

The Boys' Bugle

Calling all young men to the service of Christ

Vol. 10, Number 1

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Welcome to The Boys' Bugle

This issue's theme

“Restitution”

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Subscription Information:

Please let us know, at least every 4 years, that you want to continue to receive “The Boys' Bugle.” Back issues available. Donations appreciated. Donations include articles, stories, poems, pictures, ideas, letters, and etc. We reserve the right to print anything you send us, unless you specify otherwise. (Our cost per year for printing and postage for both *The Boys' Bugle* and *Heart and Home Harmony* is \$5.20.) Please make checks payable to The Boys' Bugle.

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The Boys' Bugle & Heart and Home Harmony

are a ministry of the Parishville Christian Church.

The magazine is managed mostly by the Martin family: Luke and Rachel. Our children are: Daniel & Mendy, Ellen & Mike Atnip, Timothy, Emily & Rob Hall, Dawn & Luke Rosenbarker, Joy & Charles Thonus, Melvin, Luray and Britany, Nathaniel (22), Larisa (20), Jonathan (in heaven) and 15 grandchildren.

The editors are: Luke, Rachel, and Melvin. Most of the time we publish 4 issues a year.

We live in the country and manage a number of projects such as: organic produce, honey, maple syrup, orchard,

sawmill, blacksmithing, sheep, dogs, cows, chickens, earth-moving, fryer-oil for diesel fuel, farm and garden supply store, carpentry, printing, always something to keep us busy! Our children were homeschooled.

TBB was started in 2001 to help fill the need for a Christian boys' magazine.

Any comments, suggestions, submissions, or ideas you may have are greatly appreciated.

If you are ever in the area, we would be delighted for you to stop in for a visit or to worship with us.

Theme for next issue: What is Spiritual Life?

It's very clear what physical life and death are. But what does it mean to have spiritual life? Please send us your ideas. Let your thoughts and writing be in harmony with God's Word.



Editor's Desk



Dear Readers,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus. It's been awhile since you heard from us.

After we were finished editing the last issue but before we printed (August 25, 2009), I ended up in the hospital with a blocked bowel from adhesions and scar tissue. They had to do another operation to remove the scar tissue. The doctors weren't surprised, as bowel blockage from scar tissue after an accident/surgery like I had is very common. My brother-in-law, Charlie, had the same problem after his appendix burst. This surgery didn't knock me down near as hard as last winter, but it still set me back.

It is now 1 year and 3 months since my accident with the planer. I am doing a lot, lot better than I was. I can easily lift 50 lbs. I feel a lot more like myself again. It is good to be able to do things.

A few days ago I was reading in Daniel chapter 4 about King Nebuchadnezzar and how he went insane for 7 years. God gave Nebuchadnezzar great power, honor, and glory. Nebuchadnezzar didn't give God the glory for giving him all these things but rather took the glory for himself. God was not happy with him. Therefore God took his sanity from him and made him act, look, and live like an animal. After 7 years God returned to him his ability to think and returned him to his former state of being King. God showed Nebuchadnezzar who really was in control.

It's so easy for us to make the same mistake when things go good. We think we worked and accomplished all these great things. We are so smart we

can manage anything. We are strong and mighty. And we deserve to be paid for what we did and get all the glory.

Through my accident last winter and all the things I've been through, God has made it very clear that I am weak and he is strong. It's not because of my smarts or strength or greatness that I have anything. I can do great things, but it's only because of the goodness that God has given to me and because God is with me all the time.

My mind and eyes tire easily while running the computer. With the farm supply business and all its paper work, TBB, and other things, I am maxed out on paperwork. I need to spend time out

...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts. Zech. 4:6

working and getting exercise. Also I have work that needs to be done. This issue of TBB is really late. The chances are the next issue will be late too.

We are sorry that Part II of James Strickler's article on Reconciliation is not in this issue. We hope to have it in the next issue.

I printed a catalogue for my farm supply business. If you want a copy, let me know.

In His Service,

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phi 4:7

On the Cover: Nathaniel's new 10.5 feet diameter, 2KW wind generator.

Fruit Acceptable For Repentance

by Luke M. Martin

John the Baptist said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When the religious folk came around he told them “they need to bring forth fruit acceptable for repentance.”

Then Jesus showed up and said the same thing; that is, “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Later Peter, (Jesus’ disciple), also said, “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

What does the word repent mean? Does it mean to be sorry for bad behavior? Or does it mean to forget the past, and to go from here, or perhaps to just “get over it,” as many people say?

Webster’s dictionary agrees with being sorry for bad behavior, but is that what John, Jesus, and Peter meant?

Strong’s Concordance of the Bible tells us that the Greek word used in the Bible meant; “to think differently”, and the Analytical Greek Lexicon tells us it means “to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to repent, also to make a change of principal, to reform.

If we look at what more the Bible teaches us on repentance, we will see that restitution is part of the change of principle and practice.

We find that Moses taught that it calls for restoring or paying up for damage and evil done. If it was something he stole he had to give extra.

Lev.24; Exodus 21&22.

We find that Jesus taught that there is mercy to be had and that by his blood he paid the price for our sins, so that we don’t need to pay up and indeed we are not able to. Nevertheless he also taught in a parable in Matt. 18 that if you do not forgive others from your heart neither are you forgiven.

James, a disciple of Jesus, tells us that mercy rejoices against judgment, but if you have no mercy then judgment waits for you. James 2:13.

In Luke 19, Zacchaeus tells Jesus that he repented and shows mercy to the poor, and restores fourfold more of whatever he may have gotten dishonestly, and upon that Jesus tells him that salvation has come to his house that day!

We are saved by grace and not by works. (Eph. 2:8-9) Some use this for an excuse to not do the works. Remember that Jesus will judge you by your works. (Matt.7; Matt.25) Do you have a dead faith, or is your faith manifest by your works? (James 2:14-26)

May God bless you as you obey the words of Jesus. The Christian faith is a faith that works by love.



The Importance of Restitution

I’ve had ideas about the importance of restitution since a boy. I think restitution is a very basic and fundamental quality. I know my parents have taught me a lot about it both by words and action. However, where in the Bible do I have any instruction

about it? Let us take a look at what the Bible has to say. Let us not just rely on “what I’ve always believed.”

It is important that you recognize your sins. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he

is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” 1 John 1:8-10.

It is important that you recognize other’s sins. See 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Sometimes it’s important to take action when others sin.

It is important that you confess your sin. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Pro.28:13. See Rom. 10:9, Jam. 5:16.

It’s important to make restitution to everyone you wrongly affected, and seek to restore to the best of your ability. In the story of Zacchaeus we see that he restored four times what he took and Jesus was pleased with him. Luke 19:8-9

Love can’t be separated from Law, Matthew 22:36-40. Love is the fulfilling of the law, Romans 13:10. The very principle of love is to make your wrongs right.

