

EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCH(GCEPC)INC,
LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCH(LEPC)

The Evangelical Protestant The Magazine of the Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church

SPRING 2012

FIRST ISSUE 1917

**BREAKING
NEWS!
CHRIST IS
RISEN!**

FILM AT
ELEVEN. ED.

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

Witness to the Resurrection	1
Who we are	2
Bishop's Page	3
PTSD	4
Visions of Jesus Stir Muslim Hearts	6
WHEN SUICIDE FAILED, WHAT NEXT?	10
What Was Roman Crucifixion Like?	13
"Seasons"	15
"Africa: A Continent in Turmoil, a Conti-	16
Evangelism Research and Cultural Trends	18
"Evangelism Connection	23
"Beyond Hope? Not to Pastor Rosey	24
"The Back Page"	26



WITNESS to the RESURRECTION!

WAS JESUS SEEN ALIVE AFTER HIS DEATH?

There was a great earthquake in the early morning as the stone covering the entrance to the tomb was rolled away. Jesus was seen of men and of angels. (Matt. 28:2-4) The Roman soldiers guarding the tomb saw Him and fell over like they were dead. Later they were paid to keep thier mouths shut about what they had seen. (Matt. 28:11-15)

A short while later Jesus appeared to the two Mary's and the other women as they were on their way and outside of the Garden tomb. (Mk. 16:2-8; Matt. 28:5-8; Lk. 24:1-8; Jn. 20:1, Mk. 16:9-11; Jn. 20:11-18, Matt. 28:9-10)

In the afternoon of the first day of the week (Sunday) Jesus appeared "out of nowhere" and walked, talked and opened the scriptures and the understanding of two disciples from the Emmaus Road. He had a snack while visiting with them.

In Jerusalem on Sunday evening Jesus appears to Simon Peter (Lk. 24:33-35; I Cor. 15:5) and later that same evening to all of the other disciples in the upper room... except for Thomas.(Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-25)



On Sunday night a week later Thomas receives a special visit from Jesus while visiting with the other disciples. And just to make sure everyone knew it was Him, He walked through the wall to get there or again appeared "out of nowhere.." (Jn. 20:26-31; I Cor. 15:5)

Sometime at the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection day and before the ascension Jesus appeared to seven of the disciples and prepared a meal for them inviting them to come and dine and threw in a large batch of fish. (John 21)

Jesus spoke to a congregation of over 500 on the mountain side at Galilee and gave the great commission to His disciples. (Mk.

16:15-18; Matt. 28:16-20; I Cor. 15:6)

Jesus appeared to His brother James. If you recall this is one of the same brothers who did not believe in Jesus. Jesus was derided because his family relationships made him no one special."Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him" (Mark 6:3; see also [Matthew 13:55-56](#), John 7:4). This same brother of Jesus became head of the church in Jerusalem and is mentioned by the Apostle Paul. ([Acts 15:13-19](#);see also 21:18).

Jesus appears to the disciples again and teaches them that He is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and gives another commission. (Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8)

On Mt. Olivet between Jerusalem and Bethany Jesus blessed those who were gathered and was then taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. A bunch of people including Jesus' Mother sand some angels saw this happen. Jesus, however, did

(Continued on page 5)



Evangelical Protestant
Church (GCEPC) Inc.,

Lutheran Evangelical
Protestant Church (LEPC),

*GCEPC "For it is by grace
you have been saved,
through faith, and this not
from yourselves,
it is the gift of God, not by works,
so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2: 8*

The Most Rev. Nancy Drew
Presiding Bishop/President
The Rt. Rev. Jessica Johnston
Executive Bishop/Vice President
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Tutrone
Bishop Consular
Board of Advisors - Council of Bishops
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Dr. David Church
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Dr. William Dorn
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Dr. Harvey Menden
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Linda Dabney
Bishop The Rev. Dr. Israel Ikpeka
Bishop The Rev. Dr. Fred Macharia
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Ralf Muller
Bishop (Interim) Rev. Dr. Michael Norton
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Dennis Overlien
Bishop The Rt. Rev. Dr. Francesco Reale

The Evangelical Protestant Journal "Kirchenbote"
(Church Messenger) was established in 1885,
Gustav Schmidt became editor. In 1917, the German
Evangelical churches in the Pittsburgh area began publication
of a monthly entitled The Evangelical Protestant. (Archives Smithfield UCC)
Members may reproduce and distribute this issue.

We Believe

- 1. The Holy Scriptures**, in the original tongues, is the inspired and inerrant word of God. (Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16,17) 2.
- 2. There is one God**, eternal and self-existent, Creator and Ruler of the universe, and manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 1:18, Matthew 3:16-17) We are Trinitarian.
- 3. Jesus Christ** is truly divine and truly human having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Matt.1: 18)
- 4. Jesus Christ** died on the cross and shed His blood as a Sacrifice for our sins; He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High.(1 John2:2)
- 5. Humankind** was created in the image of God, but fell into sin causing separation from God.(Gen. 3:1-24)
- 6. Salvation** has been provided through Jesus Christ for all; and those who repent and believe on Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God. (John 1:10)
- 7. Water baptism** identifies us with the death and burial of Christ and that we should arise to walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19-20)
- 8. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit** to glorify Christ, to convict of sin, to enable the believer to live a godly life, and to empower the Church to carry the gospel into all the world. (Matthew 12:31, Acts 1:8.)
- 9. In the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ** for His Church. (Matthew 24:30, Rev 1:7)
- 10. In the bodily resurrection** of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and everlasting separation from God of all those who reject Jesus Christ. (John 1:10-13, Rev 20:11-15.)

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin
Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and
was buried; he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he
is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come
again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the
communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

Bishop's Page



Hello Everyone,

Welcome to our Spring 2012 Issue of the Evangelical Protestant!

The day of new things has brought many good things to the EPC GCEPC LEPC! Since our official re-beginning in 2000 and non-profit incorporation in 2001 we also became incorporated in South Carolina and have obtained other incorporations as our ministry has expanded. In 2005 with the election of a new presiding bishop our corporate offices were moved to South Carolina where our ministry has grown across the country and around the world bringing His Message, His Ministry to His World. We have established other non-profits under the Umbrella of the EPC GCEPC LEPC looking to future growth and Global Communion. In 2011 we celebrated our 12th year at a wonderful Annual General Conference. This is our thirteenth year of ministry and we believe a time of "breaking down of walls" (as at Jericho) to go into new territory for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.

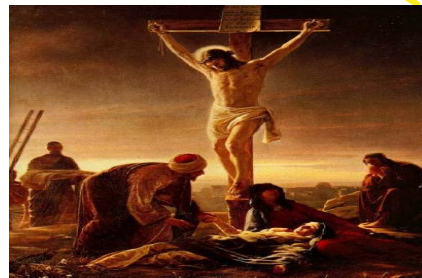
The EPC GCEPC LEPC is unique in that we have our roots in both Lutheran and Reformed Traditions but our main and most important rooting and foundation is in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Chief Cornerstone. The secret of all success is always found in Him. By the direction of the Holy Spirit we have expanded ecumenically through our chaplaincy program for Military/Veterans, Emer-

gency Service, Hospital, Mental Health and Special Services Chaplains. Reaching out to establish and enlarge our boundaries to work for unity in the Body of Christ the Lord lead us into membership in the National Association of Evangelicals and through them the World Evangelical Alliance. We are members of the Mission America Coalition (MAC)



promoting the message of Christ neighborhood to neighborhood across denominational, racial and ethnic boundaries. In April 2012 a Conference "Gather the Nations into Community, Psalm 86:9" will be held in Spartanburg, SC through Intercultural Network Carolina. You can get more information on this event in this issue of the Evangelical Protestant. Our church planting program "House to House" fits nicely with the vision of the MAC. We welcome those who have a vision for planting churches in many forms. Some are established along more traditional lines which we applaud! Others are established as house churches, One New Man groups, Outreach Groups, in Mobile Home Parks, Seasonally in RV Parks, others have special focus for recovery groups, Retreat Centers, the possibilities are endless and we applaud all of these! Wherever Jesus Christ is lifted up and given glory and His people are ministered to with His message and His ministry we are happy! We thank the Lord for His vision and the creativity He has given to the EPC GCEPC LEPC as we have become recognized as a faith community who loves Christ and desires to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

