Vista 2001

A Publication of The General Council of the Christian Church of North America
Anno Domini 2001 – Volume 2, No. 2

We Believe . . .

THE Bible to be the infallible Word of God. • in One God, distinct in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. • Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God, the Only Savior of mankind, through whose death atonement was made for our sins. • in a personal devil, served by demon spirits, who will be cast eternally into the Lake of Fire. • in regeneration, (new birth), through faith in Jesus Christ. • in Water Baptism by simple immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. • in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to salvation, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. • in the Lord's Supper to be shared in regularly as a reminder of our Lord's death. • in the Apostolic regulations regarding foods and practices that injure the body and offend the holiness of God. • in the healing of the sick in response to the prayer of faith. • in the pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ. • in the bodily resurrection of the dead.

> The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.
> Proverbs 18:4

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Editorial

ACCORDING to the Word of God, *fresh water and salt water cannot come from the same spring.* (See James 3:11) I recently met a "pastor" who preaches his version of the gospel to a congregation in Alabama. His approach to meeting the people on their turf—getting down and dirty— is to curse his way through each sermon! His "congregation" allegedly approves of his style and he claims to be invited to speak his mind on various secular talk-shows.

First, may I say that having spoken to this person, I believe this to be the absolute truth. Second, I am not surprised to find people willing to come to church to hear such nonsense. I am sure History will bear me out on this: **Any person who assumes a position of authority in any organized setting will, indeed, draw a crowd no matter how bizarre his doctrine, or how far it departs from the Word of God.** It can even be called a "church." Furthermore, chances are good that if enough money flows in, the group will wind up with a 501(c)3 tax exemption status as well! Welcome to the real world.

One thing I appreciated about this "swearin' pastor" was his honesty. He didn't say that "God told him" to preach this way, or that he was Spirit-led. Anyone who attends his meetings knows exactly what they are going to get: verbal sewage.

As believers in Christ, we are to be *led by the Spirit* (Romans 8:14) and, specifically, as Pentecostal believers, we are to witness, *not with wise and persuasive words of men's wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.* (See I Corinthians 2:4) We should leave no room in our witness for worldliness lest the Enemy gain a foothold. Some church ministries import worldly ideas and programs to "attract" the unsaved. Some pepper their message with coarse jesting and world-friendly anecdotes so as to make the unsaved feel more "at home." This is especially true in dealing with youth.

May I suggest that this approach is no better than the pastor that swears, and, in fact, may be even more harmful because it lacks the honesty of what Godliness is all about. Worldly people should NOT be comfortable in a Pentecostal church. If they are comfortable in the world, why would they ever seek the Kingdom of God? A church filled with *worldly* (unconverted) people is simply a *worldly* church.

Jesus said that *he* would draw all men unto himself. (John 12:32) This includes leading lost souls into a fellowship of believers for teaching and strengthening. God will *send* people to

Editorial
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Editorial
• CONTINUED FROM P. 2 •

a church that is faithful to His word and to Him. No gimmicks are ever necessary. Efforts to "trick" the unsaved into visiting church may increase attendance, but hinder the real goal of converting the sinner in order to bear fruits of righteousness.

We all seek a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit—in our hearts and in our churches. This will not happen as long as we persist in compromise with worldliness. Through an outpouring, God places His seal of approval on a ministry. When the Spirit reveals His presence in our midst, worshipers are called to step out of the world and are drawn to holiness—being set apart for Gods' service. God is faithful to meet needs, answer prayer, forgive sin, save souls, and baptize in the Holy Spirit. But for some, this is not enough. Strange teachings found their way even into the first century church. (See Revelation 2)

If revival is to come, will it come to churches whose members love the Lord with all their heart, diligently search the Scriptures, obey the leading of God's Spirit, live lives pleasing to God in holiness and separation from the stain of this world - or - is it more likely that the swearing pastor's church will be chosen to receive this blessing? What of the churches that have abandoned decency and order (I Cor 14:40) and have sought a "new experience" through a spirit of dog barking, wolf howling, and hilarity? I hope you see my point.

As the time of the end approaches we must be even more careful to test all things by examining the Scriptures *to see if these things are true*. (Acts 17:11) We *need* a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit in these last days. Let us *prepare the way for the Lord* by recognizing Holy Ground—in our churches, homes, and in our hearts. Moses removed his shoes before the Lord. (Exodus 3) God is calling us today to be cleansed by the power of the Blood of the Lamb.

May springs of fresh, living water spring forth as we differentiate, separate, and strain-out attitudes, conduct, and life-styles that have no place among God's people.

> ***But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.***
>
> **(II Timothy 2:20-22)**

Rev. Eric R Towse
Editor

Letters to the Editor

Concerning our Editorial about Israel:

Dear Rev. Towse,

. . . I must take serious issue with your idea that many of us are "over emphasizing" the modern state of Israel. You even referred to the land as "Palestine," which is the name the Romans gave it after they destroyed Jerusalem and deported the people. Rather than go point for point, let me simply state that the prophets are replete with the Lord's promise to regather His people Israel into the land, and that He is coming back to be their king. You say He is building a mansion in heaven, which is true, but He is bringing it down to earth. It isn't called the New Jerusalem for nothing. (It isn't called New Rome, or New Paris.) When He tells us we will be where He is, He doesn't mention space travel, because Scripture says He is heading for Jerusalem to establish his throne.

Paul tells us in Romans 9:6 that not all Israel is Israel. That is, just as not all who claim to be Christians are actually born again, Israel doesn't mean all Jews regardless of their faith. Look at Paul's imagery of the Olive trees in Romans 11. In the cultivated tree which is Israel, the branches that are removed are the unbelievers. The believers are getting grafted into Israel's tree. God is not doing a new tree from the both of them. I this illustration the believing Jewish branches never move, it is the gentiles who are brought into something new while the old Jewish unbelievers are gathered up to be burned. Thus in John 10:16 Jesus says there will be "one flock with one shepherd" because He has other sheep to bring. In short, the news of the New Testament is that gentiles are now included into something that was almost exclusively Jewish, as Jesus told the woman at the well-Salvation is of the Jews."

In your statement, "Jesus must return there (so they believe) to gather "His people". This is because this is exactly what God says He will do. . .but to say, "including the Jews that do not believe in Him" is patently false and misleading. As we have already said, "true Israel" is within the Jewish population just as the "true church" is somewhere within Christianity. . .

Pointing you to the passage in Joel 2: "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehosophat. Then I will enter into judgement with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance Israel,

Letters
• CONTINUED ON P. 24 •

General Overseer's Message

Lord: Give Us Another Pentecost!

by Rev. John DelTurco

PRESIDENT Woodrow Wilson said: *"A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do, then we are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from and what we have been."*

I would like to paraphrase Woodrow Wilson's statement and still retain its meaning: **"If The Christian Church of North America does not remember what it was yesterday, nor what it is today, nor what it is trying to do, then we are doing a futile thing if we do not know where we came from and what we have been about."**

The General Council and the Executive Board, are mandated by God to perpetuate the vision of the Christian Church of North America. But before they can chart CCNA into the future, it must recognized that God is not interested in renewing a historical era. He is not about to do an old thing. He is more creative than that. He will retain the foundation of faith, which is not just old—it is eternal. "Upon that Rock" He will build His Church. He will build it with new life, new methodologies, and new demonstrations. He is not the God of a single generation. He is the God of all generations—plural. God is not bound by or to history. He is bound only by his word.

God's ultimate for CCNA, and every pastor, minister, and layperson of our churches is:

1. Prayer
2. Bible Study
3. Pentecostal, with sensitivity to the flow of the Holy Spirit
4. Growing in grace and in the knowledge of God daily
5. Bearing our crosses, and,
6. Being holy because He is holy.

A thought that I want to share is born out of a deep conviction that I have held for a long time: Our pastors, our churches, our people must get back to our original vision, the bedrock of our foundation, i.e., **prayer, Pentecost, holiness, a strong foundation in the Word of God, humility, unity, and a close relationship with our Heavenly Father.** If we ignore our original vision, we will face spiritual stagnation as so many movements have before us.

"Without a vision, people perish." Proverbs 29:18 teaches us that God sets each church on a path. Where there is no vision, the people are adrift without the security of a sure anchor. Once we lose sight of our purpose, we never achieve our ultimate in God. We perish. We may not cease to be; we just no longer exist with God's purpose and ultimate in mind.

It is with this thought that I wish to share my heart with you. Being an ordained minister, full-time, with the Christian Church of North America for the past 46 years, I, together with my wife, Lydia, have had the honor and privilege to travel throughout the world ministering the Word of God. We have pastored for many years in America, and have ministered in practically all of the CCNA churches. We have had an active ministry, always enjoying God's blessing upon our lives.

