

The Sabbath Sentinel

May–June 2014



Marriage Maintenance & Repair

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BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath Sentinel

May–June 2014 Volume 65, No. 3 Issue 567

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Faith that Works



We have often heard it said from the book of James that “faith without works is dead.” However, there’s a lot more to the story than that. Let’s look at the entire passage in which this quote is included. Here is the entire passage: “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

“But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” James 2:14-26.

As you can see from this entire passage, there is a lot more that is expected of us as Christians.

Let’s go back to the book of Genesis. Was Noah justified by faith only or by faith and works. What if Noah had said, “I believe you Lord that a flood is coming, and I am going to sit here and wait for it?” That would have been foolish. He and his sons had to get busy and build the ark. They didn’t just sit around waiting for the flood twiddling their thumbs. They had to be busy doing God’s work. Not only did Noah have to believe, his sons had to trust their father that he had heard the voice of God. Just try to imagine how many children today would be willing to put in all that time waiting for the world to end. Would it be one out of a thousand, or maybe ten thousand? I realize that God said that He would not destroy the world with a flood again, but given the same situation

today, would anyone be willing to build an ark? This is just something to think about.

We all remember the story of Ruth who married Boaz. Boaz was the son of Salmon and Rahab. Salmon was of the line of Judah, but obviously Rahab was not. She was the prostitute from Canaan who hid the Israelite spies on her roof, and later let them escape over the wall to report to the captains of Israel. As a result of her kindness toward the spies, she and her family were spared when the Israelites took Jericho. So, to continue with the story of Ruth and Boaz, we see Ruth’s mother-in-law, Naomi, entreating her two daughters-in-law to return to Moab. Orpha was willing to return to Moab, but Ruth refused to accompany Orpha to Moab. Instead she declared her loyalty to Naomi in the following way:

“But Ruth said:”
‘Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
And your God, my God.
Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If anything but death parts you and me” (Ruth 1:16-17).

Ruth went out to glean the field in accordance with the command of the Lord in Leviticus 19:9-10: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.”

It was God’s desire for the Israelites to treat the poor and strangers (foreigners) well and to allow them to have the gleanings of all the crops to satisfy their hunger. Ruth was one of those foreigners who needed that kind of help. Boaz protected her, helped her, and eventually married her. It was in God’s plan, and who can doubt God’s plan? We see many foreigners in the line of David and in the line of Christ himself. This should have been a clue to the people of Israel that God always wanted the gospel to go to all nations, not just to Israel

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Marriage Maintenance and Repair



In last issue's article, "*My Marriage is on the Rocks*," we saw the divine overview of this unique union of man and woman in marriage. We saw the basic principles that if applied can lift marriage to the highest plane of human relationships. Now we deal with common problems that seem to scuttle too many potentially happy marriages.

by Kenneth Westby

"In sickness and in health; till death do us part." Hundreds of times I've said those words as bride and groom dutifully repeated them as their own vows. I'm sure they meant those solemn promises and at the moment thought they would be able to honor them. After all, love covers all and the newlyweds are in love.

Well, not so fast. Many times I wondered after performing a marriage ceremony if the couple would make the marriage work. In a few weeks JoAn and I will have been married fifty years and can both testify to ups and downs and to the commitment required to make a marriage work. And it's not just "work" toward a "lasting" union that is the sole goal here, but the reaping of the luscious fruit of a happy, love-filled dynamic marriage: joy, comfort, security, friendship, companionship, pleasure, challenge, adventure, and the list goes on.

What happens to the smooth newlywed life when a grave, disabling injury comes along; when job loss puts all plans on hold; when arguments over money problems dominate time together; when arguments with relatives complicate the relationship; when children are born; when weight is gained or beauty wanes; when sex and attraction become issues both within and outside the marriage; when the romance disappears; when communication dries up or becomes banal or antagonistic, and this list could go on ticking off a common array of potholes into which many marriages sink. But marriage is too important to end in failure.

Uniqueness of Marriage

Marriage is fundamental to channeling human nature in positive directions. The creation by God of this institution or sacrament was no afterthought—it was His first institution and it enshrines a relationship He Himself designed. Marriage is intrinsic to the creation of man and woman and is at the center of human design. The account of the creation of man, woman, and

marriage are all in the same second chapter of the book of Genesis. Man, woman, and marriage are the original, ancient, and sacred God-created relationship upon which the human race is built.

Marriage is what makes the human family possible and civilization itself possible. William Tucker in his new book, *Marriage and Civilization: How Monogamy Made Us Human*, chronicles the long history of monogamous marriages in all cultures down through history. He demonstrates by study and statistics how marriage has served to civilize humans, reduce aggressive behaviors, channel efforts into useful work and production and be the good glue that holds societies together in spite of cultural evils. Yet, he expresses real concern over what is happening to marriage and the family today. Tucker writes,

"There is plenty of evidence that human beings are indeed happiest when living in stable, long-term marriages and—not incidentally—their children are much better off as well. But monogamy does ask people to make certain sacrifices."¹

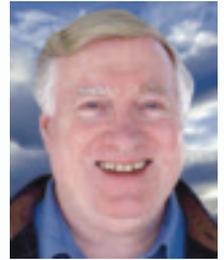
Yes it does. What is unique about marriage is that it is founded upon a comprehensive mental and bodily union. I think Robert P. George describes this union well in his scholarly work, *Conscience and Its Enemies: Confronting the Dogmas of Liberal Secularism*,

"The body is not a mere instrument for inducing satisfactions for the sake of the conscious and desiring aspect of the self. Rather, a human person is a dynamic unity of body, mind, and spirit. The body, far from being an instrument, is intrinsically part of the personal reality of the human being. Bodily union is thus personal union, and comprehensive personal union—marital union—is founded on bodily union."

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Getting No Love?

By Brian Knowles



America is an image-conscious nation. The urge to collectivism, with its accompanying political correctness (PC), is creating a new ideal image for Americans. Take, for example, the issue of body image. It's in to be thin, out to be fat. Fat people generally get no love. Nor is fat discrimination an exclusively American phenomenon.

Air India, for example, has warned its 1600 cabin crew members to lose weight or face being grounded (*The Guardian*, December 16, 2005). Overweight pilots and flight attendants have been given two months to lose the tonnage, or face consequences. (At a safe ½ pound/day, the most you could lose in that time would be about 30 pounds.)

One official for the airline reportedly said, "Imagine if crew members can't fasten their seat belts, how can they fly?" This suggests that seat belts on the airline may not accommodate the full range of human girths.

According to J. Eric Oliver, author of the book *Fat Politics*, "fatism" or "size-based discrimination," is endemic in America. Writes Oliver, "...there continues to be one group that is systematically mistreated throughout American society--fat people" (*Fat Politics*, p. 60).

In a chapter of his book entitled "Why We Hate Fat People," Oliver says, "In education, fat people have a harder time getting into top colleges, are subject to severe harassment and stigmatization by peers and teachers, and, in some instances have been expelled because of their weight. At work, fat people have trouble finding jobs, and they are evaluated more negatively, are less likely to be promoted, and are paid less than their thin colleagues. Fat people are denied insurance coverage for many medical conditions, and are routinely mistreated by health professionals. Fat people even have a harder time renting apartments [ibid. p. 60]."

The author describes fatism as the last bastion of socially acceptable bias in America. (I disagree: It is also socially acceptable these days to attack Christians and all aspects of the Christian faith. Even Christians are attacking other Christians — so what else is new? Internecine wars have been going on since the beginnings of the Church, but let's return to our discussion of fat.)

Oliver reports that fat people are stereotypically depicted as gluttonous, lazy, or impotent. On television, they are typically cast as villains or tragic figures. He writes, "...numerous studies have found that Americans, particularly white, middle-class Americans, exhibit strong prejudices against fatness and fat people. For instance, more than a quarter of college students believe that becoming fat is the worst thing that could happen to a person. A majority of college-educated adults think that obese people are weak-willed or lazy ... One study found that two-thirds of doctors surveyed thought that fat patients were morally weak, while another study found that nearly a quarter of nurses said that obese patients 'repulsed' them" (ibid. p. 61).

If you're fat, does that knowledge encourage you to seek medical treatment?

If you happen to be fat, as am I at the moment, this is not encouraging news. But those of us who have experienced tonnage increases as we've grown older know what its like to experience "fatism" first hand.

