



# Tragedy Silences Atheists

By AL DIESTELKAMP

This paper is being edited and typeset shortly after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. At the time of this writing we have had four days of non-stop heart-wrenching stories—many tragic, some heroic. As our nation tries to deal with this crisis I am moved by the overwhelming show of belief in God. Noticeably absent are the shrill voices of atheists.

In the past, when war was waged primarily by hand-to-hand conflict, a saying was coined: “There are no atheists in foxholes.” Indeed, in times of great danger and possible imminent death, faith in God is more noticeable.

Political leaders have not hesitated to call upon all people to pray to God. They have attended and participated in prayer services in which God was petitioned invoking Jesus’ name. Our President has quoted passages from the inspired word of God. Congressional leaders have stood on the steps of the capitol singing—with obvious feeling—“God Bless America.”

As tempted as I may be to criticize a nation who has ignored God during “good” times, and has even made it illegal to exercise such faith in certain circumstances, instead I rejoice that in this time of national grief the focus is toward God. I am thankful that Americans have enough faith in God to ignore the complaints of those who want no mention of Him.

Unfortunately, past experience has taught us that this renewal of faith in God will soon fade away. We will likely again be subjected to the whims of secularists who don’t want to be reminded of their immortal souls and responsibility to our Creator. But in the meantime we have a respite from their empty words as even *they* realize they have nothing to offer those who suffer.

# THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

Volume 32

July-August-September, 2001

Number 3

## Good Things Happen

By PHILIP CHUMBLEY

A friend of mine is getting married. She is excited and thankful to God for she has met the man of her dreams or should I say her *prayers*. You see...God led him to her. She even met him in church. She had been going through a tough time and she prayed that God send her someone. Although she had never attended church before, she was so depressed since her divorce that she decided to visit the denomination down the street. That Sunday she saw him walk in the door. By casually asking a friend, she learned he was single—he’d been divorced for two years now—and wasn’t dating anyone. He had two young children by his previous marriage, and she had a five-year-old son herself so it was perfect. And it was all because God answered her prayers.

Sound familiar? Just recently someone won a multi-million dollar lottery and he praised God for answering his prayers. Another person found a good deal on a new car the week after he started *tithing* so he *knows* God is blessing him.

Everything from winning a football game, to receiving a tax refund, to having a baby out of wedlock, has been attributed to special intervention by God, and each day someone who has never obeyed God’s commands and follows a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:6, 7) feels justified in his actions because

something “good” happened to him. An often quoted verse is Romans 8:28: “*And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.*” The reasoning is that “Since something good happened to me, it shows I love God and that God loves me.” But that’s not what the verse says. Instead, Paul is saying that whatever happens to a Christian, *whether good or bad*, will work to that person’s benefit!

When something bad happens to someone, some may think that person is being punished by God (Jn. 9:1,2). Likewise, when something good occurs, the tendency is to view it as a blessing from God. But while it may indeed be a blessing, it is wrong to view it as a justification of the recipient’s actions or life. The unjust receive rain (Matt. 5:45); the wicked prosper (Psa. 73:3); the wicked “have more than heart could wish” (Psa.73:7). Romans 8:28 does not teach us that good things happen to us because we are good. Instead, a proper example of Romans 8:28 is seen in the life of Joseph, who was sold into slavery (Gen. 37:28) and spent two years in prison (Gen. 41:1, 9, 14), and yet he later saw how it was for good (Gen. 45:4-7). Temptation can work to our good (Jas. 1:2). Fiery trials can work to our good (1 Pet. 4:12, 13). And just as bad things that happen to Christians do not indicate wickedness, good things that happen to non-Christians do not validate their lifestyles or beliefs. Instead, it is their end that needs to be considered. As David wrote:

“*Until I went into the sanctuary of God, And considered their latter end. Surely thou settest them in slippery places: Thou castest them down to destruction. How are they become a desolation in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors... For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that play the harlot, departing from thee*” (Psa. 73:17-19, 27).

