

Inside Wyoming

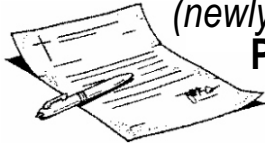
The Newsletter of the Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church

Vol. 18, No. 1, January 26, 2003



WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 CORINTHIANS 1:23

A Word from the (newly retired) PASTOR



I must confess, I had no notion of retiring for quite a while. My prolonged physical problems changed all that, and I disappointed myself.

As I said in my letter to the Diaconate and Congregation, I am

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Contributions of articles and information are most welcome! Contact the editor, Walter Rice, Jr., at 215-820-0165.

praying for and fully trusting the Lord to restore my strength to a great degree, even to the point of three years ago before my problems started. In fact, He is doing so gradually day by day. I know He can fully return me to my old normal self, so that I could get around without any assisting device, but obviously, I can't tell how long that would take, if, indeed He does. That, obviously, is up to Him.

Meanwhile the church would be without the full Pastoral leadership that is necessary for you to be a vital congregation. I have prayed about this for some time, and considered the alternatives. Although I am only 68, and felt I might go on for several years, I honestly believe it is for your benefit that I retire at this time.

I thank all of you for your enthusiastic support of almost everything I have attempted to accomplish at "Wyoming" over the past seven or so years, and pray the Lord will make this congregation continue to prosper according to His grace for many years to come. As I have said in the past, I am grateful to the Lord and to you for giving me the opportunity to lead this congregation during the past few years. May the Lord bless you.

George Rice

Defending Our Faith in the Internet Age

Part I

by Walt Rice, Jr.

With the coming of the Internet, it has become possible to get information on many thousands of Christian organizations all over the world, even to listen to preachers like Billy Graham any time of day or night on your computer. You can read the Bible in dozens of languages -- or in almost two dozen English translations.

One of the most useful things about the Internet though, is the ease and freedom with which people can communicate. The Internet is becoming a tool through which ordinary Christians have great opportunities to witness to their friends and to their friends' friends. Note that I say friends, for the basis of Christian witness is still primarily through the development of trusting relationships. But over the Internet people let down their guards and get over their pride and ask questions and discuss things that just wouldn't be "cool" or comfortable to discuss in person -- and often this means that kids have honest discussions about the Bible, something that would almost never happen in school.

The other day I received a random inquiry over Instant Messenger (on the Internet) from somebody who went to Central High School a couple of classes behind me, and is now going to the University of Pennsylvania. While trying to

understand an argument against school prayer, he asked me, "Doesn't the Bible say not to pray in public?" He gave me the reference of Matthew 6:6. I got to explain a large portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, describing how Jesus is not banning public prayer, but rather teaching that praying for the sake of looking good or religious before other people is hypocritical -- God wants our hearts to be desiring the good things that He gives, not what worthless praise this world can give.

Part II

by Walt Rice, Sr.

Just as Walter did (in part 1), George Wilson, one of our youth group teens, also uses the Internet as a tool for sharing God's Word with his friends. George often communicates using the internet's Instant Messenger which allows people to use computers to send and receive messages.

Last Saturday night, at about 12:40 p.m., while working on my computer, I received an Instant Message from George asking if only humans go to Heaven. I told him that of the things here on earth, (people, animals, vegetation) only people would go to Heaven. Then he asked another, unrelated question about the Bible -- then another.

I didn't know where these questions were coming from, but George soon

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Bringing in the New Year...



photos by Becky Crockett



Watch Night Service

On New Years Eve, a small group gathered at the church for a time of games, food, and fellowship. The most popular game seemed to be Scrabble, with avid players like Walt Rice, Sr., Debby Crockett and Mary Rice engaging in a “battle royal” of words. UNO, Monopoly, and checkers also made a showing. It turns out that Buddy Homiller is something of a checkers champion, and he handily defeated both myself and my father, sending us packing. The kids (including some grown-ups who think they are kids!) had fun with basketball and dodge-ball.

We were privileged to have as our guests Rev. Luis Centeno and his family. After our time of fun and fellowship, we gathered together as the New Year approached for a time of worship and prayer. After singing some hymns, Rev. Centeno lead us in a short devotional, exhorting us to “walk with God.” We ended the evening in prayer, listening to the firecrackers and car horns outside, knowing that we indeed have a better reason to celebrate than just another year we have a God who is faithful through all the ages, and to all generations!

by Walter Rice, Jr.

Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments. Deuteronomy 7:9

We Preach Christ Crucified

But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1:22-24)

Men tell us we should preach Christ as an example. We do preach him as an example, and rejoice to do so; but we can never allow that view of our Lord to overshadow our preaching of him as a sacrifice for sin. He suffered in the room, and place, and stead, of guilty men, and this is the gospel. Whatever others may preach, "we preach Christ crucified." We will ever bear the cross in the forefront. The substitution of Christ for the

sinner is the essence of the gospel. We do not keep back the doctrine of the Second Advent; but, first and foremost, we preach the pierced One; for this it is that shall lead to evangelical repentance, when the Spirit of grace is poured out.

O brethren, whatever else you preach, or do not preach, preach Christ crucified! Jesus Christ my Lord as crucified is my main topic, and shall be till I die. I trust you feel a pleasure in thinking of the Lord Jesus in any character in which he is revealed, but yet the cross is that whereon he is most lifted up, and this is the chief attraction for sinful men. Though it be to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, it is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

C.H. Spurgeon, Sept. 18, 1887

The art on our cover is a piece of hand-crafted stained glass, created by Rebecca Crockett.

Becky graduated from Holy Family College, Philadelphia, with a Bachelor's Degree in Art. While at Holy Family she studied oil painting, sculpture, drawing, ceramics and stained glass. Her favorite methods of expression are stained glass and what is known as "mixed media," the name given to a piece when the artist has combined two or more methods into a single work.

Becky is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Education at LaSalle University, and hopes to eventually have a career teaching elementary students.



Becky serves the Lord at Wyoming as the Craft Coordinator and lead craft teacher for both Sunday Bible School and Vacation Bible School. Much of the special decorating you see at Vacation Bible School time is her work and ideas. In addition, she is the leader of our Girls Guild, continuing the work begun a long time ago by her grandmother, Bessie Knell. Becky is always involved at Wyoming in a variety of artistic ways, whether that means cross-stitching baby things for Alpha Pregnancy Services, playing the flute at the Christmas Eve service, or getting glitter in her hair making a take-home project with the kids at VBS!

by Debby Crockett

Nursery School Update

*by Shirley Parcell,
Pre-School Teacher*

Christmas time was a very special time for our boys and girls in the Pre-School. For the teachers it was a very busy time. We prepared a party with snacks and drinks, and topped it off with a visit by Santa Claus, who presented each child with a gift. If you're old enough to read this, it shouldn't spoil anything to know that Santa Claus was played by my husband George.

Many parents attended and took pictures of their children sitting in Santa's lap. We are continuing to teach our children the basic skills necessary to get a good start when they enter school, and we are also teaching them about the Lord; a lesson we pray will be with them always.

Prayer Corner, *cont'd from page 8*

the "2-2-2," or "Two Friends, Twice a Week, for Two Months" challenge. Maybe you'll decide to pray Mondays and Thursdays. Whatever days you choose, mark them on your calendar. And enlist the help of a Christian friend to remind you to pray!

How should you pray? Pray that they would come to the knowledge of the truth, that they would repent and turn to Jesus Christ for forgiveness. Pray God would put witnesses to the Gospel in their path, that they would be drawn to the Bible, that they would start going to church, even though they may not know why. Pray they would drink of the water that Jesus offers, that they may never thirst again.

Praise God that He works through the bold and earnest prayers of His people! I hope we will rejoice together as God brings those we love into His Kingdom.

Defending Our Faith, *from page 3*

enlightened me. He was relaying the answers to a friend in a "chat" session on the internet. George has a passion for the well-being (physical and spiritual) of his friends and family -- a passion we all would do well to emulate. George invited me to join the discussion directly. In short, George's faith was being challenged and he was asking for some back-up. When I accepted, George's friend Adam greeted me. My daughter Heather was in the room with me and quickly displaced me at the keyboard because she says I don't type quickly

enough. It was a great help to me to have Heather as a back-up for quick and Biblical answers. With a Bible open in front of us, the fun began. Heather would tell me where to look; I would read aloud -- Heather would type as quickly as her fingers could flutter.

