

BAD HEIR DAY

In our last issue, we made the case that salvation is a free gift, not of works. We discussed the cultic view that "faith plus works = salvation." Under cultic belief systems, faith in Christ is not enough to gain eternal life; faith is just the starting point, and only gives you the *opportunity to save yourself* through a system of prescribed works. There are do's and don'ts . . . you must do this and refrain at all costs from doing that. DO wear the holy underwear, attend all meetings, knock on doors; DON'T break God's laws (Biblical sin), or sport a beard (manmade sin), or tell a lie (possible sin, depending upon whether its a "real lie" or "theocratic war strategy")...

Let's hope that all of us now understand that "keeping the rules" does not justify us before God, that doing good works cannot in any way contribute to our eternal salvation. Now what? Where does a Christian stand *after* salvation in regards to good works? Once we *have been saved*, what role, if any, does our behavior, good or bad, play in our eternal destiny? Can we lose our salvation by our performance or our failure to perform? And, if we cannot lose our salvation, does that mean we can just live any way we please?

Well, there are several different views on this subject. I will lay them out for you before explaining what I believe is the Biblical position on the issue. There is ...

1. The "no-assurance" crowd: Faith alone = salvation...BUT, you must hold on tight, keep God's laws, make sure your sin confession is up to date, etc... Bottom line; you could end up in hell. Scary.

2. The Catch 22 "Lordship salvation" position: Faith alone = salvation, and you cannot lose your salvation. Phew! That is GOOD NEWS, isn't it?! Now for the "catch"... If Jesus cannot be sufficiently shown by the life you lead as a Christian, to be the absolute Lord of your life, why, you were never *really* saved in the first place. If, at the point of your salvation, you did not make Him Lord

as well as Savior, He is not your Savior either. God is not mocked... If Jesus is not Lord of all, He's not Lord at all. No real assurance here either, is there?

3. The "I'm saved, let's party" view: Faith alone = salvation, and you cannot lose your salvation. As far as your Christian life goes, it really doesn't matter how you live. Sinful living isn't much of a problem; "legalism" is the only enemy. Happiness and fulfillment in this life is what counts the most. You have to love yourself before you can love others... Gag me.

I feel that views one and two are somewhat of a reaction to number three (and, perhaps, vice versa). Let's see if I can clarify my meaning here. People *know* that grace can be abused. And we all know believers who *are* abusing God's grace, who have accepted God's gift and are *not* working to further His kingdom. With some, "not working" would be an understatement. These folks can be a major irritant to the folks that are giving much, as well as an unfortunate impediment, a stumbling block, to those outside looking in. This is a problem. Have you ever had the unpleasant experience of having one of these "party girls/boys" thrown in your face by someone you were attempting to witness to? Have you seen the mileage that *Watchtower** magazine and other cult publications get from condemning the lifestyle of professing Christians?

SAINTS YET SINNERS

Of course, there are many people the world over who are nominal "Christians," people who call themselves Christian but have had no true conversion experience. But can *true* Christians, those who have actually received Christ, those who have trusted Him for their eternal life, live their lives in such a way as to cause shame and disgrace to the cause of Christ? Yes, they can, and many do. How convenient it would be to label as mere "professors" all those who

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do not meet our minimum standards for what a Christian should do and be. But I don't think it's that simple.

What is the status of such a person regarding their eternal destiny? Have they lost their salvation (view #1), or is it probable that he or she just wasn't truly saved in the first place (view #2)? It would be tempting to give an accusing inquirer the explanation that each and every party boy or lazy Susan is not a *true* believer, and never has been. But what does that response do to the gospel? It muddies the water, does it not? We are saved by grace and, after salvation, we stand in it. Grace, as I have said many times before, is *unmerited* favor. If we mix merit into the bargain, it is NOT grace (Rom. 11:6).

Nobody, including me, enjoys having to "answer" for a fellow believer's shallow attitude or sinful life. But, I have to admit, I'm grateful for the fact that grace is grace is grace when I take note of the evidence that my own sinful nature is still alive and kicking. Knowing well my own sinful heart, and being an honest sinner at least, on what basis can I judge someone else as "not fit"? Who *is* fit? The late radio Bible teacher, J. Vernon McGee, put it something like this: "If *you* knew J. Vernon McGee like *I* know J. Vernon McGee, you wouldn't be sitting here listening to him preach... But don't get up; if *I* knew you like *you* know you, I wouldn't be speaking to you!" So true. Yet even knowing ourselves the way we do, we, like the Pharisees of Jesus day, think we can judge interior purity by the exterior whitewash on the tomb (Mt. 23:27-28).

It is so easy to succumb to a "black hat/white hat" mentality... *our* group is made up of the good guys and, if you point out a bad guy, he was never really one of *us*! But, of course, that's not true. Christians do not become saved or stay saved because they are white hats, while "outsiders" are the evil villains. I can say this for two very good reasons. First, I have seen Christians wearing black hats, and have one myself that jumps right up onto my head at some very inopportune moments!!! I hate it when that happens... And secondly, I dearly love some of those "villainous" Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs), Mormons, etc., and I don't think they are, as individuals, anymore of a bad guy/girl than I am. Here is what I feel is the Biblical position, view #4.

4. The "free grace" position: Faith alone = salvation, AND it matters very much how you live!

Does this seem like a contradiction? It isn't a contradiction at all. Your ticket to eternal life is a gift of God, totally free, but gaining eternal life isn't all there is to consider! People think in terms of "going to heaven" versus "going to hell" but it is very foolish to stop there. If I were planning to go to Hawaii, I would not just concern myself with "getting there." It is true that "getting there" is the first and most important consideration, so I would first make sure I have my ticket. But there are other important considerations for vacation planning. What do I want to do when I get to Hawaii? Will I want traveler's checks? How about a swimming suit or a rental car? I could go to Hawaii and get off the plane with just the clothes on my back, but I probably would find my stay more enjoyable if I had planned ahead. What about our ultimate destination? What kind of an eternal life do you want? What do you think we'll be doing forever? Sitting on a cloud, strumming a harp??? Sounds pretty boring... But maybe you will be doing just that if you haven't invested in your future, planned for your "retirement." You can't take it with you, but Jesus made it very clear that you *can* send it on ahead (Mt. 6:19-21)!! (Incidentally, Rev. 21:2 teaches us that the New Jerusalem, the holy city with the streets of gold and pearly gates that many people think of as "heaven," will be *coming down out of*

heaven, so it might be a good idea to rethink the harp lessons.)

