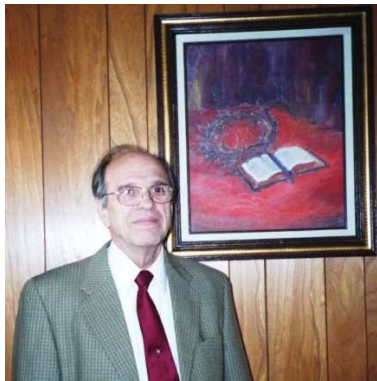

The Sower

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 4, 2008

WHEN WE HUNGER

What were they to make of one that could adequately feed 5000 hungry men on five small barley loaves and a couple sardine-sized fish, and have leftovers sufficient to fill 12 baskets? Someone is heard to say, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:14), and others are in agreement. It is soon the consensus that one that could do so much with so little could solve their economic problems, so a hasty caucus determined that a better candidate for kingship could not be found. By a quick departure to a mountain, Jesus eluded a mob that had political ambitions for Him.

As He later interacted with the crowd, Jesus spoke of another bread. While the multitude craved another like Moses, who by God's power fed their ancestors a heavenly manna, He spoke of the true "Bread from heaven...He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:32-33). It is through this Bread—the ultimate "staff of life"—that eternal life is to be realized (6:50-58).

It was easier for the populace to put their lives into the hands of a king that would satisfy their physical hunger than to trust that one to give Himself to them as "the bread of life." Many nominal disciples can no longer accept His claims, and they depart. But what of the chosen twelve? He asks of them, "Do you also want to go away?" Peter correctly responded, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (6:68).

While multitudes satisfy themselves with bread that feeds the flesh, they continue to ignore the words of Him who, alone, can truly feed the soul. They find neither time nor inclination to feed on "the words of eternal life," and, as a consequence, we find the inner man lean with hunger and facing death by spiritual starvation. Yet Jesus' promise is: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (6:35).

Do you believe on Him? Would you accept His promise: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16)?--Ron

PREPARED FOR PERSECUTION?

(This article pertains to something we Americans find unpleasant to consider—persecution. Although Jesus told his followers repeatedly that this is something His followers should expect, in our sheltered society we have come to think of it as pertaining to the early disciples—certainly not to us. However, our world is changing fast, and we would do well to heed the warnings. The following article was received through OneNewsNow.com on January 8.)

The founder of Gospel for Asia says while persecution is increasing worldwide for Christians, he believes it will soon impact believers in America—and K.P. Yohannan says they need to get ready for it. Persecution against Christians is increasing worldwide, especially in countries such as India, where attacks on churches and Christians by Hindu extremists have increased dramatically. In fact, when missionaries graduate from Gospel for Asia (GFA) Bible colleges, they are told to expect persecution—and perhaps even death—for spreading the gospel. According to GFA founder K.P. Yohannan, Christians in those countries expect such treatment and are prepared when the tough times come. But he believes Christians in America will soon be faced with persecution as well—and he is fearful that many are not ready. “The great falling away from faith would be worst here in America because people are absolutely not prepared to face suffering or persecution—because we cannot imagine a gospel with the cross and the suffering in it, says Yohannan. “Yet the Bible teaches very strong about it. So as the Word of God says, ‘He who has ears, let him hear.’” The ministry leader is convinced that prosperity has caused many Christians in America to focus on material possessions instead of surrendering all to Christ. The result, he says, is that American Christians have become “very naïve” in thinking that real persecution will never come their way. These are warning signs,” he explains. “God is telling us that we need to prepare our lives. And preachers are going around saying that revival is coming, and everything is okay, and all these things? I think that people are being set up for huge disaster and denying their faith when they face problems.”

It is estimated that more than 16,000 Christians are martyred worldwide each year for their faith.

(HAS IT ALREADY BEGUN HERE? This morning I received an e-mail from *Montana Home* informing me of the arrest of an 18-year-old Christian college student in Champaign who was arrested for commenting to a friend concerning a homosexual couple approaching them who were holding hands, “Look at those two guys holding hands.” One of the homosexuals, who was perceived to be drunk, “grabbed him by the shoulder, putting his face up to Brett’s and repeatedly shouting, ‘What did you say?’” When he would not stop, Brett pushed him away, and he fell. The police were called and Brett was arrested for violation of the Illinois hate crimes law, a class 4 felony, with a penalty that can be as much as 3 years in prison. Homosexuals have since posted his address on the Internet, and have begun picketing on the street where the alleged “hate crime” occurred. The article stated that “the police department of Champaign, Illinois is reported to be under pressure from higher authorities to increase its quota of hate crimes convictions. Has our nation gone insane? Are we losing our right to freedom of religion and freedom of speech? Can I be arrested for the “hate crime” of preaching that homosexuality is declared by the Word of God to be an abomination? It makes me wonder—where will this lead? --Ron)

IT’S UP TO YOU-- Take a piece of wax, a piece of meat, some sand, some clay and some shavings. Put them; on the fire and see how they react. Each of them is being acted upon by the same agent, yet the wax melts, the meat fries, the sand dries up, the clay hardens, and the shavings blaze. Under identical influence of circumstances and environment, one material is made better and becomes stronger, another becomes weaker, and another withers away.

This explains why some who hear the Word of God are made better. Still others hear the same thing and become angry. Not what is done to us, but what we do determines our eternity. **TAKE HEED HOW YOU HEAR AND ACT.** *—The Edifier, Farris, Tex.*

PROCTER & GAMBLE WANTS TO KNOW if you approve its efforts to promote the homosexual lifestyle. P&G has added scenes of homosexuals with open mouth kissing to desensitize viewers, especially younger viewers, to the homosexual lifestyle. Thousands of homosexual activists are already calling P&G. If you wish to let them know you disapprove, call 1-800-331-3774 and click on option 2. Following the recording, click on option 2 again. There is not a live person at this number.

—AFA Journal, Action Alert, 5-20-’08

“Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense: I shall not be greatly moved” (Psalms 62:1-2).

- **WELCOME** to today’s Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a VISITOR, we especially appreciate your decision to meet with us today. We hope you find a spiritual blessing in joining

with us in honoring our Lord, and that you will return at every opportunity.

- **“WHEN THE EARTH QUAKES”** will be this morning’s message. (I erred in last Sunday’s bulletin, announcing this as the evening lesson, and the lesson from Ephesians for the morning.) The reading will be Matthew 24:1-8. The

evening lesson will be, ***“The Walk of the New Man,”*** Ephesians 4:20-32 being the reading.

- **NEXT SUNDAY morning’s** message will be, ***The Christian’s Three Homes,*** with Ephesians 5:22-33 as the reading. The **evening** lesson will be, ***“At What Price?”*** The reading will be Matthew 13:44-46.
- **BIBLE CLASSES: Wednesday** evening’s study will begin with “XXXVII. A Growing Controversy” in our latest lesson sheet as we continue our study in church history, now studying influences in the Restoration Movement. **Next Sunday** we should be in the early part of Acts 18, depending upon this morning’s progress.
- **IN OUR PRAYERS:** Paul continues to make progress in spite of problems. He is finding it easier to recognize people and talk. Keep him, Nadine and family in your prayers. *** Lyla still awaits the results of her tests. We hope “no news is good news.” *** Continue to remember Inez, Dean, Doris, Lester, Woody, Rodger, Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis Carter (Ind./Fla.), and our men and women serving in our armed forces. Also pray for the leaders of our nation and other nations in efforts for peace. Pray for God’s providence in our coming presidential election that the right person will be selected to lead our nation in a way that best conforms with the will of God.