

The Encourager

Dave Kistler Family Ministries & H.O.P.E. Crusades Newsletter
January – April 2006

Ministries Update...

By
Dave Kistler

Romans 1:18-32, is a frightening passage of Scripture when one considers where America is as a nation and what is happening in this once "Christian" country. Verse 18 says that God's wrath is actively against men who "hold" the truth in unrighteousness. The word "hold" does not mean to "carry" but rather to "hold down" or "suppress." When one has had access to, and knows the truth, but then tries to suppress that with ungodly living, that person becomes the target of Almighty God. Three times in this chapter, we are told that God either "gave them up" or "gave them over" to judgment (1:24,26,28). What is interesting about God's judgment is that He allows men to have a full plate of what they desired. That is, God's judgment on men is allowing them to have what it is that they wanted. When Israel became dissatisfied with God's provision of manna and demanded "flesh to eat," God gave them what they wanted. His fulfilling of their desire WAS, itself, His judgment on them.

Most intriguing is the statement in Romans 1:28, "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." A reprobate mind (adokimos-literally "disapproved") is one that no longer has God's approval or blessing. This rejection by God comes as a result of not wanting God in one's knowledge. God's blessing cannot come to or remain on an individual or nation that doesn't desire to have God in their knowledge.

Consider the ramifications of this truth in light of recent events in our nation. Three attempts have been made recently to further remove any knowledge of God from the public square. In Las

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Cruces, New Mexico, one man (with the backing of the ACLU) as demanded that the city's logo be changed because of its overtly religious symbolism. Las Cruces means "the crosses" and has three crosses in its logo. In addition, Michael Newdow, the same gentleman who brought the lawsuit that resulted in the 9th Circuit Court's decision to declare "under God" unconstitutional, has filed another suit asking that "In God We Trust" be removed from our coins. As well, many retailers have succumbed to the pressure of the "church-state separation" group, and are eliminating the traditional season greeting "Merry Christmas", opting instead for "Happy Holidays." It's almost as if some in America want any concept of God eradicated from our thinking, replacing it with something totally secular.

Janet Folger has written a fascinating book entitled "The Criminalization of Christianity" in which she chronicles the attempt, not only to remove God, but to actually criminalize Him. She is not far off when she says that "pastors will be called into court for the content of their sermons." In fact, that has already happened in other countries. If God is allowed to be

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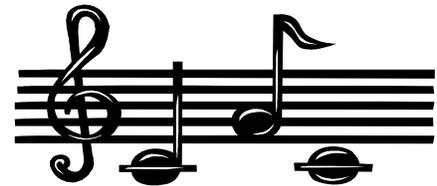
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"criminalized" in America, then He most certainly will "give up" on us.

The good news is this. The Michael Newdows of this nation represent only a fraction of the country, albeit a very vocal segment. It's time for those of us who love God and our nation to stand up. In fact, we need to KNEEL first. We must petition the LORD of heaven for His continued mercy and grace on us and our nation. Once we have done so, its time to STAND UP and declare that enough is enough. We will not allow a Supreme Court nominee who is pro-life to be declared ineligible because he is deemed "out of the mainstream." It is rather those on the opposite poll who are "out of the mainstream." While tolerance of opposing views is part of what America is, we must declare that we will not be marginalized and "criminalized" for our Christian beliefs and practices. Its time for us to graciously, but firmly, enter the arena of public debate and stand for what we believe and the basis on which this nation was founded. As our President has stated emphatically, "we must not allow our history to be re-written." That is true politically, but especially religiously! God has always extended his mercy based on a remnant of his people.

At its inception, this nation was a grand and glorious experiment in freedom. Freedom to declare the gospel of Christ without inhibition. Freedom to believe in a Sovereign Creator who moves in the affairs of men. Freedom to practice one's beliefs based on the dictates of one's heart. We have certainly allowed ourselves to be secularized, to have arrived at the point we are today. However, I am not willing to concede this blessed nation. I, for one, am going to believe and pray for repentance and revival so that God won't give up on us. Simultaneously, I am going to, by God's grace, enter the public arena as never before with the gospel and truth. Not only are our freedoms to do so hanging in the balance, but our very existence is, as well.