It isn't just being fat that invites disapproval. You can be rejected for being too thin, too tall, too short, bald, black, female, middle-aged, old, or ugly. America is an equal opportunity discriminator. Americans want to look at beautiful people on television, in movies, and in the workplace. A beautiful person is, by definition, wafer thin, well-groomed, well-dressed in the hippest possible clothes, and startlingly good-looking. The farther a person moves from that image, the less love they get; the more doors slam in their faces. A handsome actor can slip from leading man roles to character actor roles in a matter of a few years — once he loses his looks. Note for example Burt Reynolds. (Actually, character roles can be more fun and meatier for actors — they just do not pay as well.)

Culture Dictates

The idea that we have to conform to a certain physical image to be approved is a culturally imposed phenomenon. In other cultures, fatness is encouraged and even celebrated. I can remember serving in a church congregation in Canada that was approximately 70% German. Whenever we would be assigned a lean ministerial assistant for the summer, the German women tried to fatten him up with tortes and

other goodies. In Germany, in those days, fatness was viewed as a symbol of prosperity and success. The German women did not want their men to look skinny and emaciated.

In the Cameroon, in Niger, the Middle East, the Marshall Islands, and in various places in Africa and India, fat is “where it’s at.” Writes Oliver: “Although Western television images, global marketing, and improved standards of living are beginning to change these perceptions, most of the world continues to celebrate physical largess” (ibid. p. 62).

Hollywierd’s Influence

Much of our image consciousness is driven by Hollywierd, and by advertising. We are being conditioned to believe that certain physical images are associated with character deficiencies like laziness, lack of will power, or just plain malevolence. The fat person in the movies is often cast as an evil, self-indulgent, gourmandizing, wine-quaffing, slob who will stop at nothing to get what he wants (remember Victor Bueno?). Or, they are cast as stumbling domestics who frequently drop or bang into things, arousing the ire of all assembled. The beautiful, slim young woman gets the handsome man, the money and the power, while the fat woman is relegated to the depressing backwaters of life.

As we get older, we tend to lose whatever “looks” we had when we were young. As our metabolisms slow down, our weight creeps up. Our hair thins or falls out, and our skin dries up, creating wrinkles. Short people get shorter and tall people stoop. Eyesight fails and we have to don glasses. For many, illness sets in. As our conditions deteriorate, our “support system” of friends and relatives edges incrementally away. We are no longer attractive to look at, and we have become “high-maintenance.” As age and stress take their toll our world shrinks. We are driven back down the “hierarchy of needs” to the level of basic survival. We are no longer in demand, no longer viable, no longer able to bring in the bacon (beef or turkey of course).

Junk Mail Ageism

As we age, we find the complexion of our junk mail changing. We start getting mailers from “The Neptune Society” and various HMO’s that want to capture our Medicare premium dollars. We are encouraged to buy burial plots, scooters, and to ask our doctors if this or that medicine “is right for us.” Churches and charities encourage us to name them in our wills. At some point, we find that the only thing anyone is interested in is capturing as much as possible of whatever pile of money we may be sitting on — even if our survival depends on it. What friends, relatives and marketers don’t get, the government will extract in the form of its “death tax” — the final insult!

The progressive discounting of the worth of the individual in our annoyingly superficial, image-conscious, society can have the devastating effect of making one feel unloved, unappreciated, and uncared for. The less we conform to the ideal image of the beautiful person, the more our worth as persons is discounted by employers, the medical profession, marketers, husbands, wives, children and other relatives. Even fair-weather friends may blow away when they find we have become too “high-maintenance.”

American life is all about image, demographics, money, power and establishments. We the people are a manipulated mass whose major worth is to feed the massive maws of America’s entrenched establishments. We are the food supply of the rapacious corporations and ever-burgeoning governments that constitute the national infrastructure. Once we become unable to supply major dollars to these two entities, we are quickly spun off to the edges of society, there to be relegated to parasite status until we die.

If you are not a beautiful person, you are out of it. Most of us are not beautiful people. Most of us are less than perfect. When we walk into a room, all heads don’t turn and pay homage. Perhaps, as Winston Churchill famously said of a rival, when we come into a room it becomes “suddenly somehow emptier.”

No matter. All of this is cultural, superficial, and relatively meaningless. Our actual worth as individuals does not turn on our beauty, our material possessions, or the trappings of fame, power and importance. It turns on the fact that we are human, created in the image of God, and therefore of great intrinsic worth.

Maintaining Perspective

Before we allow ourselves to get lost in, and discouraged by, the values, or lack of same, of the world around us, let’s regain some perspective. Who we are in the world is relatively unimportant. Who we are in Christ is all-important. Let’s examine some relevant passages of Scripture.

John 2:15 – 17: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of the Father lives forever.”

John 3:13: “Do not be surprised my brothers if the world hates you.”

I Timothy 6:6-7: “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”

Luke 12:15: “Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life consists not in the abundance of his possessions.’”

I Samuel 16:7: But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his [Eliab’s] appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

That last quoted verse seems to sum it up. God is not concerned with our height, or lack of it, our appearance, skin color, weight, financial stature, the size of our home, the number of cars we own, the opulence of our wardrobe, our jewelry, our prettiness or ugliness, or our status in society. Rather, he is looking at our hearts. He wants to see what kind of people we are inside, not on the outside.

If a person had won the Noble Prize in science, and yet was an immoral, mean-spirited individual, the prize would mean nothing. Human accomplishment seems to mean little to God. Our outward appearance means even less. What matters to him is the state of our inner man or woman. So, what if you fat, frumpy and lacking in sex appeal. Do you think that matters with God? What matters is a good heart and the good works that flow from it. What matters is our love, kindness, gentleness, willingness to forgive, faith, goodness, mercy and similar qualities. Some of the most spiritual people dwell in the most unappealing bodies, while some of the most beautiful people have hearts as black as eternity.

Whom Would You Ask to Pray for You?

Let’s look at it another way: if you were sick, whom would you rather have pray for you: a homely person full of faith, or a beautiful person devoid of faith? Which best represents the Kingdom of God: material wealth and beauty, or godliness and mercy? It is humanly natural to defer to the beautiful people, to honor them above others. That is a very human thing to do. Some churches parade “celebrity Christians” before TV cameras to boost their own appeal. They seat them in the front row so all can view them as pastoral trophies. James offers a correction to that mentality:

“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James 2:1-4).

James then writes, “Listen my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world

to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor...” (Verses 5 & 6a).

It should be clear by now that God is concerned with our inner, not outer, qualities. A frump full of faith is better to God than a wealthy, status-hungry, slim, cosmetically beautiful, preening peacock with a power do, who is no more spiritual than Saddam Hussein on a bad hair day.

God Loves Us Individually

Perhaps the most important thought of all is that God loves each one of us personally. Each of us, no matter our age, color, poverty or appearance, is a cherished child of the living God. God not only loved the world in general enough to sacrifice his son for it (John 3:16); he loved us “*while we were yet sinners*” (Romans 5:8).

To rule Israel, God picked a young, short youth named David over his taller, more impressive-looking brothers. He used a bald-headed prophet (2 Kings 2:23), to speak on his behalf to Israel. Mary Magdalene, once possessed of seven demons (Mark 16:9), became a part of Jesus’ personal entourage. God raised from the dead a seamstress named Dorcas (Gazelle) who had sewn garments for needy Christians (Acts 9:36 ff.). Jesus paid attention to a short man in a tree (Luke 19:1 ff.). His name was Zacchaeus and he was a tax collector. In those days tax collecting was a “despised profession” of the lowest social status. One of the original prophets or teachers in the Church at Antioch was a black man named “Niger” (Acts 13:1). It is quite possible that a woman named “Junias,” a relative of Paul’s, may have been numbered among the apostles (Romans 16:7).

Heinz 57 Accepted

Jesus Christ has received into his body, the Church, all kinds of people of all backgrounds, sizes, shapes and descriptions. Paul lists the kind of people who made up the congregation at Corinth: “...*Neither sexually immoral or idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy or drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were...*” (1 Corinthians 6:9b-11). Note the past tense of “were.” They had repented of these things and were now “washed” (verse 11). The point is: God received them, warts and all. Their background in sin meant nothing to him. What mattered is that they were willing to clean up their acts and get right with God at the level of the inner man. They had been “*transformed by the renewing of their minds*” (cf. Romans 12:1-2).

We are here on this planet for but a brief moment. Our lives are mere vapors — transient puffs of ephemeral

Smoke in the vastness of time and space. The greatest human accomplishments are dwarfed by the enormity of the context in which we accomplish them. The bodies we have are tabernacles — temporary dwelling places to be discarded after we are finished with them. At some point, we will be “gathered to our fathers” and our bodies laid aside like garments no longer needed. No matter how fat, skinny, short, tall or grotesque our bodies might be in this life, those bodies will be replaced with a “glorious body” like the glorified body of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:35-49).

