

Without Excuse

- EXCUSES -

I. "THERE ARE TOO MANY HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH."

1. The man who sees the shortcomings of others before he sees his own is the real hypocrite.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."— Matt. 7:1-5

2. Even though there may be hypocrites in the church, that does not excuse you. There are hypocrites in every other profession, but this is no argument against the profession; nor is it any argument against Christ because a hypocrite is discovered in the church. You will not have to answer for the sins of the hypocrite at the judgment but for your own.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according

to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

— Rom. 2:1-3

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."— Rom. 14:10-12

3. One thing is certain, though hypocrites may be in the church here on earth, they will not enter Heaven. If you do not want to spend eternity in Hell with them you had better become a Christian now.

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"— Matt. 23:13 and 33

"And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."— Matt. 24:51

II. "WHY DID GOD CREATE MAN AND THEN DAMN HIM?"

God does not damn man. Man damns himself when he refuses to believe on Christ. He closes the door of Heaven in his own face.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

— Mark 16:16

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." — John. 3:18 and 36

By Arthur J. Smith, from the book, "Without Excuse," 1907

General Operating Expenses — Apostolic Missions
 (These funds will be used for the general operating expenses of the Missions: assistance to the poor, annual conferences, legal expenses, evangelism, etc.)

By faith, I pledge to send \$_____ monthly, beginning in the month of _____, 2004.

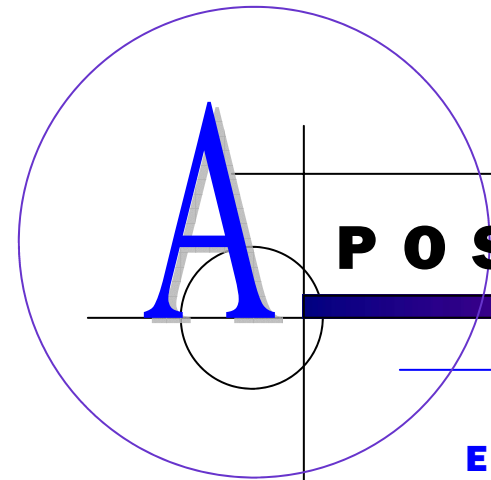
By faith, I pledge to send a one-time offering of \$_____ by _____, 2004.

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ELD. WHEELER: PHILIPPINE REPORT

Thank God for victory! We are rejoicing about the wonderful things God is doing in the Philippines. During our last visit we were excited to see what God can do in fifteen weeks. We opened a new work — our 32nd congregation! Our people are working hard.

Besides the thirty-two congregations in our fellowship, another group recently joined our coalition, bringing twenty-three more congregations into fellowship with us. Many of their churches are on islands where we had no works. What a beautiful sight when we posted fifty-five

congregations on a large wall map. God is doing a wonderful work.

We are opening a Bible school in June. God has given us many well-qualified, dedicated teachers and support staff for this wonderful project. Last March, I spoke at a graduation service for the coalition. We handed out certificates to nineteen men! Most of these men are already busy working for God and some are pioneering new works.

Bro. Barrero is an answer to prayer. He and his wife travel among the churches of Mindanao and conduct monthly seminars. These talented and dedicated people are

doing a wonderful job of developing preachers in the remote areas of Mindanao. To meet the growing needs in our fellowship and coalition churches, we opened Truth Enterprises; the publications division of our fellowship. We are collecting, developing and printing Bible study courses, Sunday school material and tracts. This is already proving to be a great blessing to the work.

Thank you for your interest in this growing mission. Please prayerfully consider helping us with the needs we listed in this publication.

In His service,
E. W. Wheeler

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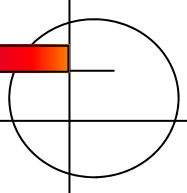
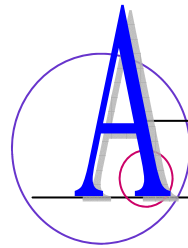
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APOSTOLIC MISSIONS

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THIS ISSUE'S GUEST ARTICLE

Pastor Steven Keith shares his experience in the Philippines with Elder and Sis. E.W. Wheeler in "A Sure Reward."



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Mission Statement:

Since our first publication in the Philippines in the early eighties, our mission has been to provide “doctrine and instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16) to the churches in the Philippines. By request, we are expanding our circulation, trusting that God will bless and use it for the benefit of His Kingdom.



