Let's Keep Christmas
Every year at this time I start looking toward the new year, and I start yearning with a renewed passion for the soon return of Jesus. Our world desperately needs His return and the inauguration of His glorious Millennial reign. Until then, this world will never experience true peace, righteousness and justice.

There are many reasons I would like to see Jesus return. For one thing, He has been promised by His Father that when He returns, He will receive the honor and glory that was denied to Him when He came the first time as our Suffering Lamb (Isaiah 24:21-23).

I also want to see Satan receive what he deserves, which is defeat, dishonor and humiliation. Satan’s fate was sealed at the Cross, but that fate has not yet been realized in history. It will be when Jesus returns. First, Satan will be bound for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). Then, at the end of the Millennium, he will be thrown into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

A third reason I want to see Jesus return is because I want to see the Creation receive what it has been promised— namely, regeneration, restoration, renewal and refreshment. Our world was originally created in beauty and perfection. It has been corrupted by the sin of Man, the curse of God, and the evil works of Satan. It will be redeemed when Jesus returns. The wolf will lie down with the lamb and the lion will eat straw with the ox (Isaiah 11:6-9). The original Peaceable Kingdom, lost when Adam and Eve sinned, will be restored (Acts 3:21).

I am also anxious to see the nations of the world receive what they have been promised, which is peace, righteousness and justice. For thousands of years Mankind has dreamed of living in peace in a righteous world with true justice for all peoples. No matter how many peace conferences may be held, this dream will never be realized until the Prince of Peace returns to rule with a rod of iron (Psalm 2, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Isaiah 11:1-5).

The unfulfilled promises God has given to the Jewish people will also be fulfilled when Jesus returns. A great remnant will be saved when they accept Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10 and Romans 9:27 & 11:25-26). These believing Jews will be gathered to Israel where they will be established as the prime nation in the world (Isaiah 60-62). And for the first time ever, the Jewish people will be given respect by all the nations of the world (Zechariah 8:23).

The Church will also receive some great blessings when Jesus returns. We will inherit the redeemed earth and be given dominion over it (Matthew 5:5 and Daniel 7:18 & 27). In our glorified bodies, we will reign over those in natural bodies, implementing the laws of God given by Jesus who will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4, 2 Timothy 2:12, and Revelation 2:26-27).

There is a final reason that I yearn so much for the Lord’s return. It’s because I want to be reunited with friends in Christ and family members who have died in the Lord.

Even more, I want to see Jesus face to face and bask in the presence of His love and holiness. I want to kiss His nail-scarred hands, look Him in the eyes, and say: “Thank you, Lord, for dying for me, for forgiving me, for loving me, for changing me, for guiding me, for sustaining me, for never giving up on me, and for providing me with purpose in my life.”

Maranatha! ☦

Next Month: The Lord willing, next month we will take an in-depth look at whether or not the Antichrist could possibly be a Muslim. There is a growing chorus of voices who think this may be the case. We will examine their arguments and look to the Scriptures for an answer.
Changes are everywhere.
Many institutions and customs that we once thought sacrosanct have gone by the board.
Yet there are a few that abide, defying time and revolution.
The old message: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” is still the heart of Christmas.
It can be nothing else.
And this message can neither be changed — nor quite forgotten although there are many things that tend to make us forget.
The idea of Santa Claus coming in a helicopter does not ring true.
No interior decorator with a fondness for yellow or blue could ever persuade me to forsake the Christmas colors of red and green.
I must confess that modernistic Christmas cards leave me cold.
I cannot appreciate the dogs and cats . . .
the galloping horses . . .
the ships in full sail . . .
or any of the cute designs that leave out the traditional symbols of the star . . .
the manger . . .
the wise men on their camels.
Angels there must be — but not modernistic angels in evening dress with peroxide permanents.
There is no need to search for stories new and different. There is only one after all — and no modern author can improve it:
“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night,
And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them,
and the glory of the Lord shone round about them:
and they were sore afraid.
“And the angel said unto them,
Fear not, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you this day is born in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”
We all feel the pressure of approaching Christmas. The traffic is terrible.
You can’t find a parking space . . .
The stores are crowded . . .
Mob scenes make shopping a nightmare.
You are thinking about presents — wondering what in the world to get for so-and-so.
You can think of friends and loved ones who are so hard to shop for.
You can’t think of anything they need (which is rather strange when you take time to think of it).
Maybe there is nothing in the store that they need. But what about some token of love — what about love itself . . .
and friendship . . .
and understanding . . .
and consideration . . .
and a helping hand . . .
and a smile . . .
and a prayer?
You can’t buy these things in any store, and these are the very things people need.
We all need them . . . Blessed will they be who receive them this Christmas or at any time.
Let’s not permit the crowds and the rush to crowd Christmas out of our hearts . . .
for that is where it belongs.
Christmas is not in the stores —
but in the hearts of people.
Let’s not give way to cynicism and mutter that “Christmas has
become commercialized.”
It never will be — unless you let it be.
Your Christmas is not commercialized, unless you have commercialized it.

Let’s not succumb to the sophistication that complains:
“Christmas belongs only to the children.”
That shows that you have never understood Christmas at all,
for the older you get, the more it means, if you know what it means.
Christmas, though forever young, grows old with us.

Have you ever been saying, “I just can’t seem to feel the Christmas spirit this year”?
That’s too bad.
As a confession of lack of faith, it is rather significant.

You are saying that you feel no joy that Jesus came into the world . . .
You are confessing that His Presence in the world is not a reality to you . . .
Maybe you need all the more to read the Christmas story all over again,
neat to sit down with the Gospel of Luke
and think about it.

I thank God for Christmas.
Would that it lasted all year.
For on Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day, all the world is a better place,
and men and women are more lovable.
Love itself seeps into every heart, and miracles happen.

When Christmas doesn’t make your heart swell up until it nearly bursts . . .
and fill your eyes with tears . . .
and make you all soft and warm inside . . .
then you’ll know that something inside of you is dead.

We hope that there will be snow for Christmas.
Why?
It is not really important, but it is so nice, and old-fashioned, and appropriate, we think.

Isn’t it wonderful to think that nothing can really harm the joy of Christmas . . .
Although your Christmas tree decorations will include many new gadgets, such as lights with bubbles in them . . . it’s the old tree decorations that mean the most . . . the ones you save carefully

Peter Marshall with his wife, Catherine, and his son, Peter.

from year to year . . .
the crooked star that goes on top of the tree . . .
The ornaments that you’ve been so careful with.

And you’ll bring out the tiny manger,
and the shed,
and the little figures of the Holy Family . . . and lovingly arrange them on the mantel
or in the middle of the dining room table.
And getting the tree will be a family event, with great excitement for the children.

And there will be a closet into which you’ll forbid your husband to look,
And he will be moving through the house mysteriously with bundles under his coat,
and you’ll pretend not to notice.

There will be a fragrance of cookies baking . . .
spices and fruitcake . . .
and the warmth of the house shall be melodious with the lilting strains of “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

And you’ll listen to the wonderful Christmas music on the radio.
Some of the songs will be modern — good enough music perhaps — but it will be the old carols,
the lovely old Christmas hymns that will mean the most.

