

YOUTH MISSION TRIPS

MIKE AVERY

Often times when we think of the church, our minds focus on a body of believers that meets at a specific location. While this group may be considered a church, it is not the whole church. 1 Corinthians 12 reminds us that **we are the body of Christ and that the body is not made up of one part but of many.**

If you smash your thumb with a hammer while attempting to drive a nail, you don't stop to blame the hand swinging the hammer or point at the thumb and laugh at it for its suffering. No, instead you most likely will grab the thumb with your other hand and squeeze it. You will go and put it in some ice and probably take a pain reliever. I would also guess that the next time you swing a hammer, you will do so with caution, making sure not to hit your thumb again. Imagine if the entire church acted like a true



body. Instead of blaming others for making mistakes or causing pain, we were there to encourage and help with healing. Instead of judging other groups that meet together, we loved them.

Continued on page 2

CASTLEMAN COMMENT:

ARE YOU ORDERLY?

Paul writes in Colossians 7:5 that he was delighted “to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is”. Other versions mention that Paul was beholding their “order” or he “delighted to witness your good discipline” or their “steadiness”.

A commentary of this word is 1 Corinthians 14:40, “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way,” as Paul is admonishing the church of God at Corinth about their worship activities. The word frequently occurs in Hebrews where it is used to describe an arrangement or decree: “after the order of ...,” etc.; read Luke 1:18 also. The word suggests one who is marked by regularity of discipline; a person whose life is characterized by a harmonious arrangement or disposition. The Colossians were peaceful, regulated and methodical in the Christian life. They were able to put persons or things into their proper places in relation to each other.

Continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Youth Mission Trips	1
Are You Orderly? - Castleman	1
Religious Wars?	3
A Ready Answer - Predestination	5
Connected or Disconnected - Brown	6
Impossible for Evolution	7
Area Wide Activities	8

YOUTH MISSION TRIPS—P. 2

Sometimes it takes a hurricane, tornado, or some other tragedy to bring us out of isolation and stir a compassion for other parts of our body (other church locations). It is in these times that we often take action by making donations or even traveling to serve the needs of others. However, there are needs for encouragement, love, and service every day even when there is no disaster.

Every year I receive a dozen emails and phone calls from youth ministers looking for places to do mission trips. What if we took mission trips in an effort to take care of the body of Christ? There are several churches with plenty of resources and scores of volunteers. However, there are many more churches that are small and have limited resources.

Maybe your church is looking for a mission trip destination for next spring break or summer. Perhaps your church is in need of a boost. The one with plenty can travel to the one who is lacking and encourage them in a number of ways. Buildings need to be repaired and painted. Personal Bible studies are in need of leaders. Elders can encourage and pray for other elders. Widows can be served. The sick can be visited. Perhaps your children need to be encouraged through a Vacation Bible School. **Many of these groups have already conducted a VBS at their own congregation and can come pre-organized and pre-prepared to do the same thing with your church.**

I encourage you to re-read 1 Corinthians 12 and consider how you and your local church can be an encouragement to other parts of the body. After all, we are the body of Christ. If your congregation is in need of help or if your church is looking to serve on a mission trip, please don't hesitate to contact me. Groups needing help should send a list of needs and dates

available. Groups planning to serve should send a list of skills, resources, and dates available. **I will be a point person, connecting groups in need with groups who are ready to serve.**

Love in Christ,

Mike Avery
Youth and Family Minister
Memorial Church of Christ
900 Echo Lane
Houston, TX 77024
mavery@mcoc.org

CASTLEMAN COMMENT. P. 2: ARE YOU ORDERLY?

Many times our feelings determine whether we read, study our Bibles, pray, continue in good works or attend worship services. The faithful child of God seeks to order his life around spiritual priorities. He makes careful decisions, based on pleasing God and being obedient to His will. When certain issues or problems arise, it is easy to make decisions in relation to God and the church because there is order based on pleasing God.

For the orderly in Christ, spiritual priorities are already in place. When Jesus returns, will He find us orderly and firm in our faith in Him?

Kirk Castleman 830-900-9771
Kirk.castleman1942@gmail.com

RELIGIOUS WARS?

Much of our personal discussions with atheists have indicated that those atheists did not so much not believe in God as they were reviled by the acts of religious people. A specific claim heard often is that most wars are fought over religion - with the Crusades leading the list.

