

Independent Evangelist

LE it's happening



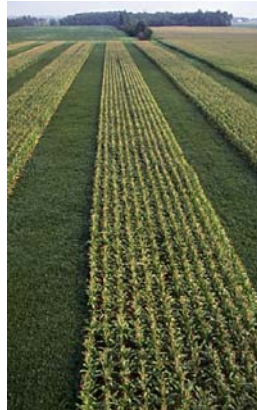
Follow the Leader

Phil Conybear – Writer

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Vol. 2 Issue 6 Mary Conybear – Editor

*Once upon a Lammas Night
When corn rigs are bonny,
Beneath the Moon's unclouded
light,
I held awhile to Annie...
The time went by with careless
heed
Between the late and early,
With small persuasion she agreed
To see me through the barley...
Corn rigs and barley rigs,
Corn rigs are bonny!
I'll not forget that happy night
Among the rigs with Annie!*
- Robert Burns



Lammas, the festival of the First Fruits of the Harvest, is the first festival of the Waning Year. It is celebrated on July 31. I always did like poems and tales of folk lore. It tells a lot about ancestral life. Times were simpler and every little thing was much more appreciated. **We need more festivals!**

Do You Believe in God?

I was watching an old TV show the other night and one of the characters asked the others if they believed in God. It was such a simple question that only required a simple yes or no answer but it left an unsettling quiet in the air.

The other characters shuffled around and one by one started to give really stupid answers. One said flat out, "That's private", while another character rambled on with philosophical double talk which in the end was the same as saying no.

The thing that bothered me was that the one who asked the question not only believed in God but told the others she talked to God and God talked to her. There was silence at first which lead to snickering and taunting and eventually all but one of the characters shunned her.

It was a waste of time as TV shows go but it made me think of how many times I've seen people grapple with that very question. As a species, humans have gone from worshipping more gods than I can count to one God and now they are afraid to admit believing in fear of being shunned. It's a simple question; you believe in God or you don't. It's not "private" or philosophical; it's "yes" or "no".

Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Acts 27:25

One thing I find in common with those that believe in God is that life has a purpose. Those that don't believe or are too weak to admit believing because they think their friends won't approve and they find themselves chasing dreams and crave some sort of power, which is just an illusion after all.

He that walketh with wise [men] shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Proverbs 13:20

I guess people are simply too worried about appearances and that's understandable. Ever since grade school we are "picked on" if we're the least bit different. But in fitting in, who are we really pleasing other than the class clowns? Then you feel empty because you caved in to peer pressure and you crave some power to make others follow you. It's silly when you think about it.

Before God we are all equally wise - and equally foolish.

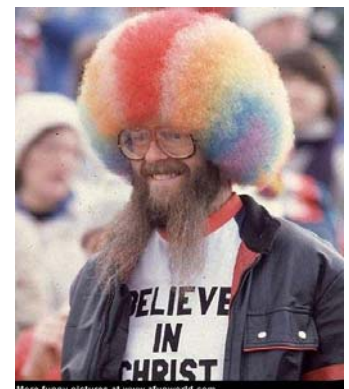
Albert Einstein

US (German-born) physicist (1879 - 1955)

There are so many variables affecting our lives that God can get shoved to the back of our minds and when that happens we forget to pray. Prayer is the surest way to talk with God. He does listen and if you bury your fears of what others think of you, you will hear His answers to your prayers. Prayer can be a powerful variable in our lives when we don't shove Him to the back of our minds.

Next time you want to have some fun observing people, throw out the question, "Do you believe in God" and watch objectively. Some will cower and remain silent while some will try to "Wow" you with double talk. How many simply say "yes"? Those that do are those you can trust.

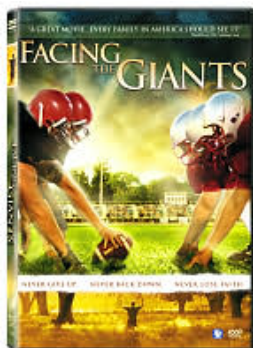
**Dare to be different!
Don't be afraid to
believe.**



Summer Movie Corner

This month has been too busy for me to review any new books but I have seen some movies that are well worth watching with the kids during rainy summer days. One incredible movie was **Facing the Giants**.

Although it appears to be a football movie, football is only a minor part of the theme. The giants that have to be faced are not just the name of the opponent's team. A failing high-school football coach finds that in order to succeed he must convince his team that there's more to sports than fame and glory in an inspirational tale of courage on the gridiron and the power of God's word.



