"To have the religion of Christ means that you have absolutely surrendered your all to God, and consented to the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Messages to Young People, p. 30
Suffering-God's Tool of Redemption

Edited and Abridged from a Sermon by Emilio B. Knechtle

To love is to serve. To serve means to sacrifice, and sacrifice always brings suffering.

Suffering is a component part of redemption. Before sin came into the world, there was no suffering. Suffering is the result of sin. But God uses suffering as a tool of redemption.

SUFFERING IN THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

Suffering runs through the whole plan of salvation. The first to suffer were two little lambs. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus left heaven, came to our earth and took two lambs and killed them to demonstrate to man how He one day would be innocently put to death in our place. And for the first time in the history of the universe, suffering had entered it.

Abel suffered when he was hated and killed by his brother Cain because he believed in the forgiveness of sins through the blood of the Son of God.

Mankind suffered when it was wiped out by a worldwide flood because the rebellion against God endangered the whole human race.

Isaac suffered when his father laid him down on an altar and was about to kill him in obedience to God's command.

Jacob suffered when he heard that Esau was coming with five hundred armed men to kill him and his family for having been cheated out of his birthright by Jacob.

Joseph suffered when his brothers sold him, bound to Egypt, where he was thrown into jail innocently.

Moses suffered 40 years alone in the desert with sheep and then 40 years in a desolate wilderness with a rebellious nation.

David suffered when he was persecuted by his own son Absalom who tried to kill him and take the kingdom away from him.

For centuries, lambs had to suffer and die every morning and evening in the temple, pointing to the suffering of the coming Messiah.

In Isaiah 53:7 we read: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter..."

And Isaiah 63:9 says: "In all their affliction, He was afflicted..."

SUFFERING IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Suffering also ran through the life of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Hebrews 2:8 says: "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.

Hebrews 2:10 says: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering..."

Hebrews 12:2 says: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..."

Faith on the Line

Suffering runs through the life of the redeemed. You cannot learn to suffer through books or through hearing how others suffer, but only through experience. John saw in a vision the multitude of redeemed in heaven robed in white robes and he wrote, "These are they which came out of great tribulation..." Revelation 7:14

This tribulation spoken of is not a long era of persecution. This great tribulation are the periods of suffering that Christians go through.

Maybe you are going through such a period of tribulation right now. Moses described the grain offering which is an offering of the Lord in these words: "And if thy oblation be a meat offering baked in the fire, it shall be made of fine flour with oil... Leviticus 2:7.

How do you get fine flour? It's made of wheat. But wheat must first be grinded, broken, and crushed before it turns into fine flour. So our own, our self-love must also be first grinded, broken, and crushed through suffering, through trials.

In the same verse, we read that the fine flour was offered with oil. What does oil stand for? The Holy Spirit. If you suffer without the Holy Spirit, you go into deep depression. But if you suffer with the Holy Spirit, drawing closer to Him, then it's a glorious experience. God tests our obedience, not only through temptations but also through suffering.

Why was it fitting that Christ be made perfect through suffering? (Hebrews 2:10) Was Christ not perfect? Yes. But God never before had to prove His obedience and surrender under such difficult circumstances namely living in the form of a human being, surrounded by sin, beset from every side with suffering and privations.

...Continued on Page 4
The way of suffering is the official, the only, way to heaven for all of God's children. The great question is this: How far is a person willing to go in His endurance of suffering? Everyone of us reaches the maximum point of endurance at a different stage. Some give up earlier than others. Only a few endure to the very end like Jesus did. But this decides our own destiny. If we never say to God, "I will go this far and no further, God. If you continue making me suffer, I will give you up," you will lose your salvation. God expects us to endure to the very end. He will grant us the necessary power to endure any amount of suffering and humiliation.

To abandon ourselves completely to the leading of the Holy Spirit while suffering without doubting, without rejecting God - is one of the greatest Christian virtues. Why? Because it requires the highest degree of trust in God. This is the test of a man who has an intimate relationship with Christ - a strong hold on Him - knows that God's mercy and help is always greater than the difficulties, suffering, and obstacles he faces. He will endure to the end, like Job.

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE POWER

Jesus had tremendous active power, which He demonstrated and exalted by creating a universe, walking on water, turning water into wine, raising the dead, healing the sick, preaching and teaching with authority, and stilling a hurricane. But Jesus also has tremendous passive power. This He demonstrated by enduring shame and suffering. When He finally went to the cross, He allowed Himself to be brought down to the zero point - the second death. In the last 12 hours of His life, the last demonstration of God's power in the history of the universe. Never before did God have to suffer the death of His Son for the sins of the world. Therefore, He could not permit that He be killed. For Jezebel was the only adversary of the universe at His disposition to destroy those who crucified Him, but He controlled it completely. On the contrary, He used that power to substibdue Himself and endure the cross. For this reason, the angels do not sing, "Glory to the Lion of the tribe of Judah," but "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. 5:6-12)

God suffered as a lamb that is brought to the slaughter. This Christian philosophy of life runs against the philosophy of our age. The world cannot understand that strength, power and influence can be shown in enduring suffering and humiliation, that a man endowed with power can walk so low, the road of unpopularity, shame and suffering and become the victor. The world does not understand passive power. It only understands active power - the power that asserts itself, and forces itself, resists and fights for its rights.