So when a child of God asks if it matters how they live, the response should be, "Matters for WHAT"? Did it *matter* how the prodigal son lived his life (Luke 15:11-32)? Did it matter that he squandered his inheritance on a sinful lifestyle? Of course, it mattered! What was lost was lost. Inheritance was lost, possessions were lost, time was lost, self respect was lost, opportunities were lost, but the son himself was *not* lost! He was just as much a *son* as ever when he returned.

We are hard on the older brother of the prodigal. But think for a moment what his rebellious brother's "bad heir day" cost him. He watched as his younger brother treated their good father with the utmost of contempt. The family name was dragged through the mud; their good reputation wound up in a pig sty. Imagine his chagrin when the little brat comes home, and dad welcomes him back with open arms! He vented his outraged sense of justice on his brother's well-received return. Did the father rebuke the faithful son? No. He gently explained to him that family is family, and nothing ever changes that. But what of justice? He assured his older son that his faithfulness, his work, his loyalty would be rewarded. What did he say? "All that I have is *yours*." His inheritance was intact (Luke 15:31).

DIFFERENT LEGACIES

The idea that our future rewards and the fullness of our inheritance depends upon how we live our earthly lives seems to make us uncomfortable as Christians. It gets lost in the confusion regarding free grace versus works for *salvation*. We think it only fair that everyone would have the exact same reward in heaven and we assume that, because we as God's adopted children are all heirs, our inheritance will be equal. But the Bible does not teach this idea of inheritance. The sons of Jacob received very different legacies dependent upon the lives they had lived (Genesis 49:1-28). Verse 28 states that he blessed his sons each one "with the blessing appropriate to him."

Contrary to our cultural views on "fairness," for all God's children to receive the same inheritance and blessing would be decidedly UNJUST to the more faithful among us. The prodigal son had received his share of his father's wealth and had blown it. What if, upon the rebel son's return, the father had taken the older brother's share of the inheritance and split that with the younger son? That would have been injustice, but the father did not do that.

There will be a day of reckoning even for Christians. It is the judgement seat of Christ. Like the prodigal son, there are "bad heirs" who have squandered their inheritance in this life. These are the sons and/or daughters whose Christian "works" don't amount to a hill of beans. Biblically speaking, they built on their "salvation foundation" with trash: wood, hay and stubble, which will go up in smoke, yet they themselves will be saved (1Cor. 3:8-15). Each Christian will receive his own reward *according to his own labor*. The foundation is Christ, and then each person is responsible for how he builds upon that foundation. Some will be standing upon that foundation alone come rewards time, and their underwear will be smokin'! The extent of our inheritance is dependent upon our own actions *after* we are adopted.

This is a very neglected teaching in the church today; that the fullness of our inheritance is based upon our works. It seems foreign to our knowledge that salvation is by God's grace alone. This is where the problem comes in. The two are confused. Just because salvation (the adoption into God's family) is FREE, completely free with no strings, does NOT mean that God does not reward His children according to their deeds. The Bible teaches that He does! Rev.

22:12, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and *my reward is with me, to render to every man according to what he has done.*" Good works are rewarded. It does matter very much how we live!

The reward teaching somehow smacks of self interest, and we have become conditioned to believe that self interest is unspiritual. NOT SO! Faith is not giving up our self interest. Faith is the quality that allows us to delay gratification, for a future gratification not yet seen. Faith is the ability to recognize that our self interest lies in laying up treasures in heaven, that will not rust or get lost, rather than pursuing the material rewards of this life which will all perish away. Every day we are bombarded with the message that we should live for today, look out for number one, grab all the gusto, but that is FOOLISHNESS from a Godly point of view!!! The wise son and daughter will be looking out for his inheritance, building his heavenly portfolio.

Will all be judged alike? Of course not. Much will be required of the person to whom much was given. We have not all been given the same raw materials. We will be judged according to what we did with what time, talents, and material resources we had at our disposal.

Am I saying that looking out for rewards is the best or only motivation for kingdom service? No. But I believe it is the best perspective on the "bad heir" issue, to understand that we don't need purgatory or some convoluted Lordship salvation view to even the score. God will judge his sons and daughters fairly and reward them accordingly. And, since God is the one who sets up the reward system, there cannot be anything inherently wrong or unspiritual about it. We are running a race, we are striving for the prize, whether we know it or not, and I think there will be genuine and terrible regret awaiting those who squander their inheritance in this life.

WANT A SPANKING?

What about discipline here and now as a motivator? There is a healthy fear of God that should motivate us to watch our behavior and our lifestyles. The fear that I am speaking of is not at all like fear of a monster out to hurt us, but very like fear of the discipline of a loving Father, looking out for our best interests. Would a good father be complacent about his children's character development? So, this may not be a very happy thought to most of us, but God gives spankings to His children. I should know. Ouch.

But for myself, the thing that spurred me to get involved in God's work was quite different from both of these. I did not understand the concept of eternal rewards when I decided to serve God. I was taught that the only rewards Christians would receive would be crowns, which we would toss at Jesus' feet in any case. I had never considered Jesus' word that He would be handing out responsibilities and privileges based upon our actions here (Luke 19:11-27). My view was, at the time, more like the Lordship salvation one, and I was plugging along in a state of free floating anxiety as to whether I was truly saved or not, based on the obvious fact that I was still a sinner. How much of a sinner could one be and still be saved? How much Lordship was required? Salvation is free, I was told, but it will

cost you everything... How spiritual that sounded! How illogical and absurd when you think about it. If it's free, it costs you nothing; if it costs you everything, it's NOT FREE! **Joy's rule: Just because you heard it in church, doesn't mean it isn't really dumb!**

So what happened to motivate me? Love happened to me. I met some girls on a bowling league that I really cared about who happened to be Jehovah's Witnesses. I didn't join a bowling league to care about lost souls... I just wanted to show everyone that I was the very best bowler in the western world, or at least in our town, but God grabbed ahold of my heart. He infected me with this "crazy love," and my life has never been the same. I made a list of these JW's, and added on to that many other wonderful non-Christians, and began to pray diligently for them every day. I can honestly say that I had not the slightest idea of what an adventure God was going to lead me into for the sake of the lovely folks on that list. They became fairly soon *my* dear JW's, *my* people.

