

Crossroad

NETWORK NEWS

DECEMBER 2006



The **Dragon** Who Hated

Christmas

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The Mission of *Crossroad Network News* is to promote partnership in the ministry of CBI through communication



| By Rev. David Feddes

The Dragon who Hated Christmas

“The reason
the Son of God
appeared was
to destroy
the devil’s work”

(1 John 3:8).

That’s why
the dragon hated
Christmas, and
that’s why
we love it.



The Dragon who Hated Christmas

Have you ever heard a Christmas story about a dragon? Probably not. Christmas tales usually have Santa Claus and elves and other jolly characters, not dragons. However, the real Christmas story involves a dragon. This dragon did not want Christmas to come. In fact, this dragon hated Christmas because the dragon slayer was born that day. Dragons don't like dragon slayers.

In the story, a woman was about to give birth, and a huge red dragon stood before her, eager to devour her baby as soon as it was born. The woman "gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." The dragon, no longer able to harm the child, went after the woman and the rest of her offspring, but they too triumphed over him.

This story, told in Revelation chapter 12, is a behind-the-scenes look at the history of redemption. The woman represents God's chosen people. The dragon is Satan. After Satan led Adam and Eve into sin, God promised that a seed born of a woman would crush Satan. Throughout Old Testament times, the dragon repeatedly tried to devour the promised seed before it could destroy him. When God said the promised seed would come from Israel, the dragon worked through the Egyptian Pharaoh to try to kill all Israelite baby boys. But he failed, and God brought his people safely out of Egypt. When God said the chosen seed would come from David's line, the dragon used vicious queen Athaliah to try to destroy

every male in David's line. But a godly priest and his wife hid baby Joash, who later became king, and David's line continued. The dragon also used vile Haman to attempt to wipe out all Jews. But God used Queen Esther to preserve His people. Again the dragon failed.

On God's appointed Christmas, the virgin Mary gave birth to the long-awaited child. The dragon this time used evil King Herod to try to murder Bethlehem's babies in an effort to kill the Christ Child. But Jesus was rescued. After Jesus grew up, Satan tried to ruin Him through temptation, but the dragon again failed. At last, the frustrated, hateful dragon entered the heart of Judas and moved religious and political leaders to torture Jesus and nail Him to a cross. But there on the cross, Jesus paid the price of sin and broke its power. Then He defeated death, rising from the grave and ascending to heaven's throne. In His work on the cross, Jesus dealt a death-blow to Satan; the dragon will never recover.

Knowing his days are numbered, Satan and his demons infect earth with as much sin and sorrow as possible. Often sin seems fierce, and sorrow seems overwhelming. But remember: Satan lost; Jesus won! Many people in prison have been in the dragon's grip. But thanks to the dragon slayer, they too can join with all God's people who defeat Satan by Jesus' blood and by their testimony. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8). That's why the dragon hated Christmas, and that's why we love it.

Rev. Feddes is the Director of The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute



What's in a Name?

| By Dr. David Schuringa, President

Whether in prison or out, our students are forever labeled and defined by crimes they committed in the past. Is that the forgiveness of Christ?

Sociologists have found a correlation between children's names and their self-image and even the level of their acceptance by others. In Sweden, the government can veto a bizarre name given by parents to a new-born because Sweden recognizes that when parents give their child an outlandish name, they are not making a positive contribution to his/her life. Johnny Cash's hit song, "A Boy Named Sue," makes the point in a humorous way, but it's no joke in the long run for a person to be saddled with a ludicrous name. A name can define a person, as it often did in Scripture. We see that in the angel's announcement of our Savior's birth where Joseph was commanded to name his son Jesus (Matt. 1:20-22).

Recently, I was discussing the importance of names over lunch with a friend of mine, Rev. Mark Stephenson. He heads our denomination's office for Disability Concerns. Mark was sharing how his department intentionally tries to avoid referring to people with the label of their disability. For example, rather than talking about "the disabled," they prefer to talk about "people with disabilities." Instead of referring to an individual as "blind," they might say, "a person who is visually impaired."