God's power to allow another person to slap your face without hitting back, than to retaliate. Some Christians become discouraged and give up, when they are asked by God to endure humiliation and mistreatment. They become physically and emotionally weak. May I be the first to say? He stood erect before Pilate, before Calaphas, before the mad and angry mob, He stood there like a King - calm, composed, Lord of the situation, while enduring the most inhuman degration, until finally a centurion exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God!"
SUFFERING, GOD'S TOOL OF REDEMPTION

WE ARE BORN TO QUENCH THE THIRST OF GOD.

God thirsts for our love. He says through Hosea: "I long for your steadfast love." (Hosea 6:3) The Bible says, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." (Proverbs 23:26) I wish I had heard His voice when I was young and had not wasted 34 years. It is only when I went on a business trip to the West Indies, where, in the Dominican Republic, a young man of 22 years was hanged in such a way that my heart broke. I considered all the wealth, influence, and the high position I had acquired in the pharmaceutical company as nothing compared to the unsurpassable riches of Christ. But then I realized, that suffering was the only way that God could have used to draw me to Himself. There is such a hard crust around our hearts that it takes suffering to break up that crust, so that God's rays of the Holy Spirit can come and work in me again and again. I was confronted with a very difficult new truth, and it was only through suffering and humiliation that I was able to accept it as a new truth.

Suffering is an able tool in the hand of a loving God to draw us closer to Him. Sometimes it even seems that God goes opposite to our prayers. Through difficulties, opposition, shame, disaster, and misfortune, He accomplishes the very thing you ask for. To understand this, to endure this, to accept this requires faith in Him. Some Christians can't take it. They give up and lose everything. But if God chastises me exceedingly, it means He also loves me exceedingly. (128:2).

ISRAEL - AN OBJECT LESSON

The history of Israel is an object lesson for the follower of Christ. God wanted to educate the people of Israel. He desired to teach them love for Him, faith in Him, trust in Him. He desired to use Israel for a special task in the world. God took this 600 million people out of Egypt, but He did not lead them into the Promised Land filled with milk and honey and the degenerate way of life of the sin polluted Canaanites. Instead He led them into a land where there was no milk, no honey, no bread, not even water. He led them into a dry hot desert. By day it was 125° F and by night it was 35° F. Why did God do this? To show Israel what God can do with people who are in difficult circumstances. To demonstrate how He can look out for and provide lavishness for those who trust Him. But instead, what did God get from Israel? Nothing but complaints. The Jews asked, "Can God give us water to drink? Can He give us bread? Can He give us meat?" They doubted God's ability to take care of them. The Jews dreamt of Egyptian metons and Egyptian gastric and Egyptian cakes. They thought they had treasures in Egypt. But they were false, now they were free, but still they longed to go back into slavery.

But God reorganized a mob. He turned a horde of slaves into a powerful nation. God gave them the high ethical values, the finest health laws, the best civil laws, and He gave them the gospel of salvation through the tabernacle. No other people on earth received such superb revelations, such superb ordinances and teachings as the Jews in that desert. More, God wanted us among the nations to live among them in glory, in sound, in power.

By day, God spread a large cloud over them which reduced the desert temperature. Imagine, Air conditioning in the desert. At night, God gave them a pillar of fire which illuminated the whole camp and warmed them. Furthermore, God kept away all illnesses from their camp. None was ill in all the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness. Their clothes, their shoes never wore out. Their feet did not swell from walking. All serpents were dead. The people were not attacked by any means by God's command. He rained manna on them daily as bread. He provided grass for the cattle. He provided water daily from unexpected springs. God kept their enemies far away. What else did Israel need? Still the people were dissatisfied and talked only of the things they missed. They became rebels by nurturing a dissatisfied spirit. They never never cooperated with God. And then they brought that false attitude in Canaan where everything flowed with milk and honey in abundance. Even there, amidst plentiful food, they remained unfailingly and dissatisfied.

What can God do with such a people? The answer is very sad. He can save a few genuine ones among them, and dismiss the rest. What's the conclusion? If you fit yourself into God's plans, even if it is a crisis, you become more precious to God than those who doubt Him. You will stand firm in the day of judgment. You will have no excuse of none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and ye shall receive a crown of life." (Revelation 3:10).

COPING WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

When Satan tries to discourage you during your crises, think of these two pillars of faith and truth:

1. God is so powerful that He can uphold the whole universe.

2. That same person died on the cross of Golgotha for you because He loves you.

Conclusion: If the most powerful person in the whole universe loves you more than Himself, what do you have to worry about?

When we contemplate these two great truths, we need have no fear of the future, no fear that God will mistreat us or play with us.

But, how do I understand my difficulties? I need them for my spiritual growth. I'm being shaped by God. You and I find ourselves sometimes in a desert where everything seems to be missing - no success in our work, no friends, no loved ones, no acceptance, no opportunity. "Father, why is this happening to me. I'm through. I'm finished," But God says, "No, you are not finished. I am everything to you. Only trust in me and I will supply all your needs." (Revelation 21:5).

The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. When under unbearable praise or cruelty fails to maintain a calm and trusting spirit, robs God of His right to reveal in him His own perfection of character.

SEVEN REASONS FOR SUFFERING

Let me suggest seven reasons for suffering:

1. To make us willing to give up cherished sinful habits. Sometimes you and I cling to a sinful habit so tenaciously that the Lord has to strike us. And then we let go of it and say, "O Lord, thank you that you delivered me of that awful habit."