And forests of fir trees will march right into our living rooms.
There will be bells on our doors
and holly wreaths in our windows . . .
And we shall sweep the Noel skies for their brightest colors and festoon our homes with stars. There will be a chubby stocking hung by the fireplace . . . and with finger to lip you will whisper and ask me to tip-toe, for a little tousled head is asleep and must not be awakened

Until after Santa has come.

And finally Christmas morning will come. Don’t worry — you’ll be ready for it —
You’ll catch the spirit all right, or it will catch you which is even better.

And then you will remember what Christmas means — the beginning of Christianity . . . the Second Chance for the world . . . the hope for peace . . . and the only way.
The promise that the angels sang is the most wonderful music the world has ever heard.

“Peace on earth and good will toward men.”

It was not a pronouncement upon the state of the world then. Nor is it a reading of the international barometer of the present time . . . but it is a promise — God’s promise — of what will come to pass.

The years that are gone are graveyards in which all the persuasions of men have crumbled into dust. If history has any voice, it is to say that all these ways of men lead nowhere. There remains only one way — The Way — untried, untested, unexplored fully . . . the way of Him Who was born a Babe in Bethlehem.

In a world that seems not only to be changing, but even to be dissolving, there are tens of millions of us who want Christmas to be the same . . . with the same old greeting “Merry Christmas” and no other.

We long for the abiding love among men of good will which the season brings . . . believing in this ancient miracle of Christmas with its softening, sweetening influence to tug at our heart strings once again.

We want to hold on to the old customs and traditions because they strengthen our family ties, bind us to our friends, make us one with all mankind for whom the Child was born, and bring us back again to the God who gave His only begotten Son, that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

So we will not “spend” Christmas . . . nor “observe” Christmas. We will “keep” Christmas — keep it as it is . . . in all the loveliness of its ancient traditions.

May we keep it in our hearts, that we may be kept in its hope.

Prayer

We yearn, Father, for the simple beauty of Christmas — for all the old familiar melodies and words that remind us of that great miracle when He who had made all things was one night to come as a babe, to lie in the crook of a woman’s arm.

Before such mystery we kneel, as we follow the shepherds and wise men to bring Thee the gift of our love — a love we confess has not always been as warm or sincere or real as it should have been. But now, on this Christmas Day, may our love find its Beloved, and from Thee receive the grace to make it pure again, warm and real . . .

May the loving kindness of Christmas not only creep into our hearts, but there abide, so that not even the return to earthly cares and responsibilities, not all the festivities of our own devising, may cause it to creep away weeping. May the joy and spirit of Christmas stay with us now and forever.

In the name of Jesus, who came to save His people from their sins, even in that lovely name we pray. Amen.

The first time He came,
He came gently on a starlit night, in a silent hush with no fanfare ...

But when He comes again,
The earth will shake, the stars will fall, as the trumpets of Heaven announce His presence ...

The first time He came,
He was ignored and scorned, despised and rejected and tortured ...

But when He comes again,
All nations will gather to kneel before Him, declaring His glory and singing His praise ...

The first time He came,
He hung on a rugged cross in shame, betrayed by His own, to die as a thief

But when He comes again,
He will sit on His throne, as the universe shouts in triumphant joy ...

King of kings and Lord of lords ...

A poem by B. J. Hoff
It’s about Time:  
When was Jesus Born?  

Dr. James Ya’akov Hugg  

Editor’s Note: James W. Hugg, PhD, has been a disciple of the Messiah since 1971 and has been a member of the Lamb and Lion Board of Trustees since 1982. James has been active in leading worship and teaching youth and adult Bible classes. He has been involved since 1989 in Messianic Judaism, working with Jews for Jesus in street evangelism, and serving as cantor in several Messianic Jewish congregations. James holds dual citizenship in the USA and Israel (where he is called Ya’akov), and dual membership in Northway Fellowship Church, Clifton Park, NY, and Seed of Abraham Messianic Jewish Congregation in Albany, NY. Dr. Hugg is a senior research physicist at the General Electric Global Research Center in Niskayuna, NY, where he designs molecular imaging scanners, including SPECT, PET, and MRI. Dr. Hugg earned his doctorate in nuclear physics from Stanford University. He is married, and he and his wife, Shoshanna, have two children.

I have long desired to contribute a series of articles to our Lamplighter magazine. I am a research physicist who escaped the slavery of devotion to the atheist religion of secular humanism and the evolutionary worldview. I have investigated a number of biblical topics related in some way to better understanding “time” and I want to share some of my faith-building findings with you.

God created time “In the beginning . . .” and placed humans into this temporal world to separate the sheep from the goats in preparation for the eternal world where we sheep will live in His presence. So the title of my series “It’s about Time” has a double meaning: I want to write about topics related to questions of time (examples follow), and the expression “it’s about time” reminds us that our Lord and Savior will soon return to conclude this phase of world history and to establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

Future Topics in the Series

Some of the topics I plan to discuss will answer questions of when historical events occurred (and why those are important questions to answer correctly). This first article will answer the question “When was Jesus born?” and will conclude (as you might suspect) that it was not December 25 in the year 1 BC. Another article will answer the question “When was Jesus crucified?” and will conclude that it was not on “Good Friday.” One of my favorite topics is “When was the universe created?” Another is “When does a new year begin?” We will find that biblically it is not the first of January.

I hope to discuss with you God’s natural rhythms that we experience in days, weeks, months, sabbatical cycles of years, and millennia. Topics may include: “What is the meaning of the names we use for days and months?” “What is the meaning of the 30-day months in the Bible?” “Can world history be described in 7 millennia?”

I’d like to invite our readers to submit questions related to time. I should exclude one question, “When will Jesus return?” since I don’t know anything more than that we are definitely in the season of His return. I believe, as Dr. Reagan clearly teaches, that His return for His bride is imminent.

The Christmas Tradition

We celebrate the birth of Messiah (Christ) on Christmas (from Old English, meaning “coming of Christ”), the 25th day of December. This date was first observed in 336 AD, some 24 years after the Roman emperor Constantine established Christianity as the state religion. Apparently, Pope Julius I chose to replace the pagan winter solstice feast in honor of Mithra, the “Unconquered Sun,” that had been officially recognized by the emperor Aurelian in 274 AD. From Rome, the new feast celebrating the birthday of the “Sun of Righteousness” (Malachi 4:2) spread to all other churches (except the Armenian church) over the following century.

As many Christians are aware, the modern Christmas celebration combines many strands of tradition including the ancient Roman pagan festival of Saturnalia (merrymaking, exchange of presents), the old Germanic midwinter customs (Yule log, decorating evergreen trees), the tradition of Francis of Assisi (displaying the crib, or crèche of Jesus), the medieval feast of St. Nicholas (Sinterklaas in Dutch, hence “Santa Claus”), and the British sending of greeting cards (1840s). The Puritan pilgrims did not celebrate Christmas because of its many unbiblical associations. The holiday was officially recognized in the United States in 1870.
The Dutch Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas) is the origin of the North American Santa Claus. According to legend, Sinterklaas makes his rounds on December 5, Saint Nicholas’s Eve. Dressed in a catholic bishop’s robes, Sinterklaas rides through the streets distributing sweets to the children. According to some versions of the popular legend, another figure accompanies him named Black Peter, who carries a whip with which to chastise naughty children.

