

# Independent Evangelist

LE it's happening



Follow the Leader

Phil Conybear – Writer

March 2007

Vol. 2 Issue 1 Mary Conybear - Editor



*I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

- William Wordsworth, Daffodils

**Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush.** March 21<sup>st</sup> is the first day of spring and my favorite time of the year.

Welcome to the March issue and the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary issue. I sincerely thank all those who gave me kind words and input during the year.

## Fear

**Fear is that little darkroom where negatives are developed.** What is it that causes us fear? Fear starts when we are young and fear the dark. Nightlights and open doors comfort all children at night but why can't we shake away fear as adults?

**No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.** Yet we have so much in our lives.

We fear **loss**; loss of possessions, friends, loved ones, jobs or death. We fear **things we can't see**; things that go "bump" in the night or perhaps something drooling under the bed. Our imagination can be a wonderful thing but it can work against us at times.

**The only thing we should ever fear is a life without God.**

*And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful?  
how is it that ye have no faith?  
Mark 4:40*

All of us have it in us to carry on when we are afraid. After all, what are the alternatives?

When we were kids, we learned to sleep with the lights out. We found nothing had been drooling under the bed and the things going "bump" in the night was just the furnace kicking in.

The loss of things and jobs are annoying but we survive. The loss of friends and loved ones is much harder to take but time and new found friends heals all wounds. You learn to remember them well and wake up the next day.

The biggest fear any of us have is our own death. **The fear of death is more to be dreaded than death itself.** That is until we start making out a will and asking, "Who gets all this stuff?"

That's when you realize it is just "stuff" and you can't take it with you. Then you realize death is only hard on those that you leave behind. All they have is some stuff and memories.

*As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so life  
well used brings happy death.  
Leonardo da Vinci*

Leonardo had it right; life well used brings happy death. Make the most out of life and pass on that which you have learned.

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was:  
and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.  
Ecclesiastes 12:7*

Live life well and trust in the Lord. The only thing worth passing on is knowledge and the only fear that's real is a life without God.

*And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will  
praise thee: though thou wast angry with me,  
thine anger is turned away, and thou  
comfortedst me. Behold, God [is] my salvation;  
I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord  
Jehovah [is] my strength and [my] song; he also  
is become my salvation.  
Isaiah 12:1-2*

## Curiosity Corner

This is the part of the newsletter that I'm most curious about. Mostly, I'm curious about reader response. There are a great many things in this world that are touchy subjects. Many of them some refuse to talk about. Some will however and here are some comments.

Last month I brought up the subject of UFO's. Unidentified Flying Objects by definition are real and many well respected people have seen them and the events are well documented. Still, they remain just that; unidentified flying onjects.

"I saw a UFO once. It was visible from I-90 and I saw a crowd of people on the shoulder watching it."

"It's hard to believe that we're alone in the universe. It seems like a waste of space."

"I'm tired of the government telling us they're weather balloons."

I received several emails saying I was ET. Maybe I am. However the number of those that don't believe in UFO's were equal to those that do.

"Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: Isaiah 42:5 That's all you need to think about. Not UFO's"

"You worry too much about things that don't matter"

I appreciate all comments. Believe me though when I say I am trying to be neutral on all subjects in the Curiosity Corner.

This month, I want your comments on ghosts. Are they real or figments of our imagination?

The Ghost Whisperer on CBS is fun to watch and many of us like to wonder what happens when we die. It is just a TV show however and though it feeds our brains with wonderful speculation about crossing over, it can give no answers.



James Van Praagh calls himself a medium and says he talks to the dead. He had a show on TV but some say he's a fraud. What do you say?



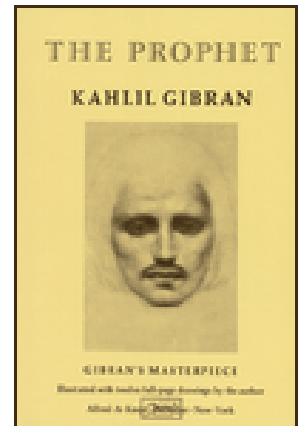
I'd like to know your feelings. Are ghosts real or are people just hoping they are?