By Dave Kistler



Betsy's Notes

As we take a solemn look around us, we notice that there are many wars raging simultaneously in many regions of the world. Just the war on terrorism alone has demanded our country's undivided attention. We have sacrificed millions of dollars as well as the lives of many of our brave men and women. This cruel enemy is ready and waiting to find this country off guard so that they can destroy us.

We too are in a raging war. The warfare of the Christian is a never-ending battle. This war began the moment we were born into the kingdom and will not end until we step into heaven's portals. As we serve in God's armed force collectively, Satan will inevitably pick a fight with a Christian, one-on-one. This single combat is a contest in which we enter the arena with our opponent, as David did with Goliath. Such combat is much fiercer than fighting in

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Betsy's Notes Cont

an army where, though the battle is sharp and long, the soldier is not always fighting. He can sometimes stop to catch his breath. In fact, it is possible for him to escape without a scratch because in war, the enemy's aim is not at one man in particular, but at the whole regiment. In wrestling, however, each contestant is the sole object of his opponent's fury, and must be shaken and tried until one or the other is proclaimed the winner.

Whether we like it or not, we must go into the ring with Satan. As the Lord delights to have private communion with His child, so the devil delights to challenge the Christian when he gets him alone. We give Satan the advantage when we neglect to see and understand that his wrath is bent against us personally and specifically. We also do ourselves disservice when we fail to see and accept the promises of God as available for our own specific needs. As the great Puritan preacher, William Gurnall, so aptly put it, the water supply for the town will do you no personal good unless you have a pipe that carries it to your own house.

As we begin a new year, may we strive to keep God's supply of grace and strength freely flowing into our hearts and minds as we "receive with meekness, the engrafted Word," which is able to protect us from the enemy.

By Betsy Kistler

Men With a Mission Update...

By Dave Kistler

On November 4 - 5, we were privileged to host our 9th "Men With A Mission" conference. By all accounts, this was the best conference yet. We began Friday evening with a dynamic service featuring special music by the Engleside Ringers (a ten-time national champion handbell choir) from Alexandria, Virginia. Additional special musicians were the Daybreak Quartet, Jose' Young and Nathan Kistler. Our guest speaker for the evening was Major Alan Pommaville, Deputy Chaplain at the Pentagon. His message was outstanding and right on target.

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Prior to the Major's message, HOPE Ministries presented a beautiful print of the Statue of Liberty surrounded by the words, "Home of the free...because of the brave." An additional brass plate was attached with the inscription:

"Presented to the Pentagon Chaplains Office, in deep appreciation for your unflinching commitment to the advancement of freedom and the gospel."

Major Pommaville, accepting for the Chaplains Office, was overcome with gratitude and stated that the picture "would hang in a place of honor in the Pentagon." The Friday evening service was packed with friends of HOPE Ministries as well as many visitors.

On Saturday, we were treated to outstanding messages by Major Pommaville, Paul Hatfield, Charles Harrell, Doug Allen, Bill Saunders and Jeff Gammons. Each message was directed by the Lord and dealt with the topics of salvation, sanctification and service. I never ask the men to speak on any particular topic. Every conference, we allow the Lord to direct each man and it is amazing how the Lord puts everything together. At the end of the conference, we allow time for the men to testify regarding what God has done in their life throughout the day. Each testimony was challenging and poignant. I praise the Lord for 5 men who were saved and approximately 40 who yielded to serve the Lord full-time.

It thrills my heart to see God challenge and change men, calling them to greater degrees of surrender to Him. One man's comment to me at the conclusion of this year's conference sums it up best. He stated, "I have been saved for 42 years and I've ministered inside the four walls of my church, but very little outside it. I can never be the same after this weekend. It's time for me to get busy reaching my world for Christ." As this mature man said this, tears filled his eyes. I agree with him 100%. It is time for us, as men, to rise to the occasion and be the salt and light that our Savior intended us to be. May we heed David's admonition to his mighty men, "Stand fast, quit (act) ye like men, be strong."

Seizing the Moment...

By Paul Hatfield

Again, I want to thank you for the privilege to come and share at this fall's **Men With A Mission Conference**. It's often said that when you teach you learn as a student during the prep time. This was true for me. Plus, just being at the conference was a blessing. Each speaker had a message that hit home in my heart.