**The Historical Evidence**

I think it is fair and not overly critical for us to admit that the date chosen by Constantine and Pope Julius I to celebrate the birth of Jesus was not based on good historical or biblical evidence. Let’s look for that overlooked evidence in the historical account of the birth of Jesus recorded by Dr. Luke.

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**Our first clue is found in Luke 1:5. Here is how it reads in the Complete Jewish Bible:** “In the days of Herod, King of Y’hudah (Judaea), there was a cohen (Jewish priest) named Z’kharyah (Zacharias) who belonged to the Aviyah (Abijah) division.” The service of the Abijah division of priests was scheduled for the last two weeks of the fourth month of the Jewish religious calendar (15-29 Tammuz, June-July), according to the Talmud (rabbinic commentaries) and Qumran sources.

Dr. Luke tells us that Zacharias was serving in the 2nd Jewish Temple in Jerusalem when he was chosen to enter the holy place to burn incense outside the Holy of Holies. The archangel Gavri’el (Gabriel) appeared to Zacharias and revealed that he and his barren wife Elisheva (Elizabeth) would have a son named Yochanan (John) who would precede and prepare the way for the Messiah. He returned home after his two-week service, then his wife conceived, as Gabriel had prophesied. The earliest date for John’s conception would be the 1st of Av (July).

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**Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, until John was born (probably during Pesach or Passover, 15-21 Nisan, April), circumcised on the eighth day, and given his prophesied name (Luke 1:57-80). One of the long-held Jewish traditions is that the prophet Elijah will return at Passover (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6). Gabriel had prophesied to Zacharias that John would come “in the spirit and power of Eliyahu (Elijah)” (Luke 1:17, CJB).**

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When Mary arrived, Elizabeth greeted her: “How blessed is the child in your womb!” (Luke 1:42). From this, we conclude that there was no delay between the time of Gabriel’s announcement to Mary and the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. We can infer that the same was true for the conception of John. At most, only a few days passed between the announcement and the fulfillment of each of these two angelic prophecies.

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Mary returned to Nazareth, where an angel (probably Gabriel again) reassured her betrothed husband: “Yosef (Joseph), son of David, do not be afraid to take Miryam (Mary) home with you as your wife; for what has been conceived in her is from the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Yeshua [which means ADONAI (God) saves], because He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20-21, CJB). Emperor Augustus ordered a census that required Joseph to take Mary to Beit-Lechem (Bethlehem) where she gave birth to Jesus (probably during Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, 15-21 Tishrei, September-October). “The Word [Jesus] became a human being and lived [tabernacled] with us” (John 1:14).

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The night of the birth of Jesus, an angel (probably the archangel Michael) appeared with the angelic armies of heaven to announce the birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-15). Perhaps there is a long forgotten connection with Michaelmas (“coming of Michael”) Day, the feast of Michael the Archangel, which is celebrated in some traditions (particularly in the United Kingdom) on the 29th of September. Michael is the leader of the angelic armies who hurls Lucifer (Satan, the Devil) down from heaven because of his treachery (Revelation 12:7).

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Joseph and Mary presented Jesus at the Jewish Temple on the 40th day after His birth (probably late Cheshvan, early November) for the ceremony of Pidyon HaBen (redemption of the firstborn son). There He received the blessings of Shim’on (Simeon) and Hannah, two righteous Jewish prophets (Luke 2:22-38).
8 Magi from the east came (probably in Winter) to inquire of King Herod about the birth of Jesus. The head cohanim (Jewish priests) admitted that Messiah must be born in Bethlehem, so the Magi went there (three miles from Jerusalem) and found Joseph, Mary, and Jesus living in a house. They worshiped Him and gave Him gifts, then obeyed an angelic warning (probably Gabriel) to avoid revealing to King Herod the location of Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12).

9 After the Magi departed Bethlehem, an angel (probably Gabriel) warned Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape King Herod’s attempt to murder Jesus. They left that same night (Matthew 2:13-15). King Herod ordered the slaughter of all boys in Bethlehem up to age two, but Joseph escaped with his family to Egypt (possibly the Sinai peninsula), where they remained until Herod’s death (Matthew 2:16-18). I assume that Herod included a margin of error in calculating how old the newborn Messiah, King of the Jews, would be when he ordered the murder of all Bethlehem boys less than two years old.

10 After King Herod’s death, an angel (probably Gabriel) appeared to Joseph to tell him it was safe to return home to Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23). The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus recorded the death of the evil King Herod in the spring of 4 BC. I assume that Herod did not live long after the slaughter of the innocent boys of Bethlehem, and thus that the family of Jesus did not stay long in Egypt. Therefore, we can place the birth of Jesus on a fairly well constrained timeline.

“His name shall be called Wonderful” — Simon Dewey

**Determining the Date**

If Jesus was born during Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, (which began the 29th of September) in 5 BC, as we deduced from the evidence above, then His conception was probably during Hanukkah, possibly as late as the 25th of December in 6 BC. It is also possible that the Magi visited Bethlehem around the 25th of December in 5 BC, when Jesus would have been almost 3 months old. ‘Anno Domini’ (AD) dating was adopted in Western Europe during the 8th century. In 525 AD when the monk Dionysius Exiguus (Dennis the Little, meaning humble) calculated the year of Jesus’ birth, he missed by about 3 years. We now have evidence that Herod died in 4 BC, probably less than a year after Jesus was born.

**The Significance**

Does it really matter when Jesus was born or when we celebrate Christmas? In some ways, no, it doesn’t matter — after all, if it was critically important to know precisely when Jesus was born, God would have told us He was born on a particular day and month and year. We have the freedom as believers to celebrate, or not to celebrate, the birth of our Lord and Savior on any day of our choosing (Romans 14:1-12).

Christmas is not a commandment. It is far more important HOW we celebrate (“remember the reason for the season”) than WHEN. Let us not give or receive condemnation for observing the 25th of December, rather let us celebrate that God’s Son became fully human and lived a perfect life so that He could become our perfect sacrifice and conquer sin and death in our place.

But, in another way, it IS important to consider the evidence God gave us and to place it in a proper Jewish context so that we can better understand the foundation of our faith. For example, the information I have presented in this article makes it clear that an important prophecy about the Messiah was fulfilled in the life of Jesus. That prophecy is found in Genesis 49:10 — “The scepter will not pass from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his legs, until Shiloh [Messiah] comes, and it is He whom the peoples will obey.” Second Temple rabbis understood this as a Messianic prophecy.

In about 7 AD, the Romans abolished the power of the Jewish Sanhedrin Council in Judah to pronounce the death penalty. Furthermore, Herod was the first king of Israel who was not a descendent of the tribe of Judah. However, Jesus had already been born in 5 BC, before the sceptor and staff (power) departed from Judah.

There is a deeper meaning and real significance to the conclusion that Jesus was probably born during the Feast of Tabernacles, thus bringing partial fulfillment to the prophetic type of that important feast established by God. Tabernacles (booths) are temporary, insecure dwellings and emphasize our reliance on God’s grace. So also the temporary human body in which the Son of God dwelled among us demonstrated what total reliance on God can accomplish.

The ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic significance of the Feast of Tabernacles will occur when Jesus returns in glory and majesty to tabernacle among us as King of kings and Lord of lords. Maranatha! ♦

**Notes:**


**The Story of a Christmas Song**

**Mary Did You Know?**

Most people think of Mark Lowry as a Christian comedian, but he is also a very talented musician. For a dozen years he was a member of Bill Gaither’s vocal band.

But his most enduring legacy is likely to be a song he wrote in 1984 when the leaders of the church he was attending in Nashville, Tennessee asked him if he would write a musical for Advent. As he was writing, he came up with a series of questions he would like to ask Mary, and he included them in the musical as a monologue to be recited between scenes.

Six years later in 1990, he handed the words to Buddy Greene, the very talented harmonica player, and Greene supplied the music for a song that has since become a Christmas classic. It has been recorded by more than 30 different artists.

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will one day walk on water?
Did you know
That your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?
Did you know
That your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you’ve delivered
Will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
Did you know
That your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?
Did you know
That your baby boy has walked where angels trod,

1

Mark Lowry

And when you kiss your little boy
You’ve kissed the face of God?

Mary, did you know
The blind would see
The deaf would hear
And the dead will live again?
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb?

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
Did you know
That your baby boy will one day rule the nations?
Did you know
That your baby boy is Heaven’s perfect Lamb,
This sleeping child you’re holding
Is the Great I Am?

1See “Story Behind the Song,” Today’s Christian, November/December 2002.
A Christmas Story
Dr. Frank Wright

(Editor’s Note: Dr. Wright is the CEO of the National Religious Broadcasters. This article originally appeared in his newsletter of August 28, 2008. It is reprinted by permission.)

Many of you probably watched the “Saddleback Civil Forum” when Senators Barak Obama (D-IL) and John McCain (R-AZ) were “interviewed” by Dr. Rick Warren. It was fascinating, from a purely academic perspective, to watch two individuals who were running for President receive and respond to identical questions without hearing the responses of the other person.

While I suspect that you have read and re-read their statements regarding issues that are near and dear to your heart, I want to zero in on one of the anecdotal stories told by Senator McCain. He used it to illustrate a point, but I think that for our walk as Believers, it illustrates far more than he perhaps intended.

In responding to the question, “What does being a Christian mean to you,” Sen. McCain explained that he and other POW’s were often tied up for hours in an excruciatingly uncomfortable position as incentive to provide information to their captors. Once, when he had been tied in this manner, a guard quietly reappeared after a little while, loosened his bonds, and quickly left. Hours later, right before the interrogators returned, the same guard reappeared and tightened the ropes again – obviously in an attempt to hide his earlier act of mercy.

Later that year, on Christmas day, the POW’s who had been in solitary confinement for so long were taken out of their cells and allowed to stand outside for a few minutes – only because it was Christmas. Sen. McCain said that the same guard walked up to him, silently used his sandal to draw a cross in the dirt, stood with him for a moment, and then erased the cross.

“For a minute there,” said McCain, tearing up, “there was just two Christians worshiping together. I’ll never forget that moment.”

John McCain knew right then that in one of the darkest, most horrible places that any man could be on earth, God was real and had ministered to him in the actions of that North Vietnamese prison guard.

Three things strike me about this story.

First, God revealed Himself to this young, broken Navy pilot who had already been in chains for so long. He knew where John McCain was, and He had not forgotten him. God never forgets us.

Second, that guard must have been suffering terribly. He was obviously a Believer, yet had somehow been forced into the untenable position of being a guard at the infamous Hanoi Hilton. We will never know this side of Heaven, what emotional and spiritual trauma he endured. Perhaps his family had been threatened in the demand for his service to the brutal North Vietnamese who worked at this prison. Perhaps he had gone along with orders rather than sacrifice his own life. It is doubtful that he served willingly. Yet, that lone guard looked for an opportunity to not only ease the suffering of his fellow man, but to, in essence, make the statement that his magnanimity was not his own idea but was a direct consequence of his understanding of God.

Finally, I think about that young Navy pilot. Who knew that this man, who was so broken and held captive for so long, might someday vie to be President of the most powerful nation on earth. Who could have suspected? Who would have thought that he would remember that incident, and recount it decades later to millions of people as a testimony to the fact that God does, indeed, live? Certainly not that Vietnamese prison guard. But God sees ahead of us. God is sovereign, and His sovereignty not only extends “backwards” in our lives, but forwards as well. He knows that every event in your life – even those painful things – can be used for His glory months, years, and even decades in the future.

What difficulty are you facing today, dear friend? Is your broadcast business feeling the financial pressure wrought by the current economic downturn? Perhaps your marriage is in a period of stress, or a child is in rebellion against God? Maybe an aged parent is in poor health, or a friend is in great need? Every single one of us is either struggling with something significant, or has a close relative or friend who is in the midst of a great trial. No one is immune from the consequences of living in a fallen world, and sometimes it is very easy to fall prey to discouragement.

Look up and praise God. Scripture tells us that God inhabits the praises of His people. We are told to praise God in all things and in all times (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), and in the most difficult situations. That alone is a sacrifice that we can bring to the throne of our loving Heavenly Father. And be encouraged. Psalm 27:13 says, “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

What our enemy means for evil, God means for good (Genesis 50:19-20). He is sovereign above and beyond all that we experience. He never forgets us, He never leaves us, and He remembers His promises to His people. Whatever you are facing right now, know that God is not only your Redeemer, but also your Protector, Deliverer, and Lord. He never fails.

Dr. Wright was assisted in the preparation of this article by Laurel A. MacLeod.
An Evaluation of the “Florida Healing Outpouring”

Dr. David R. Reagan

(Note: The original version of this article was written this past summer, before the Florida “revival” came to an end with the disclosure that Todd Bentley’s wife had left him because of his involvement with a female staff member. We are printing the evaluation anyway, with the hope that it will help Christians to be more discerning. The Bible tells us that the end times will be a period of great deception — Matthew 24:24, 1 Timothy 4:1, and 2 Timothy 4:1-4. We are living in those times, and we need to test everything carefully by the Word of God.)

Todd Bentley is a 32 year old evangelist from Canada who heads up an independent Charismatic ministry called Fresh Fire Ministries. In April of 2008 he was invited to hold a one-week revival at the Ignited Church of Lakeland, Florida.

The “revival” quickly became a religious and media phenomenon. One of the main reasons it rapidly attracted so much attention was because of the flamboyant personality and mannerisms of Todd Bentley. The other reason is because the services were broadcast live each evening over the GodTube website, making them available to all the world.

The extended meeting grew to the point that it had to be moved to a large tent-type structure that accommodated close to 10,000 people, many of whom were arriving daily from foreign nations.

A Strange “Revival”

This was a “revival” with very little teaching and preaching. In fact, Todd Bentley seldom brought a Bible to the pulpit with him. The services began with an intense and lengthy period of worship. One pastor described the worship as “hypnotic music” that utilized “rhythmic sound” with “repetitious words.”