Do you have a list? Make one. It really gives you an attitude adjustment about what is ultimately important in life. The more you pray, the more you care, and the more you care, the more you give, and the more you give, the more you love, and the more you love, the more you study, and the more you study, the more you learn, and the more you learn, the more opportunities to teach, and the more you teach, the longer your list gets, and the more you give, and the more you love and the more you pray, and the more you study, and the more... Until finally you'll notice that your bowling has *really* taken a tumble and you note with surprise that you just don't care very much about that anymore. Surprise, surprise.

LOVE IS THE KEY

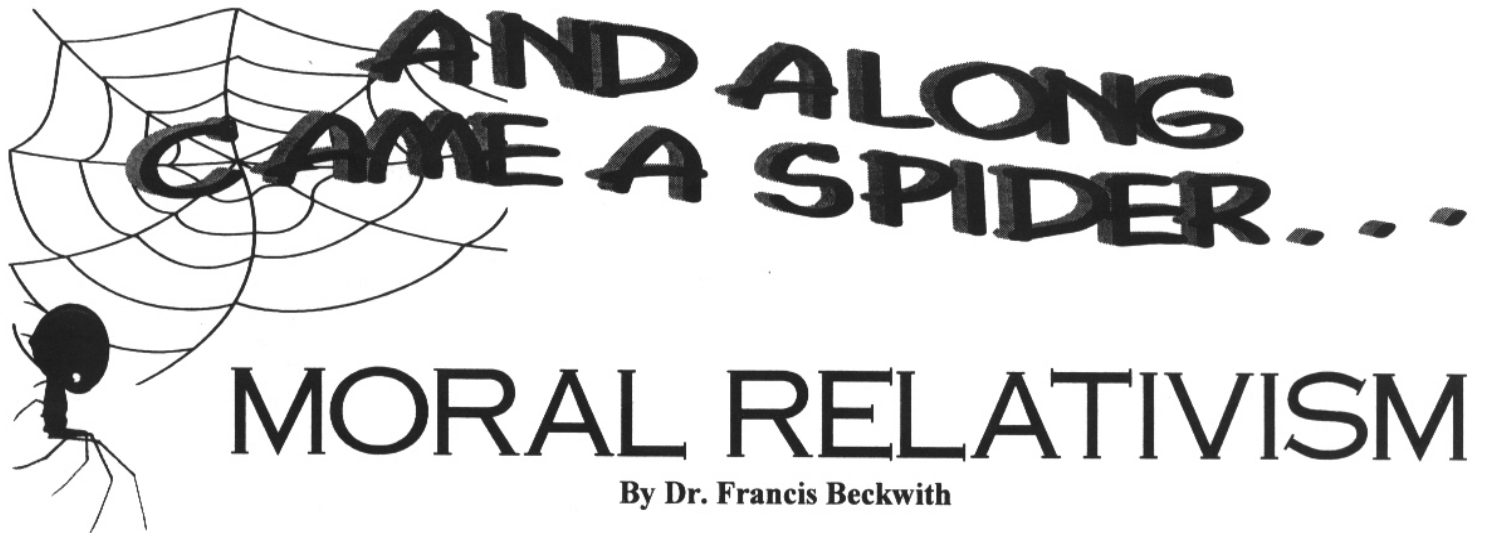
Hebrews 10:24 asks us to: "consider how to stimulate one another to *love and good deeds.*" Love, not fear, is the key to the transformed life. Joy's revised pithy saying: Salvation is free, but love might just cost you everything. JW's, Mormons, and other cults accomplish much out of fear. The Christian way is to do it for love. Love gives you the courage to do things you never thought you'd be able to do. Love opens the wallet, and finds the time. Love will give you a real concern for holiness, that

fear can only mimic, once you properly view your faults as impediments to your witness. You will love the unlovely, forgive the unforgivable. Why? For the sake of the loved ones on the list...

One film that really had an effect on me in the recent past was *Schindler's List*. For those who did not see it, it was about the Holocaust, and one man's inner journey in reaction to it. It was the story of an ordinary man trying to live his ordinary "looking-out-for-number-one" life in an extraordinarily evil time and place. Oskar Schindler did not want to save Jews. He just wanted to get rich, and as a by-product of his obsession with obtaining the good life, he incidentally saved Jews in Nazi Germany by putting them to work in his factory. The movie is about the change that came over that man, and how his heart expanded and he allowed himself to see the valuable humanity of his workers. He came to realize that his work-

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MORAL RELATIVISM

By Dr. Francis Beckwith

In his important and influential work, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom observes that "there is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative ... The students, of course, cannot defend their opinion. It is something with which they have been indoctrinated." By dogmatically asserting that there is no truth, we have become closed-minded to the possibility of knowing the truth if, in fact, it does exist. Consequently, lurking behind most of the moral rhetoric in America today is moral relativism: the belief there are no mind-independent moral values that transcend culture or the individual. This is why many people begin or end their moral judgments with such phrases as, "It is only my personal opinion," "Of course I am not judging anyone's behavior," or "If you think it is all right, that is okay, but I'm personally against it." Although such assertions certainly have their place, we often use them inappropriately. Take a common ploy used by politicians who are absolutely petrified to take a stand on the abortion issue. They often resort to saying, "I'm personally against abortion, but I don't object if a woman believes it is right for her to have one." The problem with this assertion is that it doesn't tell us why the politician is personally against abortion. Since most people oppose abortion because they believe that the unborn are fully human and have all the rights that go along with such a status, my guess is that the politician is personally against abortion for the same reason. Now this makes the politician's personal opposition and public permission of abortion somewhat perplexing, since the reason he is probably personally against abortion is the reason why he should be against publicly permitting it, namely, that an entity which he believes is fully human has a right to life. After all, what would we think of the depth of the convictions of any individual who claimed that he was personally against the genocide of a particular race, but if others thought this race was not human they were certainly welcome to participate in the genocide if they so choose? The nature of some "personal" opinions warrant public actions, even if these opinions turn out to be wrong; while other opinions, such as one's personal preference for German chocolate cake, do not.