1780 Lily Street, Aurora, Illinois 60505  
e-mail: pechumbley@aol.com

### Editor’s Note

Though the article above was written prior to the terrorism inflicted on our nation, it has some application to the situation. It should not be interpreted that those who lost their lives were more wicked than those who escaped. Jesus made that clear, using the example of a tower that fell on people, and used that tragedy as an admonition for all to repent

# I'M NOT ASHAMED

By DAN RICHARDSON

## *Not ashamed of my faith in God*

For many people faith in God is so personal that they are unwilling to discuss it with anybody. That was not the kind of faith that the first Christians had (Ac. 4:20; 8:1-4), nor is it the nature of my faith. Of my faith in God.

The so-called intellectuals of our day scoff at faith in God as unscientific. Yet God has given us ample evidence of His existence (Rom. 1:18-22). The design found in nature demands a designer (Heb. 3:4). This universe is not the product of chance.

It is the theories of evolution that, though touted as fact, violate scientific laws. These theories teach that order naturally arose out of chaos, life came from non-living matter, and that intelligent beings came from non-intelligent matter. That I'd be ashamed to believe.

God is the logical answer to mankind's questions concerning our origins. God's existence violates no scientific laws. We are without excuse for not believing in Him. I'm not ashamed to affirm that God exists.

## *Not ashamed of believing Jesus to be God's Son*

History acknowledges that there really was a Jesus of Nazareth. Many say He was a good man, a great teacher, a profound thinker, etc. However, many of these same people will deny that He was the Son of God.

Jesus could not have been a good man and a chronic liar and deceiver. He intentionally led many to believe that He was the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God (Matt. 16:16,17; Mk. 15:39; Jn. 11:27; Ac. 9:20). Either He was an imposter or He was who He claimed to be. He can't be both a fraud and a good man.

Through the power of His resurrection from the dead, Jesus demonstrated that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Those apostles who had forsaken Him during His trial later boldly preached that Jesus was both Lord and Christ (Ac. 2:36). They wrote about His miracles and teaching so others would believe (Jn. 20:30,31). Only their actual witnessing of the resurrection (2 Pet. 1:16) could have changed their cowardice to conviction! Paul, who had at one time persecuted Christians, later affirmed that He was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

Jesus said, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Likewise, He warned against people being

ashamed of Him and being unwilling to confess Him before others (Mk. 8:38; Matt. 10:32,33). I'm not ashamed to confess to you that I believe that Jesus is God's Son.

## *Not ashamed of God's word as truth*

Jesus declared that God's word is truth (Jn. 17:17). He promised His apostles that He would send the Spirit to guide them into all truth (Jn. 16:13). Thus divine power revealed all that is pertinent to godly living (2 Pet. 1:3).

Scripture does not originate with men (2 Pet. 1:20,21). "All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16,17). I'm not ashamed to claim Scripture as my standard of truth.

## *"What Is Truth?"*

As Jesus stood on trial He said, "for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." In response, Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:36,37).

Unfortunately, Pilate's rhetorical question is a typical response today. Many have believe that there is no absolute truth. Hence, we have a culture that has trouble discerning good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

This ambiguous approach to truth has even infiltrated the churches of our land. It is not at all uncommon to hear so-called church leaders questioning the doctrinal and moral truths of scripture.

This is not new! From the beginning God's truth and authority have been challenged (Gen. 3:1-6). For thousands of years God's word has withstood the onslaught of the enemies of righteousness. It is still here. Time and again it has proven itself reliable.

Jesus said, "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). However, truth that is not applied to one's life is of no benefit. Truth has not been revealed for theology majors and seminary students but for the common man, for you and me.

Those who decide that they can't understand the Bible underestimate God. He created us with the ability to learn and reason. He has communicated to us on our level. You and I can know God's will!

The division and apostasy that has occurred over the years is a direct result of ignorance. When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit (Matt. 15:14). Too many have blindly followed the doctrines and creeds of men. True faith is not blind, but

informed. Can you give a reasoned defense of your hope (1 Pet. 3:15)?