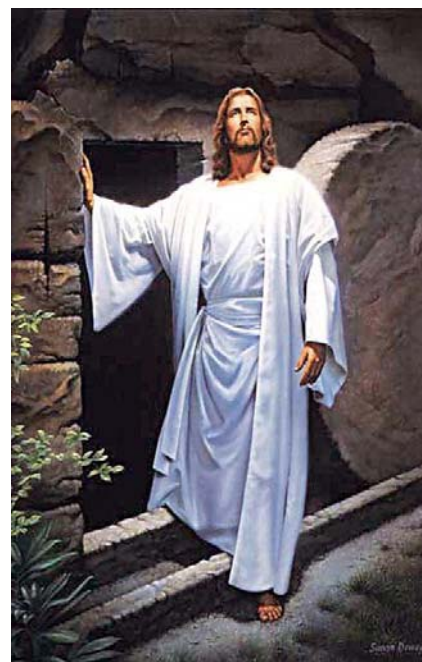
We are now in the Lenten Season leading up to the Crucifixion and



Resurrection of our Savior. It is a time to be reminded again of Jesus and Him Crucified and that we came from dust and from dust we shall return. The Hope of the Resurrection is before us! Jesus rose from the dead and that same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in those who put their faith in Him to live His life in the earth until His return. May you have a blessed Easter Season! Our Good God sent His Son and Jesus now sends those who believe in Him to tell the Good News to the ends of the earth! God's peace to you.

Bishop Nancy Drew

My greatest desire for all of our ministers is that they would have a close walk with Our Lord, learning His ways, hearing His voice, knowing Him.



With more than 1,200 affiliates, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all individuals affected by mental illness.

"*Inside This Issue*
Upcoming Events Calendar 2
Frankly Speaking 2
New Horizons Annual Benefit 2
Free Endorphins Available 3
Registration for NAMI Basics class 3
NAMI Columbus is in Jail 3
S.O.S. Groups 4

NAMI Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
 Columbus, GA 31908
 (706) 320-3755

Email: info@NAMICols.org
www.nami.org/sites/NAMIColumbusGA

> ' " <

Board of Directors

Frank Dunford, President
 Sue Marlowe, Vice President
 Charles Clark, Secretary
 Ursula King, Treasurer
 Joshua Bell

Rick Kelly
 LeAnn Siegert
 Timothy Vance
 Kristine Walls

Perry Alexander, Advisor
 Buddy Coiner, Advisor
 Doris Keene, Advisor
 Steve Scott, Advisor
 David Wallace, Advisor

Georgia Crisis & Access Line

Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services
 24/7/365
 1-800-715-4225

Peer Support "Warm Line"

1-888-945-1414 (toll-free)
 The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network operates a state-funded, consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health
 194 Regional Support Wing

PTSD

(Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy, Sr.

Monday, March 19, 2012

6:00 PM CONTACT Training Building - 152022'd Street

A few years ago Dr. Peavy gave a talk about PTSD at a NAMI monthly meeting and it was very enthusiastically received. We realized at the time, however, that we did not allow enough time because the members wanted to hear even more. Dr. Peavy also teaches our CIT Officers about PTSD and how they can help someone who has it. Our new CIT Officers love him and we're sure you will too.

Many people have heard of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). But what is it *really*? Why are we hearing so much more about it these days? The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are two of the reasons. Another reason is there is a great deal of research going on today-more than has ever been done before. We are learning that it is very, very real.

Whether people have PTSD from a traumatic event they witnessed or experienced here in the US, or it developed due to many deployments to war, we now know that because of trauma, people's brains have changed. It is a real, bona fide illness. Not a lack of strength. Not a character flaw. We also know that a great many people with mental illness developed it due to untreated traumatic events such as sexual or physical abuse as children.

The Anxiety Disorders Association of America notes that an estimated 15 to 30 percent of the 3.5 million men and women who served in Vietnam have suffered from PTSD. In April, 2008 a study conducted by the RAND Corporation estimated 300,000 US Troops are suffering from major depression or PTSD today and 320,000 have suffered traumatic brain injuries. Only half are receiving treatment. Stigma and lack of funding are probably the main reasons why people are not receiving treatment. The RAND Corporation stated "Unless they receive appropriate and effective care for these mental health conditions, there will be long-term consequences for them and for the nation," And it isn't just our troops that need treatment for PTSD. Many, many people who have experienced trauma from sexual or physical abuse are not receiving treatment and are experiencing great difficulties in their lives. As a community that cares, we need to begin the conversation about people getting the help they need. Get some more education with us at our monthly meeting.

The Anxiety Disorders Association of America notes that an estimated 15 to 30 percent of the 3.5 million men and women who served in Vietnam have suffered from PTSD

WITNESS to the RESURRECTION!

(Continued from page 1)

not stop making appearances as He later appeared on the Road to Damascus to the Apostle Paul during Paul's "wild days" when he was still known as Saul of Tarsus. There is a list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection appearances quoted by the Paul in [1 Corinthians 15:5-7](#) . "...he appeared to Peter, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also..." Paul was effectively giving an invitation, "if you don't believe me then go ask these others and they will tell you, also." At the time of Paul's writing, there are still hundreds of eyewitnesses to Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and events alive from the dead, who could easily verify or dispute Paul's claim if some of them wanted to take the time to investigate. ([Acts 1:21](#))

Short answer: "Yes, Jesus was seen alive after his death...by lots of people and probably many more than were even recorded in Scripture."



Visions of Jesus Stir Muslim Hearts



JERUSALEM - The Muslim call to prayer resounds through a large part of the Earth, where more than one billion people call themselves Muslims. Throughout the Islamic world, many Muslims from Gaza to London are also responding to the call to global jihad, where the goal is to take over the world for Islam. It's a clash of civilizations with the Christian faith in the middle. Throughout the nearly 1,400 year history of Islam, Muslims have resisted the Christian Gospel. Many Christians tried to reach them with the good news, but with little success. But according to many reports from the Middle East and around the world, that history is changing. "I see many, many Arabic-speaking people turning to Christ, accepting Him as Lord and Savior," said Nizar Shaheen, host of Light for the Nations, a Christian program seen throughout the Muslim world. "It's happening all over the Arab world. It's happening in North Africa. It's happening in the Middle East. It's happening in the Gulf countries. It's happening in Europe and Canada and the United States-in the Arabic-speaking world. Everywhere, people are accepting Jesus."

"What's happening nowadays in the Muslim world has never

happened before," said Father Zakaria Boutros, an Egyptian

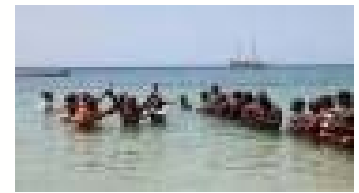


Coptic priest who is one of the foremost evangelists to the Muslim world. He says a cross-section of Muslims are accepting Jesus Christ. "Young and old, educated and not educated, males and females, even those who are fanatic."

One fanatic Muslim who came to faith in Jesus Christ is Samer Achmad Muhammed. He studied for years to become a Wahhabi sheik, one of the most virulent forms of Islam. He hated Christians and the church, but his heart changed when he heard the Gospel. "I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ, Jesus forgave me for my sins," he said. "He gave me eternal life and peace. And the second thing, I really suffered in my daily life, but I had peace, I had joy because Jesus entered my heart."

Muhammed is just one of many who are coming to Jesus. Heidi Baker of Iris Ministries sees thousands of African Muslims receiv-

ing Jesus and getting baptized. "It's probably the only place in the world where they are coming so quickly," she said. "Many people are having dreams. They see Jesus appear to them. Probably half our pastors were leaders, imams in Moslem mosques. They were leaders in these mosques, now they're pastors." (The EPC GCEPC LEPC prays for and supports the work of Iris Ministries) Another significant evangelistic movement among Muslims links China and Jerusalem. Chinese house churches plan to send at least 100,000 evangelists from China through many predominantly Muslim nations all the way back here to Jerusalem. This quiet but powerful movement of itinerant evangelists is bringing the story of Jesus Christ into the heart of the Muslim world. Technologies like satellite television and the Internet also penetrate the world of Islam.



But beyond technology, many say a supernatural dimension is at work throughout the Islamic world.

