingston congregation held combined services with the Windward Road Church of God 7th Day, which a year ago began keeping the Feast days after I had made a presentation to them which showed that the Sabbath and the Holy Days stand or fall together. That Church of God 7th Day group is now keeping all of God’s Holy Days, and they had rich fellowship with their CGI brethren for the last day of the Feast. (Another Church of God 7th Day group has also begun keeping the Feast days after my presentation to them.)

This has been another exciting year for the Kingston congregation, which has been growing significantly, and is one of the largest COG congregations internationally among all the groups which came out of the Worldwide Church of God.

In January, I held a campaign on the subject of the Trinity, attracting 63 visitors and a total attendance of 273 persons. One of the persons who attended that campaign was about to be baptized in the Seventh-Day Adventist church, but upon hearing that lecture, which proved that the Holy Spirit was not a third person of the Godhead, as taught by Adventists, she changed her mind, and along with accepting the truth of God’s holydays, decided to be baptized this Passover. Other persons have been attending services since.

Another person from outside of Kingston was also planning to be baptized in the Seventh-Day Adventist church, but after attending services in our Ocho Rios congregation since last year and listening to an interactive session I held with that group in March on the subject of *Identifying the True Church*, she decided to be baptized in the CGI, rejoicing that she had found the truth.

The evangelistic-oriented Kingston CGI congregation will hold another campaign at the end of May, this time focusing on the subject of the Sabbath. There will be another campaign on Pentecost, addressing the subject, *What About Those Who Never Heard?* The church has invested heavily in equipment for a massive social media outreach. All our campaigns are now broadcast live on Facebook. You may tune in at 4:30 PM Eastern Standard time on Sabbath, May 27, for our next campaign. This will be major year for evangelism as we penetrate the country with Christ’s true Gospel.

The church has a strong praise and worship team, complete with drums. Worship is inspiring, energetic, and buoyant. There are many young people in the church, and some of them are preachers. On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, one such young person, Jordan McKenzie, gave a riveting sermonette giving practical tips for spiritual deleavening. I gave a well-received and much-talked-about sermon looking at *The Dangers in the Wilderness*, focusing on the passages which speak of the Israelites’ yearning for what seemed to them then as the benefits of Egyptian life. I pointed out to brethren that those whose hearts still longed for the pleasures of the former life would have a harder time adjusting to the demands of spiritual freedom.

In the afternoon, another young man, Deacon Stephen Scale, spoke on God’s calendar and explained the postponements. That sermon generated much interest. Not to be forgotten was the Night to be Much Observed, where approximately 160 persons turned out for a fine dinner and a play on the Exodus, as well as an animated movie on the same theme. Overall, this Passover season was memorable, with the brethren on a spiritual high as they count down to Pentecost.

Ω

Submitted by Ian Boyne



Pastor Ian Boyne (first from right) and Deacon Christopher Hendricks (first from left) pose for a picture with the seven newly baptized members after the ceremony.



The congregation pays keen attention and takes notes as Pastor Ian Boyne delivers a rousing Last Day of Unleavened Bread sermon.



Brethren come together to partake in the traditional fellowship meal on the eve of the First Day of Unleavened Bread, known as the *Night to be Much Observed*.



Vibrant praise and worship session during the Last Day of Unleavened Bread service

Mr. and Mrs. Ramocan meet Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace



On February 21, 2017, Pastor George Ramocan, in his role as High Commissioner of Jamaica, and his wife Lola, met with Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace.

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings;
he shall not stand before mean men” (Proverbs 22:29).



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