



THE CAVE OF THE APOCALYPSE

When the apostle John was banished to Patmos island, it is understood that he received much of the revelation of Revelation in the Cave of the Apocalypse. The cave is not a typical cave, it is about 10' deep and 30' wide.

The Cave of the Apocalypse is an iconic statement of what most religion is. In the last 2000 years, each generation has done a little bit to modify the cave and its surroundings. To get to it, you go through fences, building, stairs, and walkways. When you finally get to the cave, it literally has a Greek Orthodox church in it. It appeared to be 2000 years of religious scope drift personified.

As you approach the Cave of the Apocalypse, it doesn't look like a cave at all 2000 years later. It actually looks like a plain white single story building. How many churches have evolved enough over the past 2000 years to not be recognizable?



FIRST ENTRANCE TO CAVE OF THE APOCALYPSE

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OCCG CHURCH GROWTH THINK TANK

The first Elder's Workshop has been completed and was very successful. We had 126 attendees from 44 Houston Area Congregations. The next Elder's Workshop is scheduled for October 3 in Oklahoma City and there is consideration for a third in Decatur, Alabama.

Whereas Elder's Workshops are a good thing to do, the actual goal of the relatively small church growth think tank is to promote things which will help turn churches of Christ from being a declining organization to a growing organization. This will be no mean feat, and it will not be accomplished by a few members of a think tank.

We would like to suggest that this is possibly a once in a lifetime opportunity to get involved and make a difference. There are 12,311 congregations in the USA and simply communicating with them all is a major task. To communicate something that might affect them is an even greater challenge. The following is a lists of the ways you can get involved and help.

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GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CAVE OF THE APOCALYPSE

On visiting one of the Greek Orthodox monasteries, we purchased a book ([The Way](#)) to get the following timeline. This timeline represents their understanding of church history. The universal Pope we learn about in AD 606 was a non-event. He was simply one of the officious Bishops claiming authority over the other Bishops, who did not recognize the authority. The great Schism occurred in 1054 when Pope Leo IX (Roman Catholic) and Patriarch Michael I (Greek Orthodox) excommunicated each other. The Crusades were important in that they were a Roman Catholic event in which they attacked

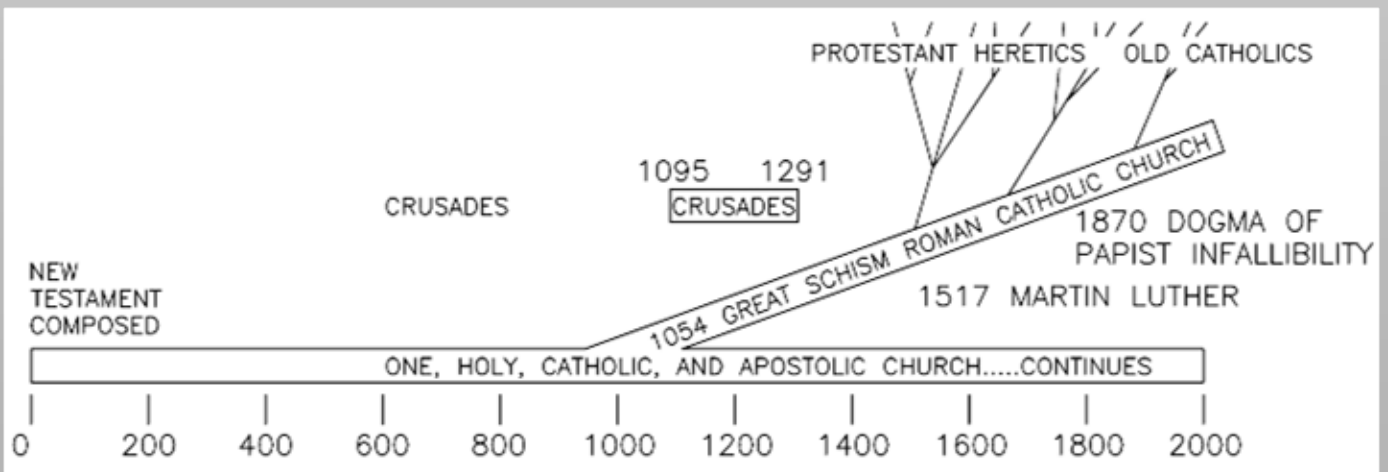
some Greek Orthodox churches. Beyond that, protestant groups are passed off as small organizations of heretics.

A real key to the book was on page 40 where it reveals that the way to Christian unity was to go back to the way it was up to the 9th century. That was a very interesting statement as it discloses their truth basis. Truth is what happened in the 9th century. That would make all revelation up to that point valid, and all presumed revelation since then to be invalid.

It is good to understand what various groups "truth basis" is to know how to approach them. For a Roman Catholic, what the Pope says from the throne is infallible today, so that would be their ultimate truth basis. Some groups go back to Martin Luther, John Calvin, Joseph Smith, or others.

The churches of Christ have a unique truth basis. God's revelation to us is in the New Testament. We have no intermediary to interpret it, no updates, no more recent improvements or changes to make to it. Each of us can and are responsible to go back to it and follow it.

Benton F. Baugh





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E-MAIL DATABASE

Volunteers have already called most of the congregations in the country. It has been an eye opening experience on how hard it is to get in touch with them, how many are simply gone, and how many do not have e-mail addresses. What we need now is for local volunteers to take care of their general service area where they have local knowledge.

PAPER PROJECTS

A basic premise is that if we can package good ideas and send them to as many congregations as possible, some will take root and be of assistance in revitalizing some congregations. You may have something beneficial to say and want to write a paper. (See samples on ocgthinktank.org). Alternately, when someone else prepares a paper you can be of service by editing and/or proof reading.