## "Classic" Book Corner

I read this book back in the 60's and couldn't resist picking up a copy the last time I was in the book store.

Kahlil Gibran worked on the manuscript for "[The Prophet](#)" his second work in English after "The Madman" for several years before it was published in October 1923. Both the author and the world consider this his masterpiece, and it has been translated into dozens of languages.

"The Prophet" concerns Almustafa, "the chosen one," who, after exile on an island, addresses such universal themes as love, joy, sorrow, pain, and time. These short aphorisms, functioning as a sort of spiritual poetry, have moved countless readers over the years. There are also wonderful illustrations by Gibran.



It is a short book, in which its hero, Almustafa (Gibran), at the invitation of his muse, Almitra (Mary Haskell), tells the people of Orphalese (New York) what he really thinks about everything. It's moving and poetic and reminiscent of many classic writers and philosophers throughout time.

Every generation seems to "discover" this book and although it may seem archaic it is far from dull. The following is an excerpt.

### ON CHILDREN

*And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said,  
Speak to us of Children.*

*And he said: Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.*

*You may give them your love but not your thoughts, For they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls, For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams. You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.*

It's poetic and thoughtfully entertaining. As I said, I read it in the 60's and thought it belonged to my generation until I read when it was written. I was wrong; it needs to be shared with each generation and can be found in the religious fiction section of any book store.

## *Age: a point of view*

*I was always taught to respect my elders and I've now reached the age when I don't have anybody to respect.*  
*George Burns 1896-1996*

Age never mattered to me. Perhaps that had to do with the fact I was the youngest of five kids and we had two grandmothers living in the house at the same time. I was used to everyone being older than me since I came along late in my parents lives.

My siblings were so much older than me that I was barely older than my nieces and nephews. The idea of being an uncle at five meant nothing. They were just kids like me.

There was one benefit though that I wouldn't appreciate for many years. I learned to respect my elders. As a kid, it would get annoying when my Irish grandmother would sternly correct my grammar but it paid off all through school because I excelled whenever there were writing assignments.

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*  
*Proverbs 22:6*

I groaned every time they would tell stories about the Great Depression and the World Wars, but I loved history in school though I ignored the connection at the time.

*The glory of young men [is] their strength: and the beauty of old men [is] the gray head.*  
*Proverbs 20:29*

As I was growing up, my buddies couldn't understand how I could like music outside our generations. I had Big Band, jazz, gospel, country, Sousa and even opera heard in our house. During my teenage years you could hear the sounds Benny Goodman emanating from my room one minute followed by Janis Joplin the next. Of course, I still ignored the connection.

Now, though I'm only in my 50's, I've already outlived most friends from my youth. My veteran friends from Vietnam have all passed on. Only two kids from my childhood still keep in touch from time to time. The rest have died or just moved on. I'm not getting the perspective of age without seeing those familiar faces.

*Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.*  
*John Lennon - English singer & songwriter (1940 - 1980)*

When I was in my 20's I met an old man who had a goal to live to 106 and be shot by a jealous husband. He was not your average old man and I admired his zest for life. He made it well into his 90's and I was there when he died. He told me to

make it to 106 and after I died, he would wait for me on the other side so I could tell him what it was like living that long.

*Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*  
*Psalms 71:9*

As far as my health goes, I may not make it to 106 but I know my time will only come when I've passed on that which I have learned. I believe that is the main assignment for each of our lives.

The biggest thing I've learned is that age is relative. I've seen old guys like him who want to live as long as he can so he can experience every possible feeling and taste all the joys of life and I've seen kids waste their talents and throw their lives away without concern.

I've seen many die in battle and once after one battle was over, I had the privilege of delivering a baby in a remote village in Vietnam. I also saw the death of my first wife and child in Vietnam. I had just turned twenty. Life happens fast at times.