2. To test our love. God wants us to test as he tested Abraham on Mt. Moriah with Isaac to show all the inhabitants of the universe that we are not going to be so fond of giving to His love for you and for me. And down, down, down, seven times. Shame, suffering, degradation and humiliation. Followed by what? Glory. Up, up, up, to the ultimate exaltation. At Pentecost, Jesus was downed in heaven. He became High Priest, Mediator, Advocate, King, Ruler of the Universe - equal again with the Father. Yes, glory is always preceded by suffering and shame.

THE LESSON OF JOSEPH

Tales Joseph. As a young boy, he had two dreams. Shortly thereafter he found himself sold by his brothers as a slave into Egypt. In Potiphar's house, he was innocently condemned and wound up in an Egyptian jail - for life. He could have said, "Lord, wait a minute! Is this the way you fritter your promises? I've had it." No, he accepted the circumstances God allowed to come into his life, remained loyal to the Lord and served his fellow prisoners in love and humility.

Because of a dream given to Pharaoh, within 24 hours Joseph sat as Prime Minister of the empire of Egypt. He sat beside the ruler of Egypt. Down, down, down, and then within 24 hours up to the highest point. That is the official road to heaven. This you and I must understand.

The principle of heaven is "he whom I love, I chasten." He whom I bring up as son, I discipline." (Hebrews 12:6-8) For those whom the Lord loves, he discipline, he chastens; and not lightly. But all discipline at the time seems very much intensified by the keenness which hides itself in Christ. If we possess the humility of our Master, we shall rise above the sights, the rebutts, the annoyances to which we are daily exposed. And they shall come as a grace over the spirit. The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. Whoever under abuse or cruelty fails to maintain a calm and trusting spirit, robs God of His right to reveal in him His own perfection of character.

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Seinfeld is the show about nothing. Actually, the show painfully depicts the fact that Jerry, Kramer, Elaine, and George are unable to establish an intimate long-lasting relationship. All of their attempts to get emotionally close fail miserably. Likewise, the teenagers in our homes, churches, and communities are crying for long-lasting relationships. When these young people don't find this soul-nourishing affection in any other area of their lives, the church appears as a lifeless, echo-chamber society.

V. Bailey Gillespie of La Sierra University (www.lasierra.edu/ hcyen) and Gary L. Hopkins of Andrews University give some sobering facts:
- almost half of all American babies are born into single-parent homes
- most teenage girls who become pregnant do so between 3 - 6 pm in their own homes
- half of teenage crime is committed between 3:00 - 8:00 pm

Let's pull our heads out of the sand - nobody has been there to establish long-lasting relationships with these young human beings - very likely due to the relentless pursuit of moneymaking or pleasure seeking. When they walk home from school, jump off the school bus, finally opening the front door to an empty house, who are they going to do? Who are they going to meet and spend time with? This eye-opening research screams for solutions. Secular society has responded by saying, "Educate kids about drugs, sex, AIDS - that's all they need in education, education, education." That's good, but that simplistic answer is not working.

I like this excellent sage wisdom from one of my favorite authors: "One of the most safeguarded of the young is useful occupa-
tions. Children, who are trained to industrious habits, so that all their hours are usefully and pleasantly employed, have no inclination to repine at their lot and no time for idle daydreaming. They are in little danger of forming vicious habits or associations. There is untold value in industry. Let the children be taught to do something useful. More than human wisdom is needed that parents may understand how best to educate their children for a useful, happy life here and for higher service and greater joy hereafter." Child Guidance, p. 122

Even further, Gillespie and Hopkins point to yet the highest solution of all time: youth need at least one person in their lives who accepts them unconditionally, regardless of temperament, physical attractiveness, or intelligence. Our youth need to experience Jesus Christ in you and me. Then, their young lives might not be a painful Seinfeld rerun.

Don Anderson makes his wife Carole, daughter Candice, and son Quennel a priority after Jesus Christ. He also pastors the Maple Ridge and Mission SDAs Churches.
Being a Christian is not a one time choice but rather a continuous choice. The first minute, continuous choice to let God have all of me.

Choice doesn’t merit me anything with God. I am not saved by my choices. The very desire to make the choice of submission to God is a gift from His grace.

Scripture history but also that most of the Jews were only outward. In other words, they followed a form, a routine, a ritual. They went to the right church and believed in the Bible. These “professed” Jews were the very ones that crucified Christ Himself, hung Him on the cross and denied Him. It wasn’t just the church leadership, but also most of its members in that the end were only outward.

Romans 2:9 puts this way, “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” In other words they are not all Jews (Christians) that profess to be Jews (Christians). In fact, Scripture clearly indicates that though their numbers be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. Do not rely on your lifestyle changes, nor your donations; they are not of Christ. For we are not saved by works. Salvation is found in “Christ only.” In the day of final reckoning there is going to be a lot of “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

A remnant of Israel has been kept by God, in their church, in their leaders, in their lifestyle, but have not been led “into Christ.” Only those found “in Christ” will be in the saved and found to be true Christians versus professed Christians.

Levi’s sacrifice is the first with Scripture, then define what it means to be “in Christ”. Let’s start with John 3:14-17. “And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.” We must have Jesus, we must be “in Christ” for Him only is eternal life.

But what does it mean to be “in Christ”? Well it’s the opposite of out. If Lucifer stepped “out” of Christ, he decided his way was better than God’s way. He lost eternal life because he chose to disconnect himself from the Source of life. He chose to follow his will and way instead of God’s will and way. Whose will and way are you choosing, yours or God’s?

