

Independent Evangelist

LE it's happening



Follow the Leader

Phil Conybear – Writer

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Departing summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

- William Wordsworth -
September

Welcome to the September issue of the Independent Evangelist. School's back and members return to church after a summer of fun with the family as leaves turn a muddy green before God brings out His pallet and paints the leaves in colors that mesmerize. I hope your summer was a good one. I know mine was.



It's All Up To What You Value

Here I go again with another song lyric, but when it fits, use it! I was listening to an old George Harrison song, **It's All Up to What You Value**, and he was right. The song goes on to say, "It all rests on the pain you've gone through, getting where you are."

The pain you've gone through? Yes, people put themselves through a lot of unnecessary emotional pain getting through life. Physical pain I can deal with. Emotional pain is a lot tougher and often avoidable.

Let me illustrate what I mean. I recommend that all Christians watch **Jerry Springer** at least once. It proudly states in the opening credits that it is the worst show on TV. So why watch it? Well, it shakes up that "White Bread" existence many live.

Here's a hint of a White Bread existence; Soccer moms drive the kiddies everywhere while tethered to a cell phone while they shut out the world as they drive on. Dad hustles towards that unexpected stroke he unwittingly is trying to earn while hustling to pay off the minivan. The kids scramble to gather every useless gadget advertisers can find to sell.

I'm not knocking buying what you can afford but watch out for pitfalls of that "Me First" "Look what I have" world. It breeds a shallow environment. Let's get back to Springer and you'll see what I mean.

Not all, but many of the kids on that show are from such a "White Bread" existence. They come on the show with a scandal befitting the show; "I'm sleeping with the baby sitter" or "I'm cheating on my lover" or some such nonsense. When they bring out the other guest, the couple fights openly and inevitably someone says, "**You never take care of ME!**"

They all want to be "Takin' care of" because they want to "Hang out" with their friends, like they were used to doing at home. They have left their soccer moms and are on their own for the first time. They have been given so much "stuff" without earning it but by whining for it. **They want the easy way out.** They want someone to take care of them but they've latched on to someone with the same attitude.

Advertisers on the show reinforce that slovenly attitude. "Quick fix colleges" and short term, pay check loan companies are primary ads supplemented with sleazy lawyer ads and dating services. None of the kids on the show or the viewers have learned to appreciate a hard work ethic and school left them behind with their video games and cell phones. It's all aimed at the weak minded and there appears to be plenty of them to go around.

That show and others like it are possible because so many people have floundered through life and never learned any values. **It really is up to what you value.**

Listen to the ads to see what you need to be like the next advertising icon. Turn your paycheck over to the Quick Cash company so you can have that new cell phone and download the jokes and junk at a price; you'll look cool losing your soul and your mind.

It's easy to cheat on your spouse or get the sex change and marry your cousin. You'll **get to be a guest on Springer** and be "Somebody" for a day and say, "Look at me!". When the show is over ask yourself was the **emotional pain incurred** worth it for a moment of fleeting glory on the worst TV show ever?

You could **read a "Good Book" instead** and find the **values that matter.** You'll never have to whine, "Take care of Me". The choice is simple and the rewards are great. But, after all, it really is up to **what you value.**

Tales From The Cell

I mentioned a young man named, Saul in past newsletters. Saul has become quite an evangelist inside prison and truly has no real “bars” since **he found God**.

He’s been very busy lately with a class he attended through the mail. In fact he completed the course and sent me all of the documents as well as the certificates. At the risk of sounding condescending, I’m proud of him.

He needs to finish such courses because when he gets out, he intends to attend a seminary. To prove the seriousness of his intents, he was told to complete such courses. He has researched this and found out that it’s not impossible to attain such a goal as others in his position before have done it. It will be hard but I know he has what it takes and I ask others to pray for him.

Here are some excerpts from his lessons. I hope you feel as inspired as I am by his efforts.

Tier 1, lesson 14 (Each lesson had two parts; Survey of the Bible and Roadmap. Survey was the lesson and Roadmap was a follow up)

Survey: He was asked by his instructor a hypothetical question; “Imagine you are talking to an old friend about your studies and he asked you, what’s so special about the Bible”.

“The **Truth** is what is so special about the Bible. For once, I was lost in the ways of this fallen world, but thanks to the grace of God and mercy through Jesus I have been given salvation so that I may serve God. The Bible gives us information on how to have a long relationship with God, all for God’s glory, not ours.”

Roadmap: When asked how these verses made a difference in his own life he replied;

“When I read Philippians 1-4, I thanked God that my life is a mirror image of what Paul suffered in prison. For this time in prison or “fire” is purging out all the evil ways of my past life and producing Christ likeness in the new life.