In the world to come, we will no longer be discriminated against because of our appearance, our poverty, our illness, our lack of social status, our race or ethnicity, our height, our glasses, our wheelchairs, our deformities, the kind we can drive, the size or neighborhood of the house we live in, our looks, or even our Christian faith. We’ll have new bodies, new outlooks, and new destinies. The sufferings of this sorrowful world will have passed into eternity. Cancer will never again ravage the bodies of hapless victims. Heart trouble and diabetes will be mere memories. The searing pain of migraines, osteoporosis, arthritis, and rheumatism will be over and forgotten. Damaged brains and crippled bodies will be no more.

Fat frumpy bodies with jiggling, cottage cheese-like cellulite will be replaced with glorious new bodies that will last forever and be a joy both to behold and to live in. To borrow a line from the Marines, we will be all that we can be. John wrote of this glorious future in the Book of Revelation: “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying; ‘Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’” (Revelation 21:3-4).

All of the tears of humiliation, loneliness, rejection and embarrassment will be wiped away never to appear again. The old order — this one — will be no more. A glorious new order will be brought into being. “He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true’” (Revelation 21:5). Note the word “everything”! I believe those words. I look forward to their fulfillment.

This stinky world, with its humiliations, its hatreds, its destructive evils, and those who perpetrate them, will be a thing of mankind’s dark developmental past. The Lord told John that “...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” (Revelation 21:8).

The point is, take courage, have hope; for this ugly, painful world order is on its last legs. It’s not forever. It has failed, and it is failing. Yet, out of it God is building a new and glorious kingdom. The new order will bury the old. “Blessed are those who wash their robes [clean up their acts], that they may have the right to the tree

of life and may go through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

Those unrepentant dogs that have made the world the ugly, painful place that it is will have no place in the world to come. Of them Christ says, “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murders [i.e. terrorists], the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood” (Revelation 22:15).

With evil gone, and the righteous rewarded, peace will break out and the world will be full of the joy of the Lord. No one in the new world will be ashamed of his or her body. We will share in the glory and wealth of our Lord. God hasten that wonderful day!

Brian Knowles is a professional artist and writer and is a former magazine editor. Brian is an avid student of the Bible and a frequent contributor to the Association for Christian Development website (www.godward.org).

New Mississippi law provides clarity on end of life decisions

Charlie Butts—(OneNewsNow.com) Tuesday, April 22, 2014

The law passed in the latest session and signed into law by Governor Phil Bryant provides state residents a concrete means to protect their directives for end of life care. Mississippi Right to Life director Barbara Whitehead tells OneNewsNow it provides people a chance to head off family, doctor and hospital difficulties.

“And it gives you the choices of specific things,” she says, “such as whether you want to have resuscitation, whether you want nutrition and hydration — those kinds of things.”

It also gives a person, or the family — when they are not receiving the treatment they desire — to place the case in the hands of a doctor who will provide the requested care. Whitehead had a personal situation of this kind with her own father.

“Not only his doctor but also other doctors there in the hospital kept trying to tell us, ‘Oh well he’s old. He doesn’t have any quality of life.’ And my daughter told one of the doctors, ‘You’ve never met my grandfather. How do you know he doesn’t have any quality of life? Yesterday he was talking to my mother about what he wanted to buy his great-grandchildren for Christmas. How is that not quality of life?’”

The family found a doctor who administered needed antibiotics but it was too late and the patient died an hour later. Those situations can be remedied through the new law, as long as the conditions are in writing and in the hands of appropriate medical professionals.

Choices: We Each Have A Responsibility To THINK

Rivqah Coover



Clancey and Benton were talking together in Benton's office, when a desperate call for help was heard from the next office over. Benton said to Clancey, "Go ask that lady if she's OK." Clancey stepped out in the hall closer to the office of the lady in distress and called, "Are you OK?" "No," she responded. Clancey returned to Benton's office. "What did she say?" asked Benton. "She said she wasn't OK," answered Clancey. "Well don't just leave it at that!" Benton exclaimed, "Go ask her what's wrong!" Clancey returned to the hall and called, "What's wrong?" No answer. He came back to Benton, who again asked what the lady's answer was. "She didn't say anything," Clancey answered.

What do you think about Clancey? Did he demonstrate any initiative or ability to think and reason on his own? Did he apply any logic to the decisions he made? It seems as though he could only think as far as what he was told, without making any logical assumptions, practical decisions, or common-sense conclusions of his own.

We all think Clancey is very foolish, don't we? But this is really just a little fictional story. The real problem is that we live in a society of many Clanceys (both male and female). Our society is filled with people who only think as far as what they're told. And to make this problem worse, a lot of the people telling everyone what to think are not concerned about saving life like Benton was.

So what I want to encourage you to do today is to think for yourself. Now I'd just like you to consider this question: How many of you are pro-life? How many of you are pro-choice? How many of you aren't sure where you stand on this issue?

It may surprise you when I tell you that I am pro-choice. Actually, I think all of us are. I believe that it is a person's choice what stores they are going to shop at, and where they are going to be employed. I believe it is a person's choice where they are going to live, what kind of a house they are going to live in, and what kind of vehicle they are going to drive. I believe it is a person's choice what kind of books they like reading, and what their hobbies are. I believe it is a person's choice whether they want to be married or want to remain single. I believe it is a person's choice whether or not they are going to attend church, and if they are, what church they are going to attend. We are all different, and we all make choices: many different choices. The little list I gave above is just a very small sample of the choices people have to make. There are many more, including the kind of food you like eating, who you pick for your friends, whether you enjoy physical exercise or not, etc. The list goes on and on. There is a line that is reached though where certain choices involve more people than just ourselves, and when it comes to these kinds of

choices, the choice is no longer just ours. If you are going out to eat with your best friend, you take into consideration what foods she likes too. If you like biking and dislike skating, and your cousin likes skating and dislikes biking, and you both like jogging, you will choose to go jogging together rather than biking or skating.

These are simple little examples, but it gets deeper than this too. For instance, there are choices that are not mine to make because of the harm that they do to others. I should not choose to drive on the wrong side of the road, because doing so will result in a car crash which will harm or potentially take another's life. It's not up to me to decide that I'm going to do something that will be detrimental to someone else's life. Agree? So in this instance, I am not pro-choice. I recognize that there are boundaries when it comes to my choices, and that there are moral guidelines and limits that my choices are not allowed to cross over. If I get mad at my mother, I can't choose to steal her stuff.

If I feel like someone is intruding on my private space, or feel like they are in some way messing my life up, I cannot choose to destroy them so that I won't have to deal with them anymore. Right? We all agree with that, don't we? We've all known people that we wish we'd never have to see again, but we should not eliminate them, should we? Why? Because that's not our choice. So yes, I'm pro-choice when it comes to choices that I can legitimately and morally make without stepping over the boundaries of regard for others' feelings, desires, and lives. On the other hand, when it comes to the issue of any choices that would harm another emotionally or physically or spiritually, I am not pro-choice.

You see, I think maybe we need to re-define the term "pro-choice". If anyone is really truly pro-choice, then that should mean that they take responsibility to weigh their choices carefully, to discern what is right and what is wrong, and to act accordingly. If someone allows everyone else (the media, peers, courts, presidents, etc.) to tell them what to think regarding morals, they are not really exercising the freedom of choice at all. So if someone tells you that you are free to choose to eliminate somebody for instance, your freedom of choice allows you to say, "I don't care what you're telling me I'm allowed to do. That isn't right, and I choose to do what is right." You have choices. I have choices. We don't want to be Clanceys. The Clanceys in this world wait for someone else to decide what they do and don't do, and thus they fail to intelligently make choices.

Let's think about another term that often comes to mind when the term "pro-choice" is used. This other

Continued on Page 20, Col. 2

Music and Worship

by Whaid Guscott Rose



Worship isn't music. That is to say, music is not a foundational element of worship; one can worship without it. But music plays an integral role in private and corporate worship; it can assist and enhance it. That may be the reason that a hymnbook is in the middle of the Bible, replete with invitations to sing and play instruments of praise, to make music to the Lord. The pages of Scripture, beyond the Psalms, testify to the importance and power of song.

Yet we must face the brutal facts about music in relation to worship.

Plainly said, music is one of the most divisive elements in the life of the church. Why? Because music is powerful; nothing stirs our emotions quite like it. Music reflects our worldview (the way we see God and the world around us) and the things most important to us. And music is largely influenced by the surrounding culture and its emerging art forms.