Another example of how ethical relativism affects the way we approach a public moral issue can be seen in the arguments concerning the rights of certain groups to boycott products that are advertised on television programs that these groups find to be inconsistent with the public good. The usual argument in response to these groups is the following, "If you don't like a particular program, you don't have to watch it. You can always change the channel." But is this response really compelling? After all, these groups are not only saying that they personally find these programs offensive; rather, they are arguing that the programs themselves convey messages and create a moral climate that will affect others, especially children, in a way they believe is adverse to the public good. Hence, what bothers these groups is that *you* and *your children* will not change the channel. Furthermore, it bothers these people that

there is probably somewhere in America, an unsupervised ten-year-old listening to and watching MTV while Aerosmith sings about the virtues of oral sex on an elevator. Most of these people fear that their ten-year-olds may have to socially interact someday with the unsupervised MTV-watching ten-year-old. Frankly, I do not believe that such a parental concern is totally unjustified, especially in light of what we know about how certain forms of entertainment and media affect people. Therefore, the question cannot be relegated to a question of one's personal preference. The appropriate question is what sort of social action is permissible and would best serve the public good.

As long as these groups do not advocate state censorship, but merely apply social and economic pressure to private corporations (which civil rights groups and feminist groups have been doing for nearly two decades), a balance of freedoms is achieved. Both are free to pursue their interests within the confines of constitutional protection, although both must be willing to suffer the social and economic consequences of their actions. This seems to best serve the public good. Notice that my response does not resort to ethical relativism, but takes seriously the values of freedom, the public good, and individual rights, and attempts to uphold these values in a way that is consistent and fair.

ARGUMENTS FOR MORAL RELATIVISM

People have put forth two popular arguments to defend ethical relativism. Argument 1 states: Since cultures and individuals differ in certain moral practices, there are no objective transcultural values.

There are several problems with this argument. First, the fact that people disagree about something does not mean that there is no truth. For example, if you and I disagree as to whether or not the earth is round, this is certainly not proof that the earth has no shape. In moral discussion, the fact that a skinhead (a type of young neo-Nazi) and I may disagree as to whether we should treat people equally and with fairness is certainly not sufficient evidence to say that equality and fairness have no objective value. Even if individuals and cultures hold no values in common, it does not follow from this that nobody is right or wrong about the correct values. That is, there could be a mistaken individual or culture, such as Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany.

Another problem with this first argument is that though cultures and individuals differ in moral practices it does not follow that they do not share common values. For example, the fact that female islanders who live in the South Seas bare their breasts and British women do not does not mean that the former do not value modesty. Due to the climate, environmental conditions, and certain religious beliefs, the people of the South Seas have developed certain practices that manifest the transcultural value of modesty. Although cultures may differ as to how they manifest such values as honesty, courage, or preservation of life, none promote dishonesty, cowardice, or arbitrary killing.

Second, sometimes apparent moral differences are not moral

differences at all but factual differences. During the Salem witch trials, certain individuals were put to death who were believed to be practicing witchcraft. We don't execute witches today, but not because our moral values have changed. We don't execute witches today because we don't believe that the practice of their craft has a fatal effect upon the community -- contrary to what the residents of Massachusetts believed in the 17th Century. But, suppose that we had good evidence that the practice of witchcraft does affect other people in the same way that cigarette smoke affects the non-smoker. We would alter the practice of our values to take into consideration this factual change. We may set up non-witch sections in restaurants and ban the casting of spells on interstate airplane flights. The upshot of all this is that the good of the community is a value we share with the 17th Century residents of Salem, but we simply believe that they were factually wrong about the effect of witches upon that good.

Consider a second example. Many people who live in India do not eat cows because they believe in the doctrine of reincarnation -- that these cows possess the souls of deceased human beings. In the United States, we do not believe that cows have human souls. For this reason, we eat cows but we do not eat Grandma. It appears on the surface, therefore, that there is a fundamental value difference between Indians and Americans. But this is a hasty conclusion, for both cultures do believe that it is wrong to eat Grandma; the Indians, however, believe that the cow may be Grandma. Thus, it is a factual, not a value, difference that divides our culinary habits.

Philosopher James Rachels presents another example of how the knowledge of certain facts can help us understand why it seems that other people have different values. He points out that the practice of infanticide (of primarily female babies) was common among the Eskimos. On the surface, this Eskimo practice seems to indicate that they have a radically different value of human life than we do. And since one's view of human life is fundamental, it seems to follow from this that ethical relativism is correct. Rachels does not agree. He explains that once one realizes that certain factual considerations have made the practice of infanticide a necessary evil for the Eskimos, one sees that the Eskimos' value of human life is not all that different from ours. Writes Rachels:

But suppose we ask *why* the Eskimos [practice infanticide]. The explanation is not that they have less affection for their children or less respect for human life. An Eskimo family will always protect its babies if conditions permit. But they live in a harsh environment, where food is often in short supply ... Infant girls are readily disposed of because, first, in this society the males are the primary food providers -- they are the hunters, according to the traditional division of labor -- and it is obviously important to maintain a sufficient number of food gatherers. But there is an important second reason as well. Because the hunters suffer a high casualty rate, the adult men who die prematurely far outnumber the adult women who die early. Thus, if male and female infants survived in equal numbers, the female adult population would greatly outnumber the male adult population. Examining the available statistics, one writer concluded that "were it not for female infanticide ... there would be approximately one-and-a-half times as many females in the average Eskimo local group as there are food-producing males."

So among the Eskimos, infanticide does not signal a fundamentally different attitude toward children. Instead, it is a recognition that drastic measures are sometimes needed to ensure the family's survival. Even then, however, killing the baby is not the first option considered.

Adoption is common; childless couples are especially happy to take a more fertile couple's "surplus." Killing is only the last resort. I emphasize this in order to show that the raw data of the anthropologists can be misleading; it can make the differences in values between cultures appear greater than they are. The Eskimos' values are not all that different from our values. It is only that life forces upon them choices that we do not have to make.

This is not to say that the Eskimos are right or that we should not try to persuade them to believe that their practice is wrong. Rather, this example simply shows that one can better understand so-called value differences, and conclude that they are not really value differences at all, when one carefully examines why a certain practice, such as female infanticide, is performed. Other examples can be produced to show why this first argument for moral relativism is inadequate, although I believe that what we have covered thus far is sufficient for our purposes. It should be noted, however, that there are some common values among peoples and cultures [but this] does not mean that all cultures share all the same values. It is obvious that certain peoples and cultures may have developed some values that others have not developed. Hence, the discovering of a unique value in a particular society does not in any way take away from my central thesis that there are certain values to which all societies either implicitly or explicitly hold.