Everywhere I go, both home and abroad, I see the church in dire need of prayer. Prayer is the catalyst to achieve God's ultimate for our lives. The greatest distinction that we have, apart from being born-again, converted, delivered from our sinful life, set apart to walk a life of holiness, is that we are a Pentecostal people, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit enables.

If a person were to compare how often in days gone by our people heard messages on the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the speaking in other tongues with today, it would not be difficult to see a disturbing trend. Some fear that within one decade there will no longer be any preaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal churches across America. It is my prayer that we never lose sight of why God raised us up and filled us with His Spirit. If we lose our vision; if we negate, deny, nullify, invalidate, compromise our glorious heritage and traditional spiritual values, then God will raise up another people to take the Pentecostal message to the ends of the earth.

I am totally convinced that only a Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost can provide the leadership, atmosphere, and power for a great revival of evangelism, and missionary endeavor such as this famished, frightened world needs. I am persuaded that we need another Pentecost. Thousands of Christians everywhere have been praying for such a Holy Ghost revival because this generation has yet to experience a true outpouring of God's glory. We **need** another Pentecost.

Thank God for the rain drops that are falling here and there but *"Oh! For the showers we plead."* Let every Christian lay aside doubts and indifferences, and begin to claim the promises. God's Word is our divine guarantee that another Pentecost is possible today; and not only possible, but indispensable for the carrying out of our Lord's Great Commission in this present generation. A Holy Ghost move of God is desperately needed to discern what is of God and what is not, because if the fakery is permitted to continue, the church cannot prosper, nor can we ever receive God's ultimate in our lives.

Let us go down to the cross at once. Let us put everything else aside. Let us get the matter settled now, for our sake, and for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom:

LORD, GIVE US ANOTHER PENTECOST

CCNA World Missions Spotlight

Caracas, Venezuela

Rev. David Verzilli,
Director of World Missions

GOD is opening new doors for CCNA Missions in Venezuela!

Years ago, the Lord used **Brother Foti** and **Brother Torres** to build a strong foundation in Caracas, Venezuela. After Brother Torres' departure, national pastors took over the work. Since that time, and through many changes, the work has grown into various outlying areas around Caracas. Our newest country leader, **Federico Tranfa** is continuing to expand the horizons the Lord's work. Churches are located in the mountains, the ghetto districts and coastal areas of Venezuela.

Brother Tranfa's heart is to see the Gospel cover all of Venezuela.

Please keep the churches in prayer. Some are located in dangerous areas, due to guerilla activity in the mountains.

Pray for the Tranfa family as they lead the work in the main church, as well as the other churches around the country.

"Welcome to our CCNA Brothers!"

A GROUP OF CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM.
HOW WONDERFUL TO SEE SUCH YOUNG FACES
READY TO COMMIT THEIR LIVES TO CHRIST

BROTHER TORRES WAS INVITED TO TAKE PART IN
THE BAPTISM SERVICE WITH FEDERICO TRANFA,
PASTOR OF THE MAIN CHURCH IN CARACAS.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP
AS PEOPLE GATHERED FOR THE MEETING

Feature

Shalom Chr
Capetown,

AFTER 28 hours, 8,500 miles, 18 flying hours, Lydia and I arrived at the Cape Town, South Africa airport, on Saturday, February 10, 2001. When we made our way out of the baggage area, we heard some beautiful singing by a large group of people. It was a pleasant surprise to discover that a large group of Christians of the Shalom Christian Church welcomed us with the singing of Christian songs.

In all of our travels around the world, this was the most impressive welcome to a foreign country that we have ever experienced. This happy welcome portended, as a omen does, foreshadowing what was to come. The warm welcome helped us forget how tired we were. We were quickly ushered to our vehicle, and immediately taken to the Shalom Christian Church, where we were again welcomed by the whole congregation. They planned a welcome party for us with food and refreshments. Pastor Ian Murray introduced us to the congregation, expressing a deep honor that it was for us to be in their midst. That introduction began our ministry.

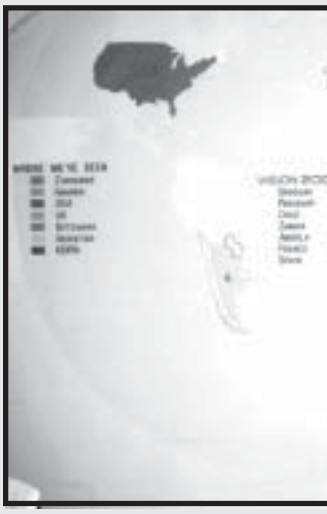
The next day was Sunday. I ministered on the subjects of the cross and the foundation of our walk with God. I told the congregation that God inspired me to begin with the cross — the bedrock of Christianity. God crowned the service with the manifestation of His glory. All of God's people at the altar experienced an unusual move of God. Every service and every seminar was impacted with the presence of God manifesting His glory with the saints of God committing their all to Him.

On February 14, Valentine's Day, Pastor Murray planned a special service for all the married couples. I had the joy of sharing with them the necessary characteristic attributes that produce a loving and sold marriage.

Every day we had special seminars for all the leaders and their wives, and in the evening services for the congregation. I also met with all of the leaders of the Shalom Christian Church for the purpose of evaluating their ministry, programs, vision, and direction. It was a very impressive and informative meeting. Counsel was given, where needed. Sunday morning, February 18, was my concluding service with an unusual move of God in the midst of my preaching. The whole congregation simultaneously jumped to their feet and experienced an unprecedented move of God upon young and old. It was a glorious climax that

"WE ARE EACH OTHER'S BUSINESS—

WE ARE EACH OT



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South Africa

General Overseer's
Visit - 2001

I will never forget.

After the service we had lunch at Pastor Murray's home. When we went to the airport, we were again greeted by many of the people from his congregation. It was sad to say good-by to the many warm hearts that went out of their way to make us feel wanted and appreciated. It was an honor to receive all that respect as the General Overseer of the Christian Church of North America. Lydia and I both concluded that our visit to Shalom Christian Church of Cape Town, South Africa, an affiliate of CCNA, was one of the highlights of all our experiences in overseas ministry.

I am thrilled to inform you that Pastor Murray is a man of vision and goals for his church to evangelize other nations in Africa, as well as in Cape Town. He sends teams out to many nations of Africa doing evangelism and pioneering churches. He also has programs in Cape Town—in the schools, homes for wayward kids, and holds special out door meetings. He is an exciting man that is very much loved by his congregation. He is very much opposed to the status quo, always urging his people to share their testimonies to win the lost. His church is now filled to capacity—over four hundred members, and will soon have to relocate to a larger facility. He is a very energetic pastor, believing God for continued growth. The leadership of the church is very dedicated and committed to the health and growth of the work of God. They are a very serious people, who have been delivered from the oppression of the evil one and focused on growth. The congregation is young with many professions such as teaching and business represented.

Pastor Murray's church is affiliated with CCNA through the Foreign Missions Department and very much a church that is "on the grow." I am very impressed with his program for the youth, as well as for the qualified leadership of his church. His church is probably the fastest growing church in Cape Town. We need to pray for Brother Murray and family that God will provide their every need: financial, physical, and spiritual, as they endeavor to fulfill the Great Mandate for our Lord to all of Africa.

Let us continue to pray for Pastor Murray and the family of Shalom Christian Church of Cape Town, South Africa.

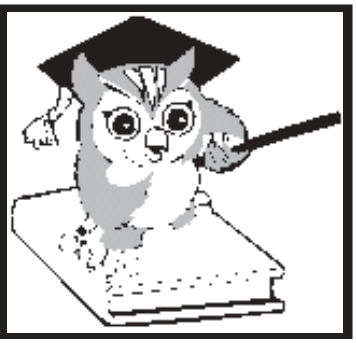
To God be all the glory!

Rev. John Del Turco

HER'S HARVEST—

"WE ARE EACH OTHER'S MAGNITUDE and BOND."

CCNA
Education Department
Rev. Lucian Gandolfo
Executive Director



Scholarship Recipient Receives Dean's List Recognition—Thanks CCNA

Adrienne Koch received a Roberts CCNA Scholarship for her studies at Malone College where she studies Christian counseling and psychology. She has achieved high grades and is on the Dean's list. She has written to thank the CCNA for this opportunity.