One constant message I picked up was how each speaker emphasized how at various times the Spirit of God had led them and worked in their lives. This meant that each day they had to be tuned to the Holy Spirit to be humble and ready to "SEIZE THE MOMENT". As I arrive back in our church this Sunday I will be teaching one of our adult SS classes. This week's text is Romans 8:1-14. The title is Lead by the Holy Spirit.

My personal illustration of listening to the Holy Spirit and "Seizing the Moment" happened right after the conference on my way home. Actually, God used something that happened many years ago to get my attention on my way home. I used to live in Statesville, N.C. as a young man. I did something one afternoon that will always be in my mind. This day I wanted to retrace my tracks to reminisce and thank God for how He has worked in my life through the years.

As I followed my literal path of yester-year I came upon a nice large city park that had taken the place of a small old one. I wanted to get some of the leaves off the trees as they were beginning to turn for the fall colors. So, I pulled in. Originally, I had no intention of getting so far off the interstate. Certainly not to spend time in a city park. I got out and was collecting some beautiful leaves as they were falling.

This older man came walking by and commented on how beautiful they looked. I responded with a phrase pertaining to Gods wonderful creation. It must have gotten his attention. Actually, God must have put him and me together at that moment. The Holy spirit was working in his heart. He responded with "yeah, if there really is a God." I had to qualify his statement. So, I asked him to explain. Like, "You don't believe there is a God?" What followed was a conversation with a very interesting find.

A couple years ago Jimmy, age 67 had come forward much like many others accepting Jesus into their hearts. This was during a revival at a church. He said the preacher was an older man. After the service he heard the preacher tell one of the men there "guess that ole boy got saved. I don't know if he did or not." Hence, Jimmy was not sure if he was saved. I reviewed his experience that night and reviewed some scriptures with him pertaining to salvation and security of the believer. At that moment Jimmy found out he was headed for Heaven. He and I prayed together Then a new Jimmy shook my hand, got in his car, and thanked me for taking the time to stop by and talk with him about Jesus. It was a moment in time for Jesus' sake. Another soul for Him.

Further south on my way home just twenty miles north of Brunswick, Ga. on I-95 there was a severe wreck. All south-bound traffic was stopped. I went over to a trucker that was talking on his radio and asked what happened. He explained about a pickup crossing the median and having a head on with a mini van going south. People were all over the road. He continued with an observation that we were being inconvenienced but their lives had suddenly changed forever.

"Wow Lord!" was my inner thought. I told him of sharing the certainty of heaven with a man in N.C. just earlier. I sure am glad if something like that happened to me, I know I would go to heaven. I questioned him, "Do you know that you would go to heaven?" That put him to thinking, I'm sure he had already contemplated this question before. God just had me there to share His Gospel, the Good News.

He answered with a long..."Nooo, I can't say that I do know for sure. I'd like to." Well, praise God, after a time of sharing some scripture verses with him, right there on I-95 smack in the center of the south-bound lane that truck driver got saved. Another moment was seized for Jesus sake. A soul saved.

I was shouting "WELL, GLORY to GOD!!" all the way home. I give God the Glory for all He has done. It's all about HIM.



Hannah's Happenings

This year has been an exciting year. I turned 13 on June 24th. I am in 8th grade now. This summer, my Mom, Rachael and I stayed home while Nathan, Dad and Mr. Bill went to the Northwest for their ministry trip. We helped Rachael get ready for college. I also helped Mom a lot in the yard. I push mowed and helped her plant flowers. I also helped mulch the yard. I also enjoyed spending a lot of time with my dogs. I gave them baths and brushed them.

In July, I took a speed-reading course for a month. I could tell a big difference in my speed and comprehension. I have spent a lot of time practicing the piano. My teacher, Dr. Cheek, has arranged for me to play for the conductor of the Western Piedmont Symphony here in Hickory. He hopes that maybe Mr. Ross will give me an opportunity to solo with the symphony someday. My mom makes me practice almost two hours. It's not my favorite thing to do, but maybe someday it will pay off. I would rather be watching my favorite movie, drawing or spending time outside. I continue to play the violin also, but don't practice as much on my violin as I do on the piano.