For these reasons, we are rightly concerned about the potential for manipulation, about undue cultural influences on our worship, and we bristle at musical styles and art forms that do not reflect our values.

The following rhetorical questions are therefore offered to help us sort through this very sensitive topic:

Are all styles and forms of music equally valid and valuable?

Is my musical taste being shaped by the surrounding culture or by the Word of God?

- Who or what is the focus of my worship? When it comes to musical choice, am I giving God what He wants or what I want to give Him?
- What is music doing to me? Is it only driving me emotionally, or is it also shaping my will and deepening my theology and doctrine? Is my worship void of any emotion?
- Does my worship begin with the fear of the Lord?
Whatever happened to the New Testament admonition to "serve [worship] God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28, NKJV)?

This only scratches the surface and will be addressed more extensively in the soon-to-be-published *Worship Manual*. Meanwhile, may our answers to these questions lead us to the feet of Jesus in pure worship.

Whaid G. Rose. Whaid is the president of the Church of God, Seventh Day.

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Licensed "concealed carry" gun owners will soon be able to carry their weapons into some churches in Georgia.

Currently in Georgia, a person can have a weapon inside their vehicle on the church parking lot, but not in the church itself. Jerry Henry, who heads GeorgiaCarry.org, tells OneNewsNow there are exceptions to that rule that fit into over 20 categories.

"You've got the police, the military ... judges, retired judges, sheriffs, court reporters, district attorneys, etcetera," he explains. "All those people, if they're under an exempt statute, then they can carry into just about any place basically except prisons and jails."

But Georgia Governor Nathan Deal recently signed a law that changes the picture.

"After July 1, it will no longer be against the law to carry in church, provided that the churches opt in and agree to allow you to do so," Henry continues. "It also decriminalizes the carry in that if a church does not opt in and you get caught in a church, then you'll be ticketed and given up to a hundred-dollar fine."

Previously, a violator would be arrested and face a stiff jail term and fine.

Story by OneNewsNow

God Has a Plan

By Chris DeWeese



Have you ever been through any trials in your life? Sure, we all have. Oftentimes we think the trials we face may be due to something we are doing wrong; that God is trying to show us correction or discipline us. The examples of people and even nations in the Bible having to be brought low before they receive correction are extensive. But the nature of trials is not so cut and dried.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is with Paul. Acts 7:58-Acts 8:3 shows Paul before his conversion actually holding the cloaks for those who stoned Stephen to martyrdom. Paul was energetically persecuting the Church of God for years after this going from town to town and dragging believers in Messiah back to Jerusalem to be jailed and punished for their faith. Paul had to be stricken blind and visited by the risen Yeshua in order for him to be converted. He had to be brought incredibly low before he, an incredibly educated Jew and Roman citizen, could admit his errors and convert.

However, being brought low was just the beginning. Paul had to publicly and repeatedly repent. He had to prove to the brethren that he was no longer a threat. Surely they must have been scared to be in the same room as the guy who delivered so many to the Jews. Then Paul had to go on to be punished in the same manner that he punished others. Beaten, whipped, stoned and left for dead. But the lesson was not just for Paul! It was for the brethren as well. They had to trust Yahweh and the Spirit to believe that they would be protected and they had to forgive the very man that had persecuted them. This is a very hard thing to do my friends. Forgiving and trusting someone who has a history of violence or destructive behavior is one of the hardest psychological hurdles for people to cross despite Yeshua telling us we must do so 7 X 70 times.

It's also very easy to see other people's trials as punishment by God. This is a trap that has existed for a very long time. When we see people begging on the side of the road for coins our reflex action is to assume they are charlatans. When we see people who have made bad decisions suffering for their poor judgment thoughts like "well, that'll teach em" creep in to even the most compassionate among us. But what does Yeshua say about these things?

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. John 9:1-3

Do you see the accusatory attitude in the disciples? They assumed because the man was blind that it had to be because of his sin or his parent's sins. But the man was born blind, perhaps in excess of 30 years prior, for this one moment in time. God had a plan. How many eyes do you think were opened on the day that this man received his sight? Those disciples had their eyes opened much more than the blind man. His disability was put on him so that many would be able to see righteousness working.

This attitude check about those who are less fortunate is part of the judgment of Matthew 25:31-46. In fact, it's the ENTIRE basis for the judgment! What do we see about the character of the righteous when Yeshua sits on His throne and starts separating the sheep from the goats? The righteous are the ones who ministered to those less fortunate. The trials of the infirm, the malnourished, the poor, and the prisoners are a test for those more fortunate.

Yes, brethren, God has a plan for each and every person on planet earth. These plans are intertwined with others and their relationships. When we see someone in a trial, our reactions are recorded in the books. When we are in a trial, we also must give glory to the Most High. Because, like Joseph said so long ago, God meant it for good.

Chris came to the Sabbath through his wife Diana who is a third generation Sabbath keeper. He is a speaker at the Northland Hebrew Roots Fellowship <http://www.hebrewrootsgroup.com> and maintains a blog at <http://www.firstcenturychristianity.net>.

Editorial: "Faith that Works" cont. from page 3.

or to the Jews in particular during the time of Christ. God is no respecter of persons.

Also we see people actively participating in the work of God. Noah had a part to play in God's plan for humanity. If he had refused to play that part, mankind would have been lost at the Flood. Boaz also had to actively play his role for God's will to be accomplished. Each of us must be willing to pursue God's plan with Him. Otherwise, nothing in the human realm would be accomplished. We have to allow ourselves to become partners with God in carrying out His plan for us and for others. That's why James says, "I will show you my faith by my works."

One of the most important principles that Jesus taught is found in Matthew chapter 10. It is nestled in the middle of His instructions to His twelve disciples as He sends them out for the first time. In verse 8 Jesus tells them "...freely you have received, freely give." That is a principle that should govern all our lives. We receive more from God than any of us can imagine. Because of that, we should always be willing to "...freely Give."

Let me quote some passages from the New Bible Dictionary in their section on Poverty: "the impression is sometimes given that God prospered the righteous with material possessions while it is true that the benefits of industry and thrift to individuals and to the nation are clearly seen, and that God promises to bless those who keep his commandments, there were numbers of poor people in Israel at every stage of the nation's history. Their poverty might have been caused through natural disasters leading to bad harvests, through enemy invasion, through oppression by powerful neighbors, or through extortionate usury. There was an obligation on the wealthier members of the community to support their poor rather in (Deuteronomy 15:1-11). Those most likely to suffer poverty were the fatherless and the widows and the landless aliens. But so often where the rich oppressors that 'the poor.'"

Let's look at one more passage from the book of Job.

"When the ear heard, then it blessed me,
And when the eye saw, then it approved me;
Because I delivered the poor who cried out,
The fatherless and the one who had no helper.
The blessing of a perishing man came upon me,
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
My justice was like a robe and a turban.
I was eyes to the blind,
And I was feet to the lame.
I was a father to the poor,
And I searched out the case that I did not know.
I broke the fangs of the wicked,
And plucked the victim from his teeth" Job 29:11-17.

In the New Bible Dictionary's section on poverty in the New Testament, we read the following "there were very heavy taxes on various kinds imposed on the Jews in New Testament times. Probably many were in severe straits, while others made considerable profits from collaborating with the Romans. Worldly minded Sadducees were generally wealthy, as were the tax collectors."

So, what are we to make of all of this? It is clear from both the New Testament and the Old Testament that we are to have a part in alleviating poverty where we find it. But, none of this will happen until we are willing to partner with God. Part of being a Christian is not only to alleviate poverty but to bring others to the cross of Christ. All of the good works that we may do amount to nothing if we are not willing to allow God to guide us in our decisions to help and to encourage others in the way of Christ. From the very beginning it was God's desire to bring all nations into communion with Him. He is inviting us to partner with him in that effort. We must always remember the words of Christ: "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me' "

—Kenneth Ryland

Ukrainians Turn to Prayer as Tension Rises

Carrie Dedrick Editor, *ChristianHeadlines.com*
Wednesday, April 09, 2014

With tensions rising between Ukraine and Russia, citizens are turning to prayer for solace.

Thousands of Russians held demonstrations in Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Luhansk over the April 4-6 weekend calling for annexation. In Donetsk, the crowd seized the Ukrainian flag from the administrative center and put a Russian flag in its place reports the Baptist Press.

In the midst of the chaos, Christians have gathered to pray for their country. Every morning, 200 people gather in the Freedom Square in Kharkiv. The group, including Baptists, Pentecostals, and Orthodox come together uniting in their hope for God's intervention in the crisis.