The point is that life can grab you by the throat and kick you in the rear at times but if you just drift around aimlessly you'll have an empty life and those hard times will wear you down. You may never recover.

When you savor things that matter, like the gift of music or literature God allows us to create, you have an experience to pass on. Observing and listening to elders when they carry on about their good old days instead of shoving them aside, only makes you stronger and wiser.

One day we all wake up and realize we are the elders of society and we wonder how that happened. We no longer can look to our parents and grandparents for guidance and knowledge. Instead we can only hope our children and grandchildren retain anything we say when their eyes roll back as we talk about our good old days.

*The longer I live the more beautiful life becomes.*  
*Frank Lloyd Wright*  
*US architect (1869 - 1959)*

Age certainly revolves around a point of view. If this life is the only chance we have to get it right, then learn from our elders and pass on what we have learned.

*The unexamined life is not worth living.*  
*Socrates (469 BC - 399 BC)*



I found some disturbing stories on the internet. I condensed them, only leaving their essence. Kids are exposed to many more evils in today's world and I worry about them. **The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children.**

## US News

### More Teens are Watching Internet Porn

CBN News

February 16, 2007

CBNNews.com - A recent report says children between 12 and 17 are the most frequent viewers of Internet pornography.

And the average age of first-time exposure to internet porn is **just 11 years old.**



The state of Virginia is taking new steps to protect kids from online predators, and Virginia's attorney general Bob McDonnell is leading the charge.

### Sex Show Heats Up Cross Controversy

CBN News

February 15, 2007

CBNNews.com - The supporters of keeping a cross in the chapel at William & Mary College are now protesting an obscene sex show performed on campus earlier this week. The Virginia Gazette reports the Sex Workers Art Show features strippers, escorts and prostitutes talking about their jobs. The show contains drag and burlesque performances as well as nudity.



This comes on the heels of a decision by William & Mary's president **to remove a small cross on display in the Virginia college's historic chapel.**

Dr. Gene Nichol issued a statement about the show Tuesday. He said, "I don't like this kind of show and I don't like having it here, but it's not the practice and province of universities to censor or cancel performances because they are controversial." The event cost approximately \$1,800. **The monies were taken from student fees.**

### Top Catholics Rip NYC Condom Handout

By Sara Kugler

Associated Press Writer

February 15, 2007

CBNNews.com -- NEW YORK (AP) --

New York's top Catholic leaders on Thursday sharply criticized the city for "blanketing our neighborhoods with condoms," saying city officials were promoting promiscuity and degrading society by distributing subway-themed condoms.



The city launched the new official condoms on Valentine's Day with volunteers handing out free samples throughout the city, including on a street corner near St. Patrick's Cathedral in midtown Manhattan.

The plan, the Catholic leaders said, "is tragic and misguided," adding that the only way to protect against sexually transmitted diseases is through abstinence before marriage and fidelity among married couples. "Our political leaders fail to protect the moral tone of our community when they encourage inappropriate sexual activity by blanketing our neighborhoods with condoms," said Cardinal Edward Egan, head of the Archdiocese of New York, and Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn in a joint statement.

Stu Loeser, a spokesman for Mayor Michael Bloomberg, said: "With all due respect to Cardinal Egan and Bishop DiMarzio, we feel differently." New York officials revamped the condom wrapper in hopes that a distinctive design - featuring the words "NYC Condom" in the fonts and colors used in the subway system - will let them track usage with their annual community health survey.

Egan and DiMarzio said the **\$720,000 cost of the program** "would be far better spent in fostering what is true and what is decent."

### Death Certificates for Aborted Fetuses?

CBN News

February 15, 2007

CBNNews.com - A Tennessee lawmaker has introduced a bill that would require death certificates for aborted fetuses.



The bill's sponsor, Republican Stacey Campfield, says it would track the number of abortions in the state. State offices already keep records on abortion and early deaths, but the women involved are not named. This bill could require that the mother be identified, and would require abortion providers to file a death certificate within 10 days of a procedure.