"There is an end-time phenome-

Visions of Jesus Stir Muslim Hearts

(Continued from page 6)

non that is happening through dreams and visions," said Christine Darg, author of *The Jesus Visions: Signs and Wonders in the Muslim World*. "He is going into the Muslim world and revealing, particularly, the last 24 hours of His life - how He died on the cross, which Islam does not teach - how He was raised from the dead, which Islam also does not teach - and how He is the Son of God, risen in power." "We receive lots of letters about people who have had dreams about the Lord, visions, even miracles," Shaheen said "When they watch the program, they say yes, we had a dream or a vision, and they accept Jesus as Lord." But Muslims who accept Jesus face persecution, discrimination or even death. Despite the dangers, many continue to live out their faith and lead others to Jesus Christ. "Jesus loves all people, Jesus changes all people and Jesus is the One who places love and peace," Shaheen said. "I was not like this but Jesus changed my life and I am not scared to talk about Jesus because praise is unto Him."

Some believe the Church's response to jihad must be a fearless proclamation of the Gospel to Muslims.

Through prayer and evangelism, many see an unparalleled opportunity for the Gospel. "I anticipate that very soon - perhaps within two or three years-we are going to see the greatest harvest in history," Shaheen said. (1)



Golgotha outside of Jerusalem

Brother Andrew "God's Smuggler" on Preaching in Iran

Brother Andrew said in 2007 that he was invited to appear on national television in Iran. He visited Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the 79 year old missionary said a Taliban leader had told him he's welcome back at any time. He said he has preached the love of Christ to militant groups such as the Taliban and Hamas as well as Iranian clerics. Brother Andrew said he personally baptized "scores of Muslim radicals" converting to Christianity, and urged other Christians to do the same. "The doors are open, their hearts are open, but are we open,?" he wondered. Brother Andrew did not provide more details on the baptism services, apparently because of security concerns.

Brother Andrew believes that winning Muslims to Christ is the key to winning the war on terror, a theme he also explained in his latest book 'Secret Believers: What Happens When Muslims Believe in Christ'. He believes the Muslim 'holy' month of Ramadan is prime time for Christians to show Muslims "the love" of Jesus and stressed that Christians should be bold in evangelism to Muslims. He also cautioned however that traditionally Christian nations shouldn't "appease" Muslim militants.

The comments from Brother Andrew seemed to underscore his passion for spreading the Gospel. As a Christian missionary he became famous for his exploits smuggling Bibles to Communist countries during the height of the Cold War. He later founded Open Doors, an organization supporting Christians facing persecution. He is called "Brother" Andrew to preserve his anonymity and because he is a brother to all who follow Christ.

The EPC GCEPC LEPC prays for and supports the work of Brother Andrew.

www.opendoorsusa.org/about-us/brother-andrew/

(Continued on page 8)

Do you have your cross yet? (Testimony of "D")

"D." is a young Muslim man who lives in Indonesia. One night during Ramadan (in 1991) he had a dream. He dreamt he was sitting with his arms tied to a chair. Then he saw a man he recognized as Jesus coming. Jesus touched the ropes and they fell from his arms. Jesus said to him, "Look for the pole" - D. didn't know what the meant so he asked "what pole?" But Jesus just said again "Look for the pole". When D. awoke he tried to think what the dream might mean but after a few days he forgot about it.

But Jesus didn't forget! Two years later during Ramadan, D. had another dream. In this dream Jesus was saying to him, "I told you to look for the pole. Why haven't you done what I asked?" So D. asked, "Where is this pole and how will I find it?" Jesus pointed to a hill very far away and said, "Go, look for the pole." In his dream, D. ran through jungle and thorns for a seemingly long way. Finally exhausted he came to a clearing and there he saw a cross. This was the pole Jesus had told him to look for.

The next day D. went to see the Imam - the leader at the mosque. He asked him about the dream. The Imam told him to search for the truth. That night D. had another dream - he dreamt he saw a Christian cemetery. All the graves had crosses at the end. Suddenly, all the graves opened and the people rose into the sky where Jesus was waiting for them. D. realized he wasn't ready because he didn't have his cross yet

In the morning D. couldn't forget this disturbing dream. So he went to visit the pastor of a church he knew of near his village. The pastor opened his Bible and helped D. understand that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. After going to church for a few weeks D. gave his heart to Jesus. Now he is going to Bible College and hopes to share about Jesus with other Muslims.

**As of 2010, over 1.6 billion or about 23% of the world population are Muslims. Of these, around 62% live in Asia-Pacific, 20% in the Middle East-North Africa, 15% in Sub-Saharan Africa, around 3% in Europe and 0.3% in the Americas.
[Pew Research Center]**

Testimony of Desert Son (Islam)

I was born in Saudi Arabia as a member of a Muslim family. We were a very happy family, and I loved my relationship with them. I also felt very happy because I did all the things that God asked me to. I had learned one sixth of the holy Quran by heart and a lot from the Hadieth. When I was a teenager, I was an Imam for the mosque.

I was always very serious to do all that God ordered me to do--fasting during Ramadan, praying five times a day or more, Hadj and so on. I was, at that time, very desirous to meet God at the last day, even when I had no guarantee. But I had always hoped for this. My hope grew when I started to think about fighting in the name of God (Jihad) in Afghanistan. I was sixteen years old. My parents would not let me go because I was too young. So I decided to wait until I was old enough.

I always had love and respect for the Muslim people. There was no love or respect in my heart for the Christians, and the Jews were my first enemy of course.

(Continued from page 8)

Far away from God: After some time, the devil found his way into our home and our life, and my life became very hard. Slowly I drifted far away from God until the time that I believed in no God at all. My life became busy. I had a very good job and earned a lot of money. Still I was not happy because I was afraid for the day that I would die. Sometimes a question came to my mind--will I be with God in heaven or not?

And it was very frightening to think about this, even for seconds, that I would not be there. What about my future?

A little prayer: One day I had a big problem in my life. I was in my room looking through the window up to the sky. Then I remembered God, and I wanted to pray to him to ask him for help, but which God should I pray to. Allah? I was sure that he was very angry with me because I had not prayed for a very long time. Or Jesus? I knew He had done a lot of miracles in the lives of other people. Then I said, "Jesus help me!" I don't know why I spoke like this. I sat down on my bed and spoke to myself, "What is this stupid thing you just did?" Anyway, I did not expect anything to happen or the problem to go away. However, one and a half days later, my problem was solved! I decided to find out who this Jesus is. Is he God as the Christian people say, or is he a prophet, as I know from Islam?

At this time, I left my country and went to Europe.



The dream: On the third day, my circumstances became very difficult for me, and I decided to go back to Middle East. During that night I had a dream. I was standing in a cross shape with a low wall around it. In my right hand, I had a big stack of white unwritten papers. I was standing at the cross beam, and I was looking to a small group of people who were standing at the top. They all wore long white clothing, but one of them was different. He was standing at the right side, and with his left hand he was leading the people through a door in the wall. Beyond the door was light, and I could not see what was in there. One moment I was standing in the dream, and the next moment I was seeing the cross from above. It was difficult for me to understand this. When I woke up the next morning, I felt a very beautiful happiness in my heart that I never had before. And I felt a love in my heart and from inside my body a very special feeling. I felt also I just wanted to walk and to walk and to ask every one I met, do you know Jesus? It was more than a great feeling. It was happiness that I had never known before in my life.

After one year of reading the Bible in an honest way, I understand now what happened to me. I found my way to God, the real God, the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope now for all the people I love, my family, my friends, and everyone also to change and begin to read the Bible in an honest way. I am sure that God will help them to find their way.

My life now: I feel love in my heart, and I am very happy to know Jesus. When I was a Muslim, I could never imagine that the Christians were right. After that, I found out how much God loves me, and I became a Christian. Yes, He loves me, He loves you, and He loves the whole world. Jesus Christ loved us, and He still does. And don't forget in the last day nobody can save us, only Jesus Christ. Dear brother/sister, Come to know Jesus before it is too late. John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (2)

Sources:

- 1 .Muslim Visions Chris Mitchell Mideast Bureau, cbn.com *printed in entirety retrieved 18 Mar. 2012*
2. www.answering-islam.com, retrieved 18 Mar 2012
3. <http://www.opendoorsusa.org>
4. Pew Research Center. <http://pewforum.org/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-regional-asia.aspx>

EPC GCEPC LEPC

Partnering with
Gospel for Asia for
the sake of Christ and
those He loves.