Grant Taylor (Alex Kendrick) has been coaching the Shiloh Eagles for six years, and he has yet to realize his dream of a winning season. When the team's star player transfers schools, the first three games of the new season show no promise for improvement. Troubles at home begin to take their toll, and a plot among the player's fathers to have him fired finds his future in football looking bleak.

Coach Taylor is faced with the prospect of either cutting his losses and admitting defeat or turning his life over to God in an attempt to test the true power of faith. With his job on the line and nothing left to lose, he convinces his determined team of underdogs that there's nothing they can't accomplish with a little faith, including the miracle of a winning season when all hope seems lost. Keep in mind that it's a true story and it becomes even more moving.

Another true story worth watching is **October Sky**. Having grown up during the Cold War and the Space Race I thought it would be a politically based movie but it was more about pursuing your dreams, no matter what life holds for you.

As the Soviet satellite Sputnik streaks across the heavens in October 1957, it's a source of inspiration for 17-year-old Homer Hickam (Jake Gyllenhaal), who refuses to follow in his father's footsteps laboring in West Virginia's coal mines.



Homer would rather reach for the stars; quite literally. Drafting a few friends, he sets about crafting a rocket to compete for a science-fair scholarship and a chance to change his seemingly immutable future. These are two great movies to watch for anyone facing their own "giants" in life.

If you have the DVD's, watch the "extras" at the end of each. There are some pleasant surprises.

Update From the Cell

It's time for an update on my buddy, Saul. He's been taking classes at Crossroad Bible Institute (CBI), a prison ministry that helps inmates prepare for their future.

CBI offers many different services such as helping inmates find work and a place to live after their release but if they find a serious student that shows potential, they can help him get into a seminary after prison. They have found such a serious candidate in Saul.

They have courses called Tier 1 and Tier 2 and Saul has been sending home his completed work, along with the instructor's notes and the certificates of completion. He's worked very hard and if all goes well, he will qualify for college and seminary courses, tuition free through CBI.



Getting through each tier is time consuming because it's done by mail. Each lesson is in two parts; the Lesson and the Roadmap. He sends his work back and forth to his instructor and the instructor grades each lesson individually.

The lessons are an in depth bible study often using examples of real life scenarios given at the beginning of each lesson. The student uses answers from the bible and the essay questions are often very profound.

For instance, Saul was the type of person who had to have the flashy car and lived for the moment when he was younger. So to have him quote Paul in his letter to the Philippians, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation" amazed me. His answer didn't just fit that lesson but the way he wrote it made me and the instructor realize he was saying it from the heart. The old Saul wouldn't have seen the connection. The old Saul is gone forever.

The Roadmap part is a different type of lesson. It's an in-depth analysis of a subject. For instance; Roadmap 7 in Tier 2 was titled, "How much is honesty worth?" In a way, I feel sorry for the instructors when they receive Saul's work on the Roadmaps. It calls for a lot of essay work and Saul pours out his heart on these.

In a part of the "honesty" Roadmap, he started talking frankly about his past and how, "I lived so many lies for so long that I did not know how to be honest". He didn't have to use any real confession but he did to illustrate a point that was being referenced in the Bible. The point he made to me though was that he "Gets It"!

Look up CBI at www.crossroadbible.org. They run a wonderful prison ministry. They make sure that those in prison aren't lost forever.

Bridges

Back in the 60's, there was a song sung by the Mike Curb Congregation titled, Burning Bridges. It was used in the movie, Kelly's Heroes, which really shows my age. Anyway, the chorus went;

*"All the burning bridges that have fallen after me,
All the lonely feelings and the burning memories.
Everyone I left behind each time I closed the door,
Burning bridges lost forevermore."*

I spent the whole decade of the 70's "burning bridges". I'm not saying literally, just those emotional bridges we build in our hearts. They may as well be real bridges because we sure can't go back.



I had some serious bridges that I burned, as so many of us do. The emotional scars of Vietnam and friends I lost and those I turned away when they couldn't deal with a scarred and angry vet. Some of those bridges were drowned in a bottle of rum and some were blown up, so to speak.

So many of us let our emotions get the better of us and we burn bridges that bind us with friends and relatives. At times we find they are the ones that burned the bridges first but if relationships weren't on a good foundation it would have happened anyway no matter who lit the match.

Some of those in my past are regrettable. When you let anger, betrayal or whatever get in your way, the pain is great and that "burning bridge" you left behind seems mighty satisfying. Of course, that's pride taking over; everyone likes to "win" at any cost.