Tennessee Right to Life says that the bill draws attention to the way abortion is handled. One opponent calls it preposterous. And a state Planned Parenthood official calls the bill an attempt to terrorize vulnerable women, and hopes lawmakers don't "invest too much energy" in it. The bill is expected to pass the Republican-controlled Senate, but may have a hard time in the Democratic House.

*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Jeremiah 1:5*

*Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. Hebrews 13:18*

## World

### Anglicans Face Difficult Summit

By Elizabeth Kennedy  
Associated Press Writer  
February 14, 2007



CBNNews.com -- DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania -- A conference of Anglican leaders opened Wednesday as the **77 million-member church struggles with a potentially disastrous fight over the Bible and sexuality.**

"I anticipate this will be a very difficult meeting," said Canon Jim Rosenthal, a spokesman for the conference of the world's third-largest church body. "The basic issue here is what to do about those who decided they don't want to stay in the main Anglican body."

**Splits between Anglican liberals and conservatives have been growing for years.** The struggle reached a crisis in 2003 when the Episcopal Church - the U.S. wing of the global Anglican Communion - consecrated its **first openly gay bishop**, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire.

The problems mounted in 2006 with the election of Katharine Jefferts Schori, **who supports ordaining gays** and is the first female leader of the U.S. church.

Conservative Anglicans are demanding that the group take a stand against homosexuality, and some have threatened to refuse to sit with Jefferts Schori at this week's meeting. The six-day conference has drawn the presiding bishops of 38 provinces in the worldwide Anglican Communion. **Some of the bishops, known as primates, have already broken their ties with the American church.**

The Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the spiritual leader of the communion, has struggled to hold off one of the biggest meltdowns in Christianity in centuries, but he lacks any direct authority to force a compromise.

Supporters of ordaining gays believe the Bible's social justice teachings take precedence over its view of sexuality. However, most Anglicans outside the United States believe gay relationships are sinful, and they are distancing themselves from the U.S. church.

***Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.***  
*Romans 16:17*

*The Anglican Communion is the world's third-largest family of Christian churches behind Roman Catholic and Orthodox. I pray that they make the right choices.*

### Two Wolves

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a **battle that goes on inside people.**

He said, "My son, the battle is between **two "wolves"** inside us all..



One is **Evil**. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret,

greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is **Good**. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather:

**"Which wolf wins?"**

The old Cherokee simply replied, **"The one you feed."**

Humankind has not woven the web of life.  
We are but one thread within it.  
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.  
All things are bound together.  
All things connect.  
-Chief Seattle, 1854-



May the stars carry your sadness away,  
May the flowers fill your heart with beauty,  
May hope forever wipe away your tears,  
And, above all, may silence make you strong.  
-Chief Dan George-

O' GREAT SPIRIT  
help me always  
to speak the truth quietly,  
to listen with an open mind  
when others speak,  
and to remember the peace  
that may be found in silence.

Cherokee Prayer





## Lent

By the time this newsletter goes out, we will be well into Lent. In fact Easter is right around the corner.

I've mentioned before that my family was far from the church going crowd. As a child, I would ask why people had ashes on their foreheads. What were they giving things up for and what was Lent?

I was told not to worry about it; that it was a Catholic thing.

My parents had their reasons for not going to church, which I mentioned in previous newsletters. So I turned to my Grandma for answers.

The same grandmother that corrected my grammar was bold enough and kind enough to give me answers to all the "mysteries" of Lent. Here are some of the things she told me.

Lent is a forty-day season of preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. The season begins with Ash Wednesday, when pastors mark the foreheads of Christians with ashes as a reminder that **we are created from dust and to dust we shall return.**

During Lent we follow Jesus from his adult ministry through his suffering during Holy Week and his crucifixion and death on Good Friday. And we read the Psalms that foretell what would happen during that week.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, also called Sunday of the Passion, and continues through Holy Thursday (when Holy Communion was instituted at the Last Supper) and Good Friday, when Jesus was tried, crucified, and buried.