Third, the argument from differing practices puts an undue emphasis on differences while ignoring similarities, in addition to giving the mistaken appearance that all moral conflicts are in some sense insoluble. In discussing moral conflicts in the United States we tend to focus our attention on contemporary issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, and affirmative action, over which there is obviously wide and impassioned disagreement. However, we tend to ignore the fact that the disputants in these moral debates hold a number of values in common, that there are a great number of moral issues on which almost all Americans agree (e.g., "it is wrong to molest six-year-old girls"), and that a number of past moral conflicts have been solved (e.g., slavery, women's suffrage). Hence, by focusing our attention on disagreements, our perception is skewed. Rachels points out how such a mistaken focus can also be applied to other disciplines:

If we think of questions like *this* [i.e., abortion, euthanasia, affirmative action], it is easy to believe that "proof" in ethics is impossible. The same can be said of the sciences. There are many complicated matters that physicists cannot agree on; and if we focused our attention entirely on *them* we might conclude that there is no "proof" in physics. But, of course, many simpler matters in physics *can* be proven, and about those all competent physicists agree. Similarly, in ethics there are many matters far simpler than abortion, about which all reasonable people must agree.

Argument 2 states: Since ethical relativism promotes tolerance of certain cultural practices that we, as members of Western civilization, may think are strange, ethical relativism is a good thing. There are several problems with this argument. First, the value of tolerance presupposes the existence of at least one real non-relative, objective value: tolerance. Bioethicist Tom Beauchamp observes:

If we interpret normative relativism as *requiring* tolerance of other views, the whole theory is imperiled by inconsistency. The proposition that we ought to tolerate the view of others, or that it is right not to interfere with others, is precluded by the very strictures of the theory. Such a proposition bears all the marks of a *non-relative* account of moral rightness, one based on, but

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BIRTHED IN BOSTON

By L.L. (Don) Veinot

Part 1

THE BIRTH OF A NATION

The year is 1773. The town is Boston. There is a great amount of unrest due to tensions with England. In the 1760's, the English Parliament enacted the Sugar and Stamp Acts, which were punitive in nature. In 1770, six colonists were shot by British soldiers and violence erupted. This became known as the "Boston Massacre of 1770."

This year (1773), the residents decided that they would take a stand. Their way of protest was what is called the "Boston Tea Party." This stand for freedom would forever change the face of this continent. Freedom, it was believed, was every man's right. The result was a war between the American colonies and England for that freedom. Taxation without representation would no longer be tolerated.

The Revolutionary War, which was "Birthed in Boston," was fought by freedom-loving, independent-thinking individuals. There are many examples which bear this out; but one which nearly everyone is familiar with is that of a prominent 39-year-old lawyer from Virginia named Patrick Henry. Patrick Henry was a member of the Revolutionary Convention since 1774 and was pressing the Convention in 1775 to adopt a resolution which would establish a state of defense in Virginia. He took a clear stand on the importance of this issue with the now famous words, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted a document which proclaimed the independence of the 13 British colonies in America. It is called the Declaration of Independence. There are portions which we will look at as we think about the Boston Church of Christ, now known as the International Churches of Christ. The Declaration of Independence begins with:

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

"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."

"Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." We

have enjoyed these liberties for over 200 years in this country. Rights which the Founding Fathers believed were given by God the Creator and are "self-evident."

The Congress listed a number of grievances against the King of England which they believed were a usurpation of their God-given rights and responsibilities. In the final paragraph, they called on God to confirm the integrity of their attitudes and actions:

"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,..."

THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

The second "Birth in Boston", is the birth of a church. The church which was born is the Boston Church of Christ. It is now the International Churches of Christ. This group is known by many names, such as the Chicago Church of Christ, the Los Angeles Church of Christ, etc. They believe that the Biblical mandate is to call the church after the name of the city in which it is located and that it is the only true church. Gordon Ferguson, who served as the evangelist in the San Diego Church of Christ, wrote:

*"The concept of 'church plantings,' with **one church per city** is obviously in line with biblical examples. There is simply no biblical example of anything else. Further, if Paul appointed leaders in **every church** (Acts 14:23) and later instructed Titus to appoint elders in **every city** (Titus 1:5), the conclusion is obvious. The real problem today is that many 'churches of Christ' are often found in a given city." (Boston Bulletin, May 15, 1988).*

The proposed solution is to plant a church in each city or "reconstruct" an existing church which is willing to repent and become "true disciples" by affiliating with Boston. Gordon Ferguson continued:

"The urgency which prompts these conclusions is the same urgency which prompts 'church reconstructions.' It takes a solid base of disciples to make disciples, because any living organism reproduces after its own kind. When a congregation is not living up to the standard of biblical discipleship, it must be called to repentance. That process has been termed 'reconstruction' because the standard of biblical discipleship must be re-established. Obviously, only congregations which want to be true disciples (emphasis added) are open to this process be-

cause no person or group can be forced to repent." (*Boston Bulletin*, May 15, 1988).

As with the birth of the Revolutionary War and the Nation, there was a conception first. The Revolutionary War and Declaration of Independence were conceived through the tyranny of the British crown. The Boston Church of Christ was conceived out of the anarchy of the rebellious 1960's. The late 1960's and early 1970's was a time of rebellion against authority and "the establishment." Many of the young people became involved in the "hippie" movement. They felt that society was too confining and the churches irrelevant and dead. The call to "drop out and turn on" was very enticing.

Out of this grew a new kind of evangelism and church. Individuals, such as Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, began reaching the "hippies" on the beach. As hippies came to Jesus Christ, we saw the "Jesus People" movement begin... a radical new kind of Christianity. Groups of Jesus People roamed the country in buses painted with Jesus slogans and participating in communal living. Crew cuts and suits were out! Long hair and sandals were the uniforms of the day. Worship services were not accompanied by an organ and choir but guitar and tambourine.

There seemed to be no accountability, no structure to the life of these "radical" believers. A number of books came out in response to the undirected and undisciplined life style of those times. They were calling for discipleship, shepherding, and radical commitment not only to Jesus Christ but, in some cases, complete dependence on the group leaders or pastors and shepherds. I, like others, read many of these works and was impressed with the need for true discipleship and accountability. In some cases, the principles in the works were valid, but the cultural differences didn't translate well into American life and society.