A SURE REWARD

David declared in the eleventh chapter of Psalms, “to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.” These words have rang true through time and have proven themselves again with the Philippine mission of Elder and Sis. E.W. Wheeler. The reward for the many years of labor of this missionary family is unmistakable. I am very thankful for the opportunity I was given to be a part of their Winter Conference 2004. From the moment of our arrival in Manila, until the time of our departure, the people of this mission showed us immeasurable gratitude and hospitality.

As this was my introductory trip to a foreign missions field, I can assure you that I experienced all the feelings of a “first-timer.” Though it may be rhetorical to say, the experience is life-altering to say the least. In America, the message, “walking by faith” is heard. Among the saints in the Philippines, it is seen. Their worship and prayer should be the envy of every Apostolic church. It is impossible for me to convey the fervency of their altar services. I was humbled by the unpretentious contrition of young folks and adults alike. It seemed as if tears flowed like small rivers, running down their faces; then soaking into their clothes, or landing on the floor and making small pools at their feet.

The evangelistic inclinations of this mission were manifested throughout our visit. The street service that was assembled is one example. Pastors and their wives could be seen leading people by the hand into the service area. There was no established church in this area, so the locals were mostly strangers, yet that did not dissuade these Apostolic people from carrying out the Great Commission. They literally compelled people to come to the service. It is my understanding that the preliminaries for establishing a new church in this area have begun as a direct result.

To see the evangelism of these pastors and their wives is truly a reward for Elder and Sis. Wheeler. It is Elder Wheeler’s message, and he conveys it well. It is their dream, and they divulge it. It has been their life, and they affectionately display it. As important as evangelism is to Elder Wheeler, so is the quality of the mission important to him. This is a mission that could stand among the best of conservative Apostolic churches. Holiness, in every aspect of the mission and ministry is impeccable. I realize that this kind of quality doesn’t happen overnight, nor is it embraced after a few convention services preached by visiting Americans. This quality of holiness is the direct result of a God-appointed man and his wife who love the Philippine people, and have dedicated their lives to establishing Apostolic churches that are rooted and grounded in the Apostolic doctrine. I witnessed several individuals receive the Holy Ghost, but Elder Wheeler is not the kind

A SURE REWARD

(continued from page 2)

of missionary that counts new converts after each service. He doesn’t even count them after the convention. In his words, “It’s the process, not the package.” This is a man without an ego.

The ministry of this mission represents the burden that comes with a true calling. In between services, I saw several of the pastors in the library copying books onto notepads! Choir leaders could be heard practicing until late at night, and by six o’clock each morning the whole facility was in a prayer meeting. Many of these pastors were just relieved to have a break from the Muslim hostilities that they face with each sunrise.

Because I am a novice when it comes to foreign missions, I cannot draw parallels between this mission and another. I can only weigh this mission in the balances of the American standard for conservative Apostolic churches, and in this regard, this mission is solid. There is no pretence, there is nothing hidden, and there are no exaggerations or self-serving agendas.

I thank God for the opportunity to be reacquainted with the Wheelers and to be introduced to the Philippine missions. I believe that their leadership will have a great influence among many other Philippine missions that see the “sure reward” of following a righteous man.

-Pastor Steven Keith-

ON TOLERATION

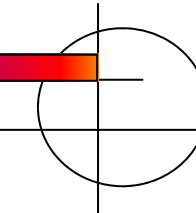
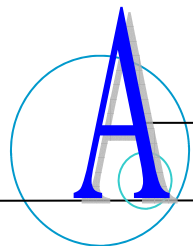
Any zeal is proper for religion but the zeal of the sword and the zeal of anger: this is the bitterness of zeal, and it is a certain temptation to every man against his duty; for if the sword turns preacher, and dictates propositions by empire instead of arguments, and engraves them in men’s hearts with a poniard, that it shall be death to believe what I innocently and ignorantly am persuaded of, it must needs be unsafe to try the spirits, to try all things, to make inquiry; and, yet, without this liberty, no man can justify himself before God or man, nor confidently say that his religion is best. This is inordination of zeal; for Christ, by reproofing St. Peter drawing his sword even in the cause of Christ, for his sacred and yet injured person, teaches us not to use the sword, though in the cause of God, or for God himself.

When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man, stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travail, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man eat, and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God. At which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, “I thrust him away because he did not worship thee.” God answered him, “I have suffered him these hundred years although he dishonored me; and couldst not thou endure him one night?”

