

September 2005

GLAD TIDINGS

“I will make you fishers of men”

The Creator and the
Declaration of Independence

The Jordon River

Christ The Evangelist

BY PAUL E. PENNO

The truth of the two Adams is most precious light. The first Adam brought nothing but sin, condemnation and death that he has passed on to his children. "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Romans 5:18. Sinners must immediately die under the condemnation of the law, but we do not die. We live temporarily upon this earth. The very fact that we live is evidence that we are not condemned, proof that Jesus took our condemnation. This is God's gift in Christ. Our short probationary time on earth is given by God to see if we will cherish His gift of forgiveness. God has freed our will to choose the gospel which "is the power of God unto salvation." Romans 1:16. Jesus the Creator and Redeemer can then save us in the only way possible—saving us *from* our sins and not *in* them.

A Heart for Evangelism

The everlasting covenant is God's promise of forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ and the writing of God's law in the hearts and minds of those who believe. "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . I will forgive their iniquity." Jeremiah 31:31, 33, 34. The old covenant is man's attempts to be religious. It is "All that

the Lord has said we will do," (Exodus 19:8) without the heart change that is required. It is the practice of worship, rites, forms and ceremonies, without the living Christ. It is the power of man compelling others to worship. It manifests itself in a critical spirit, in self-motivation out of fear of hell and hope of reward. There is no Divine love—*agape*—or Holy Spirit in it.

God gave us the truth of a Savior who has come very near to us by taking our sinful human nature upon His Divine nature—the Savior who is the Son of God and son of man. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Romans 8:3.

An Invitation to the Wedding

Jesus, the Head of the Laodicean Church, invites His people to repent. We must come into agreement with God regarding our lukewarm lack of love for Jesus who desires to be united with us in the consummation of the marriage at His second coming. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." Revelation 3:19. During this time of the great day of atonement ministry of Christ in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, God's people are to unite with one accord, and turn to Jesus.

The promise is that Laodicea will be unified and overcome her sin as she

has a new understanding in her heart for what Jesus has done for her on the cross. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Revelation 3:21. It is not that we can purify ourselves from sin and gain the victory over temptation. This is Jesus' gift to us from the heavenly sanctuary. But Jesus can't force his bride to do something she doesn't want to do. Jesus is a groomsman who will have a bride that loves him. "His wife hath made herself ready." Revelation 19:7. What groom would want to marry the flower girl in the wedding? He wants a fully mature woman who can reciprocate his love. And Jesus is a Man who wants a loving bride.

Joining in the Work of Christ the Evangelist

Christ, the evangelist, calls out: "Babylon the great is fallen." Revelation 18:2. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Revelation 18:4. Jesus is "the Saviour of the world." 1 John 4:14.

He loves those who are in Babylon. Therefore He calls them to come out because they cannot be saved in their sins. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He has "come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. Jesus loves the children of disobedience. He made them. He gives

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A Pebble...

BY BETHANY S. HELM

"It's just a pebble in the road." A what? I had just been discussing with my friend yet another unfortunate life circumstance that left me a little down and discouraged, and the best thing she could comfort me with was, "It's just a pebble in the road." A what?

That one little phrase permeated my thoughts unintentionally throughout the rest of the day. A pebble. In the road. A pebble. It just wasn't making sense to me—how a seemingly major issue could be trivialized by a pebble.

It came to me while I was walking outside enjoying the setting sun. My foot stopped mid stride as it limped against the tiny pebble trapped in the sole of my sandal. I gently removed the pebble and restored my sole to functionality and continued on my leisurely stroll. A pebble. Of course, it was a pebble. My evening stroll wasn't ruined because of one tiny pebble that got in the way. If anything, it made me more aware of my primitive surroundings and cleared my mind of the meaningless jargon running through it. A pebble.

That pebble reminded me of the "Princess and the Pea." You know, the story about a princess who is made to sleep on a pea covered by 20 mattresses of feather-down. Her claim of royalty is tested because only a true princess would be sensitive enough to feel the pea through the layers

of beds. She awoke in the morning black and blue because, as she explained, she was lying on something hard all night. By this she proved she was a true princess. The princess was black and blue. A pea. A pebble.

Are we really that different from the story book princess? Don't we sometimes go through life sleeping on a hard pea or trapped by a pebble in our shoe and trying to masquerade the discomfort instead of ridding ourselves of it? Why not remove the pebble and journey on?

As my evening stroll was nearing its final destination, one last thought entered my mind. Gravel roads are made of thousands of pebbles. These roads are a bit inconvenient and less traveled because of the bumpiness and many pebbles that get stuck in the tires and stay there longer than desired. But eventually they loosen and become part of the cloud of dust you see in the rearview mirror. Gravel roads also lead to some of God's most beautiful and exciting places, whether it's a peaceful cabin in the woods or the majestic edge of a cliff—destinations unreachable if not for gravel roads. Ah, the power of a pebble.

God allows trials into our lives to teach us patience and build our characters for eternity. "It's just a pebble in the road." A what? Of course, a pebble. May I have more, please? ☺

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Who Can Be Against Us?