It is important to seek restitution without delay, quick enough you could do it 7 times a day, (Luke 17:3,4) and before you give a gift. (Matthew 5:23-26) Also see Ephesians 4:25-28. If you don’t make it right as soon as you can, you will get calloused and never do it.

It will start a pattern in your life where you will do less and less of what is right. Be faithful on little offenses and sins, and you will be faithful on big things. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” Luke 16:10. Also see Matthew 25:21.

It is important to forgive. “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:14-15. Also see Matthew 18:21-35.

You forgive; you make your wrongs right. Don’t require the other to do what’s right. What the other one does is not your responsibility. You live right and you will be blessed.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12

Winning or Losing

When we think of restitution, we think of someone giving up or losing something in order for restitution to take place. Like a thief that makes restitution will give up the thing he stole. Or when someone did a mean thing to someone, the person who did the wrong will give up their pride and apologize for their sin. This is right.

There is another way to look at restitution. Restitution is a good thing. All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called

according to his purpose, (Romans 8:28). When there is restitution, it is good for everyone involved; that is, good for everyone involved who loves God. Even the one who has to “give something up” is a winner, for he is doing what is right and loving God. Restitution is a win win situation.

Do your part – love God and live according to His purpose.

Restitution to God

By Hannah Holter

Have you ever thought of restoring to God what he rightfully owns... like your life? God created us for His glory but we usually turn our lives toward our own pleasures and wants. You don't have to be a missionary, you don't have to be a preacher, you don't have to be a nurse..... All you have to do is serve God where he placed you. If it's on the mission field that's fine, if it's called to be a preacher or being a nurse for Jesus, that's great. But a lot of God's people aren't looking around, they want to be doing something big for God, and they don't realize that God gave them a job, right where they're living. So you have a speech impediment, so you have a limp, so you have a heart problem, so you have chocolate skin, so you have white skin.... it doesn't matter who you are, where you are or what you are – God will use you, if you restore your life to Him. God isn't calling for fancy or rich people, he's calling for ordinary people like you and I. But we're so busy following

our own dreams and desires we can't hear him. People talk about the world needing revival, and every one agrees. But revival doesn't start with a big movement; it starts with one person at a time, each turning from the world and each one restoring their personal lives to God. We're chasing after the world and trying to ignore God but he keeps gently calling for us. He asks that we give Him our hearts, our lives, our cars, our homes, our love, our family... and he will turn them around for his glory. When you restore to God what is rightfully His, the blessings that you earn by the trials he sends far surpass everything you had before. God wants restitution; will you give it to him?

*Hannah Holter
Endeavour, SK, Canada*

A Lasting Relationship

Too often I've seen two people become close, then something happens, and the relationship is broken. Then, the sad part is, it is never restored. Why are broken relationships usually not restored to a beautiful, lasting relationship? Wasn't the very purpose and goal of Jesus to restore us to God, to deliver us from our problems and set our feet on the solid rock for eternity? We love God and God loves us and our relationship with Him is restored; we love our brother and our brother loves us and our relationship with him is restored – those two go together. **And we have this commandment from Him, that he who loves God should love his**

brother also. 1 John 4:21 MKJV (See Matt. 22:37-40).

Oh, that God's salvation and love would destroy our enemies who are and have divided us, that He would restore our souls to Him and to each other, that we could praise the Lord and give Him the glory he deserves. Oh Lord my God, let not our enemies reign over us. Oh let them not have success. Let your name be blessed and all those who have sought diligently and continually after you. I'm so glad there is restoration and victory on God's side.

Uncomfortable Associations

By Timothy Martin

This is the third part of my series on depravity-based faith. The first two parts were “Father Plato” and “Holy Love” in the Summer/Fall 2009 issue of TBB.

The cornerstone of depravity-based faith is, as the name suggests, a belief in the idea that by birth man’s constitution is depraved, as Martin Luther said, “The ‘nature and essence’ of man is, from his birth, an evil tree and a child of wrath.” R. Seeburg, *History of Doctrine*, Volume II, p. 229

This is called original sin because it is a sin by origin not by action. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 102

Farfetched as it may be, according to this belief, you are on trial for your existence and all that it involves, good or bad. “Original sin is the corruption of man’s nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to evil, and that continually.” *Larger Catechism*

I’ve heard people say it this way: “Man can only do according to his nature therefore man can only sin.” “Man has freedom to choose but the only choice he can make is to sin.” “I sin every day. I can’t point to a sin that I’ve done each day but I know it must be.”

Some people even go so far as to say that the good things we do, even our prayers, are somehow sin. They seem to find support for that in the verse that says, “...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...” Isaiah 64:6

“...sin is the transgression of the law.” I John 3:4 Is there a law against doing good or praying? Apostle Paul said, “...against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:23 As my brother, Melvin, would say, “It is always right to do what is right.”

Where did this idea of original sin come from? It traces back through history through Calvin, Augustine, the

Gnostics and Platonists, to the Orphic and Pythagorean mystery cults of ancient Greece. See my article “Father Plato” in the Summer/Fall 2009 issue of TBB.

The Gnostics were dualistic (believing in two opposed forces or gods; the Christian faith is monotheistic, there is only one God) and were influenced by Platonism. They viewed matter (and the material world) as evil and spirit as good. Only those elite or elect ones who are enlightened with special knowledge or gnosis could be saved. This Gnostic revelation could not be acquired by the forces of reason or logic nor from revelation in Scripture but it is directly infused by the Spirit or by intuition of the mystery of the self.

Syrian-Egyptian Gnostics believed that an accident in the divine world caused the creation of this inferior world of darkness and according to Saturninus of Antioch (2nd century), who is commonly connected with Simon Magus (the Simon of Acts chapter 8), a primordial accident caused a wave of pneuma (“spirit”) to land in the inferior darkness. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1993, 26: p. 557 & 558

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in an article on Christian mysticism, says this about Jacob Bohme (1575-1624) who was one of the chief representatives of Protestant mysticism: “Bohme took over the Gnostic belief that the physical world arose from a primeval fall, renewed with the Fall of Adam. His teaching was the main formative influence on the developed outlook of William Law and William Blake (1757 - 1827).” E. B., 1993, 16: 333

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in an article on religious dualism, describes

two types. Dialectical dualism implies a cyclical view of history. Eschatological dualism is concerned with the ultimate destiny of man and the world in the last times, with a final resolution of the present dualistic state of things, in which evil will be eliminated at the end of a linear history. Gnostic dualism comprises both types. E. B., 1993, 26: 555- 556

The same article said that according to the Encratites (a 2nd-century semi-Gnostic sect) the preexistent soul, once it gets effeminized by concupiscent, drops into the carnal world. Since procreation perpetuates the soul's state of decay in this bodily world, they condemned all sexual relations. E. B., 1993, 26: 558 It also said that Gnostic and Manichaean antifeminism, as well as Encratite (and perhaps Orphic) antifeminism, are motivated by their hatred for procreation, which they believe implies the fall of the soul into the material world and its permanent abode there. E. B., 1993, 26: 559

You may at first think that anti-feminism is the opposite of feminism but it is not. The feminist movement tries to combine or equalize male and female roles. The Gnostics believed that God is androgynous (both male and female), hence you find this quote in the gnostic Gospel of Thomas: "Simon Peter said to them (the disciples): "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of Life." Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, p. 49, Vintage Books, 1989

Is this why Apostle Paul said that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28) and that women will be saved in childbearing (I Timothy 2:15) i.e. staying within the natural order and not becoming male?