I was touched by the one word, “**Truth**” in his first answer. Then he saw a parallel between his life and Paul’s. Too often, people read the words of the Bible but rarely see any meaning. He gets it. He reads and understands all of it. The **Truth** will set you free. He has no bars in prison.

He not busy being born is busy dying – Bob Dylan

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Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Galatians 5:1

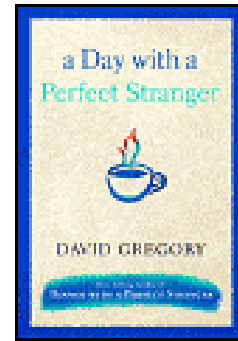
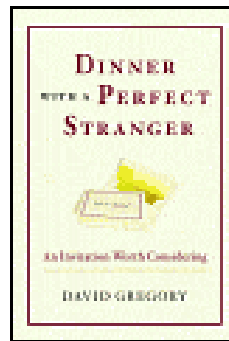
Book Corner

Some time ago, I reviewed the book, **Dinner With a Perfect Stranger**, a wonderful story about a cynic who was given an invitation to have dinner with Jesus.

It was written by David Gregory and now he has a follow up book; **A Day With a Perfect Stranger**. Usually, any sequel pales by comparison to the original but this book may be better than the original.

The story is about his wife, who is exasperated with her husband’s new obsession with Jesus. She is more cynical and far less religious than her husband ever was and is so fed up with him being a “Jesus Freak” that she wants to end their marriage. She plans to tell him when she returns from a business trip.

During the flight, she opens up to another passenger about her husband and his obsession. Though it isn’t revealed, he is the perfect stranger. Their conversation is engaging and powerful. The ending will leave you breathless and only a liar will deny having a dry eye.



Another book that is a quick read but very enjoyable is, **Coincidence or Godincidence**, by Steve Rose.

Many people don’t believe in miracles or they think they only happened in biblical times. It’s common to think that everything that happens is coincidence.

This book is full of stories of miracles, mysteries and hope. Whether or not you believe in miracles, you will be touched by the stories in his book. If nothing else, it will make you look at events everywhere differently.

How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book. - Henry David Thoreau

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A wise [man] will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Proverbs 1:5

M I D E A S T

Desperate to Escape: Christians Flee Lebanon

By George Thomas
CWNews



CWNews.com – BEIRUT, Lebanon - In 48 hours, Charbel and Lydia Karkour will start a new chapter in their lives.

"It is good to start from the beginning in a good place and a very peaceful place," said Charbel.

The newlywed Christian couple, with a baby on the way, will travel north by road from Beirut, Lebanon to Damascus, Syria.

Asked if the journey to leave is risky, Charbel said, "Yes, it is very risky."

Their final destination? Toronto, Canada.

"I have a baby, and we want to have a good future for him," Charbel's wife said.

But the decision to leave their homeland wasn't an easy one to make.

"I am trying to say goodbye to my friends and family," Lydia said. "For now, I don't want to think about it. It is very sad."

The Karkours are not the only ones leaving. Many of their friends at church have either left or are trying to leave the country for good. Pastor Shadi el-Aouad says that a number of families have approached him, desperate to escape.

"Christians are asking the question: Why would we stay? Why would we lose our homes, our businesses, and even our lives for something we are really not a part of?," he said.

But the Karkours are not just leaving because of the war. They're also concerned that Lebanon is becoming a hostile place for Christians.

"The religious Muslims are really scary. They hate us," Charbel said.

Christians were once the majority in Lebanon. Not anymore. They now make up less than 40 percent of the population. The rest are Muslims. And their numbers are growing.

Lydia said, "We are afraid that it is becoming a Muslim country."

Charbel's work takes him around the Middle East. He says that Muslims today are out-producing Christians.

"What you are seeing in reality is real," Charbel said. "They are multiplying too much."

Every family produces five to 10 children. These children will then have five to 10 children. So it's 10 exponential – 10 in the second generation."

The Christian population in Lebanon began to drop during the civil wars, either through emigration or declining birth rates.

This latest conflict is seeing a new wave of emigration. Sixteen-year-old Jade Hajj, a Christian from west Beirut, is leaving soon for Australia.

"I am forced to," she said. "At the moment, schools are closed. And if I want to do anything good for Lebanon, I need to continue my education."

Some suggest that up to 70 percent of the Christians that are left in Lebanon are ready to leave as soon as the Beirut airport opens.

Viviane Kahkedjian is one of them. She said, "Since I was born, there's been a war. Every 10 years there's another war. I plan to leave this country to have a life."

And it is not just in Lebanon. Across the Muslim and Arab world, Christians are fleeing the growing hostility against them.

"In Jordan, big numbers of Christians are leaving. In Iraq, big numbers of Christians are leaving. So too, in Syria," said Pastor Aouad.