There are presently 4 project papers posted to the ocgthinktank.org website. One on exit interviews is attached to this newsletter.

ELDER'S WORKSHOPS

Our elder's workshops will be discussing the latest thoughts on church growth principles and methods. With our first successful elder's workshop completed, we are prepared to present the work (as continually updated) in other areas. For this to happen in another area, we need local organizers and workers to assist in the arrangements.

PROGRAMMING

One of the methods we are promoting is to prepare database(s) which fit the church of Christ operating style for free distribution of churches of Christ. Imagine that when a member has missed 4 Sundays in a row, an exit interview committee is automatically notified. They may

already know a situation, or they will be charged to determine the situation. If the member has left, a committee will be charged to do a follow-up call or visit and ask the questions. When the answers are posted to the database, the member's shepherd will automatically get a copy. At the end of the month, end of the quarter, and end of the year, all shepherds will get a summary of the information.

We specifically need volunteers with Microsoft Access, Java, and website programming experience.

IDEAS

You may be the one who knows the words or ideas to promote to assist congregations in growing. We are sure it is not doing the same thing "with a fresh coat of paint". We must stay with the scriptures, but you may know an effective method for 2015. Send your ideas and thoughts to ideas@ocgthinktank.org.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.
Chair, OCCG Think Tank

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ACKNOWLEDGE OTHERS

It's the little things that add up and become big things. When we understand that the definition of "rude" is to disregard, to ignore or look the other way, it becomes apparent how important it is to acknowledge others.

Acknowledgement comes in many forms: remembering someone's name, summarizing what was just said for a newcomer to the conversation, holding a door open to let someone through, welcoming, thanking, and just plain saying hello. It is returning phone calls and acknowledging texts and emails. To acknowledge others is to express their importance to you.

BE FIRST: Instead of playing the game of invisibility when we see someone coming our way, we can at least nod, smile or give some greeting. Don't wait for others to acknowledge you first, make it a game to always speak or acknowledge others first.

LISTEN: To listen to others is to acknowledge their importance to you. Giving your attention in conversation or when someone is teaching or speaking is to show respect to that person. Show that you are listening with thoughtful questions that enhance the speaker's clarity.

BE INCLUSIVE: Another way to acknowledge others is to be inclusive. One of our greatest needs is to be accepted by others. Part of our identity is found in our church family and we need to feel welcome and acknowledged. Use words that confer regard, respect and value.

BE PRESENT: Don't invalidate or humiliate others by refusing to acknowledge their presence. Give your time and attention the present moment. The first step toward loving others is to respect and acknowledge them. "Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king." (1 Peter. 2:17)

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

We are happy to announce that the 2015 Schedule of Daily Bible Readings and Questions is ready to print. Our printer tells us that it will be about \$15/copy. Please publicize this to your family and "circle of friends" through your internet contacts. This is non-profit and we want it to be to the Glory of God! We just want folks to read their Bible every day! We will be glad to mail/ship copies to you, so please help us. Each copy will average about \$5/copy, which includes postage and mail envelope. Kirk and Linda Castleman 7419 Bairnsdale Lane, Houston 77070

kirk.castleman1942@gmail.com

830-900-9771 Any extra funds will be used to print copies to give away for evangelism. Love and blessings to all, Kirk and Linda



IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #53: SILK WORMS



As seen above, silk is harvested by soaking a number of white cocoons in water, stirring them with a wisk broom (upper right) which “grabs” a number of the fibers and then attaching the fiber ends to a collection wheel (upper left). On rolling the collection wheel, the cocoons spin rapidly in the water as they unwind.

What this means is that a fat, ugly worm with zero I.Q. figured out how to:

1. Manufacture a really high strength fiber in internal glands,
2. Figured out how to extrude the silk as an extremely long fiber,
3. Figured out how to wrap the silk around itself in an egg shape,
4. Figure out how to make the silk stick together so the cocoon is structurally secure but will come apart in water, and
5. Figured out how to get out of the cocoon (at least sometimes) and fly away.

Whereas the cocoon is a useful place to change into a moth, many other designs not nearly some complex or specialized are perfectly suitable for this purpose.

Each cocoon looks like an egg and is made of a single silk thread which is 300 to 900 meters long (1/2 a mile). Silk is the strongest natural fiber known, it is about twice as strong as the steel used in common building construction. The threads are about 0.0004 inches in diameter. A sheet of notebook paper is about 0.004” thick or it would take ten threads of silk stacked up to equal the thickness of single sheet of notebook paper.

There is no evolutionary benefit to this complicated feat accomplished by a silkworm. It is only a way for you to have fine clothing and a clear statement to you that God is real.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.



CHURCHES OF CHRIST DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT INC.

HELPING VICTIMS NATIONWIDE

When disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires and floods strike, we can bring prepackaged food boxes, personal hygiene boxes, infant care boxes, buckets full of cleaning supplies, brooms, mops, shovels, rakes, laundry detergent, bleach, bottled water, new clothing, and other miscellaneous supplies to local Church of Christ congregation(s) serving that area. Items are pre-packed in our large warehouse in Nashville, Tennessee, ready to hand out. We have served congregations from coast to coast in every major disaster.

Being the first with the best disaster relief is a good reflection on the church.

WHEN THE DISASTER IS TOO GREAT...YOUR BRETHREN WILL HELP!

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Please consider financial support to help us in this work. You may send contributions to:

Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, Inc.

P.O. Box 111180 · Nashville, TN 37222-1180

E-Mail: dsastrlf@aol.com

Website: disasterrelieffort.org

You can also follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/disasterrelieffort



HOUSTON AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

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

10/3/15 OKC / OC Area-Wide Elder's Workshop

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.

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