BY DIANA INMAN

We hope this story of one church's effort to reach their corner of the world for Christ through the radio broadcast ministry will be an encouragement to others just as it was to us at Glad Tidings.

It was late summer 2001. Glen Abbot, head deacon of the Marshall Church of Michigan, was watching 3ABN Television [a Christian television station]. The speaker was telling about low-power FM radio stations that carry the gospel message to many areas of the United States twenty-four hours a day. The Federal Communications commission (FCC) would soon be granting permits for such stations. The speaker then asked all interested parties to call or write for an application.

Glen called, discussed the possibility of a station in the Marshall area, and requested an application. When the application arrived, Glen looked it over, decided it was too technical for him to fill out alone and passed it on to Pastor Dave who put it on his desk and soon forgot about it. Late one afternoon while tidying up his office, he discovered the application. Much to his surprise he noted that it needed to be filled out within 24 hours. Realizing what a great time investment it would take to do all the paperwork, and thinking of other difficulties involved, he decided it was too late and promptly threw it in the trash.

At 3 A.M. the following morning, Pastor Dave was awakened from a deep sleep with a strong impres-

sion to retrieve the application from the trash. He climbed out of bed, stumbled to the trash can, and began digging. It was still there. Other than being slightly crumpled, it was good as new. Carefully he began filling in the blanks and was able to file the application the following afternoon.

Spring of 2002 arrived and phase two of the application process arrived in the church mail. Somehow the form was misplaced for several weeks. By the time Ruth Abbott discovered it, only three days remained before the filing deadline. Pastor Dave had since transferred to another conference and was not able to help prepare the papers. Ruth decided it was too difficult and reluctantly set it aside. The Holy Spirit had other plans and she was impressed to diligently pursue the project.

She found the telephone number for Life Talk Radio in Tennessee. Step by step she was walked through the application process. Included on the forms was a small map of the Marshall area and the exact spot was marked where the radio tower would have to be in order to comply with the FCC regulations.

Ruth asked several church members if they knew anyone in that area who might let the church erect a tower on their property. Her husband, Glen, recalled that a physician lived in that particular area. Maybe he would be willing to allow a radio tower on his property. Ruth was unable to reach the doctor and it was the third day. Time was running out. In counsel with the head elder, she

put the doctor's address on the form and called Tennessee to finish up. The papers must be filed by 5 P.M. Ruth knew the deadline could not be met. The contact from Life Talk Radio asked if she knew anyone who could e-file the application. Ruth contacted her two sons. One of them was able to finish the process in time to meet the deadline.

The FCC permit arrived in the spring of 2003. All those involved praised God abundantly. The decision was made to go forward in faith. The physician was contacted and he graciously permitted the use of his property for the radio tower. According to the FCC permit, the station must be operational by November 19, 2004 at 3 A.M.

Announcements at the church for financial support became a weekly occurrence. A Board of Directors was formed for Marshall Christian Radio, WMLY LPFM. Then bad news came: the doctor who donated use of his property would be relocating by the end of the year. Now a new tower location was needed and it had to be within one-quarter mile of his address. After much looking, a nearby 6-7 acre plot was found to be available for \$30,000. This would more than meet the project's needs. The decision to proceed with the project was contingent upon the church members making financial pledges. Encouraged by another church with similar circumstances on beginning a radio ministry, the Marshall

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The Creator and the *Declaration of Independence*

BY GERALD L. FINNEMAN



This article will discuss some of the familiar background that led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence with an emphasis on the fact that God is the Author of our rights. We do not maintain our rights merely because of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, or even the Bill of Rights. The reason for this is that these documents can be changed by man as circumstances change. Whenever a threat to the safety of a nation becomes a reality, the rights of the citizens are diminished for the sake of security. A recent example is the aftermath of 9/11.

It is God who has given the rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” not only to Americans, but to all men. These are the basic natural rights given to the human race in the creation of man. This was understood and testified to by those who framed the Declaration of Independence. The second para-

graph of the Declaration is what is most widely known. It reads:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The Declaration contains five references to God:

- ♦ as Creator of all men
- ♦ as supreme Lawmaker
- ♦ as the Source of all rights
- ♦ as the world’s supreme Judge
- ♦ as our Protector on whom we can rely.

However, this document was not intended to be religious in nature. The Declaration of Independence is the written form in which the original thirteen colonies’ representatives declared themselves independent

of British rule and explained their reasons for doing so. It was, in part, a public relations document for the world to read in order to justify the colonies’ breaking of ties between themselves and the mother country. While it is true that the principles of the Declaration are rooted in the Bible and in a mature Christian worldview, they are also the product of the Enlightenment.

The Declaration was a political instrument. Its purpose was not only to sever the colonies from England and to justify that action to the nations of Europe; it was to be used also to unite the colonies through a carefully worded affirmation of political principles that most citizens agreed to.

Drafting the Declaration Of Independence

The sole governing authority presiding over the events of the American Revolution between 1774 and 1789 was a body known as

Congress. With no power to regulate commerce or levy taxes, and further, with little ability to enforce any of its decisions, this group, representing the thirteen colonies, declared their independence from England, conducted a war that defeated one of the greatest military powers of its day, and invented a new political entity that became a sovereign independent nation. When those representatives asserted their rights, they found themselves labeled as traitors.