A first point to make sure everyone knows here is how many wars have been fought because of the teachings of Jesus Christ. **ABSOLUTELY NONE!** It may be that the crusaders called themselves "Christians", but they were not on any mission even remotely suggested by Christ. They were following the instructions of civil government and a church which had long before abandoned the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Now that the first point is made, how many wars have actually been fought over religion. This is complicated by the fact that many people inclined to go to war claim they are on a mission from God. An example of this is that the U.S. Civil war had many people thinking they were doing the work of God, on both sides. Surely they both could not be right.

In contrast when Mohammad decided to do what he did, he claimed it was by the direction of God. That made it a "religious" war. Mohammad was basically a warlord who murdered, raped, and robbed in the name of God. To a large extent the Crusades were to try to stop his followers from following his teachings.

We want to suggest to you that if you have a legitimate religious wars, you look at the writings of the originator of the religion and see what was said, not what some presumed follower said hundreds of years later.

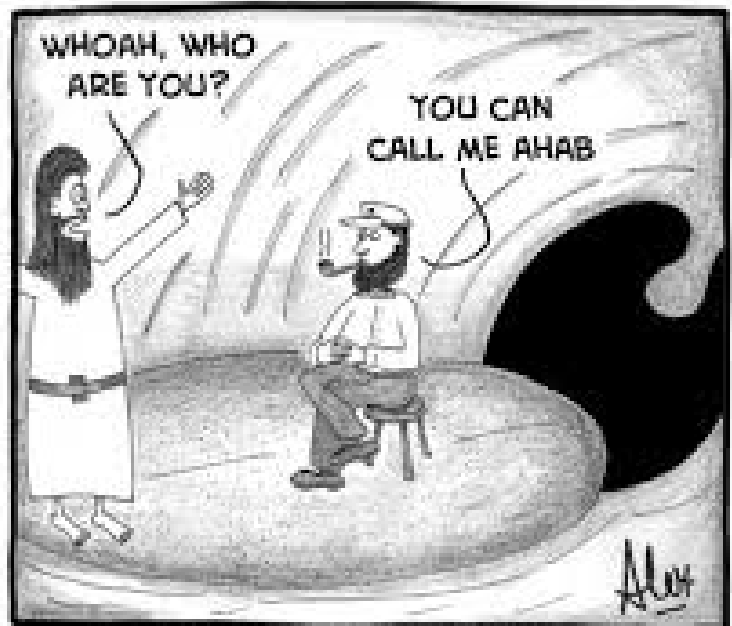
In the case of Christianity, Jesus taught nothing even close to war. Mohammad taught to murder, rape, and rob. A clear distinction was that Jesus was interested in setting up a spiritual kingdom and Mohammad was interested in setting up an earthly kingdom, Many of the jihad warriors today are doing precisely what Mohammad taught.

A favorite saying is that if you get a radical Muslim, you get a terrorist, but if you get a radical Christian you get a missionary.

Continued on page 4

CAKE OR DEATH

by alex baker



JONAH FINDS OUT HE'S NOT ALONE

RELIGIOUS WARS?—P. 2

That being said, it is interesting to see who claimed to be religious and started a war and who claimed to be an atheist and started a war. The following is the average of the high and low estimate for deaths in the wars:

WWII 1939-1945 Started by civil government

62,500,000 deaths

15,625,000 deaths per year

Mongol Conquests (1206-1368)