- Jeremy Taylor - From the book, “Perfect Jewels,” by T. De Witt Talmage, D.D; Copyright 1884, by John Blakely.

- MEMORABLE QUOTES -

- “In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.”
- Oscar Wilde -
- “What America needs is spiritual renewal and reconciliation — first, man with God, and then man with man.”
- Ronald Reagan – From the book “The common sense of an uncommon man,” by Michael Reagan.



A GLANCE BEHIND THE IRON BARS

“Crime” is usually understood to mean a violation of a human law so serious that it is punishable by death, imprisonment or other severe penalty. But it also means any evil act or sin—the violation of a civil or a moral law.

I first became interested in the disproportionate amount of crime among Catholics while I was still a priest. The very numerous crimes of drunkenness and physical violence, particularly cuttings and stabbings, among the Catholic people, resulted in the victims being taken to St. Joseph’s Hospital emergency room while I was still chaplain there.

I can recall one instance when I was called all the way to a hovel on a ditch bank in Tolleson, west of Phoenix, to give last rites to a dying Mexican Catholic. His children (about twelve of them) asked me to marry their parents before giving Extreme Unction. The man was in a coma.

I explained to the children that unconscious people could not be married and asked furthermore why it had not been done before any of them were born. A son replied that if they had been married “in the Church” they could not have separated and re-married because that would have been a sin. It was better to wait until near-death and then marry when there was no desire to marry someone else. I found through my years as a priest that this was a common practice.

—Emmett McLoughlin—From the book, “Crime & Immorality in the Catholic Church,” 1962

LEGIONS OF INDECENCY

The widespread “moral defections” of the clergy are proven by the very existence of the hierarchy’s “prisons” across the country, for example the Via Coeli near Albuquerque, New Mexico, and others. Not only are the alcoholic priests confined there, but also those guilty of flagrant violations of chastity. Usually these institutions are filled with the secular clergy. The religious orders in their various provinces have their own houses of strict observance, where members who have strayed in their observance of chastity are confined.

One of the most famous madames of an eastern “house” told me that she had quite a clientele of priests purchasing the wares of her establishment. The transgressions were often not of an interfaith character, for many of her girls were recruited from the sisters’ convents.

Among priests, particularly those in religious orders, there is constant gossip regarding the relationships of secular priests with their housekeepers. The Church recognizes the dangers not only of gossip, but also of mutual temptation and aberration. It prescribes that the woman living in the rectory as housekeeper must be “superadulta” (beyond adulthood). But the clergy of America interpret “superadulta” to mean 24 years of age! That the proximity of the flesh between a healthy, frustrated priest and a beautiful woman of that age, living together, should prove irresistible is self-evident.

Within a period of one month, during the summer of 1960, two men (unknown to each other), came to my office at Memorial Hospital and by name accused two Phoenix priests of alienating their wives. What is more, they proved it. The first was a prominent thirty-second degree Mason. His wife was a Protestant, but she had become infatuated with a young priest who was trying to “convert” her. The husband had warned the priest to stay away from his house. Nevertheless, he found envelopes addressed to his wife, with a return address near the priest’s church, and found two religious books in his home containing the priest’s signature. I sent him to a criminologist with forty years’ experience, who positively identified the handwriting on the envelopes.

The other man was a Roman Catholic, a well known member of the Knights of Columbus. He named the priest (whom I know) and told me that his wife admitted the situation, had left him and was suing for divorce after almost twenty years of marriage. The Catholic man wanted my advice on suing the priest for alienation of affections.

If all the recollections of all ex-priests and all honest priests could be recounted, the Catholics of America would be shocked to know that the rules of celibacy and chastity are observed in 1960 only slightly more than in 1500.

By: Former Franciscan Priest Emmett McLoughlin —From the book, “Crime & Immorality in the Catholic Church,” 1962

CHRISTIANITY AND PAGAN CUSTOMS

The Christian church took over many pagan ideas and images. From sun-worship, for example, came the celebration of Christ’s birth on the twenty-fifth of December, the birthday of the Sun. *Saturnalia*, the Roman winter festival of 17-21 of December, provided the merriment, gift-giving and candles typical of later Christmas holidays. Sun-worship hung on in Roman Christianity and Pope Leo I, in the middle of the fifth century, rebuked worshippers who turned round to bow to the sun before entering St. Peter’s basilica. Some pagan customs which were later Christianized, for example the use of candles, incense and garlands, were at first avoided by the church because they symbolized paganism.