The Platonist mystic, St. August-

tine of Hippo (354-430) was a Manichaean before he became a Catholic. The Encyclopedia Britannica says this about Manichaeism: "At its core, Manichaeism was a type of Gnosticism—a dualistic religion that offered salvation through special knowledge (gnosis) of spiritual truth. Like all forms of Gnosticism, Manichaeism taught that life in this world is unbearably painful and radically evil. Inner illumination or gnosis reveals that the soul which shares in the nature of God has fallen into the evil world of matter and must be saved by means of the spirit or intelligence (nous). To know one's self is to recover one's true self, which was previously clouded by ignorance and lack of self-consciousness because of its mingling with the body and with matter."

"Whatever its details, the essential theme of this mythology remains constant: the soul is fallen, entangled with evil matter, and then liberated by the spirit or nous. The myth unfolds in three stages: a past period in which there was a separation of the two radically opposed substances—Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness; a middle period (corresponding to the present) during which the two substances are mixed; and a future period in which the original duality will be reestablished. At death the soul of the righteous person returns to Paradise. The soul of the person who persisted in things of the flesh—fornication, procreation, possessions, cultivation, harvesting, eating of meat, drinking of wine—is condemned to rebirth in a succession of bodies." E. B., 1993, 7: 776

The future period mentioned above correlates well with modern doomsday futurism that says Christ will return and destroy this evil, fallen world which has been wholly affected by the Fall of man and the resultant pervasive evil seen everywhere even in nature and outer space. (I actually had a Cal-

vinist opine that there must be some sin somewhere in our lives that caused the cold, wet weather of 2009!)

Adolf von Harnack says of Augustine: "Absolutely Manichaeism is the view that man sins because he was created from nothing, "nothing" being here treated as an evil principle."

"Manichaeism also is the opinion that sexual desire is sinful, and that inherited sin is explained simply from procreation as the propagation of a vitiated [corrupted] nature..." "The most remarkable feature in the sexual sphere was, in his view, the involuntariness of the impulse." "It therefore propagates sin. That it does so is attested by the evidence of the senses, the sensuous, and therefore sinful pleasure in the act of procreation..." "The dualism lies in the proposition that children possess original sin, because their parents have procreated them in lust—and by this proposition stands or falls the doctrine of original sin (De nupt. II. 15). So also Christ has sinlessness attributed to him, because he was not born of marriage (Ench. 41, 34), and Augustine imagined paradisiacal marriages in which children were begotten without lust, or, as Julian says jestingly, were to be shaken from trees. All that he here maintains had been long ago held by Marcion and the Gnostics." "But to yield to it so far as Augustine did... could only happen at a time when doctrines were as confused as in the fifth century." "But the history of dogma is the history of ever increasing confusions, and of a growing indifference not only to the absurd, but also to contradictions..." History of Dogma, Volume V, p. 219, 211, & 212, Dover Publications, 1961

So you are born contaminated with sin because your parents had sex. Who made sex, anyway?

John Calvin, a well-known 16th-century reformer, tries to dodge the injustice of having God be the source of evil by saying: "Our perdition there-

fore proceeds from the sinfulness of our flesh, not from God, it being only a consequence of our degenerating from our primitive condition." "For the Preacher says, "This only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Eccles. 7:29 It is clear that the misery of man must be ascribed solely to himself, since he was favored with rectitude by the divine goodness but has lapsed into vanity through his own folly."

"We say, therefore, that man is corrupted by a natural depravity, but which did not originate from nature." "How could God, who is pleased with all his meanest works, be angry with the noblest of all his creatures? But he is angry rather with the corruption of his work than with his work itself." "Thus vanishes the foolish and nugatory system of the Manichaeans, who, having imagined in man a substantial wickedness, presumed to invent for him a new creator, that they might not appear to assign the cause and origin of evil to a righteous God." Institute of the Christian Religion, Book II, chapter 1, Classics of Protestantism, 1959, by Philosophical Library

Where then does this depraved nature come from? What new creator does Calvin and Augustine invent for man? Harnack says this: "Above all, however, the doctrine of original sin leads to Manichaeism, which Augustine never surmounted, and is accordingly an impious and foolish dogma. For, turn as he will, Augustine affirms an evil nature, and therewith a diabolic creator of the world. His doctrine of concupiscence conduces to the same view. Besides, he depreciates the glorious gift of human freedom, nay, even divine grace in Christ, since he holds that original sin is never entirely removed." History of Dogma, Vol. V, p. 217, Dover Publications, 1961

In his attempt to dispel any objection to an obvious falsehood, Calvin

gives us the answer: “Original sin, therefore, appears to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature... And this liableness to punishment does not arise from the delinquency of another; for when it is said that *the sin of Adam renders us obnoxious to the divine judgment*, it is not to be understood as if we, though innocent, were undeservedly loaded with the guilt of his sin, but, because *we are all subject to a curse in consequence of his transgression*, *he* is therefore said to have *involved us in guilt*. Nevertheless, *we derive from him* not only the punishment but *also the pollution* to which the punishment is justly due. Wherefore Augustine, though he frequently calls it the sin of another the more clearly to indicate its transmission to us by propagation, yet at the same time also asserts it properly to belong to every individual.” (Emphasis added)

“And therefore infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another. For though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed of it within them; even their whole nature is, as it were, a seed of sin, and therefore cannot be but odious and abominable to God. Whence it follows that it is properly accounted sin in the sight of God because there could be no guilt without crime. ...this depravity never ceases in us but is perpetually producing new fruits... For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evil that it cannot remain inactive. ...that everything in man—the understanding and will, the soul and body—is polluted and engrossed by this concupiscence; or, to express it more briefly, that man is of himself nothing else but concupiscence.” Institute of the Christian Religion, Book II, chapter 1

By the depraved logic which is still characteristic of Calvinists today, Calvin determined that the sin of Adam is the creator of present-day human nature and that, in spite of his own argument, innocent infants are justly condemned by God for a crime committed by someone else! (Augustine apparently believed in the preexistence of souls and some Calvinists still argue that everyone participated in Adam’s sinful act.) Such a warped idea of justice is not justice at all! Sadly, some of them treat others according to that warped sense of justice and would have you believe that it is pious and holy.