When Adam chose to step “out” of the will of Christ, he became fallen and selfish. He began to die, to age, to lose his life. He too wanted his way instead of God’s way. Which way is it with you? Your own or God’s?

Then the word “in” is very important. In fact it is the apostle Paul’s favorite expression occurring in his epistles more than 70 times. Six of his epistles are addressed to the church at Rome, and it is safe to say that “in Christ?” or merely in the church, in the truth, into reformation, into outreach, into end time events? These without the former can be a curse. Why? Because they become a substitute, a counterfeit, a cover up for the real, the genuine. They have a subtle way of convincing us that we are the “enlightened ones,” when in essence we may be the “foolish ones.”

Are you a wise or foolish virgin? The only difference between them is that the wise virgins possessed the oil, which represents the Holy Spirit. The wise virgins lived under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment they surrendered to do the will of God. They were “in Christ” by faith, a faith that worked and cooperated with God in all things in the present not the future. There is a big difference. No one is saved as a result of trying to be better, but in love, now, experientially. Theologically we are to assess to what is true, but experimentally we are to be doers not hearers only.

All of humanity was constituted in Christ on the cross; all of humanity is in Him. When He died, He died for all of us. But that only half of the “in Christ” equation.

Christ also invites us, by His prepositional grace, to surrender ourselves; mind, body, soul and will to His Lordship over our lives in the present. What has He done for us and what He is doing in us are to be inseparably one. You cannot have one without the other. Christ cannot be divided. You are complete in Him not apart from Him. You are complete in Him and complete in the sense that you accept His role as Lord. It was the fact that Lucifer and Adam wouldn’t allow Him to be their Lord that got us all in this mess of sin today. Adam repented and allowed Christ to regain His position of Lordship over him. Lucifer still persists resting under Christ’s control and is now Satan, the leader of the foul revolt.

Who can count? Millions of Christians have accepted Christ’s substitutionary role but resist allowing Him to be Lord of their entire life, particularly in the now. Until they do, they are not “in Christ.” You “see,” it is “you” in present and future. You are the one who is the present in all your known choices. No resistance, no rebellion, just a conscious, “Yes, Lord.”

For example, it may be an “out” pleasure below zero outside. You may know that Lucifer stepped “out” of Christ, he decided his way was better than God’s way. He lost eternal life because he chose to disconnect himself from the Source of life. He chose to follow his will and way instead of God’s will and way. Whose will and way are you choosing, yours or God’s?

This is the church’s house is paid for and you have a title to it in your safe deposit box. Still, bring in your present benefit unless you choose to get into Christ. As long as you remain “in Christ,” you receive all the benefits of His protection, warmth and security. They are yours, they are free, but you have to choose to enter in and remain in. You can set at any time outside, but if you do, you lose all the benefits of its warmth, security and protection. That’s what Paul meant when he said in Colossians 2:16, “We are complete in Him [not knowledge or professed of Him, but abiding in Him].”

In an article in Signs of the Times July 4, 1892, a well known minister put it this way, “We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved only as we abide in Him by faith.” Also we find in the book of Acts 17:28, “For in Him, we live and move and have our being.” Isaiah also understood this when he declared, “In the Lord I have my being.” Everything I have is from God. For if all shall not all the seed in Israel be justified” (Isaiah 54:25,25) May I also quote just a couple more passages so as to remove all lingering doubt? “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) It doesn’t say if you are in the church or in the truth, or into the doctrine of salvation, or into a good lifestyle. It says we must be “in Christ,” not legally but just experientially. It is a here and now experience of letting Christ choose all of Him.

Hopefully one more test will help cement in our hearts and minds what constitutes salvation, and consequently a true living Christian: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1) Who are they? Can “them” be an Adventist? Yes! Can “them” be a Baptist? Yes! Can “them” be a Catholic? Yes! You mean to say there’s going to be Catholics, Baptists as well as Adventists in heaven? The answer is yes but most important is that living faith is not walking in the flesh but in the Spirit by a living faith experience in Christ Jesus.

You say, “I hear you Jim, but will you spell out practically not that you believe salvation is by faith alone in Christ daily.” I am glad you asked, because conversion and righteousness are not received or retained apart from being in “Christ” and continuing to abide in Christ. For no man is in a saving relationship any longer than he lives in the fullness of a living faith in Christ Jesus. Being a Christian is not a one time choice but rather a minute by minute, continuous choice to let God have all of me. Day in and day out I am to live for Jesus. My focus is to be in His will.

This is because faith is the source of power through our own humanity. They set out with their strong will and their power titrated in determination to live the Christian life. It always ends in defeat. How then is it possible to live everyday, every hour, every moment to the glory of God? It’s very simple. We are to live as Jesus did. Every morning Jesus took time with God. We too, must take time with God. The best time to do this is the beginning of the day. It can’t be a rushed thing, but has to allow time for us to commune with God and really listen to what He’s saying to us individually. God speaks to us through the Bible, nature, providing us with His gifts. Let’s not forget that we are partners with our Father, and making sure there is nothing to prevent us from hearing His voice, we can rest assured that He will guide us.

When we leave our place of Christ’s house it is essential to take God’s invitation to us in order to continue with our time in Christ. This is the day. We need to learn to ask, “What wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6) God wants us to know we are not in this alone. We need help from a source of outside ourselves of the beginning of the day and then all through the day. As we learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s prompting in our hearts and learn to submit our wills to always do Him will, then it is that, “...Christ lives in me, Galatians 2:20.” But then temptation perhaps the very same temptation where we have often failed before. In the past, we have gritted our teeth and tried to resist the temptation until we either failed or forced ourselves to obey. There is no peace or joy in such an experience. Therefore, the thing to do is to step back into Christ’s heart. I first must decide if I want to remain surrendered to God.