The men who composed the First Continental Congress represented different interests, religions, and regions. They held conflicting opinions as to the best way to gain or, at least, to restore basic rights taken from them. Most of the men did not know each other; some did not like each other. With no history of successful cooperation, they struggled to overcome their differences. Without any way of knowing if the future held success or nooses for them all, they started down that long and perilous road toward independence.

What led to the necessity for the writing of this document? In 1761, fifteen years before the United States of America came onto the world stage with the Declaration of Independence, the American colonists were loyal British subjects who celebrated the coronation of their new King, George III. The colonies stretched from present-day Maine to Georgia and were distinctly English in character although they had been settled by Scots, Welsh, Irish, Dutch, Swedes, Finns, Africans, French, Germans, and Swiss, as well as English.

As English colonists they were heirs to the thirteenth-century British document, the Magna Carta, in which was recognized the principle that no one is above the law (not even

the King), and that no one can take away certain rights. So in 1763, when the King began to assert his authority over the colonies to make them share the cost of the Seven Years' War, England had just fought and won, the colonists protested by invoking their rights as free men, but loyal subjects. It was only after a decade of repeated efforts on the part of the colonists to defend their rights that they resorted to armed conflict and, eventually, to the unthinkable—separation from the motherland.

By the spring of 1775, the peaceful protests gave way to armed conflict at Lexington and Concord, ignoring one last, futile effort for peace in a message known as the "Olive Branch Petition" by King George III. The king proclaimed that the American Colonies stood in open rebellion to his authority and were subject to severe penalties, as was any British subject who failed to report the knowledge of rebellion or conspiracy. The King's document transformed loyal American subjects into traitorous rebels, so far as the British were concerned.

During the summer of 1776, the colonists' increasing desire for independence from England became a call to action. On June 11, the previously called American Congress recessed for three weeks. During this time the "Committee of Five" (John Adams, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Thomas Jefferson) prepared the Declaration of Independence, with Jefferson drafting the document. Congress reconvened on July 1, 1776, when the Declaration was voted into effect by the Second Continental Congress. Later, one by one, fifty-six representatives from all 13 colonies signed it. The Declaration of Independence was set forth by our forefathers as their bill

of God-given rights. This document became one of the most inspiring and influential documents in the history of the world.

After hearing the news about their independence declared on July 4, five days later, on July 9, people in New York City celebrated by pulling down a statue of King George who they had come to view as a tyrant.

The Declaration announced to the world the separation of the thirteen colonies from British rule and the establishment of the United States of America. It explained the causes for this move with a long list of charges against the King. In justifying the Revolution, it asserted a universal truth about human rights in words that have inspired downtrodden people ever since and throughout the world to rise up against their oppressors.

The Declaration of Independence has become the United States' most cherished symbol of liberty and without a doubt Jefferson's most enduring monument. In this Declaration, in unforgettable phrases, Jefferson expressed the convictions in the minds and hearts of the American people.

Jefferson did not aim at originality. The political philosophy of the Declaration was not new; its ideals of individual liberty had already been expressed by John Locke and Continental philosophers of Europe. Jefferson summarized this philosophy in, and as, "self-evident truths." Along with these truths he set forth a list of grievances against the King.

Another writer who influenced Jefferson was George Mason who earlier had written Virginia's Declaration of Rights. This is seen especially in the opening paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence. Mason's document was widely circulated by the other colonies and

later became the basis for the Bill of Rights of our Constitution.

The Declaration of Independence articulates the highest ideals of the Revolution, beliefs in liberty, equality, and the right to self-determination. Americans embraced a worldview in which a person's position was determined, not by birth, rank, or title, but rather by talent and ability used, and by enterprise. In the colonies, this was a widely held view, circulated in newspapers, pamphlets, sermons, and schoolbooks; but it was Thomas Jefferson, the 33-year-old farmer from Virginia, who put the immortal words to it.

Had you lived at that time and were a member of the Second Continental Congress in 1776, you would have been considered to be a rebel and a traitor by England. You would have known that a reward had been posted for the capture of prominent rebel leaders and that the largest British armada ever assembled was just outside New York harbor. Placing your name on that document meant that you pledged your life, your fortune, and your sacred honor to the cause of freedom.

The fifty-six men who did sign the Declaration of Independence had nothing material to gain, but everything to lose. They knew that if the British captured them, they would be tried for treason against the King of England and be put to death. During and after the American Revolution there are stories of hardship, sacrifice, and courage in the cause of the God-given liberties these men believed in.

While none of the members of the Continental Congress was actually tried for treason, fifteen who signed the Declaration of Independence had their homes destroyed, four were taken captive,

and one spent the winter of 1776 in the woods, pursued by British soldiers who had burned his home. Before the end of the Revolutionary War, many of those who served in the Continental Congress suffered direct, personal consequences for their support of American liberty and independence. They counted the costs for their leadership in the movement for independence and freedom and accepted the consequences.