A spokesperson for the International Mission Board (IMB) said, "It's really amazing. Young and old, fathers bringing their children, rain or snow—everybody is on their knees."

Throughout the political turmoil, Ukrainian churches have remained open for citizens to enter and pray any time.

Volunteers from the United States will soon be arriving in Ukraine to assist the IMB with their mission work, despite the crisis.

"Why would I leave when God is at work? This is exactly where I should be," the spokesperson said.



Leaving a Worthy Legacy

By Bill Ellis

Special to ASSIST News Service

SCOTT DEPOT, WEST VIRGINIA (ANS) — For most of us, life here will soon be over — at the longest, it will not last very long. How will we be remembered? What words, phrases, deeds, accomplishments will be associated with our passing from this life? Time to die is getting closer every day. That being true, what kind of legacy will we leave?

A legacy is something passed down from a previous generation or ancestor. My desk dictionary defines legacy as “money or property left to someone by a will; bequest” or “anything handed down from, or as from an ancestor.” It is simply what we leave behind after we are gone to be a blessing or curse for those who receive it.

Our legacy is what we inherit from others or what we leave for others. For example, I am deeply indebted for the legacy I received from my parents. What they left for me was mostly by way of teaching and example. Kitty and I feel that way about her parents and her “Aunt Mary.”

An inheritance is never to be limited to money received from the family. That is expressed in Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible. You will learn a lot by reading it all. As to the value of an inheritance passed down to you underscore verse 11, in this long list of meditations on the excellencies of the Word of God, which states: “Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You.”

I have been blessed by the legacy of books received from my parents, Kitty’s parents, my grandparents and from teachers, pastors and professors who passed on to me things that had been important to them. Dr. Gene W. Newberry, my graduate school professor and later an outstanding seminary dean, had a great sense of humor. He brought to every class a story that would elicit laughter. He gave me several of his books on humor.

Two of America’s greatest preachers shared many of their books, books they had written, with me. I treasured and learned from the books of Dr. W. Dale Oldham and Dr. R. G. Lee.

Preachers, teachers, politicians, writers, professors, bankers, parents, grandparents, coaches and friends leave a legacy for us. We are better people because of the legacy they left.

I have read stories in books and newspapers and heard newscasts about presidents, governors, politi-

cians, military generals, athletes, educators and business executives “working on their legacy.” The copy for some of these successful people is now being prepared for their obituary. It is being said of others every time they do something that is sensible, “They are working hard on their legacy.” Too many are blundering in failure. Success is a stranger in their story.

The big fisherman, whom we know today as apostle Peter, failed miserably during part of his life. His legacy, after years of failure, was a prime example of how people can really be changed. In I Peter 1:4, he wrote about “An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

Bill Armstrong, who taught me to play four different sports in grades eight and nine, was a superb example of a Christian gentleman by word and example. He gained national fame as a basketball coach in California. At his funeral, I read from the New Testament his beloved mother gave to him on Christmas 1937, when he was a young man. He left a legacy that prompts highly successful business and professional men to honor him because he left a life-changing example for them.

Think about your legacy. How will others remember you in years to come?

This story is the personal opinion of the writer and does not necessarily reflect the views of the ASSIST News Service or ASSIST Ministries.

Bill Ellis is a syndicated columnist, and convention and conference speaker on every continent. He is the writer of more than 2,000 newspaper and magazine columns, articles and contributions to books. He is also a widely known motivational speaker and pulpit guest who utilizes enjoyment of life and just plain fun and laughter while speaking to high school, university and professional sports teams as well as to business and professional groups of all kinds. His keen understanding of human problems makes him a favorite speaker for youth, parent, and senior adult meetings. He is accompanied by Kitty, his wife, favorite singer, editor and publisher.

For information on becoming a subscriber to the Ellis Column for your newspaper or magazine, you may contact him at: BILL ELLIS, P.O.Box 345, Scott Depot, WV 25560 or by calling: 304-757-6089.

Living like Soldiers and Athletes in Times of Apostasy

by Daniel Botkin



Apostasy

The word *apostasy* is a fairly common theological term. According to Webster's, the word has been around in English since at least the 14th century, even though the word does not appear anywhere in the 1611 KJV. The English word *apostasy* is simply a transliteration of the Greek New Testament word *apostasia* (αποστασια). Strong's Concordance defines *apostasia* as "defection from truth." The Gingrich Shorter Lexicon defines it as "rebellion, abandonment, apostasy."

These short definitions raise some questions, namely: From which elements of truth do apostates defect? What exactly is it that apostates rebel against and abandon?

The word *apostasia* occurs in only two places in the Greek New Testament, but both passages help to clarify what apostasy is. The first time the word is used is in Acts 21:21. The Apostle Paul had just returned to Jerusalem, and he was informed that some people had been spreading false rumors about him. One of the false rumors was that Paul was teaching his disciples to "forsake Moses." The words translated "forsake" are *apostasian apo*, "fall away from." The second time the word is used is in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, where Paul warns the Thessalonians that there will be "a falling away." The phrase "a falling away" is a translation of the single word *apostasia*. The NASB translates it as "the apostasy" and provides a footnote, "Or, *falling away from the faith*."

Apostasy is certainly falling away from the faith; however, the use of the word in Acts 21:21 helps us understand exactly which elements of the faith apostates fall away from. In Acts 21:21 apostates are those who "forsake Moses." The context of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 also helps us understand exactly which elements of the faith apostates fall away from. Paul goes on to describe what the "falling away" will entail. Among other things, the apostasy will include "the mystery of iniquity," literally, "the mystery of lawlessness (*anomias*)," translated in the Jewish New Testament as "separating from Torah."

So the New Testament use of the word *apostasia* helps us understand what apostasy was in the minds of the New Testament writers. It was a defection from the To-

rah, a forsaking of Moses. It was rebellion against and abandonment of the Law of God. In view of what the Church did with the Torah after the death of the Apostles, I'd say that the "falling away" is not some future end-time event, but rather is something which began many centuries ago. Paul remarked in the 2 Thessalonians 2 passage that the mystery of lawlessness was "already at work" at that very time. Here near the end of his life, Paul saw the leavening of lawlessness beginning its corrupting influence in the Church.

Truth, a Necessary Antidote to Apostasy

In his final letter to his young disciple Timothy, Paul gave instructions for living in times of apostasy. Paul warns Timothy that "perilous times shall come," and he describes what men will be like during these perilous times: "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud," etc., etc. (See 2 Timothy 3.) And Paul is not only speaking about men outside the Church, he is also describing men who are *inside* the Church, for he describes them as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" and as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:5, 7).

Coming to the knowledge of the truth (and, of course, walking in that truth) is a very important key to living in times of apostasy. Three other times in 2 Timothy Paul emphasizes the importance of Scriptural truth:

- "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2:15).
- "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yeshua. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (3:15ff).
- "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering

Continued on Page 16, column 2

Why You Need Hope — More than You Realize

R. Herbert

Hope is neither faith's distant cousin nor love's poor relation. Here's what hope is and why you need it...

The words of the apostle Paul in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians are familiar to all of us: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love..." (1 Corinthians 13:13). Paul goes on, of course, to stress that love is the greatest of this triad of spiritual qualities. Faith, too, is praised in the scriptures as of tremendous spiritual importance: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). So where does this leave hope, the third member of Paul's trio of most important qualities? In the minds of most of us, hope comes in as a kind of distant third place winner. It is like a spiritual bronze medalist that does well, but is always eclipsed by the silver and gold placement of faith and love. But we should be careful not to think of hope this way.

When we put all of Paul's words together, we find a very different picture and we realize that hope is of immense importance. It is true that faith and love are often juxtaposed in the scriptures, but we find hope filling an equally important role. Notice for example, Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:8: "... let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." In terms of the body armor used in this analogy, the breastplate is certainly vital. But so is the helmet. Put in modern terms, would you rather ride a motorcycle protected by a breastplate or a helmet? How about working on a construction site? Clearly, the helmet — hope — is of great importance in certain situations.

Opening our eyes to hope

Moving beyond analogy, we can also find in the words of Paul a vital function of hope that many Christians miss seeing. Notice first what Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus:

"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers ... I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people" (Ephesians 1:15-18).