35,000,000 deaths

Qung Dynasty, 1616-1662

25,000,000 deaths

Taiping Rebellion, China, 1851-1864

60,000,000 deaths

WWI 1914-1918 Started by civil governments

40,000,000 deaths

8,000,000 deaths per year

Conquests of Timur-e-Lang, Russia

17,500,000 deaths, 1369-1405

An Lushan Rebellion, China, 755-763

24,500,000 deaths

Dungan Revolt, China, 1862-1877

10,000,000 deaths

Russian Civil War, 1917-1921

7,000,000 deaths

Holocaust, 1941-1945

10,500,000 deaths

Thirty Year's War, Holy Roman Empire

7,250,000, 1618-1648

Napoleonic Wars, Europe, 1803-1815

5,250,000 deaths

Holodomor, Ukraine, 1032-1033

5,250,000 deaths

Yellow Turban Rebellion, China, 184-205

5,000,000 deaths

Second Congo War, Congo, 1998-2003

3,950,000 deaths

French Wars of Religion, France, 1562-1598

3,000,000 deaths

Hundred Year's War, Europe, 1337-1453

2,800,000 deaths

Nigerian Civil War, 1966-1970

2,000,000 deaths

Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979

2,000,000 deaths

Crusades, Europe, Middle East, 1095-1291

2,000,000 deaths

10,204 deaths per year

Vietnam War, 1955-1975

1,900,000 deaths

Shanka's Conquests, Southern Africa

1,750,000 deaths, 1816-1828

War in Afghanistan, 1979-2000

1,750,000 deaths

Second Sudanese War, 1983-2005

1,500,000 deaths

Gallic Wars, France, 58BC—50BC

950,000 deaths

Du Wenxiu Rebellion, China, 1856-1873

900,000 deaths

American Civil War, 1861-1865

760,000 deaths

190,000 deaths per year

You have to get to #11 (30 Year's war Holy Roman Empire) before you even get to a war which is identified with religion and to #19 before you get to the much talked about Crusades.

In terms of deaths per year, the Crusades wouldn't even make the list. WWII averaged 42,808 deaths per day, which means that every 5 days as many people died as in the entire 196 years of the Crusades.

This is another example of anti-religious people making unfounded statements which we must equip ourselves to handle. If we don't answer, it will be presumed that they are right.

A READY ANSWER - PREDESTINATION

Predestination is taught in the Bible in Romans 8:28-30 and in Ephesians 1:11, so **it is of course correct to believe in predestination.** Unfortunately we do not have a **first century dictionary** to determine what the word meant.

It is our understanding that the contemporary definition of the word originated with John Calvin in the 16th century and was well intended. It generally meant that those who are to be saved are preselected and you can do nothing about being saved or not being saved.

This is not defined as such in the Bible. Jesus said in Mathew 28:19 "go therefore and make disciples of all nations". Romans 10:9 says "If you confess with your mouth... you will be saved". Galatians 5:4 says "You have fallen from grace". These verses and others like them clearly do not teach the contemporary definition of predestination.

We need a definition of predestination by which something is predetermined, but does not interfere with your free moral agency to choose to be saved and to leave the grace once you are in it.

What makes sense here is that God predestined all to be called, the calling is irrevocable, but it is your choice (free moral agency) to accept or reject it. God is faithful in his offer, you need to be faithful in you acceptance of His offer.

Romans 8 discusses some things which God knew in advance. Genesis 18:21 and 22:12 speaks of things God did not know in advance. A possible answer for this is that God does not so much see into the future as He can control the future.....another discussion.

**DO
YOU
BELIEVE
THE
BIBLE?**

The Bible teaches that we are not to call humans father (other than our biological father) Matthew 23:8-10

If your religious group teaches something else, you might like to visit your local Church of Christ.

The Churches of Christ attempt to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. (Rev. 22:18-19)

CONNECTED OR DISCONNECTED

ELIZABETH BROWN

“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Rom. 12:5)

The “body” concept is easy when I’m thinking of my body. I don’t want my arm detached or impaired. I need every part of my body to provide the function that God intended. That illustrates unity in my individual body. But how does that work in the church body?

Jesus is the head of the body, the church. He is the one who saved the body and guides, directs and protects the body. “And he is the head of the body, the church.” (Col. 1:18) The question is, “How does Jesus want us to function as a body?”

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

It is only as I am connected to the body that I can serve and build up the body. Just like my arm has to be connected to function, each member of the body of Christ needs to be connected and ready to fulfill the purpose God intended. Those who are detached from the body are not functioning to the benefit of the body.

You are valuable and needed. No one can take your place. Don’t leave the body crippled without your function. Maybe you are the hand that welcomes, the voice that sings or the arm that comforts. As each one does their part, the body is built up and becomes stronger. Be steadfast, either you are being equipped or you are equipping someone else until the body of Christ is built up, unified and mature. Our goal is the perfection found in Christ.

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

THE BASIC PREMISE OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IS THAT:

ALL CHRISTIAN REVELATION WAS GIVEN IN THE FIRST CENTURY, &

FIRST CENTURY REVELATION INCLUDES SOME INSTRUCTIONS WHICH ARE NOT OPTIONAL TO IGNORE.