Calvin continues his dualistic argument: “It has now, I apprehend, been sufficiently proved that man is so enslaved by sin as to be of his own nature incapable of an effort, or even an aspiration, toward that which is good. We have also laid down a distinction between coercion and necessity from which it appears that, while he sins necessarily, he nevertheless sins voluntarily.” (In other words, natural man is forced into voluntary sin!)

“Augustine somewhere compares the human will to a horse obedient to the direction of his rider, and God and the devil he compares to riders. “If God rides it, he, like a sober and skillful rider, manages it in a graceful manner... But if the devil has taken possession of it, he, like a foolish and wanton rider forces it through pathless places, hurries it into ditches...” “The blinding of the wicked, and all those enormities which attend it, are called the works of Satan, the cause of which must nevertheless be sought only in the human will...” Institute of the Christian Religion, Book II, chapter 4

The urgent Calvinist gospel message then is that your depraved nature is the result of “an adventitious quality or accident” (John Calvin, Institute of the Christian Religion, Book II, chapter 1) that occurred thousands of years ago, that your will is the battleground

of a good God and a bad God, that “this depravity never ceases in us but is perpetually producing new fruits,” and that there is nothing you can do about it for you are “incapable of an effort, or even an aspiration, toward that which is good,” yet you are liable to punishment for it. Makes you want to love this capricious God that offers salvation from your unfortunate plight, doesn’t it?!

The doctrine of original sin is an elaborate, religion-approved system of blame-shifting. The blame is put on God, Satan, Adam, Eve, human nature, “a necessity of sinning,” an evil spirit, “I wasn’t born again yet,” or anything but the one who is responsible for the crime; not only punishable, I say, but responsible. Excuses are made rather than admitting the truth—you have loved the wrong thing and there is no good reason for having done so!

God will not allow us to be tempted above our ability. I Corinthians 10:13 God tempts no one. James 1:13 Depravity-based faith says that we are forced into sin by powers beyond our control for which God punishes us.

Sin is transgression of the law. I John 3:4 Love fulfills the law. Galatians 5:14 In the make-believe world of depravity-based faith sin exists independent of behavior (you are born with it) and righteousness also exists independent of behavior (it is a gift from God and no matter how you act you can never lose your relationship with Him). Relationships with God or man are imagined to be built and maintained without regard to behavior; and love is not an action—it is a foreign substance placed in your heart by God.

Under this irresponsible way of thinking you do not have the ability to control yourself. Your experiences in the real world since infancy of controlling your body and seeing the effects of your behavior are only an illusion. The basis of modern secular humanism is that actions do not have consequences—we can ignore God’s rules and still

have a good outcome. Depravity-based faith promotes a sense of disconnect between cause and effect. It weakens one’s sense of reality and waters down the character of God and His moral expectation of us.

Peter Jones, in his book “The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back,” exposes the Gnostic tenets of the New Age movement. He says of the Roman emperor Julian: “Ever since his death the world has been under the impression that Julian’s last-gasp admission of defeat before the conquering Jesus signaled the once-for-all demise of paganism.” page 12 “In our day the pagan Gnostic empire is striking back. What incredible irony! Whereas the old, once-pagan, godless Roman Empire became Christian, America, founded on God-honoring principles by orthodox Protestant Christians, is moving with alarming speed to embrace the very paganism that ancient Rome discarded.” page 11 P&R Publications, 1992

What incredible irony indeed! Paganism in high places never was eradicated. It simply put on a Christian face and became orthodox church dogma.



Book Review

Will the Theologians Please Sit Down,

by David Bercot, 2009, Scroll Publishing Company,

P. O. Box 122, Amberson, PA 17210 (717) 349-7033 www.scrollpublishing.com

Reviewed by Timothy Martin

After I wrote the first three articles in my series on depravity-based faith, a friend sent me this book and said I would enjoy it as it is saying some of the same things I am saying. I did enjoy it! Like my articles, the subject is about how the spiritual experts (Bercot calls them theologians; I would also include the philosophers) have badly corrupted Christianity, both historic and modern. While he does say some of the same things as I do, “Will the Theologians Please Sit Down” is certainly not a repeat of my articles.

I had known that the Great Reformers were wicked, ungodly men and that the result of their teachings was disastrous, but it was still a shocking reminder of the atrocities and blatant falsehood that was (and is) perpetrated by “Christians” in the name of right teaching. The Holocaust was not a new idea. Take Martin Luther for example. Beside his vicious attacks on Anabaptists, Catholics, and fellow Reformers, he urged the slaughter of up to 100,000 peasants in the Peasants’ War because they rose up against the tyranny of the Lutheran nobility of Germany. He also urged violent measures to be taken against the Jews and for them to be

ejected from the country.

This evil tree of Reformation doctrine bore its vile fruit because of the doctrine, not in spite of it. Bercot emphasizes bearing kingdom fruit over having correct doctrine. He does say that we should have correct doctrine, but he does not highlight the fact that the fruit coming from one’s life is the result of the doctrine believed by that person. He depicts the early church as having a simple gospel without complicated theological systems. He says, “If someone innocently misunderstood a statement made by Jesus or His apostles, the second-century church simply brushed it off.” Maybe so, but the Apostles certainly didn’t. The problem with complicated theological systems is not that they are complicated theological systems but that they are wrong and not what God said. God does care about having correct theology. There is a danger of over-reacting and rejecting intelligent study of the Scriptures in favor of permissive so-called “loving Jesus” and “going by the Spirit.”

Bercot contrasts the simplicity of the 63 word statement of faith penned by the 2nd-century theologian, Tertullian, with the 12,079 word West-

minster Confession of Faith of the 17th century. He notes that the farther you get from the time of Christ the more complex the theological dogma becomes. Why go back to the 2nd century? Why not go back to the inspired Scriptures? My statement of faith (the Bible) has 777,692 words in it; they are all important and Tertullian's statement of faith is not among them. Nevertheless, Bercot does clarify the focus of his book:

"It was primarily the religious authorities who opposed the kingdom of God in Jesus' day, and it has been that way ever since. When I use the term *theologian* in this book, I'm referring to the elite class of scholars and their disciples who have set themselves up as the official interpreters of Scripture. I'm in no way criticizing or condemning Christians who desire to learn all that God has revealed to us about Himself, Jesus Christ, mankind, salvation, life after death, and a whole host of other spiritual subjects. Rather, my criticism is aimed at those elitists who claim for themselves the right to interpret Scripture but deny it to others."

Bercot points out something that I also noticed before: "When a person reads the typical doctrinal textbooks of today's Anabaptists, Moravians, Brethren, and other kingdom Christians, he or she finds that they basically teach the doctrines of Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin—with the mere addition of nonresistance, free will, and

the head covering."

Bercot has a section on standing up to the theological bullies and on the fallacy of the hidden insights of the Greek language experts. He also points out the false information in the commentaries, study Bibles, and other theological reference books. For example, he exposes the agape love myth, the unveiled prostitutes of Corinth myth, the Jewish men didn't talk to women myth, and the significance of five women in Jesus' genealogy myth.