I checked this description by going to the Fresh Fire Ministries website and watching a service. I found the description to be accurate. Nearly all the songs consisted of chants of short phrases that were repeated over and over — phrases like, “Lord set us free,” “Fire fall down on me,” and “It’s raining; it’s pouring; Your rivers are flowing.” The music seemed designed to whip the audience into a frenzy.

Here’s how a Florida pastor named Gary Osborne described a service he attended:

The phrase, “stir yourselves up” was used repeatedly . . . A woman led in prayer for the service and . . . told the people to “roar like a lion!” . . . People everywhere shouted at the top of their lungs . . . This same lady was jerking and twitching . . . There was also much talk of “birthing” and “signs and wonders.” There was a very sensual spirit . . . People seemed to be in a trance all around me . . . The music had the people mesmerized . . .

At about 8:30pm . . . the music leader says, “I’m feeling drunk.” He then tells the people to say to God, “Intoxicate me, Lord!” . . . People were sure the people were going to die. . . .

Bentley’s Antics

In this carnival-like atmosphere, people were exhorted to “come and get some of the miracles that are popping like popcorn.” Bentley would stride about the stage in a frenzy screaming into his microphone, keeping the audience on their feet cheering. He came across as a carnival Barker or a Holy Ghost cheerleader.

When Bentley would lay his hands on people seeking healing, he would yell, “Bam! Bam!” They usually fell on the ground and began to contort wildly, like they were having an epileptic seizure. Sometimes Bentley would become violent. He kicked a lady in the face, choked a man, bashed on a woman’s legs, and hit a man so hard that he knocked out a tooth!

Bentley was so bizarre that it is difficult to describe his behavior in words. To get a real feel for the man, I suggest you go to either YouTube.com or GodTube.com and just type his name in the search engine on these sites. You will find many video clips of his services. I think you will be astonished and repulsed. You might also try Bentley’s website at FreshFire.ca. Numerous videos of his services are posted on this site.

Bentley’s Claims

Bentley claimed to have healed innumerable people. He also claimed to have raised many people from the dead. In one video clip I watched, he prayed for a man with a glass eye and then proclaimed that the man could see out of the eye!

On another occasion, he called up two women from Holland who claimed that as a result of the anointing they had experienced at his service the night before, they had awakened the next morning with gold teeth in their mouths! Bentley had them open their mouths, and after examining each one, he shouted, “Yes! Yes! Each lady has a big fat gold tooth!” He proclaimed this to be a “miracle.”
So, how valid was the “Florida Healing Outpouring,” as it came to be called? Was Bentley a true miracle working evangelist under the anointing of the Holy Spirit? Or was he just another shyster selling snake oil?

I cannot judge his motives because I do not know his heart. I prefer to give him the benefit of the doubt by assuming that he was very sincere in what he was doing. But if that was the case, I think I can say without doubt that he was sincerely deceived and that he was deceiving many others, and I think I can prove that.

His Appearance and Mannerisms

First, let’s consider Bentley’s appearance. Now, I am aware of the old saying, “You cannot judge by appearance,” and that is correct to a certain extent. Even the Bible says that “Satan can appear as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

But it would be more accurate to say that “You cannot judge by appearance alone.” Appearance is not irrelevant. Would you be willing to listen to a sermon from a person wearing a Nazi uniform? Appearance can provide valuable clues as to what a person believes. In this regard, I always think of the 60-year old hippies I see each time I visit Taos, New Mexico. They come down out of the mountains driving beat-up old Volkswagen buses painted with flowers. They wear tie-dyed shirts with garlands around their necks. They seem caught in a time warp. Based on their appearance alone, I can pretty well guess what their value system is.

Todd Bentley is sensational and even bizarre in appearance. His body is plastered with tattoos, and his face bears multiple piercings. Now, it would be one thing if all this bodily disfigurement and mutilation had taken place before he claims to have become a Christian. And it would certainly be forgivable if he had repented of it. But Bentley claims that God told him to get the tattoos and piercings. In fact, he often appears on stage wearing a T-shirt that says, “Jesus Gave Me My Tattoos.”

Those are unbiblical claims. The Bible says we are not to disfigure our bodies with tattoos or mutilate them with cuttings (Leviticus 19:28). I have actually had some professing Christians dismiss these prohibitions because “they are Old Testament.” Do you really think God changed His mind about bodily disfigurement and mutilation when He gave us the New Testament?

Doesn’t the New Testament say that for those of us who are believers, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:19-20). Don’t you think the Holy Spirit would be grieved to reside in the body of an unrepentant self-mutilator like Todd Bentley?

Bentley’s mannerisms should also be a cause for concern. Where in the Word of God do you find a representative of the Lord behaving like a carnival Barker or a professional wrestler? Where do you find examples of violent attacks on those seeking healing? Where do you find any exhortation for believers to surrender their mental processes to emotional frenzies?

Bentley’s Defense

Bentley and his followers respond to criticism by stating that “miracles and healings are evidence” of his anointing by the Holy Spirit. But that is not necessarily true. Satan can deceive through signs and wonders. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 we are told that the activity of Satan can be manifested “with all power and signs and false wonders” and with deception for those who take pleasure in unrighteousness. Further, Jesus specifically warned that in the end times, “false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

As examples of these warnings, I would urge you to take a look at the healing ministries of Marjoe Gortner and Peter Popoff. You can find video clips featuring the ministries of both of these men on YouTube.com. Both were flamboyant faith healers. Both used the same techniques Bentley is using. Both got the same results — people falling to the floor, others going hysterical, and many claiming to be healed.

Yet, Gortner finally revealed that he was a total imposter who didn’t even believe in God. And Peter Popoff was exposed as a shyster when it was revealed that his wife was feeding him information about audience members through a wireless radio hookup in one of his ears. It turned out that Popoff’s staff was interviewing audience members before the services began, getting personal information that would then be fed to him by radio, but which he claimed to be “a word from the Lord.”

The bottom line is that Christians are often very naive and thus willing to give the benefit of the doubt to anyone operating in the name of Jesus, despite Jesus’ warning (Matthew 7:21-23):

21) Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

22) Many will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord,” did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?”

23) And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”
The Validity of the “Miracles”

Another problem with Todd Bentley’s miracle defense is the validity of his miracles. He has been challenged repeatedly to provide proof of his healings. He usually promises to do so, but then he either ignores the promise or else he sends vague records that no one can document. When the Associated Press asked for evidence, they were sent a file containing the names of 15 people who had been healed. The file contained medical verification of 12 of the healings.

Yet, two phone numbers given out by the ministry were wrong, six people did not return telephone messages, and only two of the remainder . . . said they had medical records as proof of their miracle cure. However, one woman would not make her physician available to confirm the findings, and the other’s doctor did not return calls despite the patient’s authorization.7

I saw a TV special about Bentley recently on the program, Nightline. It was an even-handed investigation. They requested proof of three miracles. He promised it but never delivered. Meanwhile, they followed-up on people who supposedly had been healed, including a boy with cerebral palsy. None had been healed. Some claimed they believed they had been healed, but their healing had “not yet manifested itself.”8

Testing Bentley by the Word of God

The most important test of any preacher or evangelist must be the Bible. Are his teachings based on the Word of God and do they line up with it? This is a test that Bentley fails miserably.