ANOTHER WAY TO SAY THIS IS “SPEAK WHERE THE BIBLE SPEAKS, AND REMAIN SILENT WHERE THE BIBLE IS SILENT”.

ANOTHER WAY TO SAY THIS IS REV. 22: 18-19: ¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION: BI-SEXUAL REPRODUCTION

Last month we discussed the impossibility of reproduction - a spectacular display of design intelligence shown inside a cell when the zero I.Q. cell decides to reproduce itself.

The next logical impossible is for two of these cells to meet, merge, create a single DNA helix out of the components of the two "parent" cells for a "child" cell.

The simplest form of this might be for 2 cells to be floating in a pond and bump into each other. At that time they must share DNA in some way which says one DNA must leave its cell and enter the other cell. A serious complication here is that the cell has a wall which keeps the insides in and the outsides out. If you make a hole for the 6' long DNA strand to leave, the insides will likely leak out and it will die. This means that the cells must be smart enough to connect and seal so that the DNA can be safely passed through the walls. After our zero I.Q. cells do this, they have merged and now instead of being 2 cells, they are basically one larger cell. Not much of a reproduction process.

This leads us to the conclusion that bi-sexual reproduction is not just the merging of 2 cells, but starts as the releasing of 2 cells by bi-sexual creatures. Functionally, 2 bi-sexual creatures each made of millions of cells must present single cells to each other which have all the programming to make a separate creature of millions of cells.

In mammals the releasing and presenting of the cells involves a number of spectacular events which are much too delicate to discuss in this article. Some fish have a much simpler and less delicate method of mating.

Some female fish lay eggs on the seafloor and some male fish come along and deposit sperm on the top of them. As both the female cell

(egg) and the male cell (sperm) are heavier than the water they simply sink to the bottom in proximity. Can't get much simpler than that.

All this simple process requires is that:

1. The female fish figures out how to make an egg and how to deposit it on the ocean floor,
2. The male fish figures out how to make a sperm and deposit it on the ocean floor where the eggs are before they die,
3. The sperm must know how to safely penetrate the egg, and
4. The sperm and egg must know how to mate their 6' long DNA strands to make a new fish.

It cannot be that step 1 happens in a once in a million chance one year and step 2 happens in a once in a million chance a thousand years later. Each of these impossible events must happen in exactly the same generation or nothing happens. That is an impossible coincidence of impossible events.

The impossibles of steps 3 and 4 will not happen in the generation, they had to have already happened a long time ago to have a fish in the first place.

If that is not convincing enough to you, think about the added impossibilities and impossible coincidences of indelicate mammal reproduction.

Truly you can see the wisdom and design of God in these miraculous events.

THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

AN E-MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH IN OUR GENERATION



AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

2nd Tues. Houston Preacher's Luncheon, confirm with Dale Foster at dalefoster@gmail.com for address.

11/13-15 North Carolina State Lectureship (see attachment)

5/20/15 Houston Foster's Home For Children Golf Tournament—Blackhorse

YAHOO GROUP

HoustonCofC is a Yahoo group hosted by Steve Sandifer [steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net] for the purpose of communicating Houston area news among the brethren. It is open to any member of the church at no cost.

The Christian Array E-Magazine

This e-magazine is sent to members of the church on a monthly basis as an attempt to promote scriptural teachings, area wide activities and church growth. If you do not want to receive this e-magazine, send an e-mail to bbaugh@thearray.org and it will be stopped.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, send their e-mail addresses to bbaugh@thearray.org. All past copies of the newsletter can be found on the website "thearray.org".

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

A goal of this newsletter is to develop a mailing list of as many members of the church as possible and to communicate church related information to as many members as possible. In that light, we would appreciate it if you would:

1. forward the church member e-mail addresses which you have,
2. send the directory of the congregation you attend or any other directories which you might have, and
3. give us an idea of how to collect church member e-mail addresses.

The Christian Array is dedicated to support the sustained scriptural growth of the churches of Christ. It is published by BCE Publications, a 501(c)(3) organization with Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E. as editor BCE is solely responsible for the content. Any announcements, requests for publication, or comments should be e-mailed to bbaugh@thearray.org.