This document later was confirmed and complemented by the Constitution of the United States, especially in the Bill of Rights containing specific individual freedoms. The thread of "certain unalienable rights" ties the two documents together. This thread is the unifying principle of both. This thread comes to us soaked with the blood of sacrifice. The Declaration of Independence states the facts about our God-given rights, and the Bill of Rights, as the law of the land, protects those rights.

There can be no doubt that our forefathers acknowledged God as the Author of their inalienable natural rights. In the Declaration's last section (made up of one sentence consisting of 158 words) we find an appeal to God: "WE, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions ..."

This last section also speaks of the signatories' reliance upon God for His protection and their own determination in the following words, "for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

The Creator

In the Declaration document, along with calling the Supreme Being of the universe "Creator," He also is called "God" and "the Supreme Judge of the world." Most certainly the framers of the Declaration of Independence believed in God. They recognized that this Declaration of freedom was based on God's principles of governance, particularly so in regard to His ordained universal natural rights given to all humans by reason of creation.

It is of interest to note that the everlasting gospel message of mercy to the world sets forth the same truth as does the Declaration of Independence. Both present God as Judge and Creator (Rev 14:6-7). This message of mercy first began to be proclaimed about sixty years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Those who drafted the Declaration and those who signed it testified to the same self-evident gospel truth about God as man's Judge and Creator.

Because of this supreme self-evident gospel truth concerning God, the other truths of the Declaration regarding our rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," are certain and inalienable because they are given to us by the Author of that life, liberty and happiness. The everlasting gospel message for these last days must, and does, include the God-given right to liberties, which includes freedom of conscience.

Provisions in the Declaration of Independence (and later in the amendments to the Constitution) reflect the truth of the creation of man in God's image. Consider the first self-evident truth set forth in the Declaration of Independence, that all humans are created equal. This was the case with the first man

and woman on planet Earth. This equality is illustrated in the creation of the woman from the man's side. She was not created from a head bone signifying domination, neither from a foot bone indicating inferiority. It was with man's fall that domination and superiority entered and has remained in the human race. Advantage taking, over others, has been the horrid history of humanity. After thousands of years of this, a group of people dared, under God, to establish a nation that would declare and reflect the Creator's design of equality among men. They followed the identical order of the self-evident truths of creation, which are life, then liberty followed by the pursuit of happiness.

The self-evident truths in their order within the Declaration of Independence must occur in that exact order as given: "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The right to life must be first, for without this the other two are impossible. The pursuit of happiness must follow liberty, for without liberty this pursuit is meaningless. These basic liberties are inseparable and in the order as presented in the Declaration. Liberty and the pursuit of happiness were given to man when he was given life; and so, when this new nation was given its right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were embodied in its life, just as it had been given to Adam "in the beginning."

"In the beginning God created..." and Moses recorded what was revealed to him in that God created man in His own living image. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion ..." (Gen. 1:1, 26, 27). Included in this gift of life are:

- the ability and the right of liberty to think and to do,
- the ability and right to form opinions,
- the right and ability to choose,
- the right and ability to speak,
- and the ability and right to act according to the dictates of conscience under self-government or self control.

When Adam fell these rights were diminished greatly in mankind. However, God was not caught off guard. His plan of redemption was put into effect immediately. That plan was simply the carrying out of God's original plan—that man should be His image. Christ was "slain from the foundation of the world" in the promise of God (Rev. 13:8; Gen. 3:15). He would be sent "in the fullness of time" as universal Savior of this fallen world (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14) to save the race from eternal ruin and to restore the basic natural rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" irrespective of one's belief or lack thereof. The Declaration of Independence reflects this gospel truth, and it was for this purpose that governments were established, namely to guard the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for all citizens.

Because man lost his ability to control himself, law enforcing governments were instituted to control those who desire to harm others (see Rom. 13:1-7). The Declaration of Independence codified for government the rights of man in the sentences that follow immediately after the delineation of the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness":

—*That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government*

becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that Governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

Following this is a long list of abuses suffered by Americans at that time. It was because of those abuses that the Colonials broke away from the rule of Britain. And to maintain the basic rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" provision was made in the Declaration for the people to alter or to abolish abusive Government and to institute a new one by laying its foundation on the original God-ordained principles or rights.

We must never become confused over rights and right. It is never right

to do wrong, but God gave every man the liberty to do wrong if he so chooses and to suffer the consequences whether those consequences are non-intended or intended, whichever the case may be. This liberty, or freedom of will, we call a God-given “right.”

The rights enunciated in the Declaration of Independence belong to each individual and they must necessarily belong to any number of individuals. States or governments are but an aggregation of individuals, and therefore the rights that God gave to the single individual necessarily inhere in the State.

Rulers have the same liberty to obey or to disobey governmental law, whether human or divine law, as do their constituents. When men and women composing any government enact laws involving the violation of God’s law, they are doing as a government body just what an individual does when he refuses to obey the Lord.