## *"My Heart's Desire"*

Paul said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3).

Paul was not content to merely ignore the differences he had with others on spiritual matters. His appeals to reason with people from scripture were received differently in each city. For example, in Thessalonica they ran him out of town, but in Berea they were more open-minded "in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Ac. 17:11).

## *The Good News*

It begins with bad news. God's word says that we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Many don't think sin is very serious, but that is merely because we're used to its stench.

Quite simply, sin is lawlessness (1 Jn. 3:4). It is behavior contrary to God's law. God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15,16). In Him there is no darkness at all (1 Jn. 1:5). He is pure (1 Jn. 2:3). Our sins separate us from Him (Isa. 59:2). Likewise, God is perfect in justice (Deut. 32:4). He cannot let us get away with sin and be just, any more than human judges can let people get away with murder and be just.

Thankfully, however, God is also loving and gracious. While God's justice does not permit Him to arbitrarily ignore our sin, His love does not allow Him to ignore our plight. So, He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for us (Jn. 3:16). Through this willing sacrifice on the part of Jesus, God remains just and is also the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

So, what shall we do? To this question Christ's apostles responded by saying, "believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved" (Ac. 16:31) and "repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins" (Ac. 2:38).

It is essential that we crucify ourselves with Christ (Gal. 2:20). We are buried with Christ in baptism and we are raised with him through faith in the working of God to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12,13). We die to sin and live for Christ. **Have you done this?**

P.O. Box 106, Bell City, Missouri 63735  
e-mail: richardson@clas.net

# 'Kill the Umpire!'

By **ANDY DIESTELKAMP**

"Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped. 'That ain't my style,' said Casey. 'Strike one,' the umpire said. From the benches, black with people, there went a muffled roar, like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore; 'Kill him! Kill the umpire!' shouted someone on the stand. And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand."

Baseball has been called the national pastime, and it has amply demonstrated its ability to grab the attention and passions of its spectators. I enjoy the game. While I am an avid Cubs fan, I have greatly enjoyed watching my son play at the Little League level.

We have all heard of the perennial problems with the behavior of parents at Little League games. I am happy to report that I saw little of those problems this year. However, those stereotypical problems are not urban legends. In past years I have witnessed and experienced those who fit these stereotypes. A few years ago at the Peanut League level I had the unparalleled pleasure of being called a "jerk" by the father of someone on the opposing team because he imagined that I had intentionally interfered with the play in my feeble coaching efforts at third.

I have also had the opportunity to sit in the stands at a Pony League game and hear parents rail on the umpire. Oh, sure, we have all reacted negatively to the bad calls inevitably made by umpires, but some of these parents are like pit bulls and won't let go even several innings later. Such loose-lipped parents got me to thinking and analyzing. If this is our treatment of an authority figure that we can see, then no wonder people question God who they cannot see (1 Jn. 4:20).

We are a people who are not hesitant to challenge and question authority. At the Pony League game one man literally had a comment about every pitch. If the call was negative for his team, then he had only bad things to say about the umpire. Often there was a chorus of mothers agreeing with him. It is apparent that for some people the umpire is not the object of their respect, but someone to vent on when things don't go well.

I can't help but believe that many see God the same way. They sit in the stands of life constantly questioning Him and railing on Him when things don't go the way they think they should. Recall when King David moved the Ark of the Covenant in an unlawful way and Uzzah ended up dying for touching the Ark in an attempt to steady it (2 Sam. 6:6-8). David was angry with God

when he should have been angry with himself.

Isn't it interesting how the umpire, who makes possible an orderly and far more enjoyable level of play, becomes the object of our scorn rather than the object of our appreciation? It is amusing how we want him there behind the plate, but then think we have a clearer view of the game from our seat in the stands. Unlike human umpires, God is never out of position. He always makes the right call. Still, we sit in our seats in 2001 with our limited viewing and question the One who can see it all.