The insert in this week's newsletter is an excerpt of the ensuing conversation. It's a little long, but if you take time to read it, you will find some of the questions people are asking that challenge our faith.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15)

How I Became a Christian

The first time I realized that Jesus really wanted for me to openly confess my sins and walk with Him, it was like being kissed for the first time. You know it is something you want more of, but you are not ready to commit. I was in my teens, and knew everything, as almost everyone does at that age. I wanted both worlds. Part of me wanted to walk down the aisle and say yes, but my world of dreams had no place for Jesus.



I went to church and “played Christian” for many years without really committing myself to God's plans for me. In 1952, I joined the Wyoming Avenue Baptist Church. There was no earth shattering conversion, as with Paul. I joined because all of my friends were joining churches. Whether they joined like I did to be part of the crowd, I have no way of knowing. Even though I had not fully committed, God was always there for me. Looking back I can see the times that He protected me from so many dangerous things.

Many years passed, and my youngest daughter was going to be enrolled at a Christian school. New parents were asked to come and meet with members of the board. Just before I was called in to meet with them, someone told me that I

had to give my testimony. Never in all my years had I been asked such a personal request. I was tempted to leave the room, but I really wanted for my daughter to attend a Christian school. When I was called into the room, there was an enormous man sitting in the corner. He said, “I am Pastor Ben. We would like to know how you became a Christian.”

Before entering the room, I prayed as I had never done before. I knew that whatever I said it had to be true, and I had to commit.

My life changed that day, and there was no turning back. Pastor Ben does not look nearly so big today. He asked if I had a favorite Bible verse, and even though I was shaking like a leaf, I quoted John 3:16, which was the only verse I could think of at the time. That is still my favorite verse. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

I wish I could say that I have walked a straight and narrow path ever since that day, but I have many shortcomings. Jesus is still working on me, and He is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

by Pat Hales (a daughter of the King)

PRAYER CORNER

In his review of things we've seen in Philippians, Pastor Grover mentioned two things from chapter 1 that particularly caught my attention. The first is that Christians should pray for the salvation of others. The second is that Christian humility is the cord that binds us together, and is a sign to the world that Christ is among us. We'll talk about Christian humility in our next issue.

I don't know about you, but my record of praying for my unsaved friends is pretty spotty. Christian (I'm including myself in this), it ought not to be so! The heart desire of God is that those in sin

would repent and trust in Jesus for salvation (1 Timothy 2:4). Indeed the return of Christ is delayed because the Father is waiting for all who will repent to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). In the same way that we should have the mind of Christ in being humble, should not the heart of God for the lost be ours as well?

Here's a prayer challenge for you: choose two family members or friends who are not Christians, or haven't been to church in a while, and pray for them twice a week for two months. I'll call it

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Inside Wyoming

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LET
US
SING HIS
PRAISES

SPECIAL INSERT - SUPPLEMENT TO

Defending Our Faith in the Internet Age

The insert in this week's newsletter is an excerpt of a late night conversation on the Internet. (For the particulars surrounding the conversation and how it came about, read the article starting on page 3.) It's a little long, but if you take time to read it, you will find some of the questions people are asking today that challenge our faith.

Don't mind the spelling and grammar errors, or the lack of capitalization. It's just the way people talk.

Adam (12:57:42 AM): does God exist?

Walt Sr.: Yes.

Adam: do only humans go to heaven?

Walt Sr. : Of the things and beings on this world -- only humans go to heaven or hell.

Adam: what is limbo

Walt Sr. : nothing. -- a game you play at parties.

Adam : no it means something like "in the middle" like when you spend eternity in limbo

Walt Sr. : Somebody made up the idea of limbo -- not God. Once you die, you are judged and then either go to heaven or hell.

Adam : who does the judging and how is process handled?

Heather : Revelation 20 tells of the judgment process at the end of this world. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it earth and sky fled from His presence and there was no place for them and I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and books were opened another book was opened which was the book of life the dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. IF ANYONE'S NAME WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE HE WAS THROWN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea and I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God beautifully dressed for her husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying now the dwelling of God is with men and He will live with them they will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God

SPECIAL INSERT

George : Walt, Adam said the bible contradicts itself more then once ... is this true?

Heather : The Bible does not contradict itself. Do you have a specific case in which you think it does?

Adam : Mark 15:22 and it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

John 19:14-15 And about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out...crucify him!" Care to explain?