During this time, a young man by the name of Kip McKean



was a student at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Kip met the pastor of the Crossroads Church of Christ, Chuck Lucas, who was developing a college campus program called "Campus Advance." Chuck recruited Kip and began "disciplining" him. One of

the primary books which Lucas used was Robert Coleman's, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Lucas took a radical view of this work believing that Robert Coleman was teaching that Jesus controlled the lives of His disciples and taught them to control the lives of their disciples. This being the case, Chuck Lucas believed that this is the way people should be brought to Christ today.

Kip McKean was sent to the Heritage Chapel Church of Christ in Charleston, Illinois in 1976 to be near and begin a campus ministry at the Eastern Illinois University. Kip was successful in developing this ministry, but there began to be turmoil within the church as members became concerned about the methods being used. There were charges of manipulation and control in the discipleship process. There were a number of Churches of Christ who had Chuck Lucas trainees who were having the same conflicts. In several cases, there were congregational splits over the issue.

Against this backdrop or "conception," we come to the year 1979. Kip McKean came to the small, 30-member Lexington Church of Christ. Here he established and refined the aggressive evangelism and discipleship process which had worked so well in campus ministry. A little over 200 years after the "Boston Tea Party" there was a birth of another kind. A church called the "Boston Church of Christ" was born. Within just a few years, the church grew to 1,000 members and, having outgrown their facilities, began meeting in the Boston Opera House. This church systematically took and continues to take away the very rights for which the Bostonians took a stand 206 years earlier. The rights which are "self-evident," "endowed by the their Creator," and "unalienable." The right to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

They take away the "right to Life," particularly eternal life. The Boston Church of Christ writes about the "Lethal Lies" which Satan tells:

*"He propagates false doctrine like 'praying Jesus into your heart' and convinces many 'good religious people' to believe that saves them. Yet what is God's criteria for salvation as described in the Bible? Too few churches call people to make the decision to be disciples at baptism (Matthew 28:19). Jesus says if you have not done this, your baptism is invalid. Many people even in the 'church of Christ' are deceived. Only baptized disciples will be willing to go anywhere, do anything, and give up everything for the cause of winning the world for a few of the lies Satan spreads about the critical area of salvation." (Elena McKean, *Boston Bulletin*, Dec. 20, 1987).*

The Boston Church of Christ, like mainline churches of Christ, do not consider anyone outside of "the Restoration Movement" to be Christians and, therefore, do not really mention other groups as "good religious people." At one time, Boston believed that the mainline churches were Christian but have subsequently "realized" that they are just deceived.

"Early on I developed a series consisting of nine Bible studies on the 'first principles' (Hebrews 6:1-3). The members of the church were called to memorize these studies and then teach others to become Christians. The most im-

pecting was called 'Discipleship' where, from my study of Scripture, I taught what was clear in Acts 11:26: *SAVED=CHRISTIAN=DISCIPLE*, simply meaning that you cannot be saved and you cannot be a true Christian without being a disciple also. I purposely developed this study to draw a sharp biblical distinction between the Lexington (later renamed Boston) Church of Christ and all other groups. I taught that to be baptized, you must first make a decision to be a disciple and then be baptized. I saw people in and outside of our fellowship had been baptized without this understanding and then, in time, developed a disciple's commitment to make Jesus Lord of their entire life. I taught that their baptism was invalid because a retroactive understanding of repentance and baptism was not consistent with Scripture." (Kip McKean, "Revolution Through Restoration," *Upside Down*, April 1992).

According to their teaching, one cannot become a Christian unless they do so through the ministry of the Boston Church of Christ. Anything else is believing Satan's lies.

The Boston movement eliminates the right to "Liberty." There is no liberty allowed since their concept is total obedience to the leaders of the movement. Ed Townsend, while assisting as a leader in the San Francisco Church of Christ, wrote:

"Do you fully obey when you're given direction and instruction or do you interpret, filter, or revise what you hear? If we are really going to learn from others, we must decide to fully obey." (Ed Townsend, "Because You Say So," *Boston Bulletin*, August 17, 1986).

Theresa Baird, the wife of one of the Boston elders wrote regarding the discipler:

"Ultimately, if we do not trust these people, we do not trust God. To the extent that I trust my discipler, Gloria Baird, I am in reality trusting God." (Theresa Baird, "Forever Growing," *Boston Bulletin*, October 22, 1989).

Terry Moore who, at the time this article appeared in the *Boston Bulletin*, was in the group for 6-1/2 years wrote:

"We hold back our affection and loyalty, maintaining an independence that kills the learning spirit that we are to have in our quest to become like Jesus." (Terry Moore, "Trust Me! The Key To Being Discipled - Part I," *Boston Bulletin*, July 16, 1989).

Kip McKean, at the 1988 Leadership Retreat, stated:

"...the whole point of being a disciple is that they don't know what is best for them. But their discipler knows what is best for them."

Daniel Eng was with the Boston Church of Christ from

November 1984 until June 1991. He helped plant churches in Singapore, Jakarta, and Bombay. On February 4, 1993, he issued an open letter explaining why he left and enumerated the main reasons, four of which bear on this subject:

"1. One-over-one discipling which they believe and practice, giving the 'discipler' the authority to manipulate and control every aspect of the lives of the members including marriage, dating, sex, finances, school, career, future, friends, family, etc.

2. Unquestioned obedience and loyalty to human leaders in the Boston Movement where there is no room for disagreements, criticisms nor different opinions of any sort. To disagree or to differ with their leader or discipler is considered 'prideful, arrogant, insubmissive, stubborn, independent, rebellious, disloyal and having a bad heart.'

6. Legalistic understanding of the Christian life which is opposed to a correct understanding of gospel and grace.

7. Mind-control methods being practiced to manipulate and control every member in their churches."

Kip McKean, in an effort to stop anyone from exercising independent thought (liberty?) and checking out what the church was teaching with outside sources, labeled material which spoke out against Boston as "spiritual pornography" in his sermon at the Boston seminar on August 25, 1989.

For those in the Boston Movement, the "Pursuit of Happiness" is not allowed unless it is through their "discipleship." According to the dogma, happiness only comes as a result of performance and the only performance worthwhile is what the discipler allows. Jobs, education, dating, marriage, where to live, entertainment all must be approved by the discipler. To question the discipler is to question God. Who wants to question God? The only worthwhile pursuits

are promoting the agenda of the Boston Church of Christ.