The presence of a
Woman Missionary
and the love
of a miraculous
God brought the
answer for Lina.

WHEN SUICIDE FAILED; WHAT NEXT?"

Lina walked along her village road with several other people, but she wasn't going where anyone else was. She was on her way to the grave, planning how she could end her life—and hoping it would really work this time.

Outsiders wouldn't guess Lina was just moments from death. For a woman in Asia, she had what people in her culture would consider an unusually good life. She had a husband and two sons, which were an automatic source of honor. Her younger son was getting a good education, and her older one already had a successful job.

But the happiness was all external. Inside, Lina suffered unbearable pain.

Could Poison End Her Silent Torture?

For seven years, Lina had endured the tor-

ment of severe internal pain, for which she could find no cause. None of the money her family spent on doctors made a difference; it just added financial strain to the other problems. In fact, the doctors refused to help anymore because they couldn't see any change in her condition. The hopelessness Lina felt was compounded when her husband started fighting with her. He was angry she couldn't keep up her work around the house.

Hurting without anyone's comfort, Lina chose poison as her escape—twice. But each time, her escape did not get her medical treatment that saved life. But Lina's helplessness only grew. She couldn't even control whether she lived or died.

Her Final Steps Toward Death

Escape was heavy on Lina's mind as she walked along the road in pain. She hoped each step would bring her closer to the end she was contemplating. However, that day, Lina ran into someone completely unexpected.

The stranger began talking to Lina, probing into her downcast demeanor. Lina started opening up to the woman and shared all about her consuming problems and despair.

The stranger was alarmed that Lina wanted to kill herself, but it wasn't an unusual story. The number of suicides among young to middle-age women in some parts of Asia is devastatingly high—about ten times greater than the world's average suicide rate.



The Associated Press reported a study carried out in a South Asian community from 1992-2001: The average suicide rate for women 10-19 years old was 148 per 100,000 while globally, the suicide rate is about 6.8 per 100,000. That's over 21 times the global rate.

With Christ, this can change.



Stranger's Solution Proves Trustworthy

Lina's story didn't fall on deaf ears. Her new friend, Charney, was a Gospel for Asia-supported woman missionary, and she immediately met Lina's distress with comfort and a message of hope. Her compassionate words sunk into Lina's heart. It overwhelmed her that maybe, just maybe, there was help for her after all.

Charney invited Lina to a church service where she could further explore the message of hope. At the church, Charney and other believers gathered around Lina to surround her with love and prayers. The Lord answered as they cried out to Him, and He completely took away Lina's pain

For the first time in seven years, Lina felt whole—and that wholeness extended to her spirit after she chose to embrace the love of Jesus.

She Can't Hide Her Story of Rescue

Lina's neighbors, who once knew her as the desperate lady who wanted to kill herself, suddenly saw a healthy, joyful woman. They had to know what had changed!

Her testimony spread through the village, and Lina started to see change in her family as well. The whole environment of her home became more peaceful. She knew the Lord hadn't finished working in them—or in her.

Women Missionaries Set Her on Path to New Future

Lina's physical and spiritual pain ended. But her new family at church had even more to offer her.

In Charney and the other Christian women, Lina found accountability and a network of support to help her grow in the Lord. These women would be there to encourage Lina if she faced opposition for her faith.

Thanks to Charney's ministry, Lina has found a new, abundant life full of potential. She is eager

I was born on July 18, 1989 in a nominal Christian family in India. Along with my parents, I went to church and practiced the liturgies. However, I was ignorant of the love of God. During my young age, I started to suffer from abdominal pain. I underwent several medical treatments, but I was not cured. My mother then took me to a prayer meeting. There, I saw God healing the sick. Many people came forward, testifying what the Lord had done in their lives. On listening to them, I was compelled to think that God would heal my disease too if I believe in Him. I started to pray to Jesus to heal me and He healed me. The day I experienced God's healing touch, I decided to live for Him alone. I knelt down before Jesus and by confessing my sins, received Him as my personal Savior. From the day I opened my heart to Jesus, I had a desire to serve Him. While praying for divine guidance, my Savior confirmed my call. Soon, I joined a GFA Bible School.



Compassion Fatigue

Over the past several months I have been engaged in professional development and continuing education. There were a variety of topics presented through a number of organizations with both secular and non-secular perspectives. In reflecting on these learning experiences and seeing the many requests for prayer through the LEPC on line communication, I am led to share some of my thoughts on the experiences of those who are called to minister to God's children and the compassion that can lead to fatigue.

As ministers we are faced almost daily with those who are experiencing events of life that are traumatic. We bear witness to these life events and as such we bear witness to those traumas. It is common for those called to minister to bear witness to loss of many types. Most usually, we think of loss as being that of a loved one, a child, friend, spouse, parent or other family and significant others in our lives. As we look at loss we find ourselves as witness to more than the loss of persons. We find those who come to us have loss of employment, loss of health, physical appearance, and body part. They come to us with loss of control in their lives as a result of natural disaster, accident, situational disaster such as crime, violence and war. We visit in homes, hospitals, nursing homes and elsewhere and we witness loss of mental capacity, loss of potential, hope and dreams. In all of this we are viewed as providers of compassion, strength, understanding, help, comforter and a host of other views of our roles as minister. Since we are called, we see these and other functions as our responsibility and we go about that calling as we see the need and God's call. What we miss in our ministry at times is taking time for self. We may find our compassion becomes burdensome and fatiguing. Clinically we are suffering Compassion Fatigue and Burnout.

According to Jonathan Olford, Psy.D, the provider, responder, pastor, counselor become at risk most likely due to the chronic strain of dealing with others who are troubled and traumatized. He suggests that to avoid the experience of compassion fatigue, burnout and liked named conditions that the pastor as well as other caregivers maintain their own mental health while facilitating the

mental, emotional and spiritual health of others. Dr. Olford suggests the following that may aid in this process:

1. *“Work in pairs or groups where possible. There may be times the minister will work one-on-one with a person who has had great trauma, if possible try and have someone else present. There may be times when this is not possible. In times when it is not possible to have another along it is important to have someone to debrief with after these events. Fellow clergy, deacons, elders, first responders and other caregivers may be of assistance.”*
2. *” Hold each other accountable. There are recommended standards for debriefing and an hour every day for every five to ten hours of counseling is often cited. It is important to understand that to debrief is not a sign of weakness or inadequacy but it is a vehicle to maintaining better mental health and being better able to serve those to whom we are called.”*
3. *” Be sensitive to indicators of stress, grief, emotional reactivity or possibly PTSD symptoms within yourself and those working with you. Often we can see the signs and symptoms of these indicators in others but are not aware of them in ourselves. When we do see these signs and symptoms it is a flag to analyze where we are. It may be difficult, however; it is time to say “No more”, “I can't do it” or just “No.” We are called to care and comfort, not to do more than is possible.”*
4. *“Prayerfully give what you have listened to and dealt with that day to God. Ask God for His intervention, healing and calm in your own spirit. We know we are not in life's situations alone whether bearing witness to trauma or dealing with our per-*

sonal response to what is troubling. God does not expect us to manage or deal with our witness to trauma on our own. He knows already and calls His servants to share our woes, praise and challenges with Him. Seeking God out bringing our experience to Him, is spiritually beneficial and necessary. In our turning to Him we benefit spiritually, psychologically and emotionally.”

As we look to better serve our Lord and His calling in our lives we need to cultivate our ability to engage meaningfully, empathically, and sensitively with people. Our own spiritual health, availability, and openness to vulnerability are foundational in ministering to all we encounter. We are witness to another's pain however, carrying or making it our own can be difficult and damaging. When we engage in asking the Lord to meet us in our pain, the strengthen and comfort of our own spirit will often respond and allow us to bear witness to trauma again and again as He gives direction.

May God bless us as we continue in His service to the suffering, and all praises be to Him.

Dr Thom Peavy

Olford, J.M. (2007), *Ministry Manual for Grief and Trauma*, Charolette: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association,

What Was Roman Crucifixion Like?