No, Grandma wasn't a teacher, she was just well read and a Christian. She had a knack for helping a thick headed kid understand. Still, it wouldn't be clear until I attended confirmation classes and became a practicing Christian.

Because the Last Supper was celebrated during the Feast of the Passover, which is calculated on the phases of the moon, Easter is called a movable feast. Lent is scheduled backwards

from Easter. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the full moon after the spring equinox. The forty days of fasting and penitence during Lent do not include Sundays. Christians always celebrate Sunday as the day Jesus rose from the dead, so it is never a day of fasting.

Wow, that was a lot for this thick headed kid to take in. If there was forty days of fasting, how did Mardi Gras fit in, or did it? She was a very proper lady and never attended Mardi Gras but she looked it up.

Many Northern Europeans celebrate the day before Ash Wednesday, mardi gras (French for Fat Tuesday, also called Shrove Tuesday), by eating up everything good in the house that medieval Christians believed was inappropriate to eat during Lent (eggs, butter, cream, meat). This celebration has expanded into all sorts of festivals all over the world, although most modern Christians do eat some - or all - of those foods during Lent.

I was a big eater and that sounded like something I could get in to. But that would have to wait. She went on to tell me:

**Lent is a time of stripping down to essentials, as each Christian focuses on his or her individual relationship with God.** It is a time when Christians remember our baptisms, when Jesus washed away our sins, giving us newness of life to celebrate in the triumph of Palm Sunday and the glory of Easter.

Because Lent is a time of letting go of the bondage of sin, it is also a time of celebrating the freedom from the bondage of slavery. At the Feast of the Passover, all Jews give thanks for their freedom from the captivity of the Egyptians.

She had many facts like that and she would take me to her church at times when I was little. I couldn't help but to notice the color purple everywhere during Lent. She told me, in most churches, the decorations are purple, the royal color, to prepare for the King.

There were a lot more questions but she died when I was still young. I had to find the answers on my own as I journeyed along my Christian path. Still, I think of her each year as Lent happens.

This is worth repeating here;

***Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.***

*Proverbs 22:6*

***My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.***

*Albert Einstein*



## *The Lighter side*

A good friend sent me an email worth sharing here. It was too large for one page but here's the best of it.

### What Is Love?

A group of professional people posted this question to a group of 4 to 8 year olds. "What does love mean?"

When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouths.

Billy- age 4

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.

Terri- age 4

When my grandma got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore.. So my grandpa does it for her now all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.

Rebecca- age 8

Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.

Danny- age 7

Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My mommy and daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss.

Emily- age 8

During my piano recital, I was on stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.

Cindy- age 8

My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night.

Mary Ann- age 4

Love is when mommy sees daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford.

Chris- age 7

Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.

Clare- age 6

You really shouldn't say "I LOVE YOU" unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.

Jessica- age 8



(Happy St. Pats Day!)

A minister was completing a Temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said, "If I had all the **beer** in the world, I'd take it and **pour it into the river.**"

With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the **wine** in the world, I'd take it and **pour it into the river.**"

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air, he said, "And if I had all the **whiskey** in the world, I'd take it and **pour it into the river.**"

Sermon complete, he sat down.

The song leader stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, nearly laughing, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn #365, "**Shall We Gather at the River.**"

(I couldn't resist that one.)

A fifth grade teacher in a Christian school asked her class to look at TV commercials and see if they could use them in some way to communicate ideas about God.

Here are some of the results:

God is like...

**BAYER ASPIRIN**

He works miracles.

God is like...

a **FORD**

He's got a better idea.

God is like...

**COKE**

He's the real thing.

God is like...

**HALLMARK CARDS**

He cares enough to send His very best.

God is like...

**GENERAL ELECTRIC**

He brings good things to life.

God is like...

**ALLSTATE**

You're in good hands with Him. !

God is like...

**SEARS**

He has everything