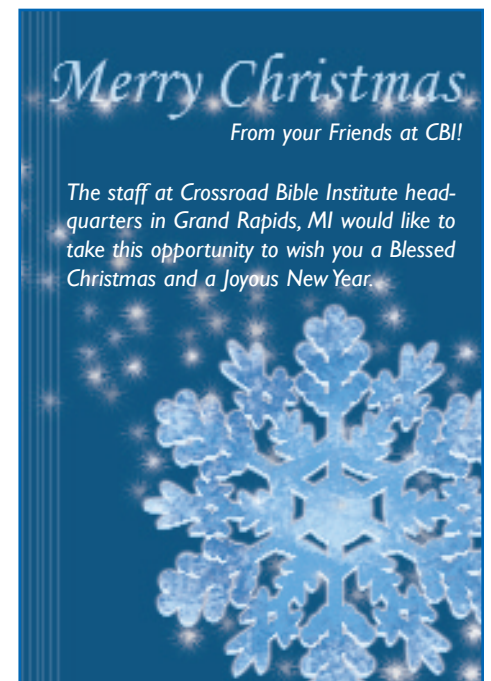
This is not about political correctness. When we label people "blind" or "disabled," we define them in terms of their malady rather than defining them as a person. Any child of God is much more than his/her disability or disease or situation, and we want them to think of themselves as more than their label.

After our chat, I began to think about those we serve at CBI. We call them "prisoners," "inmates" and "ex-offenders." And now, suddenly, I feel sick that we have used those terms so freely. Whether in prison or out, our students are forever labeled and defined by crimes they committed in the past. Is that the forgiveness of Christ? Doesn't the atonement label God's people as forever justified rather than forever condemned? Men and women behind bars are so much more than "prisoners." They're people! Perhaps changing labels could even positively affect recidivism if those in prison started thinking of themselves as more than prisoners or ex-offenders.

I'm not saying we may never use the label "prisoners" or "inmates" again; I have no intention of becoming the PC police. But I am trying to be more sensitive in my speech and writings. At CBI, we're combing

through our website, brochures and other literature as well. Wouldn't it be gentler to refer to our students as "people in prison" or "men and women behind bars" or "incarcerated persons" or "people formerly incarcerated"?

This Christmas season we will celebrate the One who was given the name above all names, Immanuel, "God with us." His name is both mighty and lovely. And when we are called into His kingdom, we are given new names: son, daughter, heir and friend. As we celebrate, I encourage you to consider the names given to all the children gathered into God's family.





The Words of Eternal Life

Speak to Recent School Shootings

| By Lael Griess

Since the beginning of the 2006 school year (as of this writing) there have been 10 violent deaths in American schools from New England to Colorado. As has happened in the past, especially after the shootings at Columbine, “copy-cat” attempts have sprung up all over the nation. These incidents mirror school shootings the nation has witnessed since 1996, and from that date until today there have been 25 fatal shootings in American schools; the death toll on school grounds equaling just fewer than 70.

While the three most recent shootings have involved adult men breaking onto school grounds, past shootings have involved gun-wielding children. The American public is left shocked and befuddled, experiencing a mixture of emotions from fear to anger to confusion. We used to think of our schools as places of safety and learning with a flag waving boldly in front of a brick building and an apple on the desk of each teacher. We used to protect our children from violent adults, not from other schoolchildren with their finger on the trigger. Truly, the effects of sin are pervasive and ugly when we watch our schools become places of bloodshed. What does this all mean, and how do we react?

We are left attempting to answer a tangled barrage of questions. How do we view the school shooters, as hardened criminals or as misguided youth? And what is the appropriate punishment: the death penalty, a life-time sentence or a shorter sentence

coupled with therapy? What is behind the violence: guns, drugs, movies, angry rock music, violent video games, school bullying, disconnected parents or all of the above? How can we prevent future tragedies: tighter school security, more prevention programs, tougher gun laws, etc.? Truly, these are all crucial questions to answer, and sometimes the answer is as complicated as the question.

But one thing is certain, the world is hurting and torn apart