MALONE COLLEGE DEAN'S LIST

Adrienne Koch

is recognized as a Dean's List honor student for having earned a grade point average of 3.940

Fall Semester 2000

Office of the Provost

She writes:

Dear Rev. Gandolfo,
Last year the CCNA Education Department was so generous in granting me a scholarship for my freshman year at college. I am so very grateful and want you to know I have been very diligent in my studies.

I thank you, again, for helping to make my college dream become a reality. I am so excited to see God working faithfully in my life here at school as I apply myself. I was blessed to start a Bible study on my dorm floor recently and have been asked to speak at a youth group retreat at a Methodist church in Middlefield, OH next month. Also, our new youth group leader at Christian Assembly in Richmond Hts. has asked my to become a mentor to the young girls in the group this coming summer. What an awesome honor to be used of God in such a way! . . . College at Malone has been one of the most rewarding and exciting opportunities of my life. Thank you so much!

Adrienne M. Koch

Education Department
• CONTINUED ON P. 23 •

Education Department to Hold 3rd National Christian Education Conference

Conference Theme: "Quest For Truth"

On Saturday, June 2, 2001, the Living Waters Christian Church will host CCNA's 3rd National Christian Education Conference at 668 Walpole Street, Norwood, MA 02062
(617) 762-3357. Host Pastor: Rev. Thomas Geyser

Program Schedule

8:30 AM	Registration and Refreshments
9:15AM	Opening Remarks & Orientation
9:30 AM	**Thy Word is Truth**
10:30 AM	**When Truth Prevails: The fruit of Sound Doctrine**
11:20-12:30	LUNCH
12:30 PM	**When Truth Obscured/Abandoned: The fruit of Corruption and Apostasy**
1:30PM	**When Truth Restored: The Fruit of Revival**
2:30-2:45	Closing Remarks & Dismissal

Speakers for this event include: Rev. Paul Coran, Rev. Eugene Palma, and Rev. Tom Geyser.

There is no registration or tuition fee for this Conference. A free will offering will be taken. So that we may have an adequate number of handouts and refreshments, please contact Rev. Peter Lambo by May 25 with the number of people who will be attending. Brother Lambo can be reached by telephone at:

(973) 325-3635, or by e-mail at PLAM42@AOL.COM.

The Gates of Hell
by Rev. Lucian Gandolfo

". . .I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18b)

Perhaps, upon casual reading of this passage, you thought that Jesus is promising in this text to preserve the defenses of the church so that it may withstand the menacing "gates of hell" as they relentlessly push against it, seeking its destruction. Although I believed this for many years, I've come to understand a different meaning to His words.

The Gates of Hell
• CONTINUED ON P. 22 •

Little Natalie– A Hospice Story

by Rev. Eric R Towse

IT was a hot July day when Natalie began to cry. Born September 1998, she had not been subject to many colds or fevers. In fact, her parents remarked at how healthy she was compared to a friend's child of the same age. The onset was quite sudden and stunned Natalie's parents, Marian and Galena, both immigrants from the Ukrane. Natalie's father, an accomplished violinist was the son of a Ukraian Orthodox Priest. Her mother was pregnant with their second child and worked full-time as a supervisor in a large hotel. The family struggled in their new America, but they were happy.

Natalie now had a high fever and bloody diarrhea which concerned her parents greatly. So it was off to the doctor! Natalie's pediatrician did not think it was anything too serious and prescribed a tonic for the fever. By Monday, things had gone from bad to worse. The fever was unabated and Natalie was now behaving very strangely. She was taken to a Brooklyn hospital and admitted. She was tested for several days and then the bad news came: Natalie suffered from an *E.* coli infection. *E.* coli is a bacteria that is normally found in the intestine, but causes terrible problems when introduced into the body by food or water. In many people it is fatal. Natalie was in real trouble.

Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York was her next (and last) stop, where she remained for four months. Intravenous antibiotics were administered to help fight the infection, but her kidneys were failing and she required dialysis. Unconscious and unable to eat, she was fed through a tube. A colostomy was performed. Repeat CT scans showed brain damage and deterioration. A neurologist determined that she was also now blind. Despite their best efforts, there was nothing more to be done, medically. Natalie made the next decision herself. Marian and Galena kept a vigil at her bedside, then, one day in November of 2000, after being hospitalized for four months, Natalie raised her arm, and pulled-out the tube from her nose right before her father's eyes. Marian felt that she was trying to tell him something: "Enough is enough!" That day he spoke to the hospital staff and said, "I want to take Natalie home." Funeral arrangements were made and a burial plot was purchased.

Just the week before, Galena gave birth to their second daughter, Christina. The decision to bring Natalie home to die was hard enough to deal with, but with the newborn, one can only imagine the strain this decision posed. It was then that someone called The Metropolitan Hospice of Greater New York. Hospice provides in-home care for the terminally ill. An interdisciplinary team consisting of doctor, nurse, social worker, pastor or rabbi, and volunteers provide medical care at home for the dying. Prescription drugs, medical equipment and supplies are also furnished. Fortunately, our medical director whose medical specialty is palliative care (which concerns pain control and symptom management) also has a pediatric specialty. Natalie was soon surrounded by a team that provided loving care and spiritual support. She was anointed and prayed for according to James 5.

Natalie's parents became her real doctor and nurse. Marian, now with little opportunity for work, having given so much time to Natalie in the hospital, spent every waking moment at her bedside constantly feeding her small amounts of sugar water through a syringe.

Natalie groaned constantly, holding her head between her hands. Medicines helped relieve some of the symptoms, but we all new that only God could help. Abby, the hospice administrator and registered nurse, handled the case herself because of her burden and love for children. We waited and prayed. As the days went by, Natalie lost even more weight. She was now skin-and-bones. It was now Christmas 2000. The family took out albums and videos of the previous year's celebration where a normal one-year old played with toys celebrating the joyous birth of the Messiah—the Lord Jesus Christ. No one who viewed the videos could believe it was the same child, but Natalie made it through Christmas.

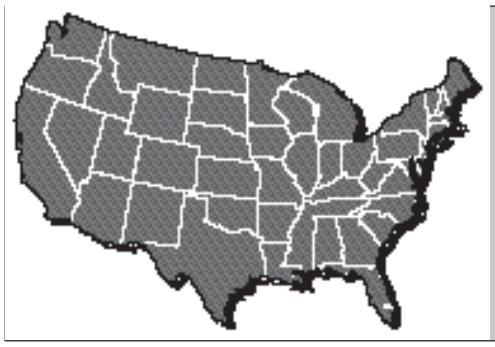
Galena and Marian were encouraged to try to allow Natalie to drink from a bottle in stead of a syringe. Prior to this, she had no sucking reflex. Strangely, she was able to drink the bottle. This was the second of many miracles. The previous miracle occurred when she first came home: a wet diaper! (She had been on renal dialysis because of kidney failure—a wet diaper meant that the kidneys had started to work again.)

When Natalie came on the hospice program, many were asked to pray. Christian Pentecostal Church of Staten Island, NY activated its prayer chain. This request was also made on the CCNA web site's prayer book which thousands of people continue to view around the world. The local Salvation Army was also asked to pray. God heard those prayers!

After a few days of bottle feeding, regular baby formula was substituted for the sugar water which barely sustained her those first few weeks. It took some getting used to but Natalie held down the formula. She began to gain weight! Natalie's nurse Abby, next did what comes natural to a Jewish mother—encouraged her parents to feed her from a spoon. Within a few days she was eating and drinking.

Then, one day, Natalie began to make sounds, to sit up, to interact with her sister. Natalie was getting better. She began to mimic sounds and within a week began to ask for "Da Da!"

Little Natalie
• CONTINUED ON P. 24 •



District News

New England District

THE INSTALLATION OF REV. DUYO MARKS AS SENIOR PASTOR OF ROMANY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Rev. Vincent Prestegiacomo presides at the installation of the Rev. Duyo Marks. **Romany Christian Church** is a CCNA congregation of Gypsys.

Taunton God's Love Bible Church is doing well. It has started a coffee house ministry. They are now meeting in a store front which needed some remodeling as well as a new rug and chairs. Members of the congregation did all the work, the New England District gave them $350 towards the rug. Living Waters Christian Church gave them fifty cloth covered chairs and in a very short time they were worshiping in the store front.

Oxford Hills Christian Church is now preparing to move into a new recently purchased building which the Lord provided. Once again we thank God. A church family gave the entire down payment plus two hundred chairs, another church family purchased a new sound system. The New England District gave them $2,000.00 to date, and they have raised from church members for the building fund a total of $16,000. Pastor Jeffries visited his son's church in Virgina he spoke in both morning and evening services, they wished to be a part of the blessing and gave them a check for $2,500. Praise God! We thank God for what He is doing in New England. Both of these ministries are new church plantings.