Scourging of prisoners was a separate form of punishment which consisted of flagellating the prisoner with a short, heavy whip made of leather thongs with lead balls at the end of each thong. That Jesus of Nazareth was both scourged and then crucified reveals the enormity of the price He paid for the ransom of sinners. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Once the prisoner had made the journey to the place of execution, exhausted and chafed from moving under the extreme weight and discomfort of the *patibulum*, he was then laid on the ground. The prisoner's wrists were nailed to each end of the *patibulum* by iron spikes five to seven inches long. These spikes were driven in by hammer through the median nerve as the prisoner's arms were stretched wide across the beam. The arms were not stretched utterly tight; a small amount of flexibility and movement was allowed to better enable the hanging process. The sufferer, nailed to the crossbar is hoisted up so that the *patibulum* can be attached to the vertical *stipes*. A sign called a *titulus* is placed at the top of the *stipes* which identifies the prisoner. The prisoner is allowed a small seat, called a *sedile*, a small board attached to the cross. It offered little assistance, actually causing more pain as the person attempted to actually sit on it

Now with the criminal's left foot pressed behind the right, another spike is driven through the arches and heels going through the lower portion of the upright beam. The knees are slightly bent; the body is turned unnaturally sideways. As the prisoner writhes in response to each new painful atrocity, each movement causes a counter pain and torment. At this point, there was tremendous strain put on the wrists, arms and shoulders, resulting in a dislocation of the shoulder and elbow joints. The position of the nailed body held the victim's rib cage in a fixed position, which made it extremely difficult to exhale, and impossible to take a full breath. Having suffered from the scourging, the beatings and the walk with the *patibulum*, Jesus was described as extremely weak and dehydrated. He was probably losing significant amounts of blood. As time passed, the loss of blood and lack of oxygen would cause severe cramps, spasmodic contractions and probably unconsciousness.

To breathe, the victim was forced to push up on his feet to allow for inflation of the lungs. As the body weakened and pain in the feet and legs became unbearable, the victim was forced to trade breathing for pain and exhaustion. Eventually, the victim would succumb in this way, becoming utterly exhausted or lapsing into unconsciousness so that he

could no longer lift his body off the *stipes* and inflate his lungs. Due to the shallow breathing, the victim's lungs would begin to collapse in areas, probably causing hypoxia. Due to the loss of blood from the scourging, the victim probably formed a respiratory acidosis, resulting in an increased strain on the heart, which beats faster to compensate. Fluid would also build up in the lungs. Under the stress of hypoxia and acidosis, the heart would eventually fail.

There are several different theories on the actual cause of death for Jesus. One theory is that there was a filling of the pericardium with fluid, which put a fatal strain on the ability of His heart to pump blood. Another theory states that Jesus died of cardiac rupture. Another theory is that Jesus' death was "multifactorial and related primarily to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion asphyxia and perhaps acute heart failure." Regardless of the actual medical cause of final death, the historical record is very clear -- Jesus suffered numerous hours of horrible and sustained torture on the cross of Calvary.

As excruciating as the agony was that the prisoner suffered, Roman crucifixion sometimes lasted for hours, even days before the individual succumbed to the torture, and finally died. The method for ending the crucifixion was the breaking of the bones of the legs, called *crurifracture*.

(Continued on page 14)

"...a heinous, barbarous act; it served, however, the purposes of Holy God."

(Continued from page 13)

This act was done to hasten the criminal's death as was done to the two other criminals executed on the day Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. This was performed that day in response to the concern that the Sabbath was approaching.

The prisoner could not push up as a result and would quickly succumb to suffocation. Suffocation was due to the prisoner's inability to exhale air once it had been inhaled; the muscles of the chest had been incapacitated as he sagged down from the nailed wrist and then attempted to push up from the nailed feet. The bones of Jesus were not broken, however, because *He gave up His life*; when the Roman soldiers came to Him, they found Him already dead. "But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken. . ." (John 19:33, 36).

Jesus loved us so much that He willingly died in utter shame and pain for our sins. In fact, the Bible teaches us that He who was without sin was literally "made sin" for us. God, in human form, allowed himself to be made sin to save us. On the cross, he bore all the world's sin because of His love. The only way to complete His story of love is to love Him in return.

Roman crucifixion was a heinous, barbarous act; it served, however, the purposes of holy God. Through it the penalty for sin was forever paid when the Son of Man was lifted up on the cross. "And they crucified him. . ." (Mark 15:24).

Source: <http://www.allaboutjesuschrist.org/crucifixion.htm> with thanks. AllAboutGOD.com, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80949
Please visit their websites. Retrieved 15 Mar 2012





"seek the Lord and
ask him "What
season am I in
Lord?"

A new season is upon us. Springtime.... a season associated with new beginnings, a fresh start, growth, beauty, breaking forth. Practically, we will be planting flowers, gardens, tending our yards, cleaning house, getting outdoors. Some will vacation for spring break and most of us prepare for the Easter celebrations and services. While the signs of the season are apparent all around us we can also reflect on the fact that spiritually there are seasons in our lives.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 says "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.² a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,³ a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,⁶ a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,⁸ a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."

From time to time I will

seek the Lord and ask Him "what season am I in Lord?" A season can be defined as a time characterized by a particular circumstance or feature. For most of us just understanding the time brings peace and forward motion. We perish for a lack of knowledge. We don't know because we don't ask. We don't stop to think that maybe God would want to tell us what He is doing in our lives and where we are in the process or maybe we don't want to know because we are afraid of what He will say. Whatever the season He always meets out the grace to live through it.

One reality we must face is that with each season comes change. Change can be welcomed or resisted. With change always comes a letting go of the past or what was and embracing the unknown. How do you prepare for change? Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't. We prepare for retirement, a life season by putting money aside and investing. We expect this season to come. However, some seasons bring change we do not anticipate. The best thing you can do is to keep your heart and mind focused on Him. And, as ministers we are charged to "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;

reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.³ For the time is coming when people will not endure healthy teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." Timothy 4:2-5

So, take some time this spring to seek the Lord about the season of your life and walk with Him. Let go of your past season and embrace the season you are in now. Live in the now and hope for the future. Praise Him for what He has done and what He is about to do. And remember to be there for others in their season. We are to "rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn". Romans 12:15. We are to "... be all things to all people...". (I Cor. 9:22b) God bless you!

Bishop Jessica Johnston

Africa: A Continent in Turmoil, a Continent to Reach

By Bishop Dr. David A. Church

Anyone keeping up with world affairs today sees the conflict between Islam and the rest of the world. Considered one of the world's great religions along with Christianity and Judaism, Islam is bent on



conquering the world and bringing every soul on the planet into submission, which is what Islam means. Although monotheistic, Allah, the god of Islam *is not* the God of the Bible that created the world, and the scriptures in the Qu'ran, also spelled Koran, are not verifiable by fulfilled prophecy as is our Bible.

First of all, although the Qu'ran contains many stories plagiarized from the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, they are distorted or blatantly contradicted by the so called "revelation" allegedly given to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel. In the Qu'ran Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Ishmael because Isaac ran away. Abraham was the first Moslem (one who is submitted), although the Qu'ran contradicts itself by also claiming that the first Moslem was Adam. The Qu'ran rejects the Deity of Christ, denies God has a Son, and sees Jesus only as a prophet inferior to Mohammed, al-

though Jesus' Virgin Birth and his miracles are acknowledged to some extent. The Qu'ran also states that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but that Judas dies in His place. According to the Qu'ran the sun disappears into a muddy spring every evening and the world is flat. Contradiction and scientific and historical inaccuracies are replete in its pages, which, by the way, were not written down until 100 to 150 years after Mohammed's death in 635CE.