Some of the false information that he exposes is easy to prove false and some is not so easy because it is based on what he calls counterfeit history—history that simply doesn't exist. I can verify his statements on some things (like the agape love myth) but I find it harder to prove the nonexistence of nonexistent history!

It is a much needed book for today's misinformed Christians. At 199 pages of easy reading, it is not too long and to the non-theologian, it is easy to understand.



Proverbs 6:30-35

"Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own

soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts."

The Oil Fire

November 2009

By Melvin Martin

On Monday afternoon, I decided to heat some vegetable oil in the heater tank. I got the fire going and left. It was a windy day. I think I had come back and checked on it and left again. I went up to my place (big house) and was filling my big tank by the pond with water that I set up to go swimming in. I was planning to go back down again pretty soon. As I was filling the tank I glanced in the direction of my oil, and I saw more smoke than should have been coming from the heater tank stove. Just as I noticed the smoke, I heard Tim yell my name from the house. I assumed he was yelling about the smoke, but it didn't matter what he was yelling about, I ignored him. And just before I had a thought that I should go check my fire. I shut my pump off in a hurry and ran as fast as I thought I dared. Tim came on his bike. When I got there and looked over the situation a bit, I realized it was out of our ability to stop it and that it was going to spread into a lot more places, so I yelled to Luray to call 911.

Before this, Luray had noticed the smoke, and went to investigate. He realized it was pretty hot and started to go for help. Just as he started to leave, there was a terrific explosion that he felt the wind from. His pace increased to maximum! He ran to call me. Tim happened to be at my phone, and he went out and yelled at me, though I had noticed the smoke an instant before.

While we were waiting for the fire department, there were a few more explosions. My full diesel fuel tank exploded twice. My neighbor, Gerard, from about a mile down the road, came to see what the big explosion was about. Daniel and Jim were at the sawmill. Daniel heard and felt the explosion with his earmuffs on and the sawmill running! Jim noticed me run like something was wrong. So they came to investigate. There was only

one really big explosion, the rest were much smaller. The big explosion was the one that Luray felt the wind from!

Within a few minutes, the fire department was there. They ran two fire hoses out and squirt water on it. In a few more minutes, the fire was out.

All things considered, I got away very good. It could have been a lot worse. If the fire department wouldn't have come, a lot more would have burnt. If the diesel tank wouldn't have held together but would have leaked, I'd have lost the fuel, the fire would have been many times hotter, and I'd have had a horrible mess to clean up.

The cause of the fire was a spark from the heater tank. I think it started in some leaves, traveled to the centrifuge, then to the clean oil pump, and then under all the storage tanks. There were lots of leaves all around. And they were dry because we didn't have any rain the last few days. I should have thought of it that it was a windy day. I should have never lit the fire or I should have stayed there all the time. But I didn't.

I had plans to build a much nicer and safer oil setup for quite awhile already, but it didn't happen. I knew I had a less than satisfactory setup. Now after a lot of cleaning, fixing, and building, I am well on my way to having a new setup like I like.

One tiny spark can make a terrific fire. One little sin can destroy your life. One bad word can do a lot of damage. One evil friend can destroy you. When God says to fully follow Him, he really means it.

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the Light.

Questions and Answers

Question from Spring 2009:

How can you tell if something is of the Devil or of God?

How can you tell if something is just your own idea or if it's from God?

How can you tell who is a true prophet and who is a false prophet?

Answer: God is truth, life, light, and love. (John 1:1-9, 14:6, 1 John 4:7-10) The devil is a liar and murderer. (John 8:44) Lots of times we know where things come from, if we honestly want to know. But because Satan has distorted truth and we have been carried away by our own lusts, we have been blinded. God has provided two things to show us His will: the Bible and the Holy Spirit. These two always agree.

God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. Joh 4:24 MKJV

We find the truth of God by careful study of the Bible. The Spirit reveals to us the things of God. **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** 1 Cor. 2:14, read 9-16.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits to see if they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of

God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the antichrist you heard is coming, and even now is already in the world.

You are of God, little children, and you have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us. The one who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1Jn 4:1-6 MKJV. See Rom. 8:1-16.

Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Mat 7:15-16 MKJV. Read Mat 7:15-20. Also: Deu. 13:1-4, 18:20-22, Jer.23:25-40, 28:8-9

Trust in the LORD with all thy heart; and lean not to thy own understanding. Pro 3:5 Webster

The only way to settle a disagreement is on the basis of what's right—not who's right.

Awhile ago I was getting ready to heat some vegetable oil in my big heater tank. I was throwing slab wood in the firebox. A piece of slab wood got jammed on a crosspiece in the firebox and instantly stopped. The inertia of my hand and the force of my arm jammed the splintered end of the slab wood into my hand. It ripped the skin on my hand a few places. I thought there may be a splinter in my hand but it didn't look too bad, so I kept working. When I got to the house, I cleaned it out as well as I could. I pushed around on it in every direction to be sure there was no splinter. I took good care of it. It got better and worse as the days went by. Then it got sore and infected and a red streak started up my arm. I realized I need to get serious about this problem. I diligently treated it with hot and cold water, essential oils and stopped using it. It got better. But it didn't heal and in a few days the red streak came back. My hand was really swelling up and puss was coming out from time to time. I again got real strict with my remedies but it didn't help much. Something was really wrong. At

Dad's suggestion, I got a good sharp razor blade and started cutting away at any dead tissue in the wound. I dug deeper and deeper until suddenly I hooked a big splinter with the razor blade. A whole bunch of puss came out with the splinter. In a few hours the swelling went down a lot and it felt a lot better. As it healed in the next few weeks, the skin peeled and looked terrible.

Now let us learn a lesson from this story. If you have a problem with your relationship with God or with a fellow man, and you don't get to the root of what caused the problem to start with, you can do all kinds of right things and it won't fix the problem. The other thing we can learn is it is good and necessary to do the good things even if it isn't getting to the root of the problem. If I wouldn't have been fighting the infection in my hand, it would have spread through out my whole body and probably killed me.

What is a miracle?

We go about our business day by day. Then one day something great, something unexpected, something out of the ordinary happens. We are excited, for God did a miracle. And indeed, God did do a miracle, indeed it is great. We praise God for what he has done.

But do you realize the fact that you can go about your business day by day, the fact that you are alive is, in one sense of the word, a miracle! Only because of God's greatness, His wisdom, His knowledge, His understanding, His love that you even are. Don't forget to praise God as you go about your business day by day.

And if you have been transformed by Christ's Spirit from a selfish, fearful person to an ambassador of God's Kingdom of light, love, and peace, then you are a miracle of His grace. **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Php 4:13**

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. Proverbs 3:19-20



Heart and Home Harmony

Aiming for hearts, homes, and lives in harmony with:
God and His Church, and the rest of His creation through the Holy Spirit.

Blessings and Trials

We are blessed with two precious new granddaughters and we are looking for two more grandchildren in the next few weeks.