When surrender is my choice, then self dies and the victory is won and then God supplies all the power to meet the temptation. This experience is hard because self, my way and will must die; but it is the only path to peace and joy as a Christian! I must choose to remain in Christ, daily, hourly. Now choice doesn’t merit me anything with God, I am not saved by my choices. Every desire to make the choice of submission to God is a gift from His giving. Salvation is fully the gift of God, yet it is that choice to submit which allows God the freedom to transform our lives through the ministry of His grace upon the human heart. If we choose to surrender the most who have taken the name of Christ live a strange amalgamation of Christ and self contending for the management of the life. This type of Christian life is like a yo-yo, continually up and down. Being born of the Spirit is going from that experience of surrender to Christ to be sole Ruler of the life. When this amalgamation ends, there is rest for the soul. Then we learn the true science of salvation and the take to give ourselves to the path of that experience every day to all my decisions and then by His grace, through a living faith, to say yes to God and to self no. It all has to do with faith, a living faith, a faith that works by love and purifies the soul, where we are enabled to live to his will. Faith is not only a belief in what Christ has done for me but also a surrender of all my chosen known choices to Him, where all my thoughts, feelings and actions are in accordance to His will, where I choose by His grace, to be surrendered of my own free will, to my own known choices surrendered to Him? Do you trust only in His merits...
DOES "LESSER LIGHT" MEAN LESSER AUTHORITY?

The Lord has sent His people much instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light. Oh, how much good would be accomplished if the books containing this light were read with a determination to carry out the principles they contain! There would be a thousandfold greater vigilance, a thousandfold more self-denial and resolution. And many more would now be rejoicing in the light of present truth. (CM 125)

Con the lesser light of the Spirit of Prophecy be of lesser value than the Bible if the same "Lord" gave the light in both cases? Does God's authority have different degrees, or has it changed since the Bible was written? Obviously, No! The only question we have to settle in our minds then is: "Was it really the Lord who has given an authoritative lesser light to us in the greater light?" It is, of course, the Spirit of Prophecy, like the Bible, is nothing less than the voice of God speaking to us so far away. Do we stand in such a day and question His authority? Why is the term "lesser light" used to describe the Spirit of Prophecy? In fact, the Bible, being a living word, gives authority and spiritual content, more concentrated than the Spirit of Prophecy, and in this sense is considered a "greater light." One point verse from the Bible can corroborate thousands of Divine revelations when compared to that of the Spirit of Prophecy, and yet thousands have neglected our Bible. God has given us simple testimonies which have begun to unfold some of those deep truths, and are intended to further stimulate this spooling process in our own minds. Yet it should be clearly understood that the same "current" empowerers (gives authority to) both the lesser and greater lights.

The first advent of Christ, there was ushered in an era of GREATER LIGHT and glory; but it would indeed be sinful ingratitude to despise and ridicule the lesser light because a fuller and more glorious light had dawned. Those who despise the blessings and glory of the Jewish age are not preparing for the day of the gospel. The brightness of the Father's glory, and the excellence and perfection of His sacred law, are only understood through the atonement made upon Calvary by His dear Son; but even the atonement loses its significance when the law of God is rejected. (TDG 246)

In like manner, the Bible loses its significance when the Spirit of Prophecy is rejected. The New Testament was not given to supersede, but to support, the Old Testament, but rather to expand upon it, and bring us to a clearer understanding of its types and figures. Yet we do not hesitate to ascribe equal authority to the teachings of the New Testament because we find that they perfectly complement the light given in the Old Testament. Then should we not ascribe equal authority to the Testimony of Jesus, which perfectly complements the teachings of both Old and New Testaments, and so clearly and beautifully brings us to this most precious word? Yes! But just as the New Testament does not replace the Old Testament, we must never attempt to uplift the Testimonies above the Bible.

The Spirit was NOT given - nor can it ever be bestowed - to SUPRESEDE the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the Word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested... Isaiah declared that the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in it. (3 SM 30)

The Lord desires you to study your Bibles. He has not given any additional light to TAKE THE PLACE OF His word. This light is to bring certainty TO HIS WORD, which, if eaten and digested, is as the life-blood of the soul. Then good works will be seen as light shining in darkness. (SSM 29)

Brother I would confine the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies IS AN ADDITION TO the Word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people TO HIS WORD, to give them a clearer understanding of the Bible. (3SM 30)

The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plain teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed Testimonies, bringing them back TO THE WORD that they have neglected to follow. (2T 455)

The Word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles. (4T 323, ST 663-664)

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which are first principles of the oracles of God... Hebrews 5:12

In the Scriptures, God has set forth practical lessons to govern the life and conduct of all, but though He has given minute particulars in regard to our character, con...
IN THE NEWS

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"The study, called The Gift of Authority, also says the Pope has a 'specific ministry concerning the discernment of truth.'"

The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, urged the world's 70 million Anglicans to read the document. "Christian movement is not able to deal with a common voice, confident of the authority of the gospel of peace," Carey said in a statement.

Reverend Mark Sander, the Anglican bishop of Birmingham, said the study was a "recognition of the place that the Pope has in the Christian family. Even now, before we are in full communion, the Pope is a pastor of immense authority in the Christian world as a whole," Sander said.