Some of those bridges had to come down because the ones on the other side were destroying me. Some people have to be left behind because they are destructive, mean-spirited and want to bring you down to their level. I'm not a psychologist or trained professional so burning those bridges were more of a life saver.

*And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words,
when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of
your feet.*

Matthew 10:14

The only burning bridge that nearly cost my life was when I turned my back on the Lord. The only church I attended in those days was to wake up Sunday morning after a night's sleep under the stars while lying on the hood of my car somewhere in the forest with a hang over. The quiet of loneliness and solitude can easily be confused with being at peace but when that solitude carries the stench of Hell because you are without God, there is no peace.

*For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the
lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but
is of the world.*

1 John 2:16

I really wasn't at peace with myself or anyone; I just felt comfort in burning bridges. I had a lot of pent up anger and aggression in those dark days and thought God didn't care about me.

One day I checked into Hines VA hospital and was told I had a cancer and would not live. They figured I had six months at best. Being a very defiant person, I laughed at the young doctor who gave me the news and bet him five bucks that I'd survive.

The doctor almost won that bet but one very rough night turned things around. I was nearly dead from the effects of a very aggressive chemotherapy treatment and I thought I was having a bad dream. A chaplain was reading last rights over me.

I grabbed his hand and asked him to pray for a recovery instead of an empty bed. He started to come by often, praying with me and teaching me to pray. **I learned that the time to pray is not just when we are in a tight spot but also when we get out of it.** I still remember those days and that chaplain when I pray.

It took another year before I walked out of there for good. It took me many more years to get my life back together and having a stroke ten years later to the day didn't help.

The biggest gift I received from Hines was the chaplain teaching me the power of prayer. It would take until after the stroke before I was comfortable being in a church again but I made it back and found out it's not so bad after all. I've made a vow never to burn bridges between me and the Lord.

Now, there are many bridges from my past that will probably never be mended and some of those on the other side have chosen destructive paths that may consume them forever. That's between them and the Lord. I'm not strong enough or bright enough to help them but I learned to pray for them.

I figure the best way to predict the future is to invent it so I'm doing that by building new bridges. Some may be used only temporarily because we are not all destined to walk the same path but I don't feel the need to burn them anymore.

I was never afraid of losing friends or dying but it was really ugly living without God. Building bridges takes work from both sides but only one side has to light the match. People may desert you by lighting that match but God never will. With prayer, all bridges will stand solid as a rock.

*He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise
their prayer.*

Psalms 102:17

Christian Persecution in Iraq Getting Worse

By Sarah Pollak and Lee Webb
CBN News
July 26, 2007



CBNNews.com - Christians in Iraq are facing severe persecution from Islamic radicals.

That's the message a minister from Baghdad delivered to a committee on religious freedom in Washington.

"They have been, as we heard earlier, kidnapped, killed, tortured, massacred."

The Reverend Canon Andrew White testified Tuesday at this hearing of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

White leads an Anglican Church in Baghdad. Though it started small, the church has grown to 1,300 people in recent years.

"It is an Anglican church, and none of my people are Anglicans," White said. "They simply come to church because it is the closest church to come to in the midst of great danger."

Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Calif., is the only Assyrian Christian member of Congress.

He testified that nearly half of all Iraqi Christians have fled the country due to intense persecution since the beginning of the war in 2003.

"They represent the oldest surviving Christian population in the world and one that, without help, is literally facing the brink of extinction," Eshoo said.

Recently, things have gotten even worse.

"In the last three or four months, things have deteriorated very considerably. Things are bad for everybody in Iraq," White said.

White says he was given some disturbing news at a congregational meeting this month.

"I said to them, tell me what has happened over the past week. And the people went through what had happened and I realized that 36 of my congregation in that past week had been kidnapped. None of them have been returned."

White also says Iraq's government is weak and corrupt and that U.S. troops have failed to protect Iraqi Christians.

.....
My times [are] in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
Psalms 31:15
.....

Everyone ought to worship God according to his own inclinations, and not to be constrained by force.
Flavius Josephus, Life
Jewish-Roman historian & turncoat (37 AD - 100 AD)

S. Korea Races to Save Christian Hostages

By John Jessup
CBN News
July 26, 2007



CBNNews.com - WASHINGTON

- With one hostage dead, the South Korean government is dispatching a top envoy in a scramble to secure the release of 22 South Korean missionaries

For the families and friends of the hostages, it has been eight long and agonizing days.

And for the relatives of Bae Hyung-kyu, their worst fear has come true.

