

March 2009

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Michigan News

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Good News and Good News

Elder Charles Moore

Cartoonist Johnny Hart came under a great deal of criticism for his "B.C." comic strip's Christian themes, especially for the 2001 strip that depicted a Jewish menorah being transformed into a Christian cross as the "seven last Words" of Jesus on the cross appear under each pane. It was a powerful statement, one that many people protested. They campaigned to get it removed from many newspapers because of its so-called "lack of respect" for the Jewish faith.

What was the big deal? It's simple. As Christians, we believe that Jesus' resurrection is the focal point of history and the world does not. We picture history as a linear timeline with the cross at the center. The Bible tells us that every moment from Creation on had been leading up to the cross and that every moment since the cross is lived in light of Jesus' death and resurrection. It's very clear to us but an offense to the world.

Max Lucado writes, "The cross. It rests on the time

line of history like a compelling diamond. Its tragedy summons all sufferers. Its absurdity attracts all cynics. Its hope lures all searchers... History has idolized it and despised it, gold-plated it and burned it, worn and trashed it. History has done everything to it but ignore it. That's the one option that the cross does not offer. No one can ignore it! You can't ignore a piece of lumber that suspends the greatest claim in history. Its bottom line is sobering: ...if the account is true, it is history's hinge. Period. ... If not, it is history's hoax. That's why the cross is what matters." (From "No Wonder They Call Him The Savior")

Paul makes the centrality of the Cross and the empty Tomb clear in 1Corinthians when he said, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast

the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures," (1Corinthians 15:1-4)

He tells them that the Gospel he preached to them, that they received, that they stood upon and by which they are saved is simply this: Jesus died for their sins; was buried and rose from the dead on the third day and that this was all according to the Scriptures.

Going further, Paul declares the consequence if Jesus was not resurrected from the dead. "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1Corinthians 15:17-20)

If Jesus' resurrection is truly the focal point of history... then you have a

(Continued on page 2)

choice to make: Believe in Jesus, or dismiss Him? Accept His claims, or reject Him? There is no middle ground! Either you submit to Jesus, live under his daily direction, and receive the benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection or you deny Him and live only for yourself and under your own power. You have to make a choice! You cannot remain neutral! Too often people think Heaven is the default position. Everyone is going to Heaven unless they really mess up, like a Judas or a Hitler. The truth is the default position for mankind is Hell. Everyone is going to Hell unless they make a choice to trust Jesus and follow Him.

Let's take a look at another "B.C." cartoon where Johnny Hart depicts three men talking:

1st man, "Would you lay down your life for someone else?"

2nd man, "That would be pretty stupid."

3rd man, "Yeah, why would we do that?"

1st man, "What if you loved someone so much, you would give your life for them?"

2nd man, "... You mean, like, would we die in their place?"

3rd man, "...So they wouldn't have to?"

1st man, "BINGO!"

2nd man, "Nobody has that much love!"

3rd man, "And if anyone did, I'd sure hate to lose him!"

Overhearing their conversation, a fourth man appears and says: "Well, guys. I've got Good News and Good News." The good news is that He did lay down His life for us and the good news is that He's still alive and is making intercession even now for us in heaven at the right hand of the Father!

If you have made the choice to follow Jesus, I want to encourage you to live your life in light of Jesus' death and resurrection! Let God speak to you in His Word. Speak to God in prayer. Get involved in Worship and Fellowship regularly. Share God's love with those around you. Finally, make your life a celebration of all God has done for you!

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Happy Spring to everyone! We are having a little more sunshine than before, but the temps are not high enough for me. I wish you the best wherever you are.

We have some incidents to report this month, but I don't want this to always be about health issues. I find that as I visit with folks all over, they always mention their blessings. We have so many that it is hard to "count or to name them all".

Norma and Rip Ripley have some blessings—their two grandsons took them out for lunch recently. On the way out of the restaurant Norma found herself at the bottom of the exit steps on her knees and can't remember how she got there. A visit to the hospital showed no broken bones, so now all she has to do is hobble around and heal. We will pray for you, Norma.

Dorothy Layton called and told me about her similar adventure in her bedroom. She fell on her knees, at least it was on carpet. After help up from her daughter, Lisa, she seemed to be fine. She said she has bionic knees after her surgeries, so that was a good place to land.