Next year, all Anglican and Catholic archbishops plan to meet in Canada, the first time the entire hierarchies will have met to discuss healing their four-century-old rift.

35 Things the IRS Prohibits Churches From Doing

About 12 months ago, Texe Marrs, founder of Living Truth Ministries, was told by the IRS that his ministry would be undergoing an examination of its philosophy and viewpoints to see whether it has violated its 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The IRS said that they were investigating IRS policies by making disparaging remarks about faith groups and cults that oppose Christianity, and may be subject to penalties and fines for exposing the Catholic Pope, the United Nations, the Masonic Order, the Skull & Bones, the Illuminati, and other organizations deemed worthy by the IRS. The IRS also found objectionable their stance against the sexual immorality and abortion views of President Bill Clinton. The following list shows what the IRS contends is prohibited of churches and ministries in the U.S. - a list compiled by Texe Marrs in the 10 month investigation of his ministry by the IRS.

According to the IRS, Christian churches, ministries, and organizations may not:

1. Expose conspiracies
2. Criticize the New World Order.
3. Say or publish anything negative about any politician, Republican or Democrat.
4. Criticize government agencies and bureaus - the IRS, FBI, BATF, CIA, EPA, DEA, OSHA, DOJ, etc.
5. Criticize an institution of government such as the White House, the Congress, the Federal Reserve Board, or the Supreme Court.
6. Encourage citizens to call or write their congressman, senator, governor, mayor, or other public official.
7. Critize any proposed or pending bill or legislation that would take away the rights and freedoms of the people.
8. Make disparaging remarks about, or criticize, any other faith group, cult, or religion.
9. Expose or criticize the New Age Movement
10. Support or encourage a law-abiding citizen's militia
11. Support or encourage the Second Amendment, the right of the people to keep and bear arms.
12. Discourage young women from getting an abortion, or endorse the pro-life movement.
13. Teach that abortion, especially partial birth abortion, is murder and is the killing of innocent babies.
14. Identify homosexuality as a sin and an abomination to God.
15. Express an opinion on any subject or issue.
16. Appeal to peoples' emotions by employing an evangelization method (such as 'fire and brimstone' preaching).
17. Discuss or identify threats to Christianity.
18. Discuss subjects or topics the IRS deems 'sensationalist'.
19. Criticize well-known public figures or institutions the IRS deems 'sensationalist'.
20. Publish or broadcast information on any topic without giving equal opportunity to opposing views of the IRS' enemies.
21. Publish and offer books, tapes, or products that expose the elitist plot against humanity and God.
22. Criticize the Pope or the Vatican, or contrast the New Catholic Catechism with the truths found in the Holy Bible.
23. Criticize the United Nations or such globalist groups as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderbergers, and the Trilateral Commission.
24. Criticize the Masonic lodge, the Order of Skull & Bones or other Secret Societies.
25. Highlight or otherwise bring attention to immorality or public officials or corruption in government.
26. Complain or otherwise bring attention to immorality or public officials or corruption in government.
27. Criticize the Jewish ADL, or other Jewish lobby groups.
28. Say anything positive about the 'religious right' or the 'patriot movement'.
29. Support home schooling, home churches, or unregistered churches.
30. Spend money on missionary projects or charitable causes not approved by the IRS.
31. Promote or encourage alternative healthcare (herbs, vitamins, etc.)
32. Expose false teachings of any kind by anyone
33. Support or encourage persecuted Christians suffering under anti-Christian regimes in Red China, Cuba, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and elsewhere.
34. Ordain a pastor whose training or qualifications are not approved by the IRS.
35. Advocate or teach any Bible doctrine that is politically or religiously incorrect, including any public policy (abortion, feminism, gay rights, etc.) currently being enforced by the IRS.

Panic in the Year Zero

According to a WorldNetDaily exclusive (March 4, 1999), David M. Bresnahan reports that "the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued plans which include the possibility of removing the domestic police force in the event of Y2K civil disturbances. The plan also provides for the movement of large numbers of people into shelters in the event of a disaster associated with Y2K computer failures. The plan for the Y2K crisis is outlined in the report 'Contingency and Consequence Management Planning for Year 2000 Conversion: A Guide for State and Local Emergency Managers.' The plan was recently made available to local governments throughout the country.

As part of the FEMA Federal Response Plan, there is a detailed plan for the evacuation, shelter, and care of large populations. Such plans for shelter are in place for any major disaster, but they have been incorporated into Y2K consequence planning by FEMA.

The plan describes the details of care for up to 350,000 people including registration, feeding, emergency first aid, mail delivery, and all other aspects of care for a minimum of 30 days following the start of the crisis.

FEMA predicts that the magnitude of the disaster "will rapidly supersede the capacity of State and Local governments to assess the disaster and respond effectively to basic and emergency human needs."

There are references in the FEMA documents to the use of the military and their equipment as part of the Y2K Federal Response Plan. The National Guard and local law enforcement are also included in the plan.

'Each state has the general responsibility for law enforcement, utilizing local resources, and State resources, including the National Guard (to the extent that the National Guard remains State authority and has not been called into Federal service or ordered into active duty),' says the FEMA plan.

In the event that a problem or disturbance is beyond the ability of local law enforcement to handle, FEMA has provided a means within the plan for federal law enforcement and the U.S. military, armed forces to be called into action.