Why do people act this way at a game or in life? Because of pride and prejudice. It is pride that keeps many from being willing to

submit to any authority, let alone the authority of the unseen God. God warns that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

Prejudice enables people to find fault with others without applying the same standard to themselves (Rom. 2:1-11; Jas. 2:8-11). We want a wide strike zone when we're pitching and a narrow one when we're batting, and we complain if it is any other way.

Life is not a game, but some certainly approach it that way. How easy it is to lose our perspective of what is most important. "Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

323 E. Indiana Ave., Pontiac, Illinois 61764  
e-mail: [adiestel@mail.bwsys.net](mailto:adiestel@mail.bwsys.net)

## Look

## Again...



## Dad *and* Mom!

By **AL DIESTELKAMP**

Over thirty years ago I wrote an article titled, "Look Again, Dad," (*Think*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January, 1970). At first my plan was to simply reprint that article, but upon further consideration I decided to rewrite the article in order to include a few additional points, not only to fathers, but to mothers as well.

It would be an understatement to say that times have changed since my original article. Some things have improved, but many things have grown worse, including the standards of morality in our culture.

In the intervening years, styles of dress have taken many changes. Occasionally we would rejoice to see a brief trend toward more modest clothing, only to witness a swing back in the other direction at the whim of the fashion industry. Needless to say, their concern was *never* for modesty, but for more sales.

Most recently, it seems, the fashion industry has urged young women to mimic the lead of worldly actresses and other celebrities in wearing extremely seductive clothing. Too many young women who claim to be Christians are wearing these fashions without a blush.

We have marvelled that mothers of young women would purchase such clothing for their daughters. We have found that too many young girls are permitted to purchase their own clothing without any guidance from their mothers. This is a disgrace!

I saw a commercial on television which may be more true than we'd like to believe. It portrayed a girl, dressed in jeans and a short top revealing the midriff, stopped by her father who said "You're not leaving the house dressed like that!" The girl had a devastated look on her face when her mother agreed, but was quickly relieved when her mother pulled her jeans lower to reveal even more.

Even if the mothers can't (or won't) see the sin in allowing their daughters to dress immodestly, I'm convinced the fathers can. In the old article I gave fathers the benefit of the doubt, assuming that time had crept up on them, not noticing that their "their little girls" had grown up. However, much of what is fashionable today is not even decent on *little* girls.

Once again, with kindness, I suggest that fathers of young girls, look again! Perhaps they have grown up. Your early action in this matter will mold a pattern for future behavior, and possibly prevent tragic circumstances. It will also be a help to young men who are trying to do what is right, and will *attract* them to the modest young lady. I'm sure it is this type of young man that you hope will be attracted to *your little girl*, and not the type who seeks out the company of immodest girls.

Ideally, mothers will closely guide their daughters in what they buy and wear. If not, it's time for fathers to exercise and enforce their veto-power in the way their children dress.

# Old 'Issues' Need to Be Studied To Prepare A New Generation

By **AL DIESTELKAMP**

To many Christians the controversies that divided brethren beginning in the mid-1950's through the early 1970's is ancient history and of little concern. For the most part there is little communication between "institutional" and "non-institutional" Christians, and even less discussion of our differences.

A large percentage of the brethren we would describe as "institutional" have become even more liberal with each passing day. Not all among them are happy about the changes they see and are calling for a return to "a thus saith the Lord." This has caused some to investigate those of us they have heard were "antis," and have found that we're not the ogres that some have portrayed us to be.

We need to be prepared to answer them as to why we don't involve the church in support of institutions, sponsoring church concepts and the social gospel concept.

This is why I chose to write the booklet, *A Brother At Our Door*. In this booklet I respond to the booklet, *A Church Divided*, written by Wayne Jackson. He attempts to justify each of these practices while at the same time rejecting the more liberal changes that are taking place among "non-anti" brethren.

It is very important that we make sure that these issues be studied again in order to prepare the younger generation for tomorrow. That can be done without my booklet, but if it can be a help in at least approaching the subject, then my mission in writing it will be accomplished.