Next issue: Baptism *Boston Style*. Ω

The Boston Church of Christ, like mainline churches of Christ, do not consider anyone outside of "the Restoration Movement" to be Christians . . .





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1. Pray for the Ministry of Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc.;
2. Call today and switch your long distance carrier to **LIFELINE** and ask other people you know to do the same;
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Thank you so much,

T & C.

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For information call: 708/627-9028

Cornerstone Festival

July 4-7, 1996

Sponsored by Jesus People USA
To be held in Bushnell, IL

For information call: 312/561-2450

The Culting of Christianity Conference

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Sponsored by
CMNR and
Personal Freedom Outreach
To be held in St. Louis, MO
For information call: 314/388-2648

Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. works with several other ministries that operate help lines. The information on these lines is changed on a weekly basis. Individuals can call anonymously and simply listen, or they can request additional information. If they desire to speak to someone immediately, they are referred to our LIVE line.

The phone numbers for the pre-recorded lines are:

For Jehovah's Witnesses:

- ☎ (708) 556-4551
- ☎ (312) 774-8187
- ☎ (502) 927-9374
- ☎ (815) 498-2114

For Mormons:

- ☎ (708) 736-8365

LIVE LINE:

- ☎ (708) 627-9028

(Continued from page 5)

not reducible to, the cross-cultural findings of anthropologists ... But, if this moral principle [of tolerance] is recognized as valid, it can of course be employed as an instrument for criticizing such cultural practices as the denial of human rights to minorities and such beliefs as that of racial superiority. A moral commitment to tolerance of other practices and belief thus leads inexorably to the abandonment of normative relativism.

Second, tolerance can be a virtue only if you think the other person, whose viewpoint you're supposed to tolerate, is mistaken. That is to say, if you do not believe that one viewpoint is better than another, then to ask someone to be tolerant of other viewpoints makes no sense, since to tolerate another's viewpoint implies this other person has a right to his viewpoint despite the fact that others may think that it is wrong. To be tolerant of differing viewpoints involves just that -- *differing viewpoints*, all of which cannot be equally correct at the same time (although they certainly may all be equally wrong at the same time). If one thinks that one can be tolerant while at the same time believe that nobody is either right or wrong about any moral value, one would be not more virtuous than the man who thought his chastity was virtuous even though he was born with no sexual organs. Consequently, real tolerance presupposes that someone is right and someone is wrong (and in the latter case, especially the person who is intolerant), a viewpoint that implicitly denies moral relativism.

It must be acknowledged, however, that there is a noble motive behind the relativist's appeal to tolerance. He believes that his view of tolerance will help us to better understand other cultures and other people without being hypercritical about their practices or forcibly imposing our own cultural practices upon them, such as putting blouses on the bare-breasted women of the South Seas or forcing polygamous families to divide and become monogamous. I do not disagree with this view of transcultural tolerance. However, a cultural practice is different from a cultural value. For it does not follow from different practices that people have different values.

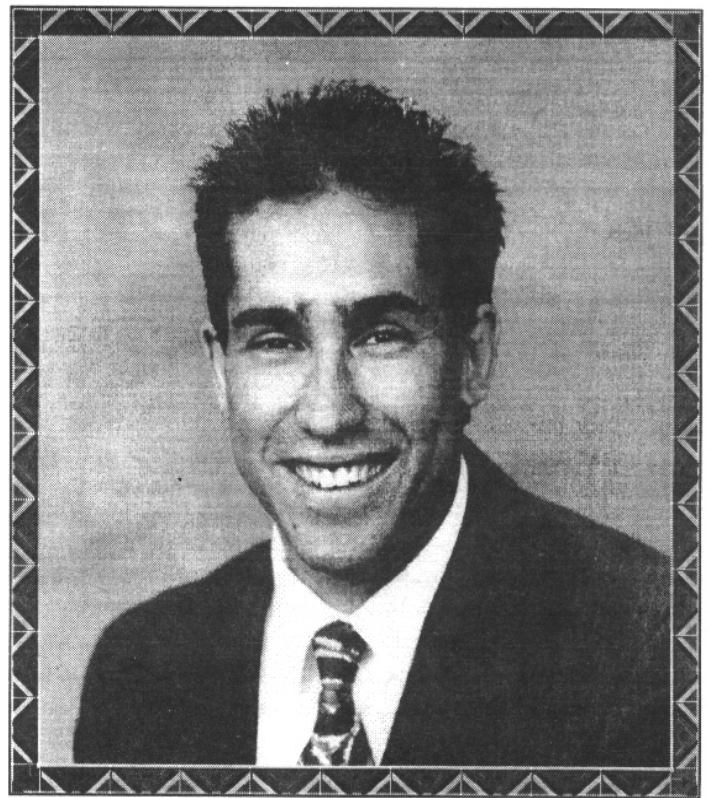
The same goes for popular moral debate in the United States today. For example, both those who favor capital punishment and those who oppose it agree that human life is in some sense sacred. Where they disagree is in the application of this value. Most proponents of capital punishment argue that since human life is so sacred, an individual who takes another's innocent life should forfeit his own life. Arguing from the same value, most opponents of capital punishment claim that it should be forbidden, since the sacredness of human life makes it never justifiable for the state to execute a human being.

The local controversies surrounding the elimination of certain books from public school curricula and libraries is another example of how people can agree on values and yet disagree on practice. Those who favor conservative guidelines, and who are often referred to as advocating censorship, usually propose that certain materials are not suitable for certain age groups. They argue that parents, not educational administrators, are best suited to know what is best for their children. On the other hand, their opponents, who are often referred to as advocating freedom of expression, usually propose that teachers and educational administrators should choose what is suitable material, although they do believe that a line should be drawn somewhere. For example, none of these defenders of freedom of expression defend the placing of hard-core pornography in the hands of fourth graders. This, of course, makes the debate all the more interesting, since it means that both sides agree on the following general principles: a line must be drawn, certain materials are suitable for certain age groups, and education is important and valuable. Where they disagree is on who should make the decisions surrounding these issues. Both advocate some kind of censorship. They just disagree on who should be the censors and who should be censored. Therefore, they both hold to the same values, but they disagree as to the application of these values.