The plan specifies that it is the President who will call the National Guard into federal service, and 'use the Armed Forces, to end the emergency or suppress the disturbance.'

Franklin Frith, hired by Michigan to help prepare local governments for the consequences of the Y2K problem, became alarmed when Michigan's many government agencies opened their documents to him. In them he claims he found compelling evidence that a greater problem exists than has been admitted publicly.

At a special workshop on Feb 11 organized by Frith, Tom Mattioli, the emergency management coordinator for the Michigan State Police, gave a presentation. Participants were given a handout which showed a FEMA/Red Cross checklist for Y2K preparedness that included a need to store 3-5 days supply of food and water. When asked if it was expected that Y2K disruptions would only last a few days, Mattioli replied, "The 3-5 day period for preparations is not the expected down time for essential services. It is rather the expected response time for emergency response personnel to arrive and evacuate people to shelters."

Frith was further alarmed when the President's Council on the Year 2000 issued a report on Dec 3, 1998 which stated that the "gap in the government's planning from contingency planning to crisis management. Frith contends that plans are under way for martial law and the use of mass shelters. The basis for his belief includes the recent Operation Last Dance training conducted by the Army Special Forces command in some Texas towns involving live-fire exercises and other evidence Frith uncovered, including Executive Order 12919 passed by Bill Clinton on June 3, 1994, which is included in FEMA documents involving emergency plans and preparations. According to Frith, "statements made by Deputy Defense Secretary John Hazen (the Pentagon's chief Y2K officer) in the Dec 8, 1998 report of the President's Council on Year 2000, along with the existing FEMA Federal Response Plan confirms the intention to invoke Executive Order 12919 and that the possibility of a national emergency being declared with the intention for martial law to follow is probable and should be planned for." The full order is outlined below.

E.O. 10995 - The seizure of all communications media in the United States.
E.O. 10997 - Seizure of all electric power, fuels, and minerals, both public and private.
E.O. 10998 - Seizure of all food supplies and resources, public and private, all farms and farm equipment.
E.O. 10999 - Seizure of all means of transportation, including personal cars, trucks or vehicles of any kind and total control over all highways, seaports, and waterways.
E.O. 11000 - Seizure of all American people for work forces under federal supervision, including the splitting up of the government has to.
E.O. 11001 - Seizure of all health, education, and welfare facilities both public and private.

 Continued On Page 10
Are only able to recognize the last two digits of the year and could read 2000 as 1900 and crash.

The test was designed to see whether computer upgrades - in which banks have invested billions of dollars - are "understood" by the computers operated by banks on the opposite end of global transactions.

Deutsche's Singer and Commerzbank millennium expert Detlev Kirchner said they had tested their financial messaging and clearing systems and they had worked smoothly.

In the United States, the New York Clearing House, which initiated the test, reported that payment settlements were processed without any problems.

"I think this will go a long way to show the world that the world payment system is intact and ready to go for 2000," said New York Clearing House Senior Vice President and Director of Information Clearing Systems George Thomas.

The New York Clearing House and major banks in Germany and other countries have already carried out extensive simulations within their national boundaries to test their systems, but this weekend's drill is the first worldwide exercise.

Thomas said the New York Clearing House, which is connected to 82 U.S. and international banks, had successfully made the "international handshake" - the connection to other financial institutions around the world.

"Virtual" business at other clearing houses around the world was also running smoothly.

"We've had reports from the European Bankers Association, Australia, CHAPS in Great Britain, TARGET (the European Central Bank's payment system), France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Korea and Poland -- and they are all excellent," Thomas said.

Kansas Board Split on Whether Creationism Belongs in Schools

By Scott Canon, Globe Correspondent, 06/13/99

OPEKA, Kan. - In the classrooms of Kansas, there may soon be a place for the lessons that man and beast were designed by God.

"Just because something's in the Bible seems a poor reason to keep it out of the classroom," said John Bacon, an accountant and one of five religious conservatives on the 10-member Kansas Board of Education.

The faction is pushing to put creationism, which reflects a fairly literal interpretation of the Bible, on an equal footing with the theory of evolution.

These conservatives are seeking a toehold in state education standards for the theory that says the Earth is but a few thousand years old and its myriad species were created essentially as they are today as related in the Book of Genesis.

The opposition, which follows the mainstream of science and education, argues that the proposal could turn Kansas students into science dopes.

This side rejects science rooted in the Bible, seeing instead humans and other species as the work of millions of years of natural selection. To them, the elevation of creationism replaces science with theology.

"If people want to teach creationism in their homes and their churches, that's their business," said retired home.builder John van Keppel of Leawood.

In the middle of the dispute are Kansas schoolchildren, whose futures will be affected by the outcome of a political battle that seemed to have been settled in the so-called Scopes Monkey Trial nearly three-quarters of a century ago in Tennessee.

The conflict may be especially heated in Kansas, but is not unique. The state school board in Texas, for example, approved a biology text only after its references to evolution were trimmed. In Alabama, legislators insisted on having disclaimers pasted in every biology text saying evolution is not proved.

Televangelist Pat Robertson struck a chord among religious conservatives last year when he traced the demise of public education to John Dewey's reforms a century ago and what the minister saw as the resulting Godless education.

In Kansas, the seeds of controversy were planted about a year ago, when elected members of the Board of Education set out to overhaul science and social studies standards.

Those standards don't mandate a curriculum for local school districts, but strongly influence how schools teach various subjects. They form the framework for state proficiency tests, and student scores on those exams play a key role in determining how much state aid a local district receives.