The body of the 42-year-old pastor and leader of the missions group was found Wednesday with 10 bullet holes to the head, chest, and stomach.

Church officials say he was killed on his birthday.

The South Korean government confirmed the death and announced a top envoy is headed to Afghanistan in a bid to save the 22 others believed to be alive and in the custody of Taliban militants.

"They are still in the Taliban custody. There has been no release or no exchange yet. But the dialogue continues, the negotiation continues," said Marajudin Pathan, governor of Afghanistan's Ghazni province.

Afghan officials involved in the talks say the kidnapers have a list of eight Taliban prisoners they want released in exchange for eight Koreans. A local Afghan police chief says he's hopeful some sort of deal will be reached.

The Korean Church Continues to Pray

Meanwhile, in the U.S., Korean churchgoers are hopeful too.

"As fellow Christians and fellow Korean people, all we can do right now is pray for those people," said Rev. Byoung Jung-Chul of the Oriental Mission Church.

Reverend Chul pastors a large Korean congregation in Los Angeles. His church also has missionaries in Afghanistan, but he says they are not in harm's way.

"The only thing that I can share with you is that they're safe right now. We heard from them that they're in a safe place," said Reverend Chul.

But it's a different story for the hostages in Afghanistan, 18 of who are women.

The group was kidnapped last week on a trip from Kabul, where - according to their church - they were providing only medical and other volunteer aid.

And because of a recent spike in foreign kidnappings, Afghan police announced that foreigners are no longer allowed to leave the capital without their permission.

And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
Exodus 21:16

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
1 Thessalonians 5:8

US News

Terrorists Standing by on American Soil?

By John Jessup
CBN News
July 23, 2007



CBNNews.com - WASHINGTON - Warnings about the threat of terrorism here in the homeland keep coming in.

The latest warning comes from the Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell.

"The most serious threat is that the plotters that are being observed will be successful in penetrating our defenses and conducting attacks that will result in mass casualties."

McConnell says he believes al-Qaeda, in some cases, already has people positioned in the U.S., where small numbers of operatives are raising funds for attacks on American soil.

"Their intent is to effect an attack with mass casualties, secondary attempt would be political or infrastructure targets," he told NBC's Meet the Press.

Last week, McConnell specifically mentioned targets such as Chicago's Sears Tower or other prominent buildings in Seattle, Los Angeles, or Dallas.

Another major worry: leading scientists have told ABC News that the U.S. is still vulnerable to attempts to smuggle nuclear material into the country.

The warnings come on the heels of last week's National Intelligence Estimate in which the nation's 16 spy agencies agreed al Qaeda has strengthened its ability to attack the United States - and has regrouped in the mountainous frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

It is here where intelligence analysts believe Osama bin Laden, himself, is hiding and an area in which the Bush administration has not ruled out military strikes.

"Just because we don't speak about things publicly, doesn't mean we're not doing many of the things you're talking about," Homeland Security Advisor Frances Townsend said.

But Pakistan refutes that bin Laden is in the country in what is becoming a diplomatic row between the U.S. and a key ally in the war on terror.

"We can't allow another safe haven to exist. But if we do things to prevent that safe haven from being created that undermine the government, we create a bigger safe haven with an unstable Pakistan," Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., said.

Administration officials acknowledge growing concern about unrest in Pakistan and say it could have a quote severe impact on the U.S.- led global war on terror.

You don't need a weather man to know which way the wind blows.

*Bob Dylan, Subterranean Homesick Blues
US singer & songwriter (1941 -)*

House Expected To Pass 9/11 Bill

CBNNews.com
JULY 27, 2007



CBNNews.com - A homeland security bill containing recommendations from the 9/11 Commission is expected to be passed by the House today. It will then be sent to President Bush for his approval.

The Senate version of the measure was approved Thursday night. It would shift more federal funds to high-risk states and cities as well as requiring better screening of all air and sea cargo. The bill was passed by an 85 to 8 vote.

If Bush signs the bill into law, it would be at the top of the Democrat's achievement list for this legislative year. Running a close second would be the recent boost to the minimum wage.

White House Opposition

The administration opposes several provisions in the security bill, namely one requirement that within five years all ship containers be scanned for nuclear devices before they leave foreign ports for the United States. However, the White House has not threatened a veto.

Some within the administration have questioned the feasibility of this requirement -- the installation of radiation monitoring equipment in more than 600 foreign ports. In response to the opposition, lawmakers gave the Homeland Security secretary authority to delay implementation in two-year increments if needed.