First of all, he does very little teaching or preaching. That’s because he is basically a showman. But when he does attempt to teach, he seems obsessed with angels and his experiences with them. This is cause for serious concern. Anytime a preacher starts substituting experiences for the Word of God, alarm bells should go off.

Bentley’s Obsession with Angels

In a teaching entitled, “Angelic Hosts,” Bentley tells story after story about special angels the Lord sends to help him with his ministry. The first was the Angel of Healing who came to him in December of 2005. Bentley says this angel suddenly appeared inside the church building where he was speaking and that he had a “body going through the ceiling of the church.”9

William Branham (1909-1965) is usually credited with founding the post World War II faith healing movement. The photo at the right was used by his followers to validate his anointing. They claimed it showed a halo over his head.

“Wherever this angel shows up,” says Bentley, “the miracles go off the charts!”

Bentley then makes the incredible claim that God revealed to him that this was the same angel who empowered the ministry of William Branham! It is astonishing that Bentley would want to have his ministry associated with this man.

Branham was a healing evangelist of the 1940s and 50s who denied the Trinity and who claimed the Zodiac and the Egyptian pyramids were on equal authority with the Bible. He also taught the “Serpent Seed” heresy that is popular with various neo-Nazi and Christian identity cults — that Cain was produced through a sexual union between Eve and the Serpent in the Garden of Eden.10 Branham also claimed to have been personally present with Moses and John the Baptist during their ministries!11 And Branham believed in the Manifest Sons of God heresy and claimed to be “a god manifested in the flesh.”12

More Angels

Getting back to Bentley’s teachings about angels, he claims the second angel sent to him by God was one named Revelation. He says this angel always appears as an innocent little child but is possessed with great power. It is this angel who gives Bentley visions and prophetic experiences.13

Evidently this angel is not all that powerful because there are many video examples on the Internet of Bentley trying to exercise words of knowledge through supernatural revelation, and he usually ends up making a fool of himself through all his wrong guesses about people. One expert on this phenomenon, which is called “cold reading,” has said that if Bentley was a parapsychologist doing public readings before a secular audience, he would be laughed off the stage.14

Bentley claims in his teachings that on occasion God sends the Cherubim and Seraphim from His heavenly throne room to energize his meetings. He says they appeared at a meeting he was conducting at a church in Iowa and that they manifested themselves by sending lightning bolts back and forth across the sanctuary for two and a half hours! He says “people began to scream . . . and the meeting became pandemonium.”15

Another angel Bentley claims to have on his ministry team is one called Promise. When he shows up, people experience spiritual breakthroughs in the form of answered prayers.16

And, of course, there are special angels who release finances. Bentley says that when he needs a financial breakthrough, “I don’t just pray and ask God.” Rather, he petitions the Father to send His money angels to help him. He says he prays:

Father, give me the angels in heaven right now that are assigned to get me money and wealth. Let those angels be released on my behalf. Let them go into the
four corners of the earth and gather me money . . . loose the Devil from the money assigned to me. I call in that money in the name of Jesus.  

A Very Unbiblical Angel

The most troubling angel Bentley describes in his teachings is a female one named Emma. (Keep in mind that the Bible never mentions female angels!) Amazingly, he states that he was introduced to this very special angel by none other than Bob Jones, one of the infamous “prophets” of the Kansas City Movement in the 1980s. I say, “amazingly,” because Bob Jones has been thoroughly discredited, not only because of numerous false prophecies he has made, but also for serious moral failures which he has publicly admitted.

Bentley says Jones asked him if he had ever met the angel called Emma. Bentley said he had not and then asked who she was. Jones explained she was the one who empowered him and the other leaders of the Kansas City prophetic movement in the 1980s. He described her as a “mothering-type” angel.

Bentley states that within a few weeks of this encounter with Jones, Emma suddenly appeared to him during a service in North Dakota. He says she floated into the room a couple of inches off the floor. You must read what happened in Bentley’s own words lest you think I am exaggerating:

She [Emma] glided into the room, emitting brilliant light and colors. Emma carried these bags and began pulling gold out of them. Then as she walked up and down the aisles of the church, she began putting gold dust on people. “God, what is happening?” I asked. The Lord answered, “She is releasing the gold which is both the revelation and the financial breakthrough that I am bringing into this church . . . Within three weeks of that visitation, the church had given me the biggest offering I had ever received to that point in my ministry. Thousands of dollars! Thousands!

During this visitation the pastor’s wife got totally whacked by the Holy Ghost — she began running around barking like a dog or squawking like a chicken as a powerful prophetic spirit came on her. Also, as this prophetic anointing came on her, she started getting phone numbers of complete strangers and calling them on the telephone and prophesying over them.

In my opinion, this sort of stuff borders on insanity. You have to read it with your own eyes to even believe that someone would say it.

If Bentley saw such a creature at all, it was clearly a demonic apparition. There are no female angels in the Bible. And when angels appear in biblical stories, they appear as normal human beings, not as spirits floating around pell-mell.

Another Bentley Obsession

Bentley speaks very seldom of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. He talks mostly about “the Glory” which he identifies as the Shekinah Glory of God. He says God is manifesting His Shekinah Glory today like a river and is calling Christians to jump in to receive healing, finances, and new revelations.  

There is no biblical basis for this strange teaching. God is present in and among His people today through His Spirit, not His glory. His glory will not be manifested here on earth until Jesus returns to reign in glory and majesty over all the world (Isaiah 24:21-23 and Habakkuk 2:14). Nor is there any need for further revelations from God. The Bible reveals everything we need to know this side of Heaven. As one critic of Bentley has put it so well, “We have no need to grasp after new impartations and anointings and visitations because God has already imparted His Spirit and the mystery of His will to His people.”

The “Glory” Bentley talks about constantly is not the Second Coming of Jesus. It is, instead, the return of Christ within men, bringing about the perfection of believers and producing perfect and immortal sons of God who are invincible. It is the old apostate “Manifest Sons of God” doctrine.

Astral Projection

In addition to supernatural tales about angels, Bentley likes to talk about astral travel. He claims that he makes visits to Heaven. In one of his stories he tells about meeting the Apostle Paul and says that he looked “very Jewish with a short, trimmed white beard.” He had “jolly cheeks” and was “a little pudgy.” He says that Paul took him to his heavenly home and told him to climb a ladder that was in his back yard. Bentley says that as he climbed the ladder, a hole opened in the sky and a green liquid started pouring onto his eyes. He says the next thing he knew, he was standing in God’s throne room.

What nonsense! What is even more appalling to me is that there are Christians who are gullible enough to swallow this claptrap — hook, line, and sinker.

Special Revelation vs the Bible

This kind of unbiblical nonsense is what happens when a preacher abandons the Word of God as his source of authority. And that is exactly what Todd Bentley has done. In his teaching entitled “Extreme Living in God’s River of Glory,” Bentley asserts:

All I teach is by revelation received by God’s glory falling upon me. It’s a revelation whereby I instantly know certain things.

Accordingly, Bentley’s sermons are peppered with conversations with God — “I said to God.” and “The Lord said to me.”
In one of his sermons, Bentley announced the presence of “great authority” in the building and then proceeded to declare, “I speak creation . . . I speak new hearts, new livers into existence tonight.”