Although this distinction between practice and value helps us to be tolerant of unusual cultural practices, we are still able to make

valuable moral judgments about others and ourselves. First, we are free to criticize those intolerable cultural practices that do conflict with basic human values, such as in the cases of genocide in Nazi Germany and Apartheid in South Africa. Second, we are able to admit to real moral progress, such as in the case of the abolition of slavery. And third, there can exist real moral reformers, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and the prophets of the Old Testament, who served as prophetic voices to reprimand their cultures for having drifted far from a true moral practice based on basic human values. These three points that follow from a belief in transcultural values do not follow from a belief in ethical relativism. That is to say, in order to remain consistent the ethical relativist cannot criticize intolerable moral practices, believe in real moral progress, or acknowledge the existence of real moral reformers. For these three forms of moral judgment presuppose the existence of real, transcultural non-relative, objective values.

Although much more can be said about the justification and existence of certain values, what we have covered thus far is sufficient to show that ethical relativism is enormously problematic and that we can rationally discuss and argue with each other about right and wrong without resorting to the claim that ethical judgments are merely subjective or relative and that all such judgments have equal validity. For to claim the latter logically leads one to the judgment that Mother Teresa is no more and no less virtuous than Adolf Hitler. I believe that this example is sufficient to show ethical relativism to be bankrupt. Ω



Untangling this issue's "Spiders Web" is **Francis J. Beckwith**, 35, Lecturer of Philosophy and Ethics & Policy Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas as well as Senior Research Fellow at the Nevada Policy Research Institute and Professor at Large, Simon Greenleaf University. He has authored and edited several books including *Do the Right Thing: A Philosophical Dialogue on the Moral and Social Issues of Our Time* (Jones & Bartlett, 1994), *Politically Correct Death: Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights* (Baker, 1993), *Are You Politically Correct?: Debating America's Cultural Standards?* (Prometheus, 1993), *Matters of Life and Death* (Baker, 1991), *The Mormon Concept of God: A Philosophical Analysis* (Edwin Mellen, 1991), and *Baha'i* (Bethany House, 1985). He and his wife, Frankie, make their home in Las Vegas, Nevada. This article was reprinted, with permission, from Francis' book entitled *Politically Correct Death: Answering Arguments for Abortion Rights*.

(Continued from page 3)

in his factory. The movie is about the change that came over that man, and how his heart expanded and he allowed himself to see the valuable humanity of his workers. He came to realize that his workers were more than just "furniture" in his life; these were little girls and boys, old folks, men and women, precious souls whose lives were being savagely destroyed by the evil menace of racial hatred.

He eventually was able to save the lives of over 1,100 people, but he had to purchase them from the Nazis in order to accomplish this. What did he use to purchase them? The money he had made in the factory, and the good life that went with it. Do you see the irony? He started out seeing people as nothing more than a means to acquire money and material things, but ended up seeing that the true wealth was in *the people*, and realized that the money was merely the means to acquire people, who are infinitely more valuable than things. He made a list, and he expended everything he had to buy his workers, and provide them with a place of safety. He went completely broke. Yet, at the end of the movie, as he contemplated the number of lives he had saved, all he could think of was that he could have saved even *more* lives if he had only been a little less selfish still. He looked at his expensive car, and he cried in anguish, "I

could've gotten two more people for that *two more people* I didn't do enough!" "No, no, you did *so much*," was the reply.

That is the very transformation that can come to you and me as we let God shed His love abroad in our hearts. Don't you want to hear that some day, that you have done *so much*? Do you have a list? Is it worth it to you to spend your money, your talents, your time, and your prayers, to bring *your* people to a place of safety? What's a Mormon worth to you? Enough to take the time to meet with him? What would *you* give for a JW? Can you see any value in an agnostic? Please Christian, I beg you not to waste your opportunity to take part in the only truly great venture this world has to offer. The choice is yours. Your salvation is not at stake if you live selfishly. But so much *is*. *Work for the reward that will never perish* Ω.

Love to all,

Joy



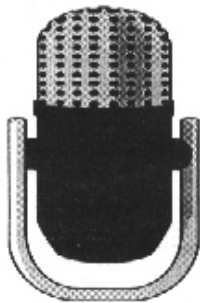
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APRIL

6th

Did Jesus Christ really rise from the dead in the same body he was buried in? Or has this idea been disproven by modern scholarship? Dr. William Lane Craig, author of the book *Reasonable Faith*, will be our guest for this pre-Resurrection Day show.

13th

Bob Anderson, President of "Take Heed Ministries" in Pittsburgh, PA and contributing author of the book *Earth's Final Days* will be our guest.

20th

Bill Honsberger, missionary with "Missions to the Americas," will be our guest. The topic will be: *New Spirituality*.

27th

What does Mexican food and Christian Apologetics have in common? You'll have to tune in to find out as Larry Pile, Research Specialist at Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center, will answer the question: *"What is a T.A.C.O.?"*

MAY

4th

Dr. Michael Noble, Sr. Pastor of Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago, IL. and *New Life In Christ Convention* speaker will discuss "No Other Name."

11th

If you have questions about Mormonism then be sure to call in and speak to James Walker who was a fourth-generation Mormon and is now President of Watchman Fellowship in Arlington, TX.

18th

Tonight we will be talking with Renee Halley, from "Witnesses Now for Freedom" and David Hoover, Program Executive for Missions, Evangelism and Stewardship with the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Northern Illinois District.

25th

A loving God would never send anyone to an eternal punishment . . . would he? Dr. Scott McKnight, professor at North Park College, will have the "HOT" topic, "Politically Correct Hell."

JUNE

1st

ON LOCATION!!! There is no telling who we may talk to as we broadcast LIVE from the 3rd Annual New Life In Christ Convention held at Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. (Not a function of Wheaton college.)

8th

Eric Pement, a Senior Editor for *Cornerstone* magazine, will have a "wild" topic: "Goin' to the Festival."

15th

Dr. Philip Johnson will be discussing his book, *"Darwin on Trial."*

22nd

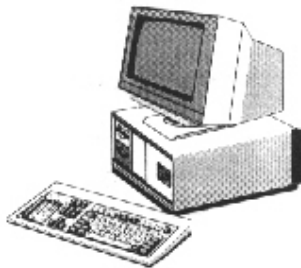
"When should a Christian be a Skeptic?" Bob and Gretchen Passantino of "Answers in Action" will attempt to answer this question.

29th

Elliot Miller, Editor-in-Chief of the *Christian Research Journal*, will help us distinguish between "True and False Views of God."

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*"Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"
Galatians 4:16*