GOD'S LOVE FAMILY CHURCH, TAUNTON, MA

OXFORD HILLS CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Norway, Maine

A Childrens' Story

"Willamina and Willie Wasp"

by "Uncle Vince" Immordino

HI! I'm **Willamina Wasp** and my husband **Willie is over there**. It is okay if you call Will and I sleepy heads. That's because for 364 days a year we sleep in a male fig tree (that you can't eat). The tree's name is **Newton**. His wife's name is **Filimina Fig Tree**.

Then, one day in a year, the very same day that Newton and Filimina Fig Tree bloom, Willy Wasp and I wake up. In that 24-hour period, Willie fertilizes my eggs. I now have to look for a place to lay them. I keep on trying to lay my eggs in Filimina's flowers, but her blooms are too deep, so I don't leave the eggs. What I do leave is pollen from Newton in Filimina's flowers. This pollen fertilizes her flowers.

NEWTON THE FIG TREE

FILIMINA FIG TREE IN FULL BLOOM

At the same time, God provided flowers on Newton where I could lay my eggs to have baby wasps! It's really cool, don't you think? It seems God thinks of everything to make us all happy.

I hear some people talk about how Newton and Filimina were here on the earth millions of years before the wasps came on the scene. That's just plain foolishness. How could Newton and Filimina Fig Tree reproduce fig trees for millions of years without Willy and my help? No, common sense tells us there is only one possible answer: ***In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all living things in six day-and-night days!*** Don't you agree?

"Uncle Vince" Immordino is a Christian financial counsellor, author, and host of the radio program ***"How to Make Your Money Grow Safely"***. Christian families may receive free consultations by calling 718-846-5600.

The Pastor's Wife

Holding It All Together!

by Sandra J. Carlo,
Christian Pentecostal Church, Staten Island, NY

IF you are the wife of a pastor, you may have often asked the question, *"How do people see me?"* This used to be one of my greatest concerns. I don't quite know how I came to fall into that trap, but the unspecified demands of the body of Christ can certainly take its toll. Pastor's wives are, all-to-often, expected to be superhuman, super-spiritual, full of wisdom, able to expound Scripture at a moment's notice, and to fill every vacancy from Sunday School superintendent to cleaning lady. Offices that begin with the title "Women's—" or "Ladies—" may also be an obligatory assumption for the pastor's wife. With that type of job description is it any wonder why some women feel that they aren't "making the grade" so to speak?

I have learned to just thank the Lord daily for allowing me to serve Him and not to worry about what people think of me. I have learned to serve the Lord in Spirit and in truth—in other words, to just be my self.

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. . . For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord"

(Ephesians 1:2, 9,10.)

God has bestowed upon each of us certain gifts for ministry (yes, pastors' wives, too!) and we should be ministering within those giftings.

"So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

(Romans 3:5-7)

If you have become discouraged about the ministry and are facing insurmountable difficulties of some type, you may be wondering if you were truly called to it. Remember if your spouse was called, so were you! The day he agreed to become pastor of your church you were part of the package. You might say that you are the ribbon and bow—you hold it all together. You bring a uniqueness to the ministry and you are a beautiful gift to your congregation. Be assured that you are an integral part of the ministry.

You are not just a pastor's wife, but you are a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be led by the Holy Spirit and will be faithful to what He has called you to do, because He has given you the power to do so.

"Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it."

(I Thessalonians 5:24)

Women's Ministries

Rev. Vilda C. Roy

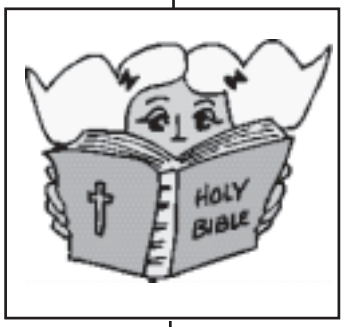
National Director

A Message Worth Repeating

PLEASE allow me to say up front, this is a message worth repeating! It is intended to be a word of comfort and encouragement to you in the Lord. Everywhere I go I am hearing that the people of God are under fire I know in my own life the enemy of my soul is trying hard to get the victory over me, but, I've already read the back of The Book, and I know WE WIN!

The trials of our faith and the afflictions that the people of God are enduring are awesome indeed. But, the Word of God says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *"Author and Finisher of our faith."* If He is the Beginning and the Conclusion of our faith, then why must we be undone by these attacks of the enemy? The Word of God further tells me that I HAVE OVERCOME (already!) by the Blood of The Lamb, and by the WORD of His Testimony!

The things I say are important! Satan is the prince and power of the air and he uses my own words against me. The words I speak become arguments in heaven against me. Satan and his demon imps are looking for a right to accuse us before God. In addition to our actions, our spoken words become Satan's argument against us in the heavens. However, when we agree with what God's Word has already declared to be true, we will come through our trials and afflictions victoriously! That's why we agree with The Word—what God says about us, and NOT what our circumstances seem to say.



II Thessalonians 2:3 talks to us about a great apostasy, that there will be a great falling away, but look down to verses 13-17. My Bible says in its caption to STAND FAST. Then, verses 13 and 14 say, *he chose you* for salvation by the Spirit and for believing the truth of His Word. He called you by the Gospel for *the obtaining of the glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and verse 15 says, *therefore STAND FAST and HOLD to what you were taught, whether by word or letter.*

Verses 16 and 17 say, *now may the Lord Jesus HIMSELF and our God The Father, who has loved you and has given you EVERLASTING CONSOLATION and good HOPE by GRACE, (to) comfort your hearts. He will establish you in EVERY good work.*

Chapter 3 continues on, *THE LORD IS FAITHFUL IN ESTABLISHING YOU AND WILL GUARD YOU FROM THE EVIL ONE* (Satan)! But pay attention to WHO is DOING THE GUARDING, it's The Lord Jesus Himself and our God and Father!

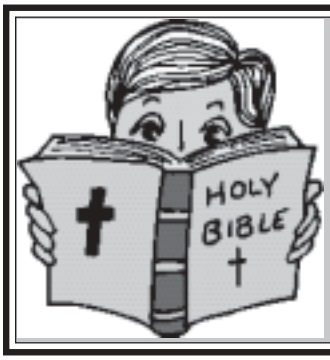
Beloved, what I'm trying to tell you is this, GOD HAS IT ALL UNDER CONTROL. SATAN AND HIS DEMONS CANNOT DO ANYTHING TO US THAT GOD HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT will not bring us through to the end in victory. We have already overcome by the Blood of Jesus.

By keeping our words in agreement and alignment with what God's Word has already declared concerning us, we have already overcome the Wicked One! We simply must continue to stand, guarding our hearts and our words, not giving up or giving in to the pressures of life.

Continue to stand, keep believing, keep trusting in the Lord...you are already victorious. Don't give up, give praise to the Lord!

Committed to serve until He comes, I love you,

Vilda



It's In the Bible!

A Study in the Word with Rev. Eric R Towse

Topic: Death, Dying, and the Christian

Introduction

The Bible is clear that until Jesus comes again, all must die—a very sobering thought to be sure—but what of death itself? What can we learn about death from God's Word? The Old Testament and New Testament give different accounts as to the state of the dead. Aside from Enoch who was taken by God, Elijah who was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind, and Moses whose body was resurrected (Jude v.9), the Old Testament is consistent in regarding death as "sleep."

> *Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death* (Psalm 13:3)
>
> *"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."* (Daniel 12:13)

But in the New Testament Paul states:

> *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* (II Corinthians 5:8)

and the writer of Hebrews identifies the heavenly Jerusalem as—

> *the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.* (Hebrews 12:22-23)

Death is never a pleasant subject. Our society tends to avoid rather than to deal with issues of death and dying. Pastors are often called upon—during times of crisis—to answer difficult questions concerning the "whys" of death. Although these questions are often rhetorical, the informed pastor can refer to the Word of God to offer comfort and hope, but may only be able to touch on the question of "why?" Much of death remains a mystery—to be revealed only on the day Christ returns. But a thorough study of the Word of God will better equip the pastor for dealing with this unavoidable subject.

Two positive experiences can result from a study of death. First, our own mortality is brought to bear—something that reminds us that our days are few in number; to live each day to the fullest and live each day for God. Second, the reality of death for the Christian renews the reality and hope of eternal life through Christ Jesus. We have the comfort of knowing that *"our redeemer liveth"* and that our future is secure in Him. For others who do not have assurance through Christ, we must bring the truth forward so that all may have the opportunity to be saved and to share in "the peace that passeth understanding."