While it is true that God’s word declares that “righteousness exalts a nation” (Prov. 14:34), He has not laid down in the Bible the duties of governments per se, but of individuals, and he has not commissioned religious persons to tell the world how governments should be conducted, but He has commissioned us to tell individuals, whether private persons or rulers, the good news of salvation. The question to be answered is whether rulers, along with other citizens, will yield to God His rights. The Lord should have His rights acknowledged in the obedience of those for whom He gave his life (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

Jesus demonstrated, while on earth, that our foundation for the rights of life and liberty is in the everlasting truth about and from God. There is no taking away of

these rights by Church or State, even though a person may be put to death, because truth is eternal and cannot be defeated or eliminated by temporal death. Truth will stand when everything else gives way. The universal self-evident truths as stated in the Declaration of Independence will last forever, even though they may be denied and trampled in the dust by all governments of earth. The reason these truths will last forever is because the principles of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” are basic to God’s eternal government.

The Declaration is correct. These self-evident truths are incapable of being alienated, surrendered, or transferred, because they are constituent elements of God’s very nature. And when He created man in His image, in His likeness, He established within human nature these inalienable rights.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

The gospel call to “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment has come: and [to] worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev 14:7) is a revelation of, among other things, the self-evident truths of equality, of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” founded on God as Creator. We too may appeal “to the Supreme Judge of the World” and rely upon Him as our Protector as did those Colonials who declared their independence in 1776.

This everlasting gospel will be contested fiercely in the last days of earth’s history. Before Christ returns

to claim His followers, not only the gospel, but the God-given liberties enunciated therein and in the Declaration of Independence will be denied according to the writings of the Apocalypse. In Revelation, chapter thirteen, two religious entities, symbolized by two amalgamated beasts unite with secular powers and together they will eliminate the rights of liberty, the pursuit of happiness and life itself on a global scale. Rev 13:15-17 outlines the state of affairs when economic sanctions imposed on those who cannot in good conscience engage as participants in a system of forced worship. The denial of the basic rights outlined in the Declaration is central to this passage. The Declaration of Independence as well as the Creator will be set aside as of little consequence in the light of supposed present gratifications, needs and perils that are coming upon the earth.

When economic sanctions fail, slavery will be instituted to force people to submit their consciences to the dictates of others. Finally, when both economic sanctions and slavery fail, the ultimate consequence of religious doctrines enforced by government will result in the death penalty. This has been the case in past history, far too often, among nearly every religion, including both Christian and non-Christian. When State power unites with religion—Church, Mosque or Temple—there is a tendency to enforce the beliefs of the religious constituent with the most potential political power. The battle will be fought over the rights contained in the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence laid down the main purpose for government, which is to secure our God-given rights; not to take them away. Because governments derive their

authority from “the consent of the governed,” they are to set in motion the assurance of the universal basic rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” to all the governed of whatever religious belief they might adhere to; and likewise to those who do not believe in God.

The government in America was an altogether different kind of government on earth. Other nations were ruled by dictators or by kings. In Europe the so-called “divine right of kings” was affirmed, while individual rights were of a secondary nature and in many cases denied. Here, in America, a fledgling nation declared individual and equal rights for all its citizens, including its representatives. Here the order was reversed. Here the government was to be the servant and not the master of its citizens. This is not unlike the government of heaven. The Creator of the universe lives to serve His subjects. He came to seek and to save the lost and not to Lord it over them.

The Extent of the Rights

The rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence have reached out farther than our forefathers could see. Emancipation of the slave population is one example. The Revolution’s ideals of liberty and equality existed side by side with a reality that did not fit the Declaration of Independence. The reality was that of human slavery, whether indentured or otherwise. The one difference in the forms of slavery was this: indentured slaves were so, usually by their own choice brought about by circumstances such as moving to America without funds to do so, mismanagement, misfortune or other things. The other group (made up mostly of Africans) were enslaved by force.

By the time of the Revolution,

slavery existed in all the colonies. Slaves made up 20 percent of the population and their labor had become a vital contribution to the physical and economic development of the colonies. However, the existence of slavery created tensions that would strain the integrity of the United States for many decades to come.

It is a fact of history that disagreement over the institution of slavery almost defeated the Declaration’s adoption.

The men of that day stumbled over the Creator’s gift of equality for *all* men. It was very obvious that slaves were endowed with one unalienable right and that was *life*. But it was a life without the second great unalienable right: *liberty*. Doubtless, some were happy and others pursued it, but it was without liberty!

Throughout the Revolution, as the states struggled to find common ground, the issue of slavery continually came to the attention of everyone. It was so divisive that it threatened to shatter the fragile union of the Revolutionaries. Some prominent leaders of the Revolution raised their voices in opposition to slavery on moral grounds. Of course, slaves and free Africans embraced the principles of liberty and equality embedded in the Declaration. They naturally saw this as their hope for freedom and better treatment. Many slaves fought as soldiers in the American armies and helped defeat the British forces. These men earned

*When men and women
composing any
government enact laws
involving the
violation of God’s law,
they are doing as a
government body just
what an individual
does when he refuses to
obey the Lord.*

their freedom and gained the respect and gratitude of some whites. Clinging to their hope of the “all men are created equal” clause, they pushed the country closer to living out the full promise of its words.