The bill also requires the screening of all cargo on passenger aircraft within three years.

Bill's Provisions

The 9/11 bill would also change the formula for the distribution of federal security funding to ensure that high-risk states and urban areas get a greater share. Cities such as New York and Washington are considered high-risk. These cities have complained that the current formula divides money more evenly around the country and does not reflect the realities of the terrorist threat.

The bill also establishes a new grant program to assure that local, state, and federal officials can communicate with each other. In addition, \$4 billion will be allocated over four years for rail, transit, and bus security.

The measure would also strengthen security measures for the Visa Waiver Program, which allows travelers from select countries to visit the United States without a visa. In another provision opposed by the Bush administration, the bill would require that the total amount appropriated for the intelligence community be made public.

9-11 was a long time ago in this fast paced world but it hasn't been forgotten and never should; especially when it comes to our prayers.

***Nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer;
nothing is more difficult than to understand him.***

*Fyodor Dostoevsky
Russian novelist (1821 - 1881)*

K-Love

K-Love is a Christian radio station that deserves mention here. In the Chicago area they are located at 94.3 on the FM dial, though they are a national station and are expanding globally. They also have a website; www.klove.com where you can find the station for your area.

I was unaware of their existence until last year and now I listen to them every day. That's a big deal for a man who was lost in the 60's. There was no way I would listen to anything other than my oldies until now.

They're not just about Christian rock, though. They call themselves, "Positive and Encouraging K-Love". It may sound like a cheap gimmick to some but they have a daily "Encouraging Word" they read on the air and is archived neatly on the web site. For instance, here's July 22nd as an example;



22 July Encouraging Word:

For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.
Luke 19:10 NLT |

A Deeper Look:

Jesus didn't come to set up a new political system or to spread a new philosophy. His mission was to glorify God and bring us salvation.

As for the music, I had never listened to Christian rock until I started to attend contemporary services with my wife and friends. I really preferred very traditional services and old fashioned hymns, but I find that this music is very uplifting and can touch more lives. I thought, at first, that it was aimed at those in their teens and 20's but there's something for any age in that music.

They are more than just a Christian Rock station though. They are involved in missions all over the world and they work with many organizations. The progress of their mission work can be monitored on the web site.

They have what they call a "Wall of Prayer" which is a prayer chain for our troops. That touches me because I've often asked that people put politics aside to pray for our troops. They are, after all young people following a path they believe in and doing a job few could do. They deserve our prayers.

The website is quite unique and entertaining and the music is relaxing and uplifting. They really live up to their slogan, "Positive and Encouraging". Be careful though; if you give them a try, you may get hooked.

Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

Acts 5:20

Excerpts from K Love's Wall of Prayer

My husband's first 6 month deployment is coming up, and I know he is stressed about leaving. I pray that the worry and stress of the military life will go away, and that he will draw closer to God. He's a great husband! I love you Dale! :)

Submitted by: Brittany Howeth

Douglas is my youngest son, he is currently finishing his training. Please pray for his and his fellow servicemen and woman's salvation and safety during these difficult times.

Submitted by: Jann Kitselman

He did what he was called to do for this country. I pray that those memories of war be washed from his mind so he can feel like a good man again. I pray the struggles in his mind, his dreams, his life be taken to the Lord in prayer and left at the altar of forgiveness. Bless our soldiers and their families. May the Lord have his will be done in all of our lives. In your name.....Amen *I love you Greg

Submitted by: His niece

I pray that he will find renewed strength in his faith and be able to set an example for those around him instead of struggling with it like he has been. I pray that we come to seek God more together, and apart.

Submitted by: Janette - His girlfriend

He thanked me in his last letter for introducing him to Christ. He now knows His strength daily in his prayers.

Submitted by: Dad

My the Lord always protect you and keep his arms wrapped around you. Although there are oceans between us, nothing can separate the love that holds our family together. Everyday we pray for you.

Submitted by: Wife and Family: Angela, Julian, Jolaun, Jayden, Jazlyn

Today marked the 16th day since David left us. He is 18 and made the very grown up decision to join the military when he turned 16. I have had two years to prepare for the day he left and I still cried, like a babe. David has just written and needs to be lifted up in prayer, he is discouraged and spirits are low. I know that God can help him move his psychological and physical mountains. Thanks for the prayers. :)

Submitted by: Bernadette Luttrell - His VERY PROUD Mother:)

Mom's and Dad's, families and friends poured their hearts in those prayers. I'd like to add this;

Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

Psalms 10:17

The lighter side

Can you stand more church signs?