We thank God for the blessings. Sometimes we take them for granted, but we seldom ask, "Why, Lord?" However, when trials come, we tend to question God. But even trials can yield

greater blessings than we ever imagined, if we obey Him and keep our focus on Him and our blessings. To experience His goodness, we do not need to understand the reasons for everything, we just need to trust Him.

Wishing you God's blessings,
Luke and Rachel Martin



Rebecca Dawn Martin
born to Daniel & Mendy
Jan. 22, 2010

Sarah Jane Hall
born to Rob & Emily
Feb. 4, 2010



When Rebecca was born, Toni was on her way to the hospital. See pages 20-22

Most of the time my heart beats much too slow. I have been diagnosed with a 2nd degree AV heart block. This means there is a blockage in the flow of electricity that signals my heart to beat, causing in me a slow rate and an odd 3 part beat, instead of the normal, healthy 2 part rhythm. We pray, trusting God knows best. While I would like to be healed of this problem, it is far more important that God heals my spiritual heart. That, I know is His will, and if I give my heart to Him, He will.

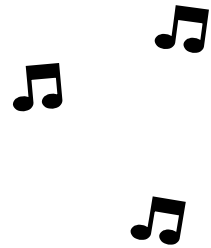
Lord, Unblock My Heart

God who planned our lives on earth,
For a purpose gave us birth.
His good work He set in motion,
Seeking all our heart's devotion.



But alas! Sin's burden marred my heart,
And deadened my soul.
My life lost its rhyme and rhythm.
Confusion dragged me along.

In my heart I hear some singing.
Melodies of love are ringing;
From God's heart, a steady beating
Bids me come. Oh, what a meeting!
Now His life through me is flowing,
And my quickened heart is glowing.



Injustices come and my heart is sore vexed.
Lord, help me to love. Will I pass this test?
Alas, what is wrong in the depth of my soul?
For the pulse of my love is uneven and slow.
I looked inside, and God helped me to see.
My heart was too selfish to let love flow free.
There was that persistent pride, hanging around.
And I found I had fear, greatly slowing me down.
It all worked together to effectively block
The pace of my love. To my Healer I look.

I'm the one that's mercy needing.
Lord, for help and strength I'm pleading.
Open up my heart door's story.
Clean away—for Thine's the glory.
If some think I'm offbeat surely,
I won't care. I rest securely,



Close enough to feel God's ticker
Flowing through to make mine quicker.
So His glory I'll be showing.
In His will may I be growing.



The fires of trials have started to sear.
Sorrow and sickness, injustice and fear,
Our purposes dashed. Lord, how long will this be? Are you there?
Please, help! I know that You care.

Peace divine, all enveloping,
Lifting, leading—keeps me hoping.
May the trials keep us learning,
May the dross continue burning,
Ever cleaner, purer turning;
Better still, Your will discerning.
Is my love like Yours, forgiving?
Less of me and more of giving?
May my path be Yours the choosing.
And my life be Yours for using.
But, Oh Lord, I need Your power;
People often make me cower.
Give me wisdom in my weakness;
Give me boldness, gracious meekness.
Set my heart in rhythm surely,
Burdened with compassion purely.



You probably noticed something “off” in the rhythm and rhyme in parts of this poem. It is because I tried to fit the rhythm to my various experiences.

When I was in sin, I was “out of it.”

In Christ, there is a perfect rhythm and rhyme to life, like the Tup-tup of a healthy heart.

When problems came, my life, and my poem, faltered with imperfect rhythm and rhyme, and were like the slower, 3 part beat of my physical heart.

The beat of our physical hearts are in God's hand. We could be a heartbeat from eternity and we can not stop our hearts from stopping. Likewise, I cannot heal my heart. But, I can choose abundant life in Christ by repenting and loving Him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is more important that I become fit to work in His Kingdom, a true representative of His love.

I like this quote by Terri Bale: “Those who fight against God and ‘live’ as though there were no rhyme to contribute to, nor rhythm to take up and broadcast, nor reason to reach for, take hold of, and pass on—they fight against their own lives as they fight against their Creator, the Great Poet of all His poems.”

Thank you, Terri and Cherie, for your input and critique of my poem.

--Rachel Martin

The Children's Challenge

To Charity and Cheerfulness

Toni's Testimony

By Toni Anne Flynn, age 9

Larisa was most likely the first person to show me Jesus. Larisa showed Jesus to me by how she acted. She didn't act like the other teenagers. She was modest. She was kind to me. She cared more about other people than herself. She is a good example of Christ for me. I want to be more like her.

After Jessica got saved I saw a change in her. She acted nicer to her sisters and friends. She cared more about other people than things.

When I was in the hospital on the ventilator, I couldn't easily talk to anybody. I was so happy to have Jesus to talk to. I was on life support with a tube down my throat. I could have easily died. I was in I.C.U. totally paralyzed with Guillain Barre. I was so sick I didn't know if I would live. When my friend Jonny died, it affected so many people, but he is in a better place. Because I already knew Jesus, and had him in my heart, I knew I would be OK. I was really worried about my baby brother and sister, Paul and Joy, missing me if I died.

You can hear the Lord lots more after you get saved. I was glad He was beside me the whole time I was sick. He is right with me every day.

My church family and hundreds of people prayed for me and helped me while I was sick. They showed me Jesus through a lot of kind acts. They cared for me in so many ways.

I made a new friend who also loves the Lord, while I was at the hospital. His name was Fransisco. He made a point of reaching out with food, even though he didn't have a lot of money. Most importantly, he reached out with hope. It was amazing that he didn't have much, but he really knew that God loves him. He really did a good job of sharing Jesus.

Now that I have Jesus in my heart I want to share the Gospel. I want to share the Gospel through my actions. I want to be modest. I want to read the Bible and pray. I want to wear a head covering as a sign that I respect God. I want others to see Jesus by the way I care for them and love them. I think sharing is very important. I want to share Jesus. ✕

See story on next page



Seeds of Faith

By Cherie Whitten

My daughter Toni asked Jesus to be her Savior years ago. She has tried hard to keep her eye on Him. This past fall she asked to be baptized. Being she is only 9 years old, I had some reservations regarding her level of maturity in making such an important decision. I was not the only one who felt this way. Shortly thereafter Toni faced some challenges to her convictions which she fell short of perfect on. This may have been the reason that she didn't immediately persist in her baptism request. I thought I'd just give her some more time...

Time, so hard to grasp, untouchable, changing, fleeting... Just a few months later we thought Toni had growing pains, a balance issue—then we were in ICU, with Toni on life support. In just a few days she went from healthy—to dying? Guillain-Barre Syndrome is rarely fatal. But, ventilated life support and protocol treatment has its own issues. Toni was four days from first symptoms to life support. Hardly was there time to research and make informed decisions. I could try to manage her physically, within my limitations, but what I could really do was PRAY!