The rights of the Creator and enunciated in the Declaration extend in covering more and more of the population. Voting is a second example. This was at one time restricted to white, male property-owners who had to be at least 21 years old. To date, this right has expanded to include nearly all persons over the age of 18, including both men and women, people of any color, property-owners and those without property. A third example is that of woman suffrage. In the United States, Women were not allowed to vote until 1920.

In summary and conclusion in considering the Creator’s gifts of equality and rights as reflected in the Declaration of Independence we have learned that:

1. "All men are created equal."
2. All men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."
3. Among these rights are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."
4. "To secure these rights, governments are instituted among men."
5. Governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed."
6. "It is the right of the people to alter or abolish" any government that "becomes destructive of these ends."

This, the Declaration of Independence, in harmony with the Creator's gifts of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," was the foundation upon which a new nation was established on earth, one previously never in existence in kind. The principles were like the gentleness of a lamb although these were not fully understood until decades later.

The Declaration of Independence proclaims that life and liberty are the unalienable gifts of God. These are universal natural rights, which no person or government can rightfully take away. The stated purpose of government is to secure and to guard our God-given unalienable individual rights; finally government derives its powers from the consent of the governed. For the first time in recorded history, the Declaration of Independence reduced government from master to servant. ✨

(Principal sources for this article may be found in the National Archives, Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, located in Washington, D.C. and in the records of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.)

AGAINST US

(Continued from page 4)

church prayed for a miracle to complete what the church members could not.

News of the financial need reached the Michigan Lay Advisory Coordinating Committee, the Michigan Advance Partners Special Projects fund and the Michigan Church Conference. The remainder of the necessary funds was provided, subject to the township allowing for this special use.

One of the primary expenses was the tower that was needed for the antenna. Friends and relatives of a church member managed to obtain a tower saving the station approximately \$5000.

After filing and paying \$300 for a permit to erect the tower, the pastor was informed that no other towers were allowed within a three mile radius. The zoning commissioner assured him there were no others nearby. A date was set for the hearing and construction would begin immediately after the zoning board met. One week before the meeting, the pastor received a call. A tower had been discovered less than three miles from the erection site. Their tower would not be allowed. Once more, the project seemed doomed.

After being primed with additional questions, the pastor went back to

the zoning board asking permission to erect a TM or Ham Radio tower on the site. He was told no permission was needed if the tower was less than 100 feet in height. That was all the pastor needed to hear. The \$300 permit fee was returned and things happened in succession. The deed was signed. Construction began. Concrete was poured. The 96-foot donated tower was erected. Nearby Charlotte church members constructed the radio station building and transported it to its final destination. The Marshall Church purchased the radio equipment that was quickly installed in the little building.

Another setback manifested itself. Consumers Energy (the local electric company) informed the group that electricity could not be provided in time for the station's start up date. The phone company could not get the phone line to the site either. But, with the help of a portable generator, the station was live and on the air before the deadline.

Today, if you are driving in the vicinity of I-94 and I-69 be sure to tune your FM radio to 93.1 MHz. You will find the third angel's message being presented to the community.

The Apostle Paul says it best in Romans 8:31, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" ✨

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EVANGELISM



I am a young Adventist. I feel it is very important that each one of us tells everyone about the kingdom of God and Christ's soon coming.

On the second of April of 2005, Bakari, a friend of mine, and I decided to witness to the homeless people in the downtown area of St. Louis, Missouri. Primarily, we wanted to pray with them and share a word or two of motivational scriptures from the Bible. As we arrived in the area, we stopped to pray. We asked God to lead us to at least one person who would be receptive and willing to accept His Word. We tried to be prepared for the rejections of the many, yet we had a hunger to share Christ.

The downtown area of St. Louis has a large library with a pond just in front. Homeless persons frequently sit around this rectangular small body of water soliciting those passing by. Bakari and I determined to approach and witness to each one sitting on the benches surrounding the pond. We were favorably received by the first group we spoke with. They allowed us to pray with them and share God's Word.

I noticed a lone isolated man not far from the first group. He would not allow us to greet him, but rather brushed us off with his arm. We went on to others.

We worked our way around the pond to the other end on the opposite side from where we first started. We were surprised to see the same

gentleman who had earlier brushed us off. I asked him how his week had been. He replied by asking why his life is such a mess, why he had to sleep on a bench every night in the cold, and why he is heartbroken.

My mind was taken to the book of Job in the Bible. I answered, "There are two things I can tell you. God is proud of you like He was of Job and as a result He has allowed these things to happen to you. Or perhaps God is working on your heart. Maybe it is taking this to bring you to the foot of the cross."

As the conversation continued, he told me that he had been praying "night and day" and that he was just fed up. As a result he wanted to commit suicide. I froze and silently prayed, "Father, give me the right words to say." I told him that God still has a purpose for him. I asked him to give God one more chance. My request was rejected. I told him there was nothing I could do to convince him to not end his life, but I believed God had sent me to encourage him to allow God into his life and give Him a chance to work in it. The man abruptly answered, "My mind is made up. I am going to kill myself tomorrow." He allowed me to pray with him.