Thanatology—the Study of Death

Thanatology comes from the Greek word ***θανατοσ*** meaning death. The corresponding Hebrew word is: ***moot***.

Salvation is as much about death as it is about eternal life. God had said,

> *"but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."* (Genesis 2:17)

Were it not for Adam's sin—through which death entered the world—Satan would have been defeated in the garden, Adam and Eve would have had unlimited access to the Tree of Life, and we would be living in a perfect world. The fact that death *does* exist—even for the saved, sanctified, Holy Ghost-filled, believing saint, means that it deserves our attention and needs to be thoroughly studied.

Death and dying is generally studied on the university level as a secular course incorporating such topics as grief and bereavement. Incredibly, this study and counseling is usually presented apart from the Word of God. Secular thanatology and grief counseling may be summarized by the following account related to me by a secular bereavement counselor.

> "A woman had lost her husband. They were very close. She and her husband enjoyed looking at sunrises. After he died, she had difficulty driving to work in the morning when she saw a sunrise. The counselor encouraged the woman to buy a portable tape recorder, place it on the seat next to her in the car, and record a description of the sunset for her husband. The woman did so and was able to get to work without any longer having to pull off the highway to cry."

This did not sound to me as though anything was resolved in this woman's life at all. Now she drives her car talking to her dead husband into a tape recorder in order to get to work! I asked the secular counselor what would happen if the tape recorder's batteries died during the trip? My question was not appreciated nor answered.

Christians have a better answer. While it is beyond the scope of our study in the Word to but touch on grief and bereavement counseling, the importance of counseling from the Biblical perspective cannot be overemphasized. Pastors need to become proficient in Biblical counseling. There are many excellent resources available which will permit a pastor to develop skills in this area. Christians having experienced a loss or who are dying with an understanding of creation, salvation, and redemption are better equipped to resolve these issues and to have peace than a nonbeliever. Truly, the Bible is all sufficient. Let us turn our attention to the Bible to learn what the Lord has revealed to us about this mystery and enemy: Death.

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Types of Death

Science defines death in two ways. First there is **clinical death**—the cessation of respiration and heartbeat such as in the case of a heart attack. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation must be implemented within 3 to 5 minutes of clinical death or brain tissue damage from lack of oxygen will occur. After this period of time, the usefulness of the brain diminishes rapidly, and unless there are extenuating circumstances such as drowning in ice water, that's all the time one has. This proceeds to **biological death**. A person who is biologically dead may be able to donate an organ or two to help someone else, but brain death is irreversible.

I have seen this first hand. During the '70s and '80s I worked as a paramedic in New York City. I have performed CPR and instituted advanced cardiac life support procedures countless times in people's homes and also in the street—usually to no avail. In fact, it was during my study of anatomy and physiology that God revealed to me (an agnostic, evolutionist at the time) the miracle of life and the evidence of Creation.

The Bible adds additional dimensions: **spiritual death** and the **second death**. Spiritual death may be viewed in light of Ephesians 2:1, 4, 5—

> *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, . . . but because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.*

From this it may be assumed that we are "born dead"—spiritually dead, that is. Through acceptance of Jesus Christ we cross over from death to life:

> *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.* (John 5:24-25)

We have all heard of the second death as recounted in the Book of Revelation:

> *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.* (Rev. 2:11)

> *Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.* (Rev. 20:6)

> *Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.* (Rev. 20:14)

> *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.* (Rev. 21:8)

Other Religions and Death

All of the world's religions address the issues surrounding death. Most offer some hope or assurance in an afterlife or at least a round trip ticket with another shot at perfection (albeit in another life form.) Our Judeo-Christian heritage provides for only one life on this earth, and, with the exception of the Sadducees in Jesus' day, all look forward to an eternal life. Modern Judaism, for example, has widely diverse opinions of the afterlife which include, according to one source:

> "personal survival in some form after death, the survival of the people Israel and a return to their historic land, a new world, eternity, a rebirth of the cosmos as envisioned in the messianic aspirations of the great prophets."

Prior to the giving of the law, Scriptures recount the offering of animal sacrifices to God from the offering of "righteous Abel" to the burning of ceremonially clean animals by Noah after the flood. ("Clean" and "unclean" in Noah's time dealt with the issues of acceptability for sacrifice as man was not yet permitted to eat meat.) These sacrifices of animals must have been required by God to be performed in faith as an atonement for sin.

Job, who lived, it is thought, before the giving of the law at Sinai spoke, in faith, about a future resurrection—

> *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.* (Job 19:25-26)

In ancient Judaism, eternal security was obtained by strict adherence to the law given at Sinai. Concerning the law, with its commandments and regulations, God spoke through Moses saying—

> *"The man who obeys them will live by them."*
> (Leviticus 18:5; Romans 10:5).

Atonement for sin was at the heart of the sacrificial system under the Mosaic law. The word atonement means "covering." Although the dates, times, animals, and ceremonies were specifically detailed so that the Levitical priesthood could provide atonement for sins—especially on the day of atonement, the observance of the law was of limited value in forgiving sins (especially intentional sins). This is made perfectly clear in the Book of Hebrews—

> *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*
> (Hebrews 10:1-4)

Atonement for one's sins under the law through the sacrifice of animals did not have the same efficacy as the atonement provided for in the shedding of the blood of Jesus. Yet,

> *. . .the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*
> (Hebrews 9:22)

This is not to say that the giving of the law was in and of itself a blessing. Quite the contrary. Recall that without mixing it with faith, the law meant nothing, and,

> *. . . the law was given so that the trespass might INCREASE.*
> (Romans 5:20)

No one could be in fellowship with the God of Israel apart from the law. Everyone who wanted a part of the blessings of Israel, needed to conform to the law. This included slaves and servants and any of the Egyptians who left with the Israelites. Nevertheless, *"when the fullness of time had come,"* any hope of assurance of right standing with God through these ceremonies was lost due to—

- the tearing of the veil between the holy and most holy place in the tabernacle at the time of Jesus' death and,

- the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 AD.

These remain the strongest proof of a change in the law and the priesthood in which the sacrificial system given to Moses was replaced with something better—

> *For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.* (Hebrews 7:12)

Many Jews have accepted Christ as their Messiah because of this. How can the Jewish people gain a right standing with God and have the assurance of eternal life apart from meeting the requirements of the law? Through Christ Jesus, of course. Christ is the key to their eternal security and ours. That is why evangelism amongst the Jews is so important.

The Old Testament and Death

The principle message of the Old Testament equates death with "sleep"—an unconscious existence in a place called Sheol.

The first occurrence of natural death is found in Genesis 5:5—

> *Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.*

We can draw no conclusions about what happened to Adam after he died. We don't know if he went to heaven or hell, sleep or conscious existence, or if he was lost or saved. All we know is that he "died". God did, however, present a covering (an atonement) for Adam and Eve through animal skins that he himself provided.

> *The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.* (Genesis 3:21)

A different allusion to death is found in Genesis 25:8—

> *Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.*

This, after being promised by God, in Genesis 15:15—

> *You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age.*

Being "gathered to his people" must refer to his family, but, there is no mention about any of them being in right standing with God or having part in Abraham's blessing. You will recall that Abram was directed to leave his father's house in Ur of the Chaldees.

Although no conclusions may be drawn concerning the state of Abraham following his death, there is certainly no evidence of Abraham being *"absent from the body and present with the Lord."*

Of Jacob's death it is also recorded—

> *When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.* (Genesis 49:33).

Aaron's death is spoken of by God—

> *"Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah."* (Numbers 20:24).

Concerning Moses' death, The LORD said—

> *"Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people."* (Numbers 31:1-2).
>
> *He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.* (Deuteronomy 34:6)

The concept of death as being "gathered to one's people" was applied to the whole generation of Israelites who entered the promised land.

> *After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.* (Judges 2:10)

Samuel, Saul, and the Witch of Endor

Events subsequent to Samuel's death reveals more evidence of the state of the dead.

> *Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah.* (I Samuel 25:1)

The death of Samuel was like any other. But what happened when a desperate Saul went to the witch of Endor and asked her to bring up the prophet Samuel?

> *Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" "Bring up Samuel," he said. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul! "The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?" The woman said, "I see a spirit coming up out of the ground." "What does he look like?" he asked. "An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" "I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."* (I Samuel 28:11-15)

This further reinforces the notion of "sleep" following death.

"Resting With One's Fathers"

After this incident, the Bible continually refers to death as rest.

> *Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David.* (I Kings 2:10)

Of King Solomon it is said—

> *Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.* (I Kings 11:43)

"He rested with his fathers" is the final words spoken of most of Israel's kings—good or bad, including Ahab.