Although Moslems claim that the Qu'ran is a perfect book with only one version recited by all, there are actually "seven basic texts (al-qira'at as-sab', "the seven readings"), each having two transmitted versions (riwayatan) with only minor variations in phrasing, but all containing meticulous vowel-points and other necessary diacritical marks. ... The authoritative "readers" are:
 Nafi` (from Medina; d. 169/785)
 Ibn Kathir (from Mecca; d. 119/737)
 Abu `Amr al-`Ala' (from Damascus; d. 153/770)
 Ibn `Amir (from Basra; d. 118/736)
 Hamzah (from Kufah; d. 156/772)
 al-Qisa'i (from Kufah; d. 189/804)
 Abu Bakr `Asim (from Kufah; d. 158/778)"

(Cyril Glassé, The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 324,

bold added)
 From < <http://answering-islam.org/Green/seven.htm>>

The Moslem is taught in the Qu'ran to kill all infidels, those who will not submit to Allah. Contrast this with Jesus' teaching to "love your enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully use you." A Moslem does not have to keep his word to a non-Moslem even with a signed contract. The rest of the world must submit to Islam either willingly or by threat of death. The world is not in conflict with "Radical Islam" as the media and the so called moderate Moslems would have us believe. A moderate Moslem, according to the Qu'ran, is actually a heretic denying the teachings given through their prophet. Radical Islamists are actually the orthodox followers of Mohammed, faithfully warring against all resistance to submission to Allah. And on the continent of Africa the battle lines are drawn. We can see on the internet news of constant incursions and attacks into non-Islamic nations such as Nigeria, which included an attack in Lagos reported by Christian Purefoy of CNN on November 5, 2011 where 65 persons were killed. Anyone standing in the way of the spread of Islam is fair game for these murderers, be they men, women, or children.

Our LEPC ministers in Kenya, Nigeria, and Angola are targeted
 (Continued on page 17)

Africa: A Continent in Turmoil, a Continent to Reach

(Continued from page 16)

because of their faith in Christ, and more for proclaiming the Gospel boldly. We have two Bishops in Kenya, Bishop Fred Macharia and Bishop Elijah Ruboneka, and Bishop Israel Ilpeka in Nigeria. They have a God given mission to reach those walking in spiritual darkness, including Moslems. This puts our clergy on the front lines in the battle for the souls of men. With a Bible college in each country we are able to train other men and women committed to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who is the *only* Mediator between God and man. The average follower of Islam is already familiar with Jesus, known as Isa in the Qu'ran. Their clerics keep them from the Truth of who Jesus really is, keeping them in darkness to insure their allegiance to Allah and Islam. But we are called to preach the Truth, Jesus Christ, to every creature. Just as the Apostle Paul endured beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, and other deadly perils to reach the lost so are those on the front lines in Africa. We are not all called to leave our homes behind and travel to the foreign mission field, but we are called to assist in the endeavor to do so.

We must pray for the laborers, not only their safety and well being, but also for the boldness to proclaim Christ and His salvation purchased for all men by His death on the Cross and by His resurrection. Only by the Holy Spirit resting upon and empowering these faithful preachers of the Gospel is this possible. We are not to rest in our own comfortable homes in

the USA while others are in a fight to the death. We are given so much in order that we may richly bless others, providing for their needs out of our many blessings. Or do you believe wrongly that Christ will overlook the grip on "your" money while others go without the basics of life while yet serving Him faithfully?

We need to support our ministers in Africa. The tracts they distribute in the streets and in the prisons cost money to print. Costs are incurred in traveling around their countries, much as did John Wesley in the early days in America. Supporting their families and living by faith they endure for the cause of Christ. Being in regular contact with them brings one request by them- to provide the finances for the Gospel Tracts they distribute.

Also, how many of us write to them through email, telling them they are not alone in the fight and that they are remembered in our prayers? With the holiday season upon us I challenge each Bishop, minister, and those aligned with us to remember them in our prayers, to contact them with encouraging words, and to give to the LEPC Mission Fund which provides finances for tracts. Invest in the Kingdom of Heaven here and reap a harvest of souls ready to meet us together with the Lord when He returns for His Bride, the Church. Go to [http://](http://www.lutheranepc.com/donate.html)



www.lutheranepc.com/donate.html and prayerfully consider giving a special offering to Missions along with your monthly pledges.

Sola Fide

Bishop Dr. David A. Church
Director of Missions



Evangelism Research and Cultural Trends



Christians in Israel Christians have the lowest growth rate among the Israeli population, according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. The Christian growth rate of 0.9% lags behind the Jewish rate of 1.7% and the 2.7% growth rate among Muslims. Christian Arabs have a growth rate of 1%, while the rate among non-Arab Christians is 0.7%. About 154,000 Christians live in Israel, representing about 2 percent of the population. (Church Report 1/19/12)



Global Christian Data

There are 2.18 billion Christians of all ages around the world, representing nearly a third of the estimated 2010 global population of 6.9 billion. Christians are also geographically widespread—so far-flung, in fact, that no single continent or region can indisputably claim to be the center of global Christianity. 26% of all Christians live in Europe, 37% are in the Americas, 24% are in sub-Saharan Africa and 3% are in Asia and the Pacific. (A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population, The Pew Forum 12/19/11)



Christianity Has Grown

enormously in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, where there were relatively few Christians at the beginning of the 20th century. The share of the population that is Christian in sub-Saharan Africa

climbed from 9% in 1910 to 63% in 2010, while in the Asia-Pacific region it rose from 3% to 7%. (A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population, The Pew Forum 12/19/11)

Boomers & Church

According to Gallup, self-reported church attendance increased in 2010, with 43.1% of Americans attending weekly or almost weekly, up slightly from 42.8% in 2009 and 42.1% in 2008. The older people are, the more likely they are to attend church than younger people. The challenge is for places of worship to relate to Boomers individually, helping them answer the question, "What's in this for me?" (The Boomer Project 1/4/12)

Location Growth

Congregations located in the downtown or central city neighborhoods of metropolitan areas were more likely to grow in recent years, as were those in newer suburbs. This is a significant change from a similar study completed in 2005 when the newer suburbs were more likely to be the location of growing congregations than central city neighborhoods. Congregations located in the South are also more likely to grow than those located in other parts of the country. (Monday Morning Insight 1/9/12)

Healthy Church Trends

Thom Rainer, researcher and LifeWay Resources CEO, identifies these 6 trends in healthy U.S. churches for 2012: 1) Have a high view of Scripture, and have leaders and members who believe the totality of the Bible. 2) Read the Bible daily. 3) Have a priority and focus on the nations, via short-term mission trips, in care and adoption of orphans, giving to mission causes. 4) Have a missional community presence. They love, serve, live in, and have deep relationships in their community. 5) These healthy churches are high expectation churches. Members are expected to serve, give, be in small groups, and be accountable to others. 6) Are evangelistically intentional, with high accountability for ongoing evangelism in multiple contexts. (Christian Post 1/5/12)

Christian Young Adults

Leaving Church A Barna Research study of people 18 to 25 found a large increase in personal disbeliefs about faith and a noteworthy decrease in overall church participation. 38% of Christians 18 to 25 have significantly doubted their faith. At the age of 15, 57% were less active in church and 59% dropped out all together. 1 in 5 have transformed from the faith practices of their childhood and uprooted the church habits that were developed in their

(Continued on page 19)

Evangelism Research and Cultural Trends

(Continued from page 18)
upbringing. (You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith, The Barna Group, 2012)



Church Dropouts LifeWay Research reports 70% of young adults who were active in church for at least one year in high school drop out for at least one year between 18–22. However, half of those who leave return. Among evangelicals, the dropout rate is lower. (Facts and Trends, Winter 2012)

U.S. Clergy Pay Both Reformed and Conservative rabbis earn an estimated average annual salary of around \$140,000, while the median salary for full-time pastors at Protestant churches was just \$40,000, the Jewish Daily Forward reports. Catholic priests and Muslim imams make even less, with average salaries of about \$25,000 and \$30,000 per year, respectively. (Church Report 1/17/12)



Americans Say Marriage Important 78% of American adults rate the institution of marriage as at least somewhat important to U.S. society, and that includes 60% who consider it very important. A new Rasmussen Reports survey finds only 17% don't believe marriage is a very important institution, with 3% who say it's not at all important. (Rasmussen Reports 1/24/12)



