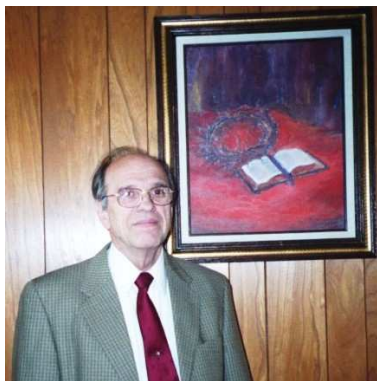

The Sower

Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4th Street
Arthur, IL 61911

Times of Worship

Bible Classes.....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study.....6:00 p.m.



Ron Bartanen, Minister

WELCOME to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a VISITOR, we especially appreciate your decision to meet with us. It is our hope that you will return at every opportunity.

Have you visited our website lately?
(www.arthurchofchrist.com)

Be sure to check out the "Christian Evidences"/"Apologetics Press" links Now in both English and Spanish.

May 11, 2008

THE RIGHT THING IS SOMETIMES THE HARD THING

Yesterday several good friends and I were sitting in the office of a neurosurgeon. We listened to him as he explained why he left a thriving practice in a large metropolis to come to a much smaller hospital in our area of the country. He said it was because of a letter he received.

You see, he had been so busy with his job, he told us that he literally had not seen his little girl in three weeks. Then one night when he came home from work, there was a letter by his bed from his 11-year-old daughter. It was a letter in which this little girl told her daddy that she missed him and wanted more of his time. She acknowledged to her daddy that he had an important job, but she said, "Daddy, doing the 'right' thing is sometimes the 'hard' thing to do." It was at this point that this successful neurosurgeon decided he wanted to be a father first. So he left his practice and moved his family to south-central Kentucky.

I couldn't help but be touched by this doctor's story. Before me was a man who knew that there things in life that are more important than fame, ego, work, and money. It doesn't take a "brain surgeon" to be able to identify proper values and priorities in life. Sometimes little 11-year-old girls who miss their daddies can discern those things. The question I have for you is, have you discerned these same truths? Give it some thought.

--Steve Higginbotham, Glasgow, Ky., *MercEmail*

"Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him" (Psalms 68:3-4)

THE CHURCH OF OPRAH

(The following is a portion of an article by Robert N. Lambert, minister of the Main St. Church of Christ in Milan, Tenn. While Oprah seems likeable, does many good deeds, and has many fans, people need to be aware of her powerful influence. She is so powerful that one presidential aspirant welcomed her endorsement. What all should be wary of is her message.)

Oprah Winfrey has now become more than a talk-show host and is without question the latest spiritual guru in the ever-growing New Age Movement. In reference to Jesus Christ as the one way of salvation, she stated emphatically, "There couldn't possibly be just one way!" Oprah's next big event is a 365 day study of, "A Course in Miracles". This is a book written by Marianne Williamson, who claims she received it from God. The book states, "This is a course in mind training." The course states, "There is no sin," and that a "slain Christ has no meaning." Lesson 70 teaches that, "my salvation comes from me."

Before going any further it is only proper that I tell you that I am not, nor have I ever been, a fan of Oprah Winfrey. That, coupled with the knowledge that she is extremely popular with so many people, caused me some hesitancy in writing this article. To criticize someone so popular can sometimes lead to bad feelings. However, Oprah Winfrey has now intruded into an area where, because of her enormous popularity, influence, and wealth (\$1.4 billion at last report), she could easily lead millions into eternal destruction. There are thousands, perhaps millions, who hang on her every word and follow her every lead with their only justification being, "Oprah's doing it." And that is the reason I feel that to comment on this new "Oprah religion," or "Church of Oprah" (as some have called it) is not only appropriate but absolutely essential.

In addition to what was referenced in the first paragraph, Oprah has also voiced agreement with one New Age pundit who declares that the crucifixion and resurrection are not actual events, but merely symbolic rallying points to show that we can rise above adversity. Several years ago, when Oprah was lambasting the Christian community for their opposition to homosexuality, someone in her audience pointed out that Jesus and the Bible condemned homosexuality as an abomination before God. To this, Oprah piously responded, "Well, I serve a different Jesus."

In fact, she serves no Jesus at all. To claim that He is not the only way to salvation, to support those who cast doubt on the sacrifice that provided the means of our forgiveness, and the resurrection which ratified all that He did, to support the notion that there is no sin and that a slain Christ has no meaning is to cast aside the love, mercy and kindness which God bestowed upon us to save us. It is amazing how complicated her new "gospel" (please read Galatians 1:1-10) really is. Equally amazing is how simple the gospel of Christ really is. Oprah's new religion may provide interesting books to read, entertaining television, and even the chance to be given a new car. However, one day the books will be tattered and faded, the television show canceled, and the cars rusted piles of metal. The only thing that will last through eternity is the plain, simple doctrine of the destructive and universal nature of sin, the sacrifice of the Savior, His resurrection and ascension back to the Father, and the promise of eternal life it provides.

I'm sorry, Ms. Winfrey, but like Belshazzar, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Obedience to the doctrines of God found in His word are indeed the ONLY way to eternal salvation. It was true in New Testament times, it is true today, it will be true long after you and I have disappeared from this earth, and it will be true until Jesus returns to deliver us to the Father.

FROM A FOUNDING FATHER

"statesmen, my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand.... The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People in a great measure, than they have it now. They may change their Rulers, and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting Liberty." --John Adams (letter to Zabdiel Adams, *Our Sacred Honor*, Bennett, p. 371)

TWO WOLVES

There is an old Cherokee legend about a young man who keeps getting in trouble because of his aggressive tendencies. The young man goes to see his grandfather, and says, "Sometimes I feel such anger that I can't help it. I can't stop myself." And his grandfather, who is a tribal elder and a wise man, says, "I understand. I used to be the same way. You see, inside of you are two wolves. One is good and kind and peaceful, and the other is evil and mean and angry. The mean wolf is always fighting with the good wolf." The boy thought for a moment, then said, "But Grandfather, which wolf will win?" And the old man said, **"THE ONE YOU FEED."**

- **WELCOME** to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly. We are especially appreciative of any that may be VISITORS with us today. We hope for your soon return.
- **"BEING WARNED OF GOD"** will be this morning's message, with Genesis 6:11-17 as the reading. Since I made a substitute for the announced lesson last Sunday evening, I will bring the message previously announced: **"AT WHAT PRICE?"** The reading will be Matthew 13:44-46.
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** Next Sunday morning Wayne Polk from the church in Shelbyville will be speaking, while I'll be at Shelbyville. We appreciate the good work Wayne is doing in our area.
- **NEXT SUNDAY EVENING**, being the last Sunday of the month, will be our monthly **Song Service**. Let me know of any songs you would like to have led.
- **BIBLE CLASSES:** **Wednesday's** study in church history begins with "XXXVIII.- 3" on our latest lesson sheet. **Next Sunday** morning we should be near the middle of Acts 19, depending on this morning's progress.
- **COMING UP:** **Our Arthur Nursing Home service** will be May 27 at 6:45 p.m.
- **IN OUR PRAYERS:** Paul has been moved to a hospital in Chicago for special therapy. He is expected to be there at least for 2 weeks. *** Lester had carpal tunnel syndrome surgery Thursday, and is home and doing well. *** Continue to remember Inez, Dean, Doris, Woody, Rodger, Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis Carter (Ind./Fla.) and our service men and women.