Resurrection in the Old Testament

The word "resurrection" does not appear in the Old Testament. Furthermore, the Old Testament makes no distinction between the states of the righteous and unrighteous in death, and, as we have seen, there is little evidence for a conscious existence after death from the Hebrew scriptures. But the hope of a future resurrection is found in such scriptures as—

> *The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.* (I Samuel 2:6)

and,

> *Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.* (Psalm 23:6)

God's promise to Israel as spoken through the prophet Isaiah concludes with a reference to a new heaven and new earth and to a final judgment—

> *"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants en-*

• CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE •

dure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD. "And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."

(Isaiah 66:22-24)

Enoch, Moses, and Elijah

Enoch walked with God and was taken. He did not experience death:

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5)

Moses died and was buried but was later resurrected:

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9)

Elijah, like Enoch was taken up into heaven having not experienced death:

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. (II Kings 2:11)

There are different theories about these accounts. Enoch was a prophet who pleased God and received his reward without having to taste death. He was a type of those saved before the law was in effect. At the time, he lived in obedience to the Lord and pleased the Lord, undoubtedly by his faith.

Moses lived under the law and sinned. As punishment, he was not permitted to enter the promised land. God had a better plan. After he died, God sent for him. He was a type of those who died under the law, but, by God's grace received forgiveness and was resurrected to eternal life.

Elijah, too, lived under the law. His life serves as a type of those under the law who would be taken up into heaven on the last day without having tasted death.

The witness of these events in the lives of Enoch and Elijah was testimony to the Israelites that God's promises were sure. The evidence of Moses' resurrection was not revealed until Jesus revealed the Kingdom of God to Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration:

Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. (Matthew 17:3)

The New Testament and Death

As previously discussed, God had made a covenant with Israel. The terms of the covenant required obedience to the law. God, knowing that the Israelites would continue to be disobedient, decided to change the terms of the old covenant. This He revealed through the prophet Jeremiah:

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

(Jeremiah 31:31-33)

This "New Covenant" written on the hearts of the people would to include:

- the believer (as faith would still be an element),
- God,
- Jesus Christ (their Messiah), and,
- the Holy Spirit:

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

(II Corinthians 3:3)

The Old Covenant vs. The New

The Old Covenant was established and mediated by the law. The New Covenant by Jesus himself. It is so critical to understand the difference between the two covenants, we shall highlight a few of the passages from the Book of Galatians so that the promise of eternal life based on faith in Christ can be positively established, as well as the role of observance of the law once the New Covenant was put into effect.

The Galatian church turned from the true gospel and began to follow a false gospel:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

(Galatians 1:6,7)

What was the essence of this *different gospel*?

know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

Why is this a problem?

. . . for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (Galatians 2:21)

What must believers do to receive the Spirit?

Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Galatians 3:5-6)

Why can't the observance of the law bring righteousness?

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

(Galatians 3:10)

The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."

(Galatians 3:12)

What, then, was the purpose of the law given to Israel?

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. (Galatians 3:23-25)

To what is observance of the law to attempt to attain righteousness equated?

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by

the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

(Galatians 4:21-26)

What of grace?

You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

What replaced the Law of Moses?

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

(Galatians 5:14)

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. (v.18)

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Who Fulfilled the Law of Moses?

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

(Matthew 5:17-18)

Everything was accomplished by Jesus on the cross:

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

It is, therefore, essential that we recognize the source of our hope for eternal life is not based on the law or observance of the law, but of faith in Christ Jesus. The terms of the Old Covenant are of no value to the Christian in achieving a righteousness before God.

An illustration from life:

"A tenant has in his possession a lease in which the landlord agreed to pay for the utilities. The lease had expired the previous year. The landlord and tenant entered into a new agreement which did not include payment of utilities. Can the tenant sue the landlord for nonpayment of utilities based on the terms of the expired lease? No. It is no longer in effect. The tenant has no standing before a judge with the old lease."

So it is with the Old Covenant. Man has no standing before God with the terms of the Old Covenant.

What is the New Covenant?

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:20)

The New Covenant is the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation for Israel involving—

- faith in Christ (the Jewish Messiah),
- the death of Christ for the forgive ness of sins, and,
- a change from observance of the law to the leading of the Spirit.

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.

(Ephesians 2:11-15)

When you and I were dead in sin and in the uncircumcision of our sinful nature, God made us alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins—

having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

(Colossians 2:13-14)

By removing the law which stood as a barrier, Gentiles could become one with Israel in obtaining a right standing with God through faith in Christ Jesus. The letter of the law was replaced by the leading of the Spirit, and the system of atonement for sin contained in the law was replaced by grace.

But just where does the Old Covenant leave-off and the New Covenant begin? Because the New Testament is in the blood of Christ, the New Covenant does not begin on page one of our New Testament.

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law

(Galatians 4:4)

N.B.—**The birth, life, ministry, and death of Jesus all occurred under the terms of the law while the Old Covenant was still in effect!** Although contained in the pages of our New Testaments, Jesus' life was actually in the Old. The New Covenant actually begins when Jesus died, at which time—

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. (Matthew 27:51)

When the veil or curtain separating the Holy from the Most Holy Place in the temple was split from top to bottom, the sacrificial system under the law was void and the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus took effect.

Resurrection and the New Testament

Resurrection from the dead is the hope of the Christian. The reuniting of the body and soul at the last day in conjunction with the second coming of Christ is well established in Scripture.

So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)

We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

(I Thessalonians 4:14)

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

(I Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will

• CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE •

be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

(I Corinthians 15:51-52)

The State of the Dead Under the New Covenant

Throughout the Old Testament, death is continually referred to as "sleep." We learn from Paul's writings, however, that the nature of death to those in Christ is different from those who died under the Old Covenant. Although he speaks openly about a bodily resurrection at the second coming of Christ, Paul also considers death to result in being in the Lord's presence.

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

(II Corinthians 5:8)

I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

(Philippians 1:23)

Perhaps this change in the state of the dead from sleep to conscious spiritual existence followed the change in the law. This may be the meaning of Ephesians 4:8—

This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

Related Topics

The study of the state of the dead, resurrection, and eternal life leads into other topics such as:

- the second coming of Christ,
- the millennium,
- the New Jerusalem, and,
- the New Heaven and New Earth

which are beyond the scope of this work.

Premature Death due to Accident, Disease, or Life-style

Moses died when it was time for him to die—at age 120. He had served God from the time he was called at age 80 to lead the Israelites from Egypt. The Biblical account of his physical body at the time of his death is—

Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.

(Deuteronomy 34:7)

There is no biological need for death. Scientists believe that the aging process is controlled (or programed) in the brain. Each one of us has been allotted a time on this earth. Some of us shorten it through negligence, ignorance, or poor choices.

Hosea 4:6 tells us,

my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Today, most people die prematurely because of lack of knowledge. Although almost everyone is without excuse concerning matters of general health: the importance of diet, exercise, and harmful substances—many ignore such concerns.

We shorten our lives through heart disease and cancer by:

- allowing stress to take its toll
- smoking
- eating animal fats
- overeating
- eating and drinking foods containing poisonous preservatives
- consuming artificial sweeteners linked to brain cancer
- drinking certain tap waters
- failing to neutralize environmental toxins in the body and take appropriate nutritional supplements
- living a sedentary life-style
- living near golf courses or other areas where fertilizers and pesticides are used in abundance

Adults and children are needlessly killed or seriously injured in preventable accidents—

- children don't wear helmets when bicycling
- infants and children are improperly seated and/or belted in cars
- infants and children are poisoned by common household products in an unprotected home
- children are left alone at home
- adults fail to wear seat belts
- drivers fail to properly maintain vehicles
- unsafe driving
- Teens and adults are sexually active outside of marriage.
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- IV drug abuse
- Homosexual and heterosexual immoral life-styles

How appropriate is the verse—

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

(I Corinthians 6:19)

Medical Treatments for Terminal Diseases

Unfortunately, deaths are on the rise from most types of cancer. Scientists, blinded in part by propaganda from drug and chemical companies, still look for "cures" in chemotherapeutic agents and radiation. The result in most cases is poor. To make matters worse, most cancers are preventable, yet so little is spent on prevention.

It is well worth the effort to research cancer prevention and alternative treatment as every church is faced with it. The Internet provides invaluable resources of uncensored information concerning all types of diseases for which modern science struggles for cures. Remember also the lesson of King Asa—

In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians. Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his fathers.