The following day the Holy Spirit impressed me to return to the

same downtown area and look for that sorrowful brother. As I arrived at the library pond, I heard a voice calling to me from across the street. I recognized the voice as that of the man I was searching for. Praise the Lord, he was still alive!

He told me that he had gone to the bridge earlier that morning to kill himself. As he was positioning himself to jump from the bridge a stranger suddenly approached him and began a conversation, acting as though he knew him. This hurting brother went on to explain that after the stranger left, he again attempted to jump from the bridge. This time he began to hear many voices calling out to him. The passing cars were blowing their horns and a sense of reluctance overpowered him. He could not jump.

With a heavy sigh, he placed a crumpled piece of paper in my hand. It had the phone number of his fiancée written on it. He asked me to call her as they had been having "problems." I phoned her when I returned home, explaining how I had met her friend. I shared with her that I



IN ACTION

believed God had directed me to her fiancé for a reason. She allowed me to pray with her and for her loved one's heartache.

Later that same week I phoned her again inquiring if she had heard from her fiancé. She asked me to wait a minute while she put him on the phone. I was joyously surprised to learn that the two of them had reconciled and were making plans for their future together. We prayed together on the phone. He thanked God for intervening and sparing his life and bringing him back to the one he loved. He thanked me for the hope he felt and for the realization that God will never leave us or forsake us. ☘

—Mwaka,
from Botswana,
while working with evangelism
outreach in St. Louis, MO.

*A seed was sown. A life was spared.
We never know when or how we may
be used to lead others to the One who
loves us so.*

The summer of 2004 marked an amazing harvest of souls as the city of Minneapolis was invited to participate in a six week Revelation Seminar. This was the first noteworthy evangelistic accomplishment in one of the largest cities in Minnesota for nearly 20 years. The area proposed for the series was notorious for violence, crime, and a general feeling of hopelessness. The task was certainly daunting, yet begged careful prayer and guidance.

Feeling the weight of this endeavor, this pastor entreated the Lord in prayer and was impressed to be "determined not to know anything" of these precious Minnesotans "...save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He also settled in his mind that no matter how the meetings appeared to progress, or even regress, he would not use fear tactics or appeal to self-interests as a motivation for joining the church. Only the clear Biblical truth, as it is found in Christ Jesus through the cross, would be presented to stir the hearts of the listeners.

Oh, how sweet was the experience! On the opening night of the series, 135 pilgrims were noted to

be in attendance. Six weeks later, 90 souls were baptized as trophies of the cross and became the founders of the New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Minneapolis. Praise the Lord!

In less than a year, that core group of believers began a week of prayer based on a study of the book of Romans and conducted their own Christ-centered evangelistic meetings. This small series resulted in 30 more baptisms!

Today, the New Life Seventh-day Adventist church holds weekly prayer meetings focusing on an expository study in the book of Hebrews. They have a vibrant Sabbath School with study classes for the youth and new believers that have been modified from the adult lessons. In addition, the Lord is opening a door for the Sabbath services of this church to soon be televised on the local cable network. To God be the glory for this modern demonstration of the ceaseless power of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ!

Evangelism still has its place in our modern world today. There are those waiting to devour the life-saving truths of the cross. As water to the thirsty, so we must be to those pilgrims searching to and fro. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." ☘

—William Pergerson,
pastor and evangelist
from Wisconsin

Christ the Evangelist

(Continued from page 2)

them their life now even though they sin and use it against Him. He loves the pagans, the atheists, the savages, the secularists, the Buddhists, the animists, the Protestants and the Catholics. To all He extends the call to come out of her my people.

“Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you; therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.” Isaiah 43:10-12.

Share What You Know

The Lord puts us into contact with any number of people who are as children in varying degrees of readiness for adoption into his family. Especially those who are going through crisis in their lives are open for spiritual nurture and comfort. By coming close to people and being their friend we learn what experiences they are going through and what their needs are. Then we can share with them our friend Jesus who has all power to deliver them in time of need.

“Jesus said to the disciples of John, ‘Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard.’ Luke 7:22. That is all that any gospel worker has to do. He has not to strain himself to make a learned discourse; he has not to theorize and speculate; he has only to tell what he has seen and heard. Not what he has heard men say, but what he has heard from the Lord. The command is, ‘Hear Him.’ Tell only what you know from a personal acquaintance with Jesus. This

was the source of the apostles’ power. They had been with Jesus, and they said, when forbidden to teach, ‘We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ Acts 4:20. You may not have heard and seen very much, but that little will be as effective as the greater amount that another has seen and heard. But do nothing to add to its effectiveness by adding something that you do not know from personal knowledge. That will weaken the whole. The testimony of the man in court, who knows only one thing about the case, and who sticks to that one thing, is as useful as any man’s testimony could be. But he throws discredit on what he does know, as soon as he begins to tell something that he does not know. This wonderfully simplifies Christian work, and provides a place for every one. ‘Go your way, tell those things which ye have seen and heard.’” E. J. Waggoner, “What to Tell,” *The Present Truth* 10, 19 (May 10, 1894), p. 290.

Sharing the Patient, Persistent Appeal of Christ

We are living in perilous times and people are fearful of the things that are coming upon the earth. But even though people are afraid of things like the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in lower Manhattan and the attack on the Pentagon in 2001, our message should lead them to something better, rather than appeal to their fears.

