

New Bethel Christian Life Commission Report – April 2009

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Quote of Month

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is going through a great battle.”

Philo Judaeus, of Alexandria, Jewish Philosopher, A.D. 30

Happy Birthday Baptists—1609-2009—An Honorable Heritage

Baptist Standard 121:1 (1-12-2009), most of issue devoted to Baptist history, articles edited by M. G. Maness

The cover had a Baptist in the stocks on public square. In “Happy Birthday Baptists” Ken Camp (*Baptist Standard* managing editor) noted that though many held distinctively Baptist views prior to 1609, “historians agree” that the defining moment was when John Smyth administered believer’s baptism to himself—that “marked the beginning of the Baptist movement” according to Leonard, dean of Wake Forest Univ. Divinity School in his *Baptist Ways: A History*.

Though some claim a lineage to John the Baptist in the N.T., historians attribute that and some portions of the Landmark Baptist variants (like John Penn, church history instructor at Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, Ark.) to a response to Alexander Campbell’s baptismal regeneration and the beginnings of the Church of Christ, said Ken Camp in “Historians Debate Reasons for Rise of Landmarkism in 19th Century.”

The connection with the Anabaptists (re-baptizers) is still debated, there is no doubt that the “believer’s church” and freedom of worship issues inspired by Anabaptists and other Baptists as they defined themselves were influenced by folks like John Locke. The connection between European heretics—the Anabaptists—and their descendents who survived the persecution include the Amish, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and some German Baptist. The individualism of Baptists identity grew out of freedom-inspired ideals, where “every tub must sit on its own bottom” and the like, said Bob Allen (Associated Baptist Press), in *Scholars Disagree on Anabaptist, Baptist Connection*.” The late Distinguished Professor of Church History at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (d2000) noted the impossibility to understand Baptist origins without studying Anabaptist history, saying early Baptists “were dependent on the Mennonites for the determinative features of what was to become known as Baptist faith and practice.”

In “Baptist Influence on History of U.S., World a Mixed Bag, Historians Say,” Robert Marus (AB) said, “Baptists’ signal contribution to American and world history and political thought, historians almost unanimously agree, is their uncompromising emphasis on religious liberty.” Moreover, “Early Baptists not only secured religious freedom in the Rhode Island charter, but fought—alongside a coalition of Quakers, atheists, agnostics and other freethinkers—to enshrine it in the Bill of Rights.”

Frank Page Hopeful, Cautious about Faith Council

Southern Baptist Texan (2-23-9): 13, by Tom Strode and Yvette Rattray, from *Baptist Press*, edited by M. G. Maness

Former SBC president Frank Page is “both concerned and encouraged” as he serves on a 25 member panel, Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, for the Obama administration. Though few conservatives are on the council, Page hopes his viewpoints will have a hearing, and Page asked for prayers for his time on the council. At a meeting, “I might have a voice that is heard.”

News Brief—International Bible Society –

After 194 Years, No Longer Can Send Free Bibles Prisoners

IBS Letter to Chaplain Maness from Rich Blanco, Director of Outreach (2-2009)

Since 1815 IBS has been distributing God’s Word to prisoners. We are humbled and thankful by the fact that for 194 years we have provided Scripture to inmates at no cost to them. At this time, God is taking our organization through many changes and one of those is discontinuing the ministry of sending Bibles directly to prisoners for free.... The volunteers and staff ... are saddened, but until additional funds are provided, we cannot continue this outreach.... [Persons can] purchase Bibles...

Darwin’s 200th Birthday

Baptist Standard (10-13-08): 17, by Rachel Mehlhaff, *ABP*, material in quotes are exact quotes; edited by M. G. Maness

See www.ICR.org for Institute of Creation Research literature on the science of creation. See *Exploring the Evidence of Creation* by Henry Morris III (son of ICR founder) and *Thinking God’s Thoughts after Him: Great Scientists Who Honored the Creator* by Christine Dao (both ICR publications). In the latter, see:

“This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.”

~ Isaac Newton, Father of Universal Gravitation

“[When] I study the book of nature I find myself oftentimes reduced to exclaim with the Psalmist, ‘How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom has Thou made them all!’”

~ Robert Boyle, Father of Modern Chemistry

“Yet even in earthly matters I believe that ‘the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.’”

~ Michael Faraday, Father of Electromagnetism

An Ideal Husband

Maureen Dowd, Op-Ed Columnist, *New York Times* (7-6-8), edited by M. G. Maness

Father Pat Connor, a 79-year-old Catholic priest born in Australia and based in Bordentown, N.J., has spent his life mulling connubial bliss. For 40 years, he has been giving a lecture — “Whom Not to Marry” — to high school seniors, mostly girls because they’re more interested. Dowd asked him to summarize his talk:

“Never marry a man who has no friends,” he starts. “This usually means that he will be incapable of the intimacy that marriage demands. I am always amazed at the number of men I have counseled who have no friends. Since, as the Bible says, ‘Iron shapes iron and friend shapes friend,’ what are his friends like?

“Does he use money responsibly? Is he stingy? Most marriages that founder do so because of money.

“Steer clear of someone whose life you can run, who never makes demands counter to yours. It’s good to have a doormat in the home, but not if it’s your husband.

“Is he overly attached to his mother and her mythical apron strings? When he wants to make a decision, say, about where you should go on your honeymoon, he doesn’t consult you, he consults his mother. I’ve known cases where the mother accompanies the couple on their honeymoon!

“Does he have a sense of humor? That covers a multitude of sins. My mother was once asked how she managed to live harmoniously with three men — my father, brother and me. Her answer, delivered with awesome arrogance, was: ‘You simply operate on the assumption that no man matures after the age of 11.’ My father fell about laughing.

“Don’t marry a problem character thinking you will change him. He’s a heavy drinker, or some other kind of addict, but if he marries a good woman, he’ll settle down. People are the same after marriage as before, only more so.

“Take a good, unsentimental look at his family — you’ll learn a lot about him and his attitude towards women. Kay made a monstrous mistake marrying Michael Corleone! (in *The Godfather* movie).

“Finally: Does he possess those character traits that add up to a good human being — the willingness to forgive, praise, be courteous? Or is he inclined to be a fibber, to fits of rage, to be a control freak, to be envious of you, to be secretive? “After I regale a group with this talk, the despairing cry goes up: ‘But you’ve eliminated everyone!’ and I usually say, ‘Life is unfair.’”

Saints’ Everlasting Rest

From Richard Baxter’s (1615-1691) masterpiece *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest, or, A Treatise of the Blessed State of the Saints in their Enjoyment of God in Glory* (London: Jan. 15, 1649, 856p.) in Michael Maness’ *Heaven—Treasures of Our Everlasting Rest*, see www.PreciousHeart.net/heaven.

John MacArthur in his fine book, *The Glory of Heaven*, culled from a section of Richard Baxter’s huge and famous *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest* the jewels in the Christian’s heavenly crown and rest: in sum, we are a purchased possession, our rest will be a fellowship of the blessed saints and angels of God, our rest will have joys that are immediately from God, our rest will be a seasonable rest (like getting fruit that has come ripe), our rest will be a suitable rest for our natures and desires, our rest will be absolutely perfect and complete, our rest will be a perfect absence of suffering, and our rest will be an eternal rest.

BGCT Texas Christian Life Commission, www.christianlifecommission.org & www.bgct.org, 888-332-5870 — **Baptist Joint Committee**, Washington, DC — www.bjcpa.org — **SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission**, www.erlc.com—

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Texas Legislature www.capitol.state.tx.us - Who represents you: www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm

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