(II Chronicles 16:12-13)

Hospice Care

When a medical cure is not possible, hospice care offers the best possible option. Hospice gives the body a "rest" from the harmful effects of treatments that have proved ineffective in the face of diseases for which there is no cure. Persons receiving hospice care are visited at home by a doctor, nurse, aide, social worker, pastor, and volunteer. Treatment is provided by a holistic approach with the intent of controlling symptoms and eliminating pain. Persons are allowed to die at home with no inappropriate or unwanted medical interventions. Hospice is a program of choices.

Ministering to the Needs of the Dying or Grieving

Often, the greatest comfort and hope is received from the simple assurance of

• CONTINUED ON P. 23 •

Your Health Advisory

"Water, Water, Everywhere. . ."

by Marcia Kaufman, RN, BSN

Welcome to a new VISTA feature dedicated to keeping you informed about health related issues from a biblical standpoint. Our purpose is to explore topics that will help you to better understand how your body works so you can keep your "temple of the Holy Spirit" in good shape.

SUMMER is right around the corner bringing with it good times, fun outdoors, and hot weather. Sounds great but, if we're not careful, hot temperatures can cause big trouble such as fluid depletion or dehydration. To prevent this, adequate intake of water is very important, but what is adequate intake? Why is water so important anyway?

Two thirds of body weight is water. For example, a 150 pound person has about 10 gallons of water: 6 to 7 gallons in the cells, 2 gallons the the space surrounding the cells, and slightly less than 1 gallon in the bloodstream. In order for the body to work properly, the amount of fluid in the blood must be kept within a narrow range. The water outside of the bloodstream helps to keep this level constant by either replenishing losses or absorbing excesses of fluid. The water in the blood has many vital functions including, maintaining blood pressure, kidney function, digestion and bowel function, temperature regulation, transporting red blood cells to carry oxygen to body cells and take away wastes, allowing the white blood cells of the immune system to protect the body from injury or infection. Dissolved in this fluid are substances like glucose, the primary fuel of body cells, and electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, which regulate the passage of water into and out of the bloodstream.

That's the good news. Now the caution. We all lose water everyday through various routes. Our kidneys can excrete several gallons of urine a day depending upon intake. Everyone knows we lose water through our skin when we perspire but, did you know we lose water from our lungs each time we breath or talk? Actually, up to 1-1/2 pints a day are lost that way, especially during exercise and in hot environments. Other problems to watch out for are severe diarrhea or excessive vomiting. As much as a gallon or more of water can be lost with those conditions. Don't be too concerned about this because the body will stay in balance as long as fluid intake matches loss. Healthy people with normal kidney function who are not sweating profusely only have to drink one quart a day. However, for most people, 1-1/2 to 2 quarts would be better, especially for children and the elderly who are more sensitive to water loss.

If you do lose excessive fluid because of any of the mechanisms mentioned above, you must replace not only water but also the electolytes your body needs to work properly. Beverages such as Gatorade or Pedialyte were designed to replace these lost electrolytes, but for infants, diabetics, those with kidney problems, or high blood pressure drink them only as your doctor directs.

Convinced water is important? Good, but I have been referring to the same type of water the Samaritan woman was drawing from Jacob's well in John Chapter 4. There is something even better.

> *"Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life'."* (John 4:13-14)

Marcia Kaufman is a registered nurse and has received a miraculous healing from the Lord. (See *Testimony* in VISTA's Millennium edition.) She is a Community Health Nurse and teacher. Please send any health-related questions to VISTA. We will attempt to answer them in future articles! She and her husband David attend Christian Pentecostal Church in Staten Island, NY. — Ed.

20/20

The Vision for Today's Youth

What's All the Noise About?

IF you haven't noticed, just look into your local youth ministry and you will find leaders and young people getting ready for this year's National Youth Convention: **Apex 2001—THE PURSUIT**.

But one might ask, what's all the activity, fuss, and noise about? It's just another weekend. I beg to differ with that. I believe and have personally experienced that when a young person sets a designated amount of time aside for God—whether it is seven days of camp or three days at the Apex—some things will occur in that individual's life!

Now with that said, can you imagine what will occur if over six hundred who gather on this coming Memorial Day weekend gather with one unified purpose: **To let God be God, Jesus be Glorified, and the Spirit have his way in each of our hearts**?

I have had the privilege to pastor young people for sixteen years and I know the amount of work it takes to get your group to a weekend event. I know the time it takes to get them spiritually focused to receive from the start and not just at the end of the weekend. I know the disappointment of hearing "no" from a teenager who you know that if they would just give God access to their heart, that that young person would be a spiritual giant among his peers. I know the joy of seeing many young people go to a deeper walk with Jesus from a gathering such as the Apex.

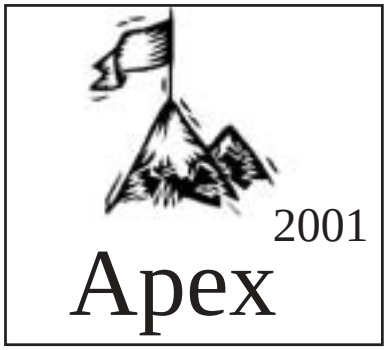
Youth Pastor, Leader, or Worker, let me encourage you. This is sowing time. Have faith to see the reaping in your ministry of what will be cultivated, imparted and/or deposited into your youth as well as into you. Sew expectantly! Don't limit this weekend as just a fun event (although is will be!) but more so that it will be a God-encounter.

Let Acts chapter 2 encourage you. They had their getaway event and were all in one accord: in agreement, unified, focused, together, tight, one-in-heart, etc., and God not only showed up by His Spirit, but flooded each and every one of them with Himself. That is what we need! That is what will happen at the Apex this year as we all come together and simply want Him! Our pursuit is proof of our desire for more of Jesus. See you at the Apex!

All out for Him,

Pastor Sam

CCNA NATIONAL YOUTH CONVENTION



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The Gates of Hell

• CONTINUED FROM P. 8 •

First, Jesus says: *"I will build my church."* The church belongs to Him, and He says that the building of it will not be left to you or me, but that He will build it. Though He uses us as His instruments, Jesus Christ Himself is ultimately responsible for His church. It must be clearly understood that the church is not the physical building, nor an organization. The true Church is a live organism. It is the body of believers who have been called out of this world and been made clean by the washing of Christ's shed blood. He brings it to life, He preserves it, and He builds it.

Second, again, Jesus says: *"I will build my church"*. Until the glorious day when Jesus returns for His bride, the church will continue to be built. The church is built brick by brick (*lively stones*, 1 Peter 2:5). As long as we are in the Church Age, God will continue to call men unto Himself for the salvation of their souls and for the building of His Church. The Church therefore is not in retreat. Rather, it is in a continual state of expansion as God unfolds His program of salvation by adding souls to His Kingdom.

Third, Jesus promises that the *"gates of hell will not prevail"* against His Church. Now gates are not an offensive, but a defensive structure. The only time gates "advanced" is when Samson tore the city gates of Gaza from their foundation and carried them upon his shoulders up the hill before Hebron. Gates do not advance. They are devices designed to keep things out! God's promise in Matthew 6:18 is not that the church will be divinely helped in its defenses, but that the church will be helped in its advance into enemy territory! The devil, not the church, is in a state of defense. And, the gates of his kingdom of darkness will not be able to resist nor withstand the power of the advancing church as she proclaims the Gospel in the fullness of the Spirit!

Every time we proclaim the gospel message, every time we lead a soul to Christ, every time we gather to worship, every time we hand out a gospel tract, we are victoriously invading enemy territory! When light shines, darkness scatters! Think about it—The most powerful entity in this world is not the United States, it is not Russia or China, it is not the European Union, nor the United Nations. By far, the most powerful entity on this planet is the Church! Oh, that we might understand the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance, and exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe! (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Let's be bold for the Lord in these last days and advance His Kingdom, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church!