Aouad says that the real impact of Christians leaving Lebanon will only be felt in the future.

"My concern is that we are losing our inheritance, our father's inheritance, and not just the land's inheritance, but our spiritual inheritance in the nation," he said.

Meanwhile, those who have chosen to stay are ministering to thousands of Muslim refugees displaced by the war. Across the country, Lebanese Christians have opened their homes and churches to those fleeing the Israeli attacks in the south of Lebanon.

But in some of the Christian areas of Beirut, the refugees, many of whom are Hezbollah supporters, think that the Christians are not doing them any special favors by helping them. Instead, many Muslims believe that the Christians have a duty to come to their aid.

As the Karkours get ready to leave, they are holding on to a promise in the Bible that one day Lebanon will see better days.

"We have a promise in the Bible that says, 'In a moment, Lebanon will become like a heaven,'" she said. "I prefer to walk by faith and not by what I am seeing, and I trust my God because He is greater than what I am seeing."

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:17

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And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

Isaiah 10:34

U.S. News

D.C. Prayer Vigils Prayer Warriors Face Down D.C. Crime

By Tracy Winborn
CBN News.com



CBNNews.com – A nighttime curfew for juveniles remains in effect in the nation’s capital after a spike in violent crime. While authorities are increasing their patrols, others are turning to prayer.

Police Chief Charles Ramsey declared a crime emergency in Washington, D.C., where there were **14 murders in the first 13 days** of July. The crime wave includes brazen assaults of tourists on the National Mall, and police are asking visitors to be on the lookout for any unusual activity.

The crime emergency allows the chief to adjust thousands of officers’ schedules and re-assign them to the areas where they are needed the most.

While police officers are beefing up patrols in certain areas, the Christian Defense Coalition says prayer can also make a difference in the fight against crime.

They sponsored **six days of prayer vigils on the National Mall**, July 21-26. During that time, authorities say there was only one murder committed in D.C. Reverend Patrick Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition, believes God heard the prayers of his people.

“Our whole focus was that **in times of adversity, Americans have always turned to God for guidance, support, and blessing.** And we felt the most significant thing we could do at the Nation’s Capital, was to call the faith community together, the Christian community together, to come and seek God for his protection from this tragic crime,” Mahoney said.

The round-the-clock prayer vigils, he said, were a unifying experience with **tourists, locals, and even police officers stopping by to participate.** According to Mahoney, the focus of these prayers was to seek God for a reduction in crime over the next six months. He said the Christian Defense Coalition plans to hold a news conference in January to document a reduction in crime the second half of this year.

“We really need to say that we have a God who’s interested in our lives, He’s sovereign, He controls the course of the nation and world events and we need to turn to Him,” Mahoney said. He encouraged the body of Christ to go beyond the four walls of the church and go out into the community to pray as the apostles did on the day of Pentecost.

He said, “I want to challenge the body of Christ out there to realize we normally use prayer as a reaction to events— the tragedy of 9-11, the loss of a loved one. But what we feel God is putting on our hearts is that prayer needs to be used in a proactive way...Prayer is a spiritual force, a weapon, if you will.”

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:10

U.S. News

NEW ORLEANS

Churches Urged to Adopt Congregations

By Becky Bohrer
Associated Press Writer



August 23, 2006

CBNNews.com – NEW ORLEANS (AP) - Two civil rights activists announced plans Wednesday to involve churches nationwide in helping their New Orleans congregations recover from Hurricane Katrina.

Atlanta-based civil rights leader Rev. C.T. Vivian said the program dubbed "**Churches Supporting Churches**" will urge churches to adopt 36 New Orleans congregations in heavily damaged neighborhoods. The adopted churches in turn would be anchors for the redevelopment of their surrounding communities.

"Our focus is not simply to build churches but to build neighborhoods and the city," Vivian said during a bus tour that wound through once-flooded neighborhoods still showing scars from the hurricane.

In one area, a person in a white hazmat-type suit and face mask stood on a front lawn; in other areas crumpled houses stood next to heaps of rubble.

Former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, once a close associate of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., described himself as numb after seeing the damage at the East Jerusalem Baptist Church in the Lower Ninth Ward, one of the hardest hit areas. He stepped over debris and nearly stumbled trying to get into the front door.

"I don't know what to think," said Young, a New Orleans native.

One of the biggest challenges for Churches Supporting Churches, organizers said, is finding church leaders who scattered across the country like many of their congregants. Some, such as the Rev. Hall Kelly Jr., aren't sure whether they'll be able to rebuild.

Kelly, who said he returns to what's left of East Jerusalem Baptist at least once a week to pray, said his "hopes and dreams" are to rebuild. Most of his congregants want to return but there are hurdles like high rental costs.