The veneration of the Virgin Mary was probably stimulated by parallels in pagan religion. Some scholars believe that the worship of Artemis (Diana) was transferred to Mary. Ephesus, a city which belonged to Artemis until the end of the pagan era, was also associated with Mary from an early date.

Many people connected Mary with Isis, the Egyptian goddess whose worship had spread throughout the Empire in the Christian era. Isis in her travels became identified with many other goddesses, including Artemis, and was the ‘universal mother’ of later pagan religion. The devotees of Isis, herself called ‘the Great Virgin’ and ‘Mother of the God’, naturally tended to look to Mary for comfort when paganism was outlawed and their temples

destroyed at the end of the fourth century. Some surviving images of Isis holding the child Horus are in a pose remarkably similar to that of some early Christian madonnas. However, the original aim of titles such as ‘bearer of God’ for Mary was to honour the divine Son.

The cult of saints and martyrs grew rapidly in the fourth century, another example of the blending of the old paganism with Christianity. Chapels and even churches began to be built over the tombs of martyrs, a practice which influenced church architecture. Competition for saintly corpses soon degenerated into a superstitious search for relics. In parts of the East it sometimes became a fight for the bodies of saintly hermits, still alive but expected to expire shortly. The cult arose among the people, but was approved and encouraged by the great Christian leaders of the age—Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine. Ambrose, for instance, discovered the bodies of several forgotten saints.

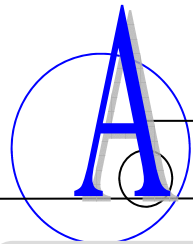
The Christian historian Theodoret boasts that in many places saints and martyrs took the place of pagan gods, and their shrines the place of pagan temples. Some saints were claimed to cure barrenness, others protected travelers, detected perjury, foretold the future, and many healed the sick. The shrine of saints Cyrus and John, physicians who in their earthly practice charged no fees, near Alexandria, was particularly

popular. To the shrine of St. Felix of Nola, who detected perjury, Augustine sent two clergymen who had accused each other, to discover which was lying.

The church never went as far as to teach that saints were to be worshipped. It was only suggested that they were in a special position to hear petitions and present them directly to God. The saint’s position in heaven was compared to that of a great man at court, who might be expected to get results for a lowly petitioner by presenting his request directly to the Emperor.

Augustine and others protested against abuses of the traffic in relics. An African church council in 401 insisted that a saint or martyr must be proved genuine before a chapel was consecrated. Only one suggestion remains by an orthodox Christian that attachment to particular shrines or relics marked a return to pagan superstition. Vigilantius, an obscure priest from Aquitaine, wrote, “We almost see the rites of the pagans introduced into the churches under the pretext of religion; ranks of candles are lit in full daylight; and everywhere people kiss and adore some bit of dust in a little pot, wrapped in a precious fabric.” Vigilantius’ protest survived only because some outraged priests sent a copy to Jerome who refuted it in a scathing reply.

Richard A. Todd—Eerdman’s Handbook to the History of Christianity.



PHILIPPINE UPDATE

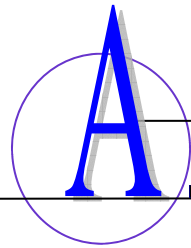


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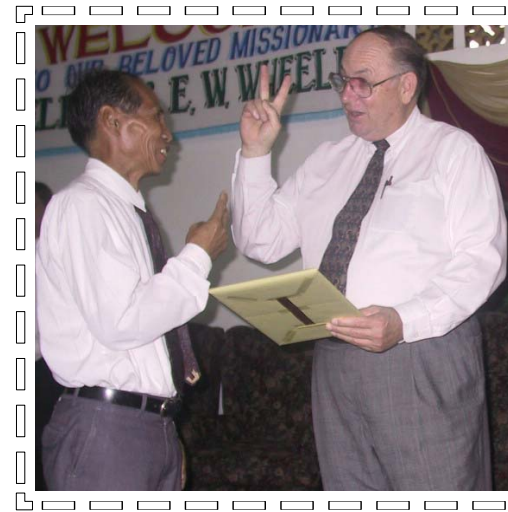


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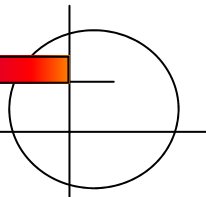


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