Copyright 2012 by Randy Gagsbergen, www.gagsbergen.com

Marriage is a major cause of the growing great divide among American upper and lower classes. The Pew Research Center reports 72% of all adults 18 and older were married in 1960 vs. just 51% today—a record low. A new book, *Coming Apart* by Charles Murray, says a retreat from marriage among the working class is a key factor in the growing economic divide in America. Although marriage is holding its own among the upper middle and upper class, it's falling off a cliff among the working class and lower class. Among upper-middle class families, 99% of children lived with both biological parents in '62 compared with 84% in '04. Among working class families, 96% of children lived with both parents in '62 vs. only 37% in '04. Overwhelming research shows this disadvantages children on an enormous scale (increased teen pregnancies, increased prison populations, and children who grow up with no modeling for how to attain healthy marriage in the next generation). Murray cites a loss of the 4 core American values—marriage, honesty, industriousness, and religion—as all contributing to the growing economic woes of the working class. Less than 5% of white college-educated women have children outside of marriage, compared with nearly 40% of white women with only a high-school diploma. The

National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting reports 72% of all African American babies are born outside of marriage. The vast majority of men in prison are from fatherless homes. Marriage builds the economic stability of children, supports the raising of a healthy next generation, and is a cornerstone for the economic health of our nation. Single motherhood most often impoverishes women and children. (Christian Post 2/9/12)

Moral Movies Win The 20th Annual Faith & Values Awards Gala and Report to the Entertainment Industry [link] reports films with patriotic, family-strong messages attract more viewers and dollars at the box office than their liberal counterparts. 7 out of the top 10 films in 2011 had a “strong or very strong Christian, biblical, moral, and redemptive content” message, and the 91 movies it reviewed that scored high in conservative/ moral categories averaged a \$59 million box office profit each. The 105 liberal movies, however, earned an average of just \$11 million per film. (Christian Post 2/11/12)

More Evangelicals According to the American Religious Information Survey, the number of self-identified Christians is down 11% over the past 2 decades, yet the number of
(Continued on page 20)

Evangelism Research and Cultural Trends

(Continued from page 19)
evangelicals has risen.
(Facts and Trends, Winter 2012)

Changing Male Attitudes

A new GfK Roper study for Men's Health magazine found some important changes in male attitudes, partly in response to continuing changes in male and female gender roles. 80% of men are okay with their spouses earning more. Likewise, 47% of men do an equal amount of food shopping as their spouses, while 44% share equally in house cleaning with their spouses. 32% equally share in child care with their spouses. (Media Daily News 12/27/12)

Mobile Givers 64% of American adults use text messaging overall, and 9% have texted a charitable donation, says data from Pew Research Center. For most, it was also a spontaneous decision that spread virally through friend networks. 73% contributed the same day they heard the news, and 76% typically make text donations without conducting much in-depth research. Even so, 43% encouraged their friends or family members to give. Mobile givers are younger and more diverse compared with other donors and differ significantly from the overall population when it comes to the use of technology. For example, they are more likely to own an e-reader, laptop computer, or

tablet computer; use Twitter or social networking sites; and use their phones for activities such as accessing the Internet and taking pictures or recording video. (Media Daily 1/13/12)

Census Data shows the bad economy and slowing of immigration is shrinking America's youthful population for the first time in a generation. The number of people under 18 was 73.9 million on 7/1/11, down more than 260,000 from a year earlier. The last drop in the child population was in the '70s when most Baby Boomers reached adulthood. Before that, it was during the Great Depression. Overall, the U.S. population is growing at its slowest rate since the mid-'40s. (OnDeadline 1/6/12)

Committed Churchgoers are "just as likely as others to use the Internet, have broadband at home, use cell phones, use text messaging, and use social networking sites and Twitter," finds a new Pew Research study. Religiously active people are just as likely, if not more likely, to utilize technology to dialogue and spread messages to others about what they believe in than non-religiously active people. 79% are Internet users vs. 75% of those not involved with religious groups. 86% are cell phone users vs. 80% of those not involved with religious groups. 75% are email users vs. 68% of non churchgo-

ers. 46% use social networking sites vs. 49%. 9% use Twitter vs. 10%. (Opine Community 2/1/12)

Growing Up Digital New Nielsen research tells us the rise of gadgets is creating a new generation of children who are "growing up digital." What may surprise some, however, is 7 out of every 10 children in tablet-owning households used a tablet computer in Q4 of 2011, a 9% increase from Q3. According to the survey of adults with children under 12 in tablet-owning households, 77% said children play down-loaded games on their tablets, and 57% used tablets to access educational apps. 55% and 41% of parents report their children used tablets for entertainment while traveling or in restaurants, respectively. Only 15% of kids communicate with friends and family via a tablet. (Online Media Daily 2/16/12)

Religion & Education According to a Univ. of Nebraska study, education does not make people less likely to be religious; it makes them more liberal in their thinking about religion. With each additional educational year after 7th grade, Americans are 15% more likely to have attended religious services in the past week, 14% more likely to say they believe in a "higher power" than in a personal God, 13% more

(Continued on page 21)

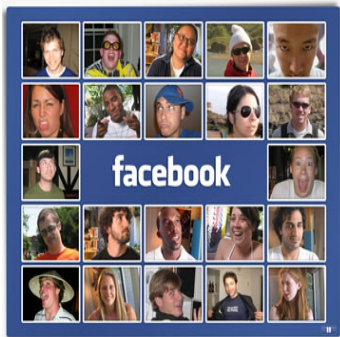


Evangelism Research and Cultural Trends

likely to switch to a mainline Protestant denomination, and 13% less likely to say the Bible is the “actual word of God.” (Outreach 2/12)

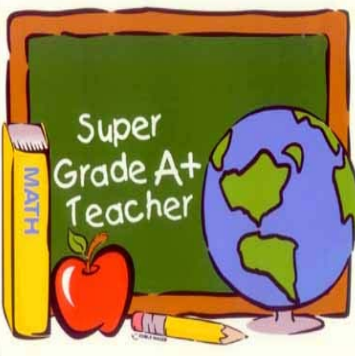
Facebook Mind Games

According to sociologists Hui-Tzu Grace Chou and Nicholas Edge at Utah Valley Univ., their research showed a correlation between a Facebook user’s disposition about their life and the amount of time spent on the social network. Students were asked to identify how much they agreed or disagreed with statements like “Life is fair” and “Many of my friends have a better life than me.” In addition, the students were asked how much time they spend on Facebook, their number of Facebook friends, and how many of those friends they had met in person. The sociologists discovered that as people spend more time on Facebook, they start to believe that others have a better life than they do. (Monday Morning Insight 1/30/12)



Elementary- And Middle-School Teachers

who help raise their students’ standardized-test scores seem to have a wide-ranging, lasting positive effect on those students’ lives beyond academics. Results include lower teen pregnancy rates and greater college graduation and adult earnings, reports a new study by Raj Chetty



and John Friedman of Harvard and Jonah Rokoff of Columbia Univ., who tracked 2.5 million students over 20 years. The difference in long-term outcome between students who have average teachers and those with poor-performing ones is as significant as the difference between those who have excellent teachers and those with average ones. Replacing a poor teacher with an average one would raise a single classroom’s lifetime earnings by about \$266,000, the economists estimate. (NY Times 1/6/12)

Aggressive Atheists The Secular Student Alliance, an umbrella for atheist organizations, has doubled in size in 2 years, with 250 chapters in the U.S. (Monday Morning Insight 1/30/12)

Giving Untouchable Despite Economy Research by BIGinsight reveals the budget tightening consumers have endured for 4 years isn’t showing signs of stopping. Yet 41% said charitable contributions were untouchable, a category that has shown continued increases since 2008, when 32% deemed giving to others untouchable. (Cent4er for Media Research Brief 2/15/12)

1 in 5 Americans are dependent on the federal government for financial assistance. The Heritage Foundation’s Index of Depend-

ence on Government also finds the average American relying on federal government assistance receives \$300 more in benefits (\$32,748) annually than the average American’s disposable personal income (\$32,446). 67 million are getting significant aid from the government for their housing, food, income support, healthcare, or education—or all 5. At the same time, the number of federal taxpayers continues to drop, with 49.5% of Americans not paying any federal income taxes. (OneNewsNow 2/10/12)

Fewer Home Owners The U.S. Census Bureau reports homeownership fell to 66% in Q4, continuing a 7-year drop from 69.2% in 2004. Falling homeownership and prices reflect the worst housing downturn since the Great Depression. Economists say the impact of the collapse will be evident for years to come. As of November, average U.S. home prices were back to mid-2003 levels. (USA Today 2/1/12)

Fast Facts:

29% of U.S. pastors 55–64 do not feel pastoral ministry makes them feel lonely at times.
21% U.S. pastors 45–54 and 19% ages 18–44 do not feel pastoral ministry makes them feel lonely at times.
79% of U.S. pastors do not feel being in ministry has had a negative effect on

(Continued on page 22)

Evangelism Research and Cultural Trends

(Continued from page 21)
their family.