The state board appointed a committee of 26 scientists, teachers, and parents to look at how best to teach science. That panel relied heavily on national standards developed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The committee's report emphasized that comprehending evolution is vital to a student's grasping life sciences.

Board chairwoman Linda Holloway complained that the committee's standards emphasized evolution much more than existing state benchmarks.

"I don't think we expected creationism to be in there," she said, "but there was just page after page after page of evolution."

The concept has long been the bane of some Christian fundamentalists. Back in 1925, when high school teacher John Scopes broke state law by teaching evolution in Dayton, Tenn., William Jennings Bryan described it as a "brute theory."

"We're going to make the schoolchildren to "lose the consciousness of God's presence in [their] daily life."

Seventy-four years later in Kansas, education board member Steve Abrams also objects. He worries that standards stressing evolution give too much weight to what he believes is an unproven theory.

"The evidence isn't there for it," said Abrams, a veterinarian. Abrams consulted with the president of the Creation Science Association for America and came up with an alternative.

His version changed the definition of science, scaled back evolution to a single reference, and made room, without requiring local districts to teach it, for "creation science."

The alternative standards include a definition for creation as "the idea that the design and complexity of the design of the cosmos requires an intelligent designer."

If these standards are adopted, questions on both creationism and evolution would not appear on state proficiency tests. Excluding those subjects from the tests would remove an important state incentive for teaching evolution, but no one knows whether individual teachers and school districts will decrease their teaching of evolution or add lessons on creationism.

Some parents would like to see creationism in the schools. "There should...Continued On Page 90"
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be some room for what we think, too,” said Phil Ellsworth, whose daughter attends high
school in a Kansas City suburb. “The whole idea that evolution is the only answer and
the only possible explanation of life, that’s what we’re opposed to.

“It’s a theory, and it’s a theory that has a lot of holes in it.” But Bill Wagner, a
member of the state board and a history professor, said students would fall behind their peers in other states if they
weren’t held accountable for something as critical as evolution.

“They’re hurting the instruction of evolution as a way to promote their ‘intelligent
designer’ outlook,” he said. “It would hobble our youngsters if they’re not required to use evolution in under-
standing the natural world.”

John Staver, a Kansas State University professor who led the drafting of the
pro-evolution standards, said the alternative “warps the whole nature of scien-
te” to conform with a religious view.

“The quality of education would be significantly decreased,” he said. “And
there’s no middle ground here.”

Board members, split 5-5 on the issue, have yet to produce a compromise and won’t
vote on the standards until at least August.

This story ran on page A3 of the Boston Globe on 06/13/99. © Copyright 1999
Globe Newspaper Company.

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN!
...Continued From Page 13

for your standing before God? Do you depend
on His power to choose right over wrong? If
you do then you are a Christian. If this is a con-
tinuous choice, a continuous acceptance, a con-
tinuous dependence, then you are continuing
to be a Christian. Welcome to the body of Christ!

Just a final note. Someone might think that I am anti-church or anti-doctrine or anti-lifestyle
because I de-emphasize these things. This
is not so! I believe in the church but not as the
solution, only as a tool. I love the truth but only
as a means - not an end. My lifestyle changes
have given me better health and a greater aware-
ness of His presence, but I’m not made right-
eous by carrots and bananas. These are good
only as they direct us to Christ. They are the
dock that leads us onto the ship which is
Christ. Let’s not just be excited about being on
the dock, let’s get aboard the Ship which is
Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour! P.S. The
ship is sailing soon!

LESHER LIGHT
...Continued From Page 15

conversion, and conduct, yet in a large measure,
His lessons are disregarded and ignored. Besides the instruction in His
Word, the Lord has given special testi-
monies to His people, NOT as a new rev-
elation, but that He may set before us the
plain lessons of His Word, that ERRORS
may be corrected, that the RIGHT WAY
may be pointed out, that every soul may
be without excuse.” (3SM 30-31)

“The Testimonies are not to belit-
tle the word of God, but to exalt it and
attract minds to it, that the beautiful sim-
plicity of truth may impress all.” (2 T 605)

From the testimonies, it is appar-
ent that the Spirit of Prophecy should
never be exalted above the Bible, take
the place of the Bible, nor be considered
an addition to the Bible. The Lord’s pur-
pose in giving us the Spirit of Prophecy
is to bring us to a correct understanding
of the Bible. However, this purpose will
never be realized to the fullest extent un-
til it is acknowledged that the same Spirit
which inspired the Bible was working
through Ellen White. This being the case,
hers writings MUST be of equal authority
with the Bible, for the Highest Authority
in the universe has established the au-
thority of BOTH.

All Emphasis supplied
Excerpted from:

"Who is He That Gave Thee This Author-
ity?" - A Study on the Authority and
Importance of the Spirit of Prophecy

by Paul Rahoi

"We are on the verge of a global transformation.
All we need is the right major crisis, and the
nations will accept the New World Order.”
David Rockefeller, the powerful leader
of the council on Foreign Relations
Newswatch January 1991

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Editor:
Wendy Goubej Penner

Associate Editor:
Ken Anderson, B.A. L.L.B.

Associate Editor:
Dawn Jakovac

Amazing Discoveries
PO Box 189
7101C - 120th Street
Delta, BC V4E 2A9
Tel: 604-572-9457
Fax: 604-599-9949
Email: creation@axioner.com
Website: www.amazingdiscoveries.bc.ca