Do you see how, although the Ephesians clearly were exhibiting faith and love, Paul prayed for these people that their spiritual eyes would be opened to know hope more fully? This certainly does not sound as though faith and love are paramount and hope of much less consequence. Paul clearly prayed that the Ephesians would have hope to the same degree that

they had developed love and faith. Why is that? For the answer we must turn to another of Paul's writings — his Epistle to the Colossians — and what he says there on the subject of hope may surprise you:

"... because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people — the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel" (Colossians 1:4-5).

Here we see the same triad of Faith, Love and Hope, but hope is put in a clear spiritual perspective. Paul says that faith and love spring from hope! Now clearly, faith and love do not only arise from hope, otherwise the Ephesians would not have had both those qualities, but not the hope Paul prayed they would also develop. So what Paul can only mean in his words to the Colossians is that our faith and love can be increased by our hope. If we ponder this, we can see how it is true.

Powering perseverance

This is something we may never have thought about, but the Bible is clear that the action of one spiritual quality can develop another. For example, James tells us: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance ..." (James 1:2-4).

Paul himself stresses this interaction of spiritual qualities — using once again his great triad: "We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

Here, endurance is clearly the "fruit" or result of hope — which shows that the hope Paul and other biblical writers discuss is nothing like the kind of anemic "hope" in expressions such as "I hope it doesn't rain today." That kind of human hope is little more than "I would like it if ..." or "it would make me happy if ..." The biblical concept of hope is a powerful motivating force. It carries us through trials and gives us long-term perseverance. As someone once said, with hope we are never stranded in the present. Hope is the light at the end of life's tunnel — the thing we must continually keep our eyes on. Hope helps us carry on, and we might say that real hope becomes the backbone of our spiritual lives.

So, far from being an "also ran" in the Olympics of spiritual qualities, and the distant lesser cousin of Paul's great triad, we find that hope, according to Paul himself, inspires our endurance and can also be re-

sponsible for "growing " our faith and love. Paul understood that the hope we nurture provides added energy to "fuel" both our love and faith, and as such hope is of immense value. It is a vital part of our spiritual toolbox, and one which we need for its own sake as well as for its development of other key qualities.

Developing true hope

How do we develop this hope? The Bible gives specific pointers. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit for which we can pray: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13 and Galatians 5:5). But this hope is also something that we can grow and develop. We do this in two ways: looking back and looking forward. First, we need to be aware of and remember whenever God works things out in our own lives, and in the lives of others we know. We need to remember how things worked out for people in the pages of God's word: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). Second, we need to look forward and continue to refresh our minds with hope in frequent study of what the scriptures say regarding the goal for which we all aim — the hope of eternal life in the family of God (1 Thessalonians 4:13, Ephesians 1:18, Colossians 1:5).

Once we receive and develop hope, it becomes a spiritual asset of inestimable value. Hebrews 6:19 tells us: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure ..." In fact, the apostle Paul ties hope directly to salvation itself:

"Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently" (Romans 8:23-25).

So we need hope in a great many ways, not least to help us develop the most important attributes of our spiritual lives and to enable God to fulfill His plan of salvation in us. That's the importance of hope. You may "lose" a number of things in life — ranging from your job to your car keys — but most of these losses are things from which you can pick up and move on. That is yet another area where hope comes in. Surviving downfalls and losses is one of the reasons we need hope as much as we do. Hope can help us with every loss, every setback, and it can help propel us forward. It's one of the few things we cannot be without. So develop it, use it, guard it with your life, and don't ever lose hope.

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and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (4:2-4).

Paul also tells Timothy to pass on the Scriptural truths he has learned to other faithful men, so that they can pass them on to others: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:2).

Then Paul lets Timothy (and us) know that living in times of apostasy requires a disciple to live like a soldier and an athlete: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Yeshua the Messiah. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2:3-5).

Living like an Athlete

When Paul writes about striving for masteries and being crowned, he is using language that describes athletic competition. As a matter of fact, the Greek word translated "strive" is *athle* (αθλη), **the source of our English word athlete. The NASB translates it this way: "And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules."**

Yes, there are rules for God's people; we must "strive lawfully" by obeying God's laws if we expect the Lord to reward us for our service to Him. In an athletic competition, athletes lose their prizes if it is discovered that they broke the rules. Apostates who transgress the rules of God's Torah will likewise suffer loss of rewards at the Judgment Seat of Messiah. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8).

Athletes have to follow the rules, but merely following the rules does not guarantee victory. Athletes also have to exercise, train, and stay in excellent physical and psychological shape if they want victory. If we want victory in our spiritual endeavors, it is not enough to merely obey the rules of the Torah. We also have to engage in spiritual exercise to keep our spiritual senses sharp and keen. We have to take time to pray, to read and study the Scriptures, to meditate deeply on God's truth, and to diligently seek the Lord, for "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Another area of discipline for athletes is diet. This too has its parallel in the life of a disciple. And I am not

Continued on Page 21

Westby: "Marriage Maintenance & Repair" from page 4.

And Tucker offers this clear summary of marriage:

"What is unique about marriage is that it truly is a comprehensive sharing of life, a sharing founded on bodily union made uniquely possible by the sexual complementarity of man and woman—complementarity that makes it possible for two human beings to become, in the language of the Bible, "one flesh," and for this one-flesh union to be the foundation of a relationship in which it is intelligible for two persons to bind themselves to each other in pledges of permanence, monogamy, and fidelity."²

Now let's look at real world problems that can prevent that happy, comprehensive sharing of life.

Marriage Baggage

It's been said that when you marry someone you marry all their family. There is some understandable truth to that. Your mate is from a family and has acquired vocabulary, speech patterns, thoughts, habits (good and bad), religious and political ideas, ways of dealing with problems, mannerisms, ethics, and so on. He or she is a product of that family environment which can include besides parents and siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins. This is not necessarily a bad thing or a good thing. It is just reality. It is part of what you "buy" when you make the deal of marriage.

The person you love is more than his or her genetics but is a composite of his or her family, friends, and experiences before you came along.

Your growing up family is part of who you are, and they had a big influence over how you became who you are. Criticism of your family, especially if not related to some bad event, is like criticism of you. It inspires you to go picking at and making war with your mate's family—a sure recipe for trouble. Now if your mate's family are all imprisoned for violent crimes that is one thing, but usually making peace with your mate's family is the smart policy. Learn to value the family heritage of your mate, and while you may not like all of her family, love her by respecting and dealing kindly with her family. She will likely reciprocate.

Speaking of baggage, there was a troubled couple seeing a counselor and the wife had finally had it with her husband. She loved him, but it had become too obvious to her that he did not love her. He said he did, but she looked to his actions. When asked by the counselor for an example of his unloving behavior she was quick to give details.

When she was sick with the flu, and she'd had several recent bouts, she needed him and he abandoned

her. The counselor asked for details. Well, all her husband did was tell her to rest and left her alone in a quiet room. He would bring her water, dry toast and soup, but that was it. The rest of the time she was alone. Seething in anger, apparently, and crying.

When asked how she was treated when sick growing up she glowed describing how her mother would let her into her bed, read her books, gave her special treats, and never left her alone. The sick times are fondly remembered for all the fuss and attention she received from her mom. Now it was time to talk to the uncaring slob of a husband, alone.

The husband confessed to the counselor he didn't understand why his wife wanted to leave him. He said he loved her and would do anything to keep the marriage together. The counselor then asked him how things were for him when he got sick growing up. He said his mother was a nurse who worked full time and she took good care of him. Details, please?

"Well, my mom said the best thing for me was plenty of rest in a quiet room. She'd leave me alone with water and some toast if my appetite improved and also told me what soup to heat up. That was it. She'd call to check in on me from time to time and I was usually better in a day or two or three. She seemed to know what was best, and I just followed her advice. I tried to give my wife the same good care."

Now it was time to bring the couple together and see that it was not a matter of cold-hearted abandonment at a time of need, but just another way of handling sickness. He was doing what his family did, but not what her family did in such situations. Had she explained to her husband that she wanted care like momma gave her? No, but she expected him to know what she wanted if he really loved her, which she had erroneously concluded that he didn't.

The session turned out well with both parties seeing that they had brought their "baggage" with expectations from their upbringing into a new relationship of marriage. Some candid communication could have stopped it from becoming a crisis event. Imputing motives to behaviors can be a dangerous impulse. Sure, the husband was a little bone-headed and dull not to pick up on the negative responses to his "good care." But the wife was maybe a bit of a spoiled brat too momma-fied growing up expecting and demanding attention because she was sick. They both cut each other some slack with their expectations and tried to put forth more trust and effort to please their mate. They lived happily ever after.