Heather : The third hour refers to the actual crucifixion. John is still talking about the proceedings before the crucifixion the whole thing went through a whole day, that night, and then the following day. John's part comes before Mark's

Adam : mark's was the third hour

Heather : right

Adam : John's sixth hour

Heather : the day before

Adam : ok fine

Adam : John 1:18 No man hath seen God at anytime

Gen. 32:30 For I have seen god face to face That looks like a big contradiction

Heather : Let me ask you a question

Adam : ok

Heather: in in Genesis 32, who is talking, and about whom?

Adam: adam and eve?

Heather: nope

Adam: i dont know

Heather: it's actually Jacob

Adam: right I know who that is

Heather: You see, it was the night before a very important meeting Jacob really angered his brother off by stealing the birthright a number of years before. Jacob had to flee for his life. Now, years later, the two were about to meet up in the dessert. Jacob was scared to death. He was kind of cowardly and sent his wife and kids out first, hoping his brother Esau wouldn't kill them thus keeping him a little safer. Anyway, Jacob had one of those "I'm scared to death so I better pray to God for help" moments. During that prayer, someone came to meet him where he was hiding behind a bush by a stream of water. They wrestled all night.

Adam: oh yeah

Heather: Jacob knew there was something strange about the guy

Adam: and now he walks with a limp

Heather: but they kept at it until dawn. At the very end, Jacob knew it was the angel of the Lord (a phrase not really clarified much more until the New Testament) Anyway, Jacob knew he was divine in some way, so he said "I won't let you go until you bless me" (a little demanding and pushy, but hey) The angel of the Lord (who we know from the NT to be a form of God Himself - maybe a pre-incarnate showing of Christ) did bless

SPECIAL INSERT

him, but He also proved that He was God. After wrestling all night, the angel of the Lord simply touched Jacob's hip and actually put it out of it's socket. Thus the limp you spoke of.

Adam : yes, thank you. I TOLD YOU
GEORGE

Heather : anyway, it was basically God saying, you HAVE seen me but I let you live because I am GRACIOUS. Now, the next part. No one has seen God and lived, true. That is, no one has seen God uncovered. He's too perfect, glorious and holy. Every time He shows Himself to people He's covered or veiled in some way.

Adam : oh

Heather : One day though, that will be different. In the new heavens and new earth we spoke of before. The people whose names were in that book of Life (the ones who believed on Christ and were forgiven). They will be made perfect and good.

Adam : ok, well how about this question

John 8:14 Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true

John 5:31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

Heather : In the first one, Jesus is answering the Pharisees. Do you know what he's responding to?

Adam : no

Heather : okay. Jesus said, "I am the

light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The Pharisees said "Hogwash". You can't testify of yourself as your own witness! But Jesus says, "it doesn't matter if I testify of myself or not it's still true regardless. Basically, he's saying, yes, according to your traditions and customs and laws, my word doesn't count, but that doesn't mean it's not true. He's just responding to their objection.

Adam : oh

George: Walt is it bad to be afraid... isn't that Satan tempting me to not believe?

Heather: afraid of what

George: my friends family going to hell and me not

Heather: there is a difference between fear and passion. You have a passion for their lives. You have a love for them. That is godly.

Adam : is there some way that when you die you can make it so you don't go anywhere? (like you'd just be "dead") i don't want to live forever

Heather : you can't change that You see, since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, something drastic happened between God and people. Man was created to live forever

Adam : i want to be a rotting corpse in the ground when i die and not go any further than that

Heather : you will never die in the

SPECIAL INSERT

sense of never existing. You can have your wish, though if you want. The Bible describes death without Christ as a place where the worm never dies, and you never stop decaying - fun, huh?

Adam : one more thing

Heather : sure

Adam : what kind of christian are you?

Heather: *The kind that Christ has purchased through His blood that He spilled on the cross the kind that God the Father has adopted into his own family. The kind that will live forever with him there is only one kind :-)* Either you are the

same as me, or you are not.

"For there is one name under heaven given among men by which you must be saved"

Adam (1:56:04 AM): ok. Good night

Heather (1:56:12 AM): *There's a quote I have for you*

Adam (1:56:17 AM): ok

Heather (1:56:24 AM): *It's by an ancient Christian. Praying to God, he said "May my soul be restless until it finds its rest in you." I pray the same thing for you tonight. Rest well.*

Adam (1:57:58 AM): good night