Rev. Lucian Gandolfo

J • E • S • U • S spells: "God Is Love"

Joy - the joy I found in His love

Earth - where He came to shed His blood

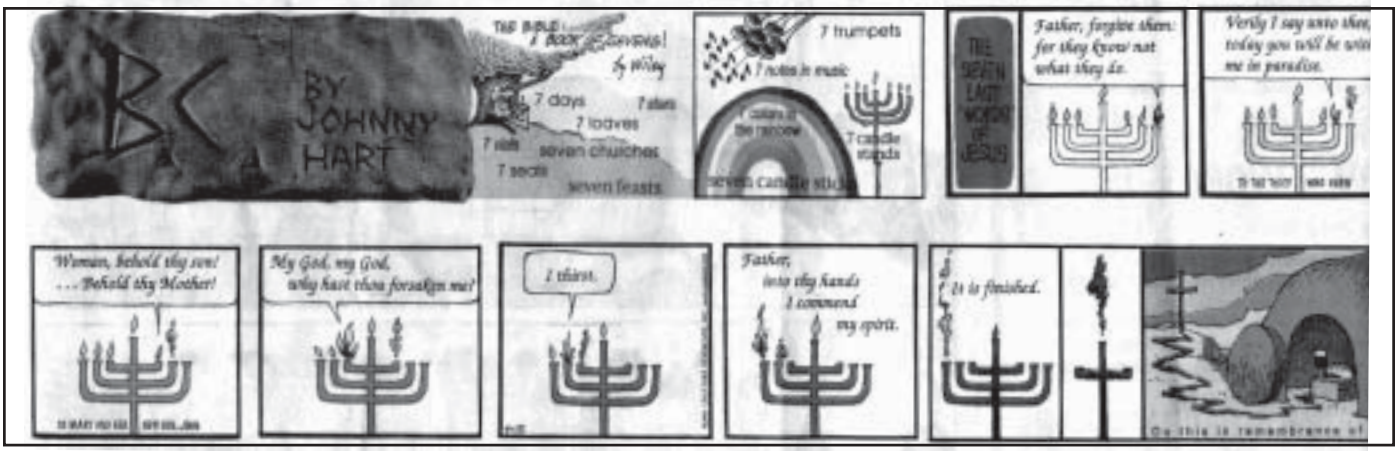
Sin - that entered in and put man under a curse

Us - you and me; 'twas God who loved us

Sons - the ones who call on His name

—ERT

Separation of Church and Comics?



FUROR OVER EASTER B.C. COMIC

The syndicated comic strip B.C. came under fire from critics when it depicted the death and resurrection of Jesus as a fulfillment of Old Testiment prophecy using the Jewish menorah. Artist Johnny Hart was denounced as "antisemetic" by Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center—a Jewish human rights group, who is quoted as saying,

"It's basically saying the Jewish people will not exist — they will be consumed by Christianity.

"All the bad things that have occurred — the pogoms, the blood libels — all started from misunderstandings, attacks like this."

Tim McGuire, editor of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune and president of the American Society of Newspaper editors, said pulling the strip would be improper.

The author was previously honored for the best humor strip in America. B.C. has 100 million readers worldwide.—Ed.

• CONTINUED FROM P. 8 •

CCNA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

During June and July we will be accepting applications for this year's CCNA Scholarship Program. Please begin to announce the availability of scholarship money for our CCNA college students. Our order of priority is:

1. Ministerial students
2. Christian college students
3. CCNA students studying for professional careers.

We welcome donations to all our scholarship funds. Without scholarship-designated donations from our CCNA family, our students cannot be financially assisted. We especially encourage donations to the "Valentino Fund." Our other funds are primarily funded by the family members of the named fund. The Valentino Fund is financed by the CCNA family and is designated to be as flexible as possible to help as many students as possible.

Another important bit of news is that we have now enrolled two more Christian colleges which will offer significant financial incentives to CCNA students who choose to attend their colleges. For the Fall 2001 semester, tuition discounts will also be available to CCNA students from **Elim Bible Institute** and **Valley Forge Christian College.**

The following is a full list of Christian colleges which have agreed to offer discounts to CCNA students:

ELIM BIBLE INSTITUTE, Lima, NY offers all CCNA students a 10% tuition discount. Call: 800-670-ELIM. Visit their web site: www.elim.edu. E-mail: admissions@elim.edu.

EMMANUEL COLLEGE, Franklin Springs, GA offers a $1,000 scholarship award to two CCNA students per year. Call: 800-860-8800. Their web site is: www.emmanuel-college.edu. E-mail: admissions@emmanuel-college.edu.

GENEVA COLLEGE, Beaver Falls, PA offers all CCNA students a 15% tuition discount. Their web address is: www.geneva.edu. E-mail: admissions@geneva.edu.

NYACK COLLEGE, Nyack, NY offers all CCNA students who maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA a $1,000 scholarship per year. Their web site is: www.nyackcollege.edu and e-mail address is: enroll@nyack.edu.

VALLEY FORGE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, Phoenixville, PA offers all CCNA students a tuition discount of $1,200 for the first year at school. The web address is: www.vfcc.edu and e-mail address is: admissions@vfcc.edu.

Please note that the above tuition discounts are for CCNA students exclusively! Applicants must provide proof of membership in a CCNA church. Take advantage of these opportunities which have been negotiated for you by your CCNA Education Department.

PASTORS: Please contact these institutions and request catalogs for display in your church!

• CONTINUED FROM P. 18 •

God's love as expressed by Jesus' death on the cross. The person in need of comfort receives God's peace. Prayers for healing (done in decency and good order) are usually welcome, especially if 'God's will' is invoked.

That a brother or sister in the church should die from illness or disease and that such should be God's will is a difficult concept for one to accept. Yet, we are faced with this each and every day. People get sick and die for many reasons, but NOT due to lack of faith.

Sometimes persons who are expected to die inexplicably recover. Some call it a miracle, others "remission." Nevertheless, the difficulty in interpreting this is further confounded by the fact that some of those who recover are nonbelievers, and some of those who do not recover are Spirit-filled believers.

We must anoint the sick in accordance to James Chapter 5, and expect God to heal in response to prayer. But if he does not, we must learn to accept His will and get on with our lives in service to the King.

> *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.* (James 5:13-16)

Rev. Eric R Towse

(Views Expressed are those of the author)

The art-work of Your hands, The stroke of the Master's brush,
The highlights of His love,
Come with evening's hush.

No sunrise is the same, No sunset repeats its cue,
No mist in evening's closing,
No repetition of view

Everyday a new creation, Changing at His command,
The Master creates His painting,
With the stroke of His mighty hand.

The birds chirp, "Good Morning," With the rising of the sun,
The sparrow takes winged flight,
To frolic and have fun.

Flowers tilt their heads, To stretch to see the view,
The sun awaits His command
To tell it what to do.

The mind of God: how great, how bold,
How awesome He must be,
For nature waits upon His word,
To bow on bended knee.

Marie Elena Wilson

Little Natalie

• CONTINUED FROM P. 9 •

Natalie now stands up in her crib, singing at the top of her lungs. She is not yet perfect. There is damage from the infection that limits her functioning, but she reaches out through clouded lenses and touches things—she is NOT blind!

Natalie is going for lots of tests. Surgery has been scheduled for late April 2001 to reverse the colostomy. An early intervention team will be evaluating her for therapy, but I believe that God will complete the good work he began in Natalie!

Marian and Galena want to thank the CCNA for all of their prayers. They are convinced that Natalie is alive today because of all of the love, care, support, and especially, prayers. At the date of this writing, Natalie has been removed from hospice services as she is no longer considered terminally ill. Praise the Lord!

NATALIE AND HER FATHER, MARIAN

A PASTOR'S REWARD

Letters

• CONTINUED FROM P. 3 •

whom they have scattered among the nations and they have divided up My land."

If God didn't mean what He says here, He didn't mean what He said before it, which was quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost. . .

In Him,
Gordon B. Goodson
Syracuse, NY

Many of God's promises to ancient Israel were conditional upon Israel's obedience to the terms of the Old Covenant. That the Jewish nation rejected Jesus as the Messiah is demonstrated in the crucifixion. This led the way for God's implementation of a New Covenant in Christ's blood. Many of the prophecies that are frequently attributed to modern political Israel were actually fulfilled during Israel's return from exile in Babylon in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Today, there exists a New Covenant (see Hebrews 8:13) through which one enters the Kingdom of God only through faith in Jesus Christ. "The Way" is for both Jew and Gentile. Spiritual Israel consists entirely of believers in Christ—both Jew and Gentile. Political Israel remains, for the most part, rigid in unbelief in defiance of the Messiahship of Jesus and thus is unable to be "grafted in." The Apostle Paul said, concerning non-believing Jews, ***"And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."*** *Romans 11:23 Their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah is our fervent hope and prayer, so that "all Israel" will be saved!* —Ed.

Also from Syracuse, NY:

Dear Bro. Towse:

. . . May the Lord bless you and your work. I love what you are doing with our national periodical. It surpasses anything this wild world has to offer. Keep up the good work. May the message the magazine proclaims spread to the whole country. Perhaps the [poems I write] might add a bit to its grandeur. . .

Yours in the Lord,
Samuel D. Museums

Your poems are inspired and bless those that read them. Thanks for making VISTA extra special by the contributions of your ministry! —Ed.