Can you believe such arrogance? It reminds me of the passage from Isaiah about Satan: “You said in your heart, ‘I will make myself like the Most High.’ Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit” (Isaiah 14:13-15).

The Basic Problem

The initial success of Bentley’s Florida “revival” is a testimony to the famine of God’s Word that exists throughout Christendom today, even among those who call themselves Evangelicals. As a result, the average Christian does not know enough about the Word of God to use it in testing what is being taught.

His ministry is also a testimony to the fact that we are living in the end times when “false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

Some Final Points

Let me make it clear that I believe in all the gifts of the Spirit, and I believe all of them are operative today. I also believe in the miracle working power of God. But our God is a God of order and dignity and holiness. It would be incompatible with His character for Him to operate through a sensual carnival sideshow (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40).

Finally, what went on in Lakeland, Florida was not a revival. True revival never focuses on healing. The focus, instead, is repentance. When unbelievers start responding to the preaching of the Word by repenting and accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, and when believers start responding in repentance and recommitment, you will know that revival is taking place.

Let us all pray for such a true revival to break out in our nation, for the time is short. And let us also pray for Todd Bentley to come to know the true Gospel, to be brought to repentance, and for his marriage to be healed.

Notes:

1) The website address for the Ignited Church in Lakeland, Florida is http://ignitedchurch.com.

2) The GodTube website address is www.godtube.com.


4) Ibid.


6) Ibid., page 3.

7) Ibid.


10) Ibid., page 3.


13) Ibid., page 11.


17) Ibid., pages 11-12.

18) Ibid., page 12.

19) Ibid.


23) Ibid., page 2.


Postscript: After the collapse of Bentley’s ministry, the editor of Charisma Magazine, Lee Grady, wrote:

“A prominent Pentecostal evangelist called me this week after Bentley’s news hit the fan. He said to me: ‘I’m convinced that a large segment of the charismatic church will follow the Antichrist when he shows up because they have no discernment.’

Ouch! Hopefully, we’ll learn our lesson this time and apply the necessary caution when an imposter shows up.”
**Television Update**

**New Network!**

In late September we began broadcasting “Christ in Prophecy” over a new television network called The Church Channel. It is owned and operated by the TBN Network, and in February of 2009 it will start broadcasting on all TBN stations within the United States. Currently the network is available on DirectTV channel 371 and on 55 independent cable systems across the United States. It also broadcasts internationally everywhere TBN is carried around the world, with the exception of Central and South America. The addition of this network has increased our weekly broadcast costs by several thousand dollars. Please pray with us that the Lord will supply the necessary funds and that this new outreach will prove to be a great success for this ministry. Thank you.

**New Equipment**

We are praising the Lord for the $100,000 worth of new video equipment which we received in August. This equipment was purchased to enable us to meet the new digital, wide screen standards for broadcasting that will go into effect in February of 2009. In addition to four new cameras, we were able to purchase hydraulic pedestals, wide screen monitors, new video decks, and a professional teleprompter system.

We decided to package all our control equipment in mobile rack travel cases so that we could easily move to a remote location. Our first use of the new system was at Rose Heights Church of God in Tyler, Texas where we videotaped two presentations by Dr. Reagan before an audience of about 1,500 people.

![Our new mobile television control system.](image)

**New Programs**

During the past few months we have been very busy shooting new TV programs with musician Larry McCoy, apologetics experts Ron Rhodes and Eric Barger, and creationist speaker Jobe Martin. We produced new versions of our Christmas programs, featuring Dennis Pollock and Don McGee. In December we are scheduled to interview a number of Bible prophecy experts during the annual Pre-Trib Study Group convention in Dallas.

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**“Christ in Prophecy” Broadcast Schedule**

### National Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DayStar Network</strong></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>4:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DISH</strong></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>5:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DISH</strong></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISH</strong></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
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| **Inspiration Network**        | Wed.   | 8:00am  |
| **DISH Channel**               | Wed.   | 9:00am  |
| **DISH Channel**               | Wed.   | 10:00am |
| **DISH Channel**               | Wed.   | 11:00am |

| **The Church Channel**         | Sat.   | 6:30pm  |
| **DISH**                       | Sat.   | 7:30pm  |
| **DISH**                       | Sat.   | 8:30pm  |
| **DISH**                       | Sat.   | 9:30pm  |

| **National Religious Broadcasters Network** | Sun. | 2:00pm  |
| **DISH** | Sun. | 3:00pm  |
| **DISH** | Sun. | 4:00pm  |
| **DISH** | Sun. | 5:00pm  |

| **FaithTV Network**            | Sun.   | 10:00am |
| **SkyAngel IPTV Channel**      | Sun.   | 11:00am |
| **SkyAngel IPTV Channel**      | Sun.   | 12:00pm |
| **SkyAngel IPTV Channel**      | Sun.   | 1:00pm  |

**Regional Networks**

“Christ in Prophecy” is broadcast throughout southern Louisiana on the Family Vision Network at various times. See: www.kajn.com/familyvision.

God’s Learning Channel broadcasts our program on Wednesday at 6:00pm throughout the Western United States via cable and Direct Broadcast Satellite. See: www.godslearningchannel.com.
An Exciting Time of Preaching!

In September Dr. Reagan was invited to present two sermons at the Rose Heights Church of God in Tyler, Texas. He spoke first on Sunday morning to all the combined adult classes. The second presentation was made to the regular Sunday morning worship service. Over 1,500 people were present.

The pastor, Doug Anderson, had requested that Dr. Reagan speak on themes related to the prophetic image of Jesus as the Lion of Judah. Accordingly, Dr. Reagan’s first presentation was entitled, “Jesus, the Lamb and the Lion.” It focused on the Old Testament prophecies that depict the Messiah as the Suffering Lamb and the Conquering Lion. Dr. Reagan’s second presentation was entitled, “The Lion of Judah: When Christ Returns.”

What made these presentations particularly exciting was the pastor’s decision to bring a very rare 500 pound white lion to the church to be on the stage while Dr. Reagan preached! (White lions are a very rare species — they are not albinos.) The plan went slightly awry when the lion’s weight caused his cage to collapse when he was loaded into it. So, at the last moment, the decision was made to bring one of the lion’s cubs instead.

When Dr. Reagan heard that a lion cub was being brought to replace the full-grown one, he was relieved. Previously, he had felt like he was going to be Daniel in the lion’s den. Now, as he thought of a cuddly little cub, he was put at ease — until they rolled the cub into the sanctuary in its cage. It turned out to be a 200 pound cub! The cub was very skittish at first, but it soon settled down and even started watching the PowerPoint slides.

The presentations at Rose Heights are going to be made into television programs that will be broadcast early next year. Watch for Dr. Reagan and the lion!

A Heart for Witnessing

Gloria Turman, one of our television viewers in Guntersville, Alabama, decided to try to create greater awareness in her community about the soon return of Jesus. She designed a yard sign and began distributing them to people in her community. The signs caught the eye of the local newspaper, and a feature story was printed about her in the Arab, Alabama Tribune.