David and Ruth Charles spend time with the doctors also as they continue tests and procedures. They do get to enjoy their great sunshiny state though. Most of us seniors always joke and say that visiting doctors is our social activity. Unfortunately, that is all too true.

I have heard of no falls or problems from Phoenix, but I know they are having hot weather. That takes care of Ellen Momberger, Sally Smeltzer, Jon and Berty Lane and Kane and Jennie Begeman.

I have a serious prayer request from Jim and Vicki Ohle—long time camp friends. They are great grandparents as of March 20. Nathaniel Burfiend was only 22 to 24 weeks old in the womb when he was born, so he is fighting a lot of things. On the other end of the spectrum, Jim Nevil's father Ken has been battling for his life in the hospital. He has improved greatly the last couple of days and is being moved to a different facility. Both families appreciate your prayers.

At our recent Salad/Dessert Bowl March 28 Katy Nevil spoke about the service we should give to God. She is involved in mentoring 8 freshmen at her college so she has a lot of experience. We appreciate you, Katy, and also Mom Kay's tireless efforts to support our church by driving across state time and again. Thanks to all the ladies who drove quite a ways to come and fellowship with us!

We wish for you lots of May flowers this month!

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore

March found the members of the local Church of the Lord Our Righteousness doing the usual things, facing the usual weather, doing the usual works of the church and learning the great truths of the Bible through various means. While Charlie and I spent vacation in Mazatlan Mexico, Tim Begeman filled the pulpit and discussed the Trinity (A Solution, Not a Problem). We were also blessed to share Communion this month, as well as to visit our friends from the Tenderc Care nursing home facility with our friends from the Petersburg Church of God Seventh Day for our semi-monthly service.

It has taken almost a year but Geneva Begeman's hand has finally regained its feeling. Dr.'s think Ila Baker, who has been living at Arden Court suffered a small stroke. She has recovered nicely and has returned home. Elder Moore and Nate Valentine enjoyed a visit with her just prior and Elder Moore reported that during a visit with Ila at the hospital, she was talking, eating and playing the part of a good hostess. Marcia Moore was deeply disappointed to return to the hospital for breathing problems, after many months of successfully avoiding the emergency room and hospital. She was one of the 40 some guests we were delighted to see at the third annual Ladies Desert and Salad Bowl this month. We had a wide and varied audience that came to hear Katy Nevil present a poised, articulate and passionate talk on the privilege and blessings of service to others. Several guests reported that the topic was a head-on affirmation of what they think God would have them do. We appreciated her remarks and the beautiful tables, and also the guests who came to share the day with us and made it all the more special.

We've also been enjoying the contributions of Don

Daniels as M.C. and Joe Smeltzer, returning after a long hiatus, as the Sabbath School Superintendent. Don was born with a perfect voice and manner to help people feel welcome and enter into worship. Joe is always a welcome sight at the podium and one week gave a perfect illustration for variety time about the hapless inability of a husband to surprise his wife for her birthday - something about misunderstanding her desire to be a size six with a desire to be age six and taking her to an amusement park.

Ben Smeltzer found a job at the Monroe Country Club, Branden Carothers got a position with more hours at the Cabela's warehouse which he had been hoping for. We are praying it doesn't take Pat Gill long to find employment again. He worked for a company that does work with General Motors and as we know, the auto industry has been hit hard in this area and we suspect it will continue to affect many people we know.

There was cause for praise and thanks this month. Dale Begeman celebrated his 79th birthday with family members this month.

David and Rox-Ann Brugman bought a carbon monoxide detector which alerted them to the presence of high levels of carbon monoxide in the house. Fortunately, aside from a headache they were safe and the problem corrected.

Marshala and James Goins gave a wonderful variety time testifying to the fact that God has answered prayers all through James' accident and recovery. They played an audio tape James had made prior to his car accident of him singing wonderfully and she praised God that James is smiling now.

It was a good month for praising God. Until next month, may God be with you and you with Him.



Which one died for your sins?

Images are available as individual downloads.

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5 finger prayer

Submitted by Jeff Begeman



1. Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a 'sweet duty.'
2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.
3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.
4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.
5. And lastly comes our little finger - the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, 'The least shall be the greatest among you.' Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective, and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

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KATY NEVIL
SPEAKING ON THE
POWER OF SERVING



ANNUAL MARCH
BIRTHDAY GET TOGETHER



GRAPE KABOBS!