Building a marriage is creating a new "individual," a new unit. It is not simply "me" or "you;" it is a new corporation called "us." This means, in biblical language, leaving behind father and mother (and all the

relatives) and cleave (adhere like a powerful adhesive) to each other as one flesh.³ This adjustment into a new relationship requires a clear decision to do so, it requires time to do it, and a powerful commitment to build and defend this new “us” unit. It will require a willingness to construct something new that suits both parties to “us.”

I often hear the response from the newly divorced, “It just didn’t work out.” I’m left wondering how much effort or work was actually put into building that marriage relationship. Did they split when it just no longer felt good, or no longer was exciting, or they could no longer just live the selfish way they wanted to live and get happy results? I know there are legitimate reasons for divorce, but often people quit simply because they are too selfish and loving their mate and building a strong relationship is too much “work.”

Negotiating Is like Breathing

To keep a relationship healthy and growing requires peace and that requires negotiation, not war. Each of us has opinions, wants, things liked and things hated. The husband likes sports, hunting, and spending time in the great out-of-doors. The wife doesn’t, but likes craft hobbies, classical music, and wine tasting with her girlfriends. Can the two ever live together with each pursuing different interests? Of course. It happens happily all the time but requires acceptance of a mate’s interests and a genuine desire to see that they enjoy them. That takes negotiation.

We breathe in and we breathe out. It seems so natural. We give and we receive. We love and are loved. Negotiation between loved ones means each is intent on seeing the other get what contributes to his or her happiness and wellbeing. You give up some of your interests to be a good companion on your mate’s outings. Or, if that isn’t welcomed or practical you accommodate schedules, vacations, and responsibilities so each can have time and space to pursue some of his or her interests. He can take a week hunting, watch football on Sunday, and go camping with the kids—no complaints from the Mrs. She in turn, can travel to craft fairs, do wine tasting with girlfriends, and take in her concerts—no complaints from Mr. He watches the kids and takes up the slack so she can have a good time. Occasionally, even with couples having quite different interests manage in time to find common interests or hobbies that they can have fun doing together.

Virtually any irritation or disagreement or argument can be defused and peace restored if each is willing to simply give up something to please the other. Often what we end up giving up in most tiffs is plain old pride. Paul suggests we follow the selfless example of Jesus:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”⁴

If we should treat others with such respect, how much more our one-flesh mate! “Looking not only to your own interests” is the principle behind marital negotiation. If you love your mate and want his or her happiness and that attitude is reciprocated, a way can be found past any impasse. When you breathe out you won’t die for you will soon breathe in. Give and receive. If you stubbornly hold your breath you will eventually pass out.

Compromise is *Not* the Key

Living together will require compromises because we can’t always get everything we want whenever we want it. Yet a key to a happy marriage it isn’t. Dr. Joel Wade, marriage counselor and author of *Mastering Happiness*, says: Compromise is kind of like when one person wants a room painted yellow, the other wants it painted blue, and we compromise and get green. Compromise is sometimes win/win, sometimes not. There are certainly times when we compromise, but it isn’t the driving force of a great relationship.”⁵

Then what is the driving force? Dr. Wade suggests it is a conception of what the relationship is about including a shared vision of the husband and wife as one team, as allies, working as mates together. Just as in team sports, the team works toward the same goal: win the game! To do that the team must work together effectively. “This is not a compromise; it is a conscious understanding of goals, priorities and strategy.”

Commitment to the team’s (the couple’s) success must be a 100% all-in effort—not 99% but 100% as the difference is critical. When Yahweh made the marriage relationship, after he made Adam and Eve, he referenced that fact that they were to become “one flesh” in a relationship of equals just as they had originated from a physical one flesh body. *One Flesh* is one way to describe the new corporate entity we call marriage; *One team* is another.

Commitment to the marriage enterprise is the key. Dr. Wade again: “In a marriage, when we commit to getting to know our spouse extremely well, to knowing what matters to her or him, what his or her dreams and hopes are, what his or her vision is for our marriage, we are getting to know our teammate. We will come to understand how he or she responds to different kinds of communication, how to ask for what we want in ways that he or she is likely to hear, the differ-

ent moods and events and timings of activities that work and don't work."

All this is what we do as allies with our mates sharing a like vision for the future and for life together; two people working together to create something wonderful. Dr. Wade offers this advice:

"If you're having some troubles in your marriage, or if you want to make your good marriage better, take some time to examine the premise that the two of you share about your marriage. Does it include the commitment to join together as allies? Does it include taking whatever troubles you have between you and facing those troubles together as a team?"

"And the details matter. A great marriage is not built through a romantic encounter every once in awhile, it's built through the daily moments of connection; how we treat each other every day: responding immediately to a request for attention, responding positively and asking a couple of questions in response to good news, asking about each other's day, and just paying respectful attention to each other."

This is how trust is built and a bond fixed that withstands the inevitable hardships of life, and allows the richness of life to be uniquely shared with your marital mate.

Marriage is a Mystery

Some may find all this talk of two becoming one a bit unreal or impossible or too "spiritual." I understand. Even the apostle Paul in his marriage discussion admits that there is an element of "profound mystery" (Ephesians 5:32) as the concept of marriage is applied to its archetype—Christ and the church.

Consider the facts relating to marriage from Genesis to Revelation. Adam was made first and independently. Eve was "built" (which is the Hebrew verb)⁶ from a part of Adam and formed into a beautiful, compatible mate for Adam. Even though Eve came from Adam he ends up marrying her and, they become husband and wife.

From where does the church come? "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). The church is called the body of Christ. That is, it comes from the body of Christ as Eve was "built" out of Adam. Here we are talking of a divinely created spiritual relationship, of course. But Paul uses that greater, spiritual relationship to give honor and guidance to fleshly marriage.

The marriage type and antitype doesn't end here. Jesus has a wife! And who might that be? It is the church that was built out of his body!

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high and showed me the Holy City Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:9-10).

The church has become New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ.⁷ She was formed from Jesus Christ and has made herself ready. Jesus said he would be building a place for his disciples after he ascended to heaven (John 14:1), and the New Jerusalem is where the Bride will rule with Christ. The greatest banquet in the history of the cosmos will herald this event.

"The wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.' (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

"Then the angel said to me, 'Write: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the lamb!'" (Revelation 19:7-9).

Let's be clear in our understanding of all these symbols, metaphors, types and antitypes. Jesus is the true Adam (Paul calls him the second Adam or Spiritual Adam—the true leader of humanity) and from his body is built a church (Eve a type of the Bride of Christ) made up of saints like you and me. But when that building of a mate (bride) for Christ is complete she is now called New Jerusalem. These are those in the First Resurrection who will rule and reign with Christ (see Revelation 5:10). Jesus and his Bride "marry," and work as a team for eternity filling the earth with the knowledge of God and making all things new. Do you catch the parallelism, the imagery, the harmony of the symbolism, the complexity and beauty of what is being created?

Is that not an inspiring picture of marriage at its highest plane? No wonder Paul said there was something deeply mysterious and wonderful about this divine institution of marriage.

Treasures

I close with what JoAn and I regard as our great treasures from fifty years of marriage: *our memories*. A person's memory is his private literature. Memories shared with a mate are like the heart of your life, your treasured book. Not all memories are good, of course, but those bad memories should have retreated into the dark corners being displaced and overwhelmed by the good ones that get visited often.

Your life is time and time is your life. Sharing your life with another has etched memories that can be brought back at will or with a little jogging. Sharing memories can be like time travel. You can remember the days of your youth, your first dates, the romance,

the wedding, the friends, the hard times, the good times, the adventures, and a life full of events. Remembered alone, they may be in black and white, but shared they take on life and color.

And for us, and for others so blessed, children are the jewels of memory. We have four children (and ten grandchildren) and each of them is a delightful story. Reliving the early days, looking at photographs, contributing a memory that your mate had forgotten, realizing anew how much you love each of them, smiles come easily, even laughter. What fun.

Then seeing children grow up. Remembering the stressful times and joyful times, we watched our children move through all the stages eventually succeeding in life. They are and always have been our best friends and JoAn and I share memories of our children that are unique and beyond price—our sparkling memory jewels.

We also share memories of each other as we constantly changed from young to old. In many ways we morphed into different people than we were when we married. Yet in other respects I see the same JoAn when I look at her high school graduation picture at age sixteen. It sits behind my desk. I look at it often as that is how she looked when I first met her in college, a few months after the picture was taken. Four years later we married.

With Wisdom God made marriage.