“Lord, my God, she loves You. She gave her life to You. She’s a good girl with a pure heart. Help her, please... I’m so sorry I focus on the things of the world more than I need to. Please give me a chance to do better... I’m so sorry I didn’t baptize her... yet. Thy will be done, not mine.” I prayed for her, and nursed her and prayed for her, on a constant vigil. I didn’t sleep and she didn’t sleep. Her breathing was bad. The atmosphere was crazy. She had bad reactions and then ventilator induced pneumonia. Her case being quick onset had a poor recovery curve prognosis. All I needed was a seed

though. Just a seed of faith to plant, and then I better do my part.

She was so strong. Only 9 and so brave. She was kind, loving and praising God, with a tube in her mouth, all but her tongue and eyes paralyzed, playing twenty questions, “God is Good.” Some of her thoughts were too profound to express in twenty questions. I could feel her questioning, but it was too hard to communicate. Just keep up a constant vigil. Just be there and love her. Don’t fall asleep, don’t leave her, how long can I last?

Then one morning her cold skin no longer felt like a plastic doll to me. There was life there again. I could feel her energy! She was getting better and I knew it. Each day a little more, then on the third day I felt her muscle twitch in my hand. It was that same morning the doctors told me they thought she may need ventilator support for several months. They wanted to schedule a tracheotomy in two days. But I knew she was getting better, and they couldn’t see it. I told them they could schedule it if they wanted to, but that she may not need it, because God is powerful and He can heal. I told them to go home and pray for my daughter that night, that God could heal her. It was that same night she made remarkable breathing progress, and the next day that the doctors could see it too. She never needed the Tracheotomy. She was pulled off the ventilator two days later, after 19 days.

We had so many struggles during that time I couldn’t possibly record them all here. A situation such as this is so difficult to manage properly. But I learned so much. I learned that a child can teach adults much more than I realized. A child is capable of knowing their own body better than the “professionals”. A child can spread

love that an adult may not be able to receive from any other. A child can serve God. A Mom can know her child better than the doctors, and that it is very hard to ask a team of doctors to pray for your child. It is very hard to help the medical profession facilitate an understanding of your own personal faith.

When Toni was pulled off the ventilator it was hard for her to talk at all. Just a few scratchy whispers per hour was all she could muster. One of her first thoughts was, "Mom, I think it was good that this happened to me because I learned how to talk to God all the time. I learned that Jesus can listen when no one else can." "Mom, if I died I knew it would be great going to heaven, but I knew how you all would feel. I hurt thinking of Paul-Paul and Baby Joy missing me." "It would be worth going through this if it would just save one person." Some of her thoughts were remarkably profound for her age. Or were they? I knew my daughter well; or did I? I had underestimated her strength and almost required proof. Did I want a "sign" that she was capable of making a decision to serve God? Am I one of a "faithless and perverse generation?" Who am I anyway to judge another's heart?

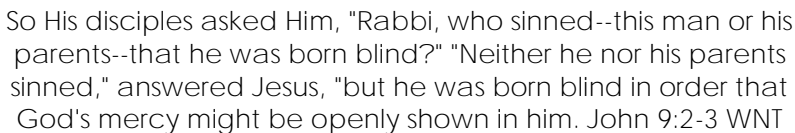
Through all these trials Toni never cursed God. She loved those around her. She treated others as she would like to be treated. She had a heart full of love, reaching out to share it with everyone. She told one doctor she loved her. That doctor had come to really like Toni, but in the medical profession, doctors really should not "love" their patients. How does this reconcile with the healing that Jesus demonstrated?

There were many other things we could not reconcile. Our form of healing is different than the mainstream medical profession. We have a different faith. We have a different respect. We felt disrespected, devalued and

oppressed by some. But, there were rays of hope, if we could just see them. There were others with the same experiences. Maybe we could help them and pave the way for future patients to be understood. There were doctors, nurses, therapists and staff who understood and reached out to us. God's people were there too, working in an oppressive environment, so as to bring that ray of hope to those who would need it.

When, after 36 days, we stepped back into our community and reunited with our church family we were overwhelmed with feelings of love and gratitude. Just two weeks home now, and it almost seems like a dream. But Toni is still regenerating, and is just now starting to stand. Baby Joy just turned one and knows who I am now, but I'll never forget how she looked at me unknowingly the night I returned after being absent 36 days. And, we have bags of cards and a message from God imprinted on our hearts. The church comes to visit. Not just the people who attend our particular services, but God's people, the servants who listen to Him and obey. They come to see us, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with the power of love. His Love! We experience faith in action. With them we gather in the presence of Jesus and feel our souls ache with the power of the Holy Spirit. We are Blessed! God is Good!

Today, March 14th, we baptized Toni. We laid hands on her in the name of Jesus, and prayed that her love for Him be forever true. The physical struggles of survival have been replaced by spiritual lessons that I hope we will hold close to our hearts forever... ✠



So His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned--this man or his parents--that he was born blind?" "Neither he nor his parents sinned," answered Jesus, "but he was born blind in order that God's mercy might be openly shown in him. John 9:2-3 WNT

Sometimes Smart People Do Stupid Things

By I. M. Wright

Most people have some smarts about them. I'm sure you agree though, that people do stupid things. Another thing about people is that they will try to please, imitate, follow, and worship something. So if our leader falls into the ditch, we do too. Maybe we should consider how intelligent and benevolent are the things that dictate what we do.

I don't like it if anybody thinks I did something stupid. So how can I convince everybody that I am right? That's a problem; because, we don't all agree on what is stupid. For everybody who admires what I do, there could be 100's who think it's stupid.

For example, while working and sweating in my garden, I may pity the one who seemingly has nothing better to do than drive in circles on a four-wheeler. He may think I'm foolish to slave away in such heat.

Some love, or even live, to kick, throw, roll, or bat a ball around. Some love to sit and watch—and even worship—others who kick, throw, roll, or bat a ball around. Some ruin their health to prove they can do something better than everyone else. Others think it's all a foolish waste.

Some try to impress people with things and rings and colors put in or on their skin or by the clothes they wear, or worse yet, a lack of them. Others cringe in disgust to see it.

Some think you don't amount to anything if you don't go to college. Others think like the Psalmist who wrote, ...**I have more understanding than all my teachers...** Psalms 119:99

Some sit and watch people do stupid things and make-believe dramas on movie screens. Others think that's foolish; because, they could use their talent and be a part of the greatest real drama ever.

Some think you have a bad spirit if you don't believe certain doctrines. Others wonder how anyone could believe such stupid doctrines.

Some think all religion is stupid. They just don't realize they also have a religion—on which they have already passed judgment.

I could come up with all kinds of bizarre, horrendous, disgusting, pathetic, laughable or cry-able examples of human ineptness. But I'm sure you have seen enough of it yourself.

Well, so much for all our trying to beat everybody to the top, for trying to

convince others that we are the best looking, the wisest, the smartest, the strongest. How many have we convinced? Really, if you think about it, it isn't smart to try to beat everybody, or to blame them when you can't.