41% of Americans are unable to identify any individual who they consider to be an influential Christian.

84% of Christian 18- to 29-year-olds admit they have no idea how the Bible applies to their field or professional interests.

18% of Millennials say their church is too concerned that movies, music, and video games are harmful.

23% of U.S. 18- to 29-year-olds say “Christians demonize everything outside of the church.”

29% of young U.S. Christians say “churches are afraid of the beliefs of other faiths.”

29% of young U.S. Christians say they are “forced to choose between my faith and my friends.”

23% of young U.S. Christians have significant intellectual doubts about their faith.

20% of U.S. Christians say they live in a way that makes them completely dependent on God.

20% of U.S. Christians claim the single most important decision they have ever made was to invite Jesus Christ to forgive them and become their savior.

U.S. Catholic schools educate more than 2 million elementary and secondary school children; about 15% are non-Catholic.

Home-schoolers, on average, score 37% above public school students on standardized achievement tests.

A fifth of the world’s population lives without electricity.

Text messaging in the U.S. was 78% in ’11, up from 71% in ’09.

37% of Americans used GPS for directions in ’11 vs. 22% in ’09.

2 in 5 Americans feel less secure financially compared to last year.

YouTube is now streaming 4 billion online videos daily—a 25% increase in the past 8 months.

An estimated 54 million unborn babies have been killed in the womb in the U.S. since the legalization of abortion in 1973.

52% of tablet owners are women and 81% of all tablet owners use Facebook.

39% of U.S. women begin using technology more when they become moms.

49% of U.S. women are interested in technology that “empowers them to be a good mom.”

45% of Americans are eating out less often than they did 6 months ago.

95% of U.S. adults say it is at least somewhat important for children to grow up in a home with both parents.

This includes 73% who see this as very important. ’11 was the worst year for new-homes sales in the U.S. since 1963.

Hispanics in the U.S. originate from 21 different countries, predominately Mexico and Central America.

Donors who make a second gift the first year they begin supporting an organization, on average, are twice as

likely to give the following year.

More than 107 trillion emails were sent in 2010.

More than 73% of U.S. female Internet users are on Facebook, an increase of 8% since ’10.

241.3 million people tune in to radio each week—that is about 93% of the U.S. population 12 years old and older.

7 out of 10 Americans would have no choice but to leave some bills unpaid if they missed one paycheck. The average U.S. household spent \$3,235 on gas in ’11, up a startling \$700 since ’10.

The Institute for American Values reports that 40% of all American babies are born outside of marriage today

News and Trends information compiled and edited by Gary Foster, President of Gary D Foster Consulting, a firm that assists Christian ministries and product companies in solving management, marketing, donor/customer service and product development problems.

Contact Gary at: 419.238.4082, GFosterCns@rmi.net or go to www.GaryDFoster.com.

Just the
Facts

Barna Research



It's a New Day for Intercultural Network Carolina!

We will gather around heaven's throne to worship the Lamb with the redeemed of every tribe, tongue, people and nation (Rev. 5:9), so let's start practicing! Our Great Commission is to make disciples of all ethnicities, starting where we are. To do this, we must work together. We've started doing this in the Carolinas! Network with us to reach the world which has come to our doorsteps. We invite all of you to Spartanburg, SC, where I-85 and I-26 cross, for an Ethnic Ministries Summit on April 19-21, 2012.

Summit Announces Speakers



Dr. Bruce Fong



Dr. Rene Jackson



Dr. Danny Carroll



Rev. David H. Kim



Bishop Harry Jackson



Evangelism Connection

Evangelism news from the Mission America Coalition (U.S. Lausanne Committee)

Beyond Hope? Not to Pastor Rosey



I want to share with everyone the ministry that I do, not only at St. Johns Lutheran Church, here in Texas by the sea but also the ministry I do for feral cats. I have been sober for a little over 23 years now and working with these feral cats that live in hell day in and day out helps me with the steps I do every day.

Helping and taking care of feral cats is nothing short of a spiritual experience for me. For I also know what it's like living on the streets, and having no one wanting a thing to do with you. But thank God there was at least one person who did extend their hand to me and pulled me

up out of the hell I was in, so I too, extend that hand to not only my fellow humans but also to these feral cats. The Book of Wisdom, Proverbs, tells us “the righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel” (12:10) This means to me that we as God’s children are to care for the needs of animals that are our pets but also those that we see who are in need. According to this scripture it is an evil person who neglects needs and shows no mercy. We are to understand the needs of those around us, people, too, and take care of them as we are able. :o)

Here are some pics of the cats I work with. The one with me kissing the cat is with a cat that was taken from a shelter. This cat came from a shelter that shut down. There were 200 cats there and 30 of them had to be put down. This cat lived and for sure, just like the rest of the surviving cats, had urine all over him; but hey, if a human was in the same condition I would hug them too. Feral cats and street people have a lot in common, both are in need and need our help and our mercy.

My dream is to go back and work on skid row to help the beautiful people

(Continued on page 25)

Beyond Hope? Not to Pastor Rosey



(Continued from page 24)

that live there and who I understand because of who I once was 23 years ago. I can see it now... looking out of my window from my office in a street shelter, helping the homeless and at the same time, watching the feral cats in the dumpster that I would also feed. “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.”

I take the cats to the vet for TNR (trap neuter return). Since they are feral, if taken to a shelter they would just be put down, but by

doing TNR they will be fixed so there will be no more aggression from the males or females and they will live in peace and not reproduce other kitties that would be in the same situation as them. After they come back from the vet, we just feed them till they get old and die. People don't realize what a lot of these cats go through. Thanks to all the building we do, the wildlife that is out there (Fox/coyotes) are forced to go into the city looking for food and thus feed on these cats. These feral cats are like little warriors, standing up to these predators and even though they may get killed, they still

put up a fight to protect their little ones if they have them. And let's not forget the humans who torture by poisoning to kill these little things.

I worked with a feral kitten for 4 months trying to make friends (its mama let me) She was the last cat to survive out of the litter and now she lives with us at home and is no longer feral. What a blessing to work with these little creatures that God put here on this earth for us!

Pastor Rosey



Pastor Rosey Rosenquist

The "Back Page"

April Fools!

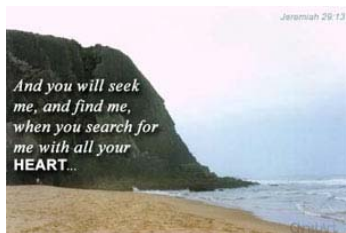
I am getting my pre Chemo IV's as I finish up this spring issue. As I look around the room I see people who are deteriorating more and more each week.

Some who were walking are now being carried in.

Hair is being lost and the faces are becoming sunken and have deep shadows.

Many are fighting a losing battle with Cancer and the effects of the Chemo.

Where is God in all of this? How can he let them suffer this way?



God's promise to us

Well Jesus is sitting with them as I write this. If they have the faith then nothing on earth, or in heaven or under the earth can separate them from the love of God. They are safe and secure in the everlasting arms of Jesus.

This same Jesus died on a cross for their sins and rose again for their salvation.

He suffered from the whip which ripped his back, from the crown of thorns that cut his head, and from the cross which pulled his harms from their sockets allowing his body to collapse within its self and suffocate him.

With His last breath he said it is finished and gave up his spirit.

Jesus know suffering, we are not alone.

The ones who don't get it are the ones who refuse to believe. They feel that they are in control of their lives and that the idea of God, especially one who let them suffer, is absurd.

The psalmist say's **Psa 53:1** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

They even have their own day, April 1st, April Fools Day.

Blessings,

Pastor Steve

From the Editor

This issue is full of great articles from the many ministers of the LEPC.

To God be the glory, great things he has done!

May the blessings of Christ be with you all.

Pastor Steve



Is he done yet?



Evangelical Protestant Church(GEPC)Inc,

Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church(LEPC)