End Notes

1 Tucker, William, *Marriage and Civilization: How Monogamy Made Us Human*, Regnery Publishing, 2014, p. 217

2 George, Robert P., *Conscience and Its Enemies; Confronting the Dogmas of Liberal Secularism*, ISI Books, 2013, p.98.

3 Genesis 2:24

4 Philippians 2:3-5

5 Quotes from article *The Key to a Winning Marriage* by Dr. Joel Wade at www.tothepointnews.com. Dr. Wade's website is: www.drjoelwade.com

6 See Noel Rude's article, *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, a New Covenant, and the Marriage of the Lamb*, available at www.godward.org

7 See also 2 Corinthians 11:2, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

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Coover: "Responsibility to Think" from Page 9

term is "pro-life". I have explained to you what I believe about choice, and now I also want to definitely affirm that I am pro-life.

Yes, I am pro-life. While I believe it is up to each person to choose when it comes to situations that are relative to himself or herself, I also believe it is each person's responsibility to regard the feelings, preferences, ideals, and most importantly, lives, of others and to refrain from crossing over boundaries when making choices.

How many of you think it would be OK to run over a person with the car because he's in your way and you're in a hurry? How many of you think it would be all right to poison one of your classmates because you're afraid he's getting too involved with your best friend? How many of you think it's your choice to decide that someone who's mentally retarded does not deserve to live any longer? How many of you would tell a mom to eliminate her six-month-old baby's existence because it's crying too loudly and continually keeping her awake at night?

If you don't believe that these things are right, your answers reveal that you are pro-life. You don't believe that it is your choice to decide that someone else has to die.

What about when it comes to life in the womb? Is it anyone's choice to decide that a living developing unborn baby who will one day become an adult has to die?

At 10 weeks development, the baby's brain has already been growing for 5 weeks. The baby's heart has already been beating for 4 weeks. The baby has had fingers and toes for 3 weeks. The baby has been able to bend her knees and elbows for 2 weeks. The baby has had eyelids for 1 week.

I want each of you to look at this baby and think about what we have been talking about in regards to pro-choice and pro-life. When it comes to the life of a human being, what is your stance on pro-choice and pro-life?

I hope this article has been a blessing to you. If you would like to learn more about unborn babies and how you can stand for life, you can visit our website at www.LoveTheUnbornBabies.name. You can contact us over this website, or you can write to us at P.O. Box 7 Shippensburg, Pennsylvania 17257 USA. I'd love to hear from you.

We can all complain about the problems and conditions our country is experiencing due to the many bad choices others have made in a multitude of areas. There is a quote though that says, "Be the change you want to see." When we see that change is needed, we can start with our own hearts and lives. I am glad that each of you are alive. I hope that you will use your lives to make choices that will have a positive impact on those around you and on those of the future.

Rivqah Coover
www.LoveTheUnbornBabies.name
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Botkin: "Living like Soldiers" from Page 16, Col. 2

just talking about dietary laws that pertain to food that you feed your body. We should certainly abstain from eating pork and shellfish. This is part of "striving lawfully." But we should be equally cautious about what we feed our spirit and our mind. Sinful thoughts are poison, and should be avoided altogether. Some thoughts are not inherently sinful, but are merely of no significant spiritual value. They do to the spirit what Twinkles do to the body. Twinkies won't kill you, and in moderation may not even do you any permanent harm. But they are just filler and are of no significant nutritional value. Just as Twinkles merely please the taste buds and take up space in the stomach, so some non-sinful (but worthless) thoughts merely please the imagination and take up space in the mind. If you let your mind absorb too much spiritual junk food, it will make you spiritually weak and flabby.

Living like a Soldier

Paul urges Timothy to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." This (and other passages where Paul speaks of warfare) raises a question: Should our local congregations be run like an army camp, with commanding officers and ranks? Should each "soldier of Jesus Christ" render unquestioning obedience to the officers over him? Should the individual disciple let all of his decisions be made for him by someone else who happens to be in authority over him? Some Christian groups and cults operate this way. The individual is told by his elders where he must live, what time he must get up in the morning, what sort of work he can and cannot do, which literature he can and cannot read, how he must spend his money, and, in some cases, whom he can or cannot marry.

Elders certainly have the right and duty to confront blatant sin and to make sure things are done decently and in order during worship time. But do elders have the right to make decisions for their disciples in the realm of non-sinful questions such as where to live, how to spend their time and money, etc.? When Yeshua heard His disciples arguing about positions of authority in the Kingdom, He called them to Himself and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,

and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

It is clear from this passage that Yeshua's Kingdom does not operate by little lords bossing around their underlings. That is the way of the Gentiles. Peter tells elders to lead by example, not by being lords over God's heritage (1 Peter 5:3). Yet there is a need for submission to leadership in the Body, for Peter adds, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder" (vs. 5). Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." In God's Kingdom there is (or at least there should be) submission to people in leadership. However, it should be a voluntary submission due to respect for God's delegated authority, not a forced submission due to rank.

As leader of our congregation, I make decisions that affect the general direction and vision for our congregation. I determine how our meetings will be conducted. I oversee things that are done in the name of the congregation. But I do not have the right (nor the desire) to make all the personal decisions for the individuals in my congregation. If I happen to think that a particular individual would be better off with a different job or a different car or different living quarters, I can certainly make suggestions and offer advice (even unsolicited advice). I can urge, encourage, and even persistently annoy a person if I think it is something urgent enough. But I am not a policeman or a military D.I. (Drill Instructor) standing over recruits, forcing them to comply with my wishes. I cannot use my position to force people to endure hardness as a good soldier. I can tell them what God expects of them in regards to endurance and self-discipline, but I cannot force people to endure hardness and to live a disciplined life.

No one, not even the Lord, will force you to endure hardness and live a disciplined life. You are the one who must do it. Self-discipline is exactly that: discipline that you do yourself. And as someone once pointed out, the two most difficult things about self-discipline are self and discipline. But self-discipline, along with truth, is necessary for living victoriously in these times of apostasy.

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The Church in the World

Saturday, April 12, 2014

Nigerian senator: "135 civilians killed" in attacks

By Dan Wooding, who was born in Nigeria
Founder of ASSIST Ministries

BORNO STATE, NIGERIA (ANS) — Gunmen have killed 135 civilians in north east Nigeria since Wednesday, a senior official from the region has told the BBC.

Borno state senator Ahmed Zannah said the killings took place in at least three separate attacks in the state.

"The attackers are suspected to be from the Islamist Boko Haram movement. At least 1,500 people, half of them civilian, have been killed in the restive north-

The militants then attacked two villages near the border with Cameroon killing a further 130 people, the senator said.

The attacks took place on Wednesday and Thursday, with initial reports claiming around 70 people had been killed.

The BBC said that the Nigerian military has not yet commented on the attacks.

A state of emergency has been in place since last year in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in north-east Nigeria.

Human rights groups have criticised both Boko Haram and Nigeria's military for failing to protect civilians.

Amnesty International said last month that Nigeria's army killed around 600 people after a Boko Haram attack.



Boko Haram Fighters

eastern region this year, according to Amnesty International," said the BBC.

The organisation blamed both "an increase in attacks by Boko Haram and uncontrolled reprisals by Nigeria's security forces" for the high death toll.

Women "abducted"

Senator Zannah said the attackers first target was a teacher training college in the town of Dikwa.

They killed five people there and abducted several women, he said.

The attackers burned down the college library before escaping, Mr. Zannah said.



Boko Haram has been accused of numerous attacks in the north including one last month in Bama, Borno State

Some 250,000 people have been forced to leave their homes because of the fighting, the Nigerian government's relief agency said.

Boko Haram has waged an insurgency since 2009 to create a strict Islamic state in northern Nigeria.

Dan Wooding, 73, is an award-winning journalist who was born in Nigeria of British missionary parents, now living in Southern California with his wife Norma, to whom he has been married for 50 years. They have two sons, Andrew and Peter, and six grandchildren who all live in the UK. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times) and the ASSIST News Service (ANS) and he hosts the weekly "Front Page Radio."

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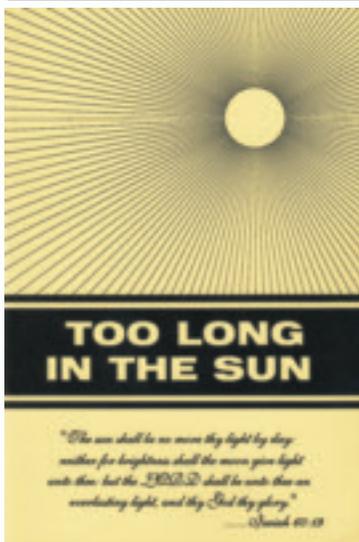
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