It is true that there is a heaven to win and a hell to shun, but the far more lasting motivation for uniting one’s life with Christ is the constraining love of God. “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” 2 Corinthians 5:14. Jesus paid the wages of sin which is eternal death and He paid this debt for all.

Such love is incomprehensible to our carnal minds and so it must be learned by the Spirit of God to be appreciated.

Bob came to a considerable number of evangelistic meetings, but he is a very slow and deliberate fellow and cannot be pressured into a decision. He was recently laid off from his high-paying job. And now that God has given him more time he has begun participation in a weekly home group Bible study. He is becoming better acquainted in personal friendships with Christians and finding out that they are not such weird people after all. Bob has even begun attending church. This is a huge step for him. With some people the Spirit of God teaches us to be patient and long-suffering.

Laura is a junior in high school. She loves to sign for the hearing impaired. Her father, a secular Jew, and her mother have not provided any religious leadership in the home. But God has put a spiritual hunger in Laura’s heart. Josh, one of our teenagers at the church, invited Laura to come with him to a series of evangelistic meetings. She became acquainted with Pastor Fred, who signs for the deaf. She came to a series of meetings in 2005 and made her decision for baptism. We sat in my office one Sabbath and prayed. The date was set for her baptism shortly thereafter.

God is the greatest lover and giver in the universe. Jesus is constantly giving His life to us. May we have a true heart-appreciation for what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Of the sins that are characteristic of the last days, in the church as well as in the world, selfishness stands at the head. “Men shall be lovers of their own selves.” 2 Timothy 3:2. God’s *agape* alone can transform us from being selfish and preoccupied with our own interests, to loving that which He loves—that is, His people which are in Babylon. ✨

BY LLOYD KNECHT

On The Road



Evangelism Report

Knowing God Evangelism Series

Following the 58th session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in St. Louis, Missouri, Pastor Paul Penno conducted an evangelistic series in the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church less than ten miles from the session site. His Spirit-inspired messages revealed the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ for these uncertain times of terrorism and distress.

Rosebud Heun uplifted hearts with beautiful music and spiritual appeals. She also presented a health nugget each evening before the sermon. As a dietician in a large California school district, she teaches vegan living to students and staff.

Programs of *Tracking God* Bible studies and christian service in the St Louis community challenged the youth each day. Lloyd Thomas and Bob Van Ornam instructed these exciting classes.

Doloris Knecht, Neta Natzke, Barbara Thomas, Carmen Kearns, and other volunteers evangelized the children each evening, introducing them to Jesus.

A number of interests from those attending the evangelism series are being nurtured by Richard Kearns, Sandra Silva, and young people from the Central Church.

New Church Plant

Several of these interests are among the nearly 400 attending the Will Pergerson evangelistic meetings. Held in the beautiful Art Museum auditorium located in the city of St Louis at Forest Park a Health Expo is a featured focus. Richard and Sandra are Bible Counselors working in cooperation with the Central States Regional Conference Bible Counselors in the planting of a new church in the city.

Washington Evangelism

Sandra Silva has been employed by the Stevenson, Washington church as Evangelism Coordinator for a campaign beginning October 21, 2005. The pre-work, under her direction began July 30 with the organization of a prayer ministry. Inactive and former members will be the initial focus. The Stevenson church has had a weekly jail ministry for several years. Health and healing of the whole person will be one of the objectives of this series.

Africa Evangelism

July found Todd and Patti Guthrie in Togo, Africa with their four children. Part of Global Evangelism, the entire family was involved in preaching and or supporting the evangelists as the message of God's love was delivered to that remote area of the world. Eleven year old Melissa Guthrie became infected with a severe case of malaria. Faith and trust in God was demonstrated for all to see as God provided healing through an experienced clinical doctor who not only treated Melissa, but prayed for her as well. Watch for more details in our next issue.

Intercessors Needed

Pray for the salvation of souls, as the most precious gospel message is beginning to lighten the whole world with the glory of God. Time is short. The showers of the latter rain, which began many years ago, are soon to swell into a loud cry. Pray for your pastor and fellow church members that many will be saved by grace through the faith of Jesus. Tell downhearted, discouraged souls that Jesus, who would rather die than live without them, has redeemed them at an infinite cost.

EVANGELISM

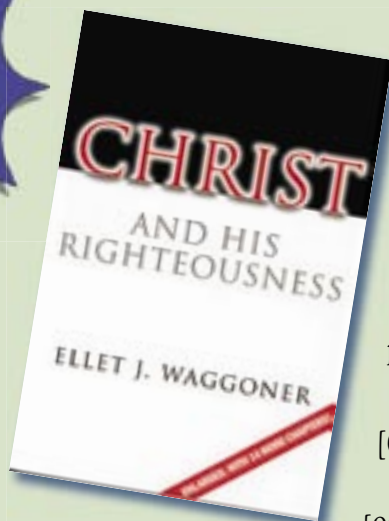
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in the way thou shalt go: I will guide thee
with mine eye. Psalm 32:8*

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