"We're not going to give up," he said, fighting back tears. "It's going to be all right."

This isn't the first effort aimed at helping rebuild churches in the region. A charity established by former Presidents Bush and Clinton had \$20 million earmarked for hurricane-affected churches on the Gulf Coast.

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But grow in grace, and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him [be] glory

both now and for ever. Amen.
2 Peter 3:18

.....
Let brotherly love continue.
Hebrews 13:1

The Golden Rule

These are just a few versions I found of the Golden Rule. The language, religion or geographical location doesn't matter as you can see.

Ancient Egyptian:

Do for one who may do for you, that you may cause him thus to you.

The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant. 109 - 110

Bahai World Faith:

Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee and say not that which thou doest not.

Baha'u'llah

Brahmanism:

This is the sum of duty. Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done so.

Mahabharata 5: 15 17

Buddhism:

Hurt not others in ways that you would find hurtful.

Udana-Varga 5: 18

Christianity:

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

Confucianism:

Surely it is the maxim of loving kindness: Do not unto others what you would have them do unto you.

Analects: 15: 23

Islam:

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

Sunnah

Judaism:

What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire law; all the rest is commentary.

Talmud, Shabbat 31a

Native American Spirituality:

Respect for all life is the foundation.

The great Law of Peace

All things are our relatives; what we do to everything we do to ourselves. All is really one.

Black Elk

Do not wrong or hate your neighbor. For it is not he who you wrong, but yourself.

Pima proverb

Shinto:

The heart of the person before you is a mirror. See there your own form.

Ko-ji-ki Hachiman Kasuga

Taoism:

Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.

T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien

Yoruba: (Nigeria)

One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts.

Zoroastrianism:

That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself.

Dadistan-i-dinik 94: 5

Did God Create Evil?

The following was from an email I received some time ago. It was entertaining and thought provoking and for some reason, I kept it as a Word file.

Nobody seems to know the original source or who actually said it, but the archives of Einstein say he really did say something to this effect. I hope you enjoy it.

Did God create everything that exists? Does Evil exist? Did God create evil?

A university professor at a well known institution of higher learning challenged his students with this question. "Did God create everything that exists?" A student bravely replied, "Yes He did."

"God created everything?" the professor asked.

"Yes sir, he certainly did," the student replied.

The professor answered, "If God created everything, then God created evil. And, since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then we can assume God is evil."

The student became quiet and did not answer the professor's hypothetical definition. The professor, quite pleased with himself, boasted to the students that he had proven once more that the Christian faith was a myth.

Another student raised his hand and said, "May I ask you a question, professor?"

"Of course," he replied.

The student stood up and asked, "Does cold really exist?"

"What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold?" The other students snickered at the young man's question.

The young man replied, "In fact, sir cold does not exist. According to the laws of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat. Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-460 F) is the total absence of heat, and all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature. Cold does not exist. We have created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat."

The student continued, "Professor, **does darkness exist?**"

The professor responded, "Of course it does."

The student replied, "Once again you are wrong sir, darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study, but not darkness. In fact, we can use Newton's prism to break white light into many colors and study the various wavelengths of each color. You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it. How can you know how dark a certain space is? You measure the amount of light present. Isn't this correct? Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present."

Finally, the young man asked, "Sir, **does evil exist?**"

Now uncertain, the professor responded, "Of course, as I have already said. We see it every day. It is in the daily examples of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil."

To this the student replied, "Evil does not exist, sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. **Evil is simply the absence of God.** God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the **cold that comes when there is no heat**, or the **darkness that comes when there is no light.**"

The professor sat down.

The young man's name was Albert Einstein.

I especially liked the last line; "It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat, or the darkness that comes when there is no light. How cool is that?"

Sometimes a good email comes around.

Say a Prayer For Our Troops

Remember at all times **to put politics aside** and **pray for our troops**. They are kids at heart, thrown into hell. They are patriots and freedom fighters and they are doing a great job.

The following pictures were taken by troops in Iraq and by motorcyclists that do a lot to say thank you to the vets. They did a "Run For Freedom" to raise money for a memorial in Marsailles, Illinois as well as funds for VA hospitals.

Also, the ladies at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church should take note of the soldiers with the care package from home. Their efforts as well as those from other churches are well received by the "kids". My hat's off to you.

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Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your



heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Psalms 31:24

As always, the last page is set aside for the lighter side of life. I know I've used funny church signs and church bulletin bloopers before, but there were some good ones that I had no room for earlier and they are too good to pass up. I hope you enjoy them.

Until next time, take care and may God bless you all.

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Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

Ushers will eat latecomers.

The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa will be speaking tonight at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I Will Not Pass This Way Again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water."
The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

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