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 2 Corinthians 10:12 KJV

I recently came across this quote: *The easiest way to grow as a person is to surround yourself with people who are smarter than you are.* The sad thing is, many do the opposite. They avoid those that they think are smarter. By hanging around with those who are lower, they feel more on top.

It would be very silly to avoid me because you feel lower; considering, (I might as well admit it) very likely I have beaten you in doing stupid things. One time I made bread and then I sat on it. Thankfully, It was still hot enough to let me know what I was doing. Actually, I've done much worse things. I'd be too ashamed to tell you about them. I don't even like to think about them; it's too depressing.

Maybe you think this article is stupid. Well, now you know that I am right about me doing stupid things. Jesus agrees. He said...**No one is good except one, God.** Mark 10:18 MKJV

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Rom. 3:23

Not every stupid thing we do is sin—but every sin is a stupid thing to do. And that is a serious matter. Sinful stupidity will kill us while we are still alive; and the harm is never just to ourselves. Thankfully there is a remedy in Christ if we accept His sacrifice for our sins. He will help us follow the wise One instead of trying to impress, please, imitate, follow, and idolize people.

The fear of the LORD is the be-

ginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. Psalms 111:10 KJV

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Pro 1:7

Most people aren't even at the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. That is why the Psalmist could say, **I have more understanding than all my teachers...** The rest of the verse explains: **...for thy testimonies are my meditation.** Psalms 119:99 KJV

Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Psalms 119:6 KJV

I almost agree that all religion is stupid. The only exception is: **Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.** James 1:27

Either we worship our Creator, the one true, life-giving God, or we have an idol. Idols are dumb, cannot be trusted, and cannot give life. When we give ourselves to follow people, churches, things, or our own selfish lusts, we invariably get tricked into doing foolish things. Stupidity multiplies if we follow each other around or when substances paralyze our sense.

They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. Isaiah 45:16 KJV

Regardless of where idolatry has taken you or how trapped in it you may be, you do not need to stay there. **For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.** Isaiah 50:7 KJV

Set your face. You can't be looking around at other things, one foot in the world, afraid to let go of some of the stupidity that has become to feel comfortable. Many say, "Lord, Lord," but do not do what He says. (Luke

6:46, Matt. 7:19-27, Rev. 3:14-22.) To be a deceived, lukewarm or half-hearted “Christian” is wholly foolish.

We are called to something much higher—the wisdom and knowledge of God! **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!** Romans 11:33 KJV

In Him we never run out of worthwhile things to do and learn. To understand and know Him is to find love, joy, peace... all that’s good, and power over sin. Then we’ll realize just how stupid the imaginations of our heart and mind were.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15 KJV

I’m sure that you, with a brain like you have, can do a lot of good. If you repent, accept Christ’s forgiveness, make restitution where you can, and keep learning, then you need not dwell in the past or worry about those who will think or say you are stupid. You will be your best when you do and be what God made you to be.

I need smart people, hopefully like you, to be around so I can grow. Most of all, I need God. If you know me,

you know I am right when I say I need all the help I can get.

We can be sure we are right, when we are praising God! We can’t go wrong comparing and aligning ourselves to the One who knows it all and cares about us. He is available and He holds us responsible for what we do to each one. I’m glad He is patient and merciful. For all the stupid things I have done—you better not hold me too hard—I have no doubt I am right about this: GOD IS GOOD—and we NEED to make use of that goodness! ✕

Wait on the Lord

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 Webster

One evening we were sitting around singing. We sang “They that wait upon the Lord” which brought up that question, “How do we wait on the Lord?” Several ideas were brought out, such as, time spent in expectation or waiting on Him as in

servicing Him, like a waitress does.

One of my friends looked it up and found that “wait” in that place meant to *bind together, to intertwine*.

What a beautiful thought! They that have their hearts and lives binding and intertwining with the Lord will have their strength renewed.

Larisa Martin

God Gave Jonathan

In memory of Jonathan, whose name means "Jehovah gave."

August sixteen, 'ninety-one
Jehovah gave to us a son.
Oh! What satisfying joy,
This gift, this bright and busy boy.

He chose to serve the God who gave
His Son to die, our souls to save.
God gave a Light; Jon saw the flame.
He took the torch, to spread His name.

For fifteen years the world he blessed.
God gave him then eternal rest.
A painful, empty spot in the nest;
We know that God gives what is best.

To you, young friend, who loved him too,
God gave, in him, a friend to you.
He was a help, a mentor true,
Someone you could look up to.

In him, God gave this world a ray
Of hope of noble men to sway
The tide of evil to the right,
And help the downcast rise to Light.

To young and old he was a friend.
To you may I this comfort send.
The light of his example lives.
God gave us much, and He still gives.

Take up the torch so men can see,
God gave us mercy, sets us free.
God gave His love; Jon sang the song;
Take up the tune; resist the wrong.

God gave us Jonny; now he's gone;
It's up to us to carry on.
Christ, the Son, gave Jon the grace;
He'll help us, also, run the race.

Last Minute Update

March 30, 2010

Dear Readers,

A little more time has gone by as we deal with a few more small delays in printing, so I'll give an update.

Toni continues to improve remarkably. Today she took a few steps, unsteady but without holding onto something! It is now six weeks since she is off life support.

Since last Fall, my average heart rate has been slowly dropping further, until a few weeks ago. We had consulted professionals and tried various things. I decided to try a hair test and supplemental and diet program to balance the ratio of minerals in my body. In the meantime my heart rate dropped as low as 26-32 beats per minute for a few days. From the time I cut out simple sugars from my diet, my average rate has slowly climbed. It is still irregular but 30-65 is better than it was! (Normal is 60-100.) It gives me hope of avoiding a pacemaker. Our hearts overflow with thanksgiving to God. We hope and pray for continued improvement.

Three years ago today, Jonathan was called to his heavenly home. I spent some time today writing a poem about him. That helped me to focus more on his life than on the painful memories of his death.

We got together this evening, except for Timothy. He went to Kentucky to attend the funeral of members of the Esh family, which is today. Our hearts go out to all the families who lost loved ones in the head on collision of their van and a tractor-trailer. The crash took the lives of 11 people, John and Sadie, four of their children, a daughter-in-law, infant grandson, the fiancé of one of the daughters, a friend, and the truck driver. Two grandsons, 3 and 5 years old, survived the crash. Our thoughts and pray-



Toni can stand, holding onto something!

ers are with the families.

Our thoughts also go to the people of Haiti. Indeed, we have much to be thankful for.

Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Pro. 27:1.
Are you ready to meet your Maker?

Sincerely,
Rachel Martin

Baking tip: Do you have trouble getting distracted while measuring your flour or other ingredients and forgetting how many cups you put in? Measure your flour into a pan, putting each cupful on a separate pile. If you lose track, just count the mounds.

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“Bring forth
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fruits meet for
repentance:”

Matthew 3:8