A Heart for the Jews

Two of our Prophecy Partners, Lisa Preuss and Jan Spencer of Sulphur Springs, Texas recently sponsored a Holocaust remembrance day in their community. They set up a reception at their city library for two Holocaust survivors from Dallas, Texas. Over 300 people showed up for the event. To emphasize the magnitude of the slaughter, the ladies displayed bags containing 6 million grains of rice.
Thanks for Your Generosity!

Our new caretaker’s home arrived in August, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our supporters. The home has a little more than 1,900 square feet of floor space and cost a total of $85,000, including the concrete pier foundation. We received an $11,000 trade-in on our old home, so our total cash outlay was approximately $74,000.

The caretakers of our property and buildings are Leo and Rachel Houck. They both serve the ministry in many other capacities.

Foreign Missions Worthy of Your Support

Indian Evangelist

John Ishmael is the director of a ministry called Revival Literature Fellowship (RLF) which is located in Bangalore, India. The ministry was founded by his father in 1968. It has three purposes:

- To encourage people to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- To prepare the believers in Him to be ready for His Second Coming.
- To be an instrument for individual and corporate revival.

Lamb & Lion has been an ardent supporter of this ministry for a number of years because John Ishmael is a highly effective evangelist and a gifted teacher of Bible prophecy. We have sponsored several seminars for pastors through RLF, and John has overseen the translation and publication of several of our books into various Indian languages.

The ministry provides a number of additional services, including medical care for the poor and disaster relief. It also provides support for a large number of native ministers. An entire missionary family can be supported for only $100 per month.

You can find out more about this significant ministry at the following website: www.rlfministries.com. You can contribute to the ministry through Lamb & Lion. Just designate your gift for “India Outreach.”

Note: Lamb & Lion Ministries currently provides monthly financial support to 11 foreign missions and 8 domestic ministries. We give more than 10% of our income each year to other ministries and missions.

Filipino Evangelist

Remegio Blanco is both a pastor and an evangelist in the Philippines. He has a pastor’s gentle and humble heart, but he has an evangelist’s passion for lost souls.

Pastor Blanco is a man of great vision. He is constantly utilizing imaginative methods of reaching people with the Gospel. He has a special zeal for Bible prophecy, and he has helped Lamb & Lion to conduct several major conferences for pastors. He also distributes our literature throughout the area north of Manila where his church is based.

His congregation recently embarked on a major building project. They constructed a new church building with their own hands, a building that will also serve as the base for Pastor Blanco’s evangelistic efforts. They need $20,000 to complete the building. Donations can be made to this great ministry through Lamb & Lion. Just designate your donation for “Philippine Outreach.”

Pakistani Evangelist

In Pakistan we provide support for a wonderful man of God named Nazir Gill. He works daily under the threat of death, but he continues to boldly proclaim the Gospel.

He also has a great desire to proclaim the soon return of Jesus, and his ministry has translated and distributed many Lamb & Lion materials. Gifts for his ministry should be designated for “Pakistan Outreach.”
Ministry News

Schedule — In November Dr. Reagan will begin the month speaking to the Believer’s Class at First Baptist Church in Forney, Texas (2nd). The weekend of the 8th and 9th, he will be speaking at Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, California (Los Angeles area). On the 13th he is scheduled to shoot television programs with Jobe Martin concerning creation and evolution. In December the Lamb & Lion Board of Trustees will conduct its three day annual retreat at the Prothro Center on Lake Texoma (5th-7th). During the Pre-Trib Conference at DFW Airport (8th-10th) Dr. Reagan will be videotaping interviews with Bible prophecy experts. In January of 2009 Dr. Reagan will attend the annual board meeting of Acts 29 Ministries in Panama City Beach, Florida (3rd). In February he will be one of the featured speakers at the Southern California Prophecy Conference being hosted by Calvary Chapel in Chino Hills, California (20th-22nd). In March Dr Reagan will be at First Baptist Church in Socorro, New Mexico (2nd-3rd). In April he is scheduled to speak at Hill ‘N Dale Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky (18th-19th). He will also speak that month at the Christian Worldview Conference in Branson, Missouri (24th-25th).

New Videos — The ministry has produced several new video albums recently. You may want to consider some of these for Christmas presents or as gifts to your church library.

Profiles in Righteousness — Contains three programs about the lives of biblical persons who were considered righteous in the eyes of God:

King David of Israel
The Prophet Elijah
The Roman Soldier Cornelius

All the scenes were shot on site in Israel in places like Mount Carmel, Haifa, Caesarea Maritime, Jaffa, the Valley of Elah, Kireath-jearim, Jerusalem, and Ein Gedi. A fascinating travelogue combined with rich teaching. 75 minutes, DVD, $15.

Fundamentals of Bible Prophecy — Six presentations made before live audiences by Dr. Reagan. They provide a comprehensive introduction to all the fundamentals of Bible prophecy:

The Abuse of Prophecy
The Importance of Prophecy
The Variety of Prophecy
The Interpretation of Prophecy
The End Time Viewpoints
The Signs of the Times

Contains printable files for a Teacher’s Manual and Student Study Guides. 150 minutes, 2 DVDs, $25.

New Trustee — Lamb & Lion Ministries currently has 22 trustees who meet three times a year to determine the ministry’s policies and to oversee its operations. They come from a great variety of Christian fellowships. The thing that unites them is the conviction that we are living in the season of the Lord’s return and the desire to have that message preached to as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

Our newest trustee is Ray Dunn of Griffin, Georgia. He and his wife, Sylvia, are members of Second Baptist Church in Griffin. They have three children and four grandchildren. Ray is retired from the Norfolk Southern Railroad where he worked for many years as a machinist. He is an ardent student of Bible prophecy. In fact, the first gift he gave to his wife while they were dating was a book about Bible prophecy (he is a real romantic!). Ray and Sylvia travel extensively around the world, and they also attend many Bible prophecy conferences each year throughout the United States.

Prophecy Partners — Our featured Prophecy Partners this month are Larry and Evelyn Thomas of San Jose, California. They are pictured below with Dr. Reagan at a conference he held in July at Northside Christian Church in Clovis, California (Fresno area). Larry is an electrical engineer and works for a defense contractor. Both are ardent students of the Bible and are currently looking for a new church home. They are the parents of two daughters.
We want to thank you for your prayers and financial support throughout this past year. We are especially grateful to our Prophecy Partners who have joined hands with us to proclaim the message of the Lord’s soon return.

If you are not a Prophecy Partner, we would like to invite you to become one. All you have to do is give us a call at 1-800-705-8316 and make a commitment to give $20 a month or more for one year. We ask you to aim at $30 a month, representing a dollar a day for one year, but the minimum requirement is $20 per month.

In return, you will receive a letter from Dr. Reagan each month in which he will outline our financial and prayer needs. You will also receive a gift, usually a DVD of one of our TV programs.

The Lamb & Lion Staff — Front row (left to right): Anna Watts, Rachel Houck, Cathie Grubb, and Kay Bien. Second row (left to right): Trey Collich, Nathan Jones, Don Gordoni, Dave Reagan, Leo Houck, Larry Watts, George Collich, and Gary Byers.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Staff of Lamb & Lion Ministries