We enjoyed Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. For Thanksgiving, we went to Waco, Texas for my grandparents' 50th Anniversary celebration. We had a short service for them at their church where we (all the grandchildren and children) played our instruments and sang in their honor. We had a really good time together.

Then, I got a Christmas break. I was thrilled for school to be out for a little while. It was fun to have Rachael home for a while. I really miss her when she is gone, but I know she has to go to college.

Well, I hope everybody has a fantastic New Year! Love, Hannah



Nathan's Notes

Hey there everyone! Hope everyone is doing fine. I'm so excited about what the Lord has done this year in my life. First of all, we had the opportunity to go to the Pentagon in June to sing and preach to the servicemen and women. I met Sgt. Dinkins, (pretty much the coolest guy I've ever met). He and Maj. Pomaville gave us a tour of the Pentagon. It is like a little city with a mall, post office, barber shop and food court.

After the trip to D.C., we spent about a month and a half at home. I enjoyed spending some time with my friends and enjoying my dogs (John, Matthew, Luke, Leah, and Chocolate). I also worked at a fireworks store at the beginning of July. Our friends, the DeBords, graciously gave me a job for 3 days at their store. I carried boxes of fireworks to the store, replenishing the shelves, and also sold some fireworks. I also recorded two projects while I was at home. I helped record Rachael's new CD, Souls Sessions, as well as record the men's quartet at our church. I enjoy recording and am presently working on my new recording, "Give Me Jesus". I plan on having it finished by March.

On July 29, Dad, Mr. Bill and I loaded the trailer and jumped into the truck and trekked across the United States alone without the females. Mom, Hannah, Rachael and Ms Janet stayed home this past summer for various reasons. We held meetings in many churches in the Northwest as well as went to Camp Northwest (my 15th year).

As I write this article, we are getting ready to leave for Miami, FL. It's hard to believe that we are now in 2006. I'll be 16 years old on the 9th of January and am a sophomore in high school. I look forward to seeing you this year. Nathan



Hello...since I wrote last, I have started a new chapter in my life: college. I am beginning my second semester at the Cleveland Institute of Music, majoring in Violin performance with teacher David Updegraff. This past semester was a busy but productive one as I started working towards my Bachelor of Music degree. I love the school, as far as the instruction, but I don't enjoy the weather so much. Before I left Cleveland in December to come home for Christmas break, we had already gotten two feet of snow! The damp blustery wind goes right through you, even with several layers of sweaters and a thick coat.

This semester will be even busier as I prepare for competitions, juries, and decide about summer festivals. Thank you for your support and prayers as I start this new journey in my life. Rachael
My school address: Rachael Kistler

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Hope Ministries International

Future Events

Mark Your Calendar!

May 14 – 19, 2006, Elkhorn, WI
Walworth County Tent Crusade

November 3 – 4, 2006
"Men With a Mission" Conference

June 10 – 15, 2007 (tentative)
3rd Washington, DC Tent Crusade

June 24 – 29, 2007, Clayton, GA
NW Georgia Tent Crusade

New for 2006

Available through the Bookstore at
www.hopeministriesonline.com

First Solo CD by Rachael Kistler

Soul Sessions

Released October 2005

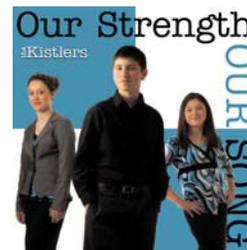


Includes the following songs:

Nearer My God to Thee
How Beautiful
Amazing Grace (Medley)
Still Nearer (Medley)
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
Adagio for Violin and Piano
Remembrances
Concerto for Four Violins
Orange Blossom Special

New Kistler CD Our Strength, Our Song

Released March 2005



Includes the following songs:

'Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus
Mary Did You Know
Our Savior' Love
Were It Not For Grace
I Worship You
His Strength Is Perfect
How Beautiful
To Rescue A Sinner Like Me
Near The Cross
God Bless America

"Men With A Mission" 2005 Men's Conference Session Recordings



Coming Soon!

Rachael Kistler
2005 Violin Recital
DVD