The 16-page booklet may be purchased

from me at the nominal cost of \$2 per booklet, plus shipping. Single copies sent via mail cost \$2.60. For orders of multiple copies I will enclose a bill with the booklets. You may order by mail, e-mail or phone.

**Al Diestelkamp**  
P.O. Box 891  
Cortland, IL 60112  
(815) 756-9840  
aldiestel@aol.com

## Looking for New Teen or Adult Class Workbooks?

I know that many congregations are always looking for fresh class material for teenage and adult classes. There are two new workbooks, both written by Matt Hennecke, that I recommend. These workbooks, which have been professionally and attractively printed, were "tested" in classes here in Sycamore where he and I serve as elders.

*Old Testament Geography, From Genesis to Malachi in 13 Lessons* is suitable for teens or adults. It contains 54 pages (8.5x11) with many maps and exercise pages. It sells for \$6.25 plus shipping.

*Bible Wars - Old Testament Lessons For Soldiers of Christ*, also for teens or adults, has 13 Lessons in a 54 page (5.5x8.5) workbook. It sells for \$5.95 plus shipping.

I am not selling these books—merely recommending them. You may view sample pages and place orders online at [www.biblemaps.com](http://www.biblemaps.com) or call (630) 961-9155. Orders by mail should be addressed to: BibleMaps, 40W919 Elodie Dr., Elburn, IL 60119.  
—Al Diestelkamp

## Voluntary Partners

### Cost of last issue:

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Printing & Supplies            | \$ 85.00         |
| Domestic Postage (permit)      | 379.00           |
| Foreign Postage & Bundles      | 34.20            |
| Return Postage (51)            | 17.34            |
| <b>TOTAL COSTS</b>             | <b>\$ 515.54</b> |
| Funds Available for past issue | 392.44           |
| Deficit                        | \$ 123.10        |

### Donations (as of 9/13):

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Kevin Swandlund, CA         | \$ 25.00         |
| Anonymous, TN               | 50.00            |
| Anonymous, MS               | 78.00            |
| Frank Vondracek, IA         | 10.00            |
| D.E. Walker, TN             | 25.00            |
| Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Graham, TN | 50.00            |
| Jim & Ruth Spurgeon, IL     | 30.00            |
| Carl & Marjorie Handell, IN | 25.00            |
| Martha E. Sewell, MO        | 50.00            |
| Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Wright, KY | 10.00            |
| Jim & Nora Woolbright, AZ   | 100.00           |
| Carlton Walls, TN           | 10.00            |
| Beulah Burney, MO           | 20.00            |
| T.B. Smitherman, CO         | 20.00            |
| Milburn E. White, AR        | 53.00            |
| Cecil Cox, AL               | 17.40            |
| Anonymous, WI               | 60.00            |
| Jerry & Sue Brewer, AL      | 50.00            |
| Robert P. Shreve, OH        | 50.00            |
| Joe & Sandra Greer, TN      | 10.00            |
| <b>TOTAL DONATIONS</b>      | <b>\$ 743.40</b> |
| Deficit from past issue     | 123.10           |
| Funds for this issue        | \$ 620.30        |

Many people must have noticed the expected deficit and came through with donations sufficient to erase it. We thank each one who has voluntarily contributed to this effort. Due to yet another change in postal rates, requiring the purchase of a computer software upgrade, this issue is expected to cost approximately \$570, which would leave a surplus of \$50.30.

**"Test all things; hold fast what is good,"**  
~ 1 Thess. 5:21

# THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

Published in the interest of purity of doctrine and practice by the Diestelkamp family. Distributed free as often and in quantities as ability permits.

Editor AL DIESTELKAMP  
P.O. Box 891  
Cortland, IL 60112-0891  
(815) 756-9840

E-mail [AlDiestel@aol.com](mailto:AlDiestel@aol.com)

Home Page <http://users.aol.com/thinkpaper>

### THINK ON THESE THINGS

P.O. Box 891  
Cortland, IL 60112-0891

### Return Service Requested

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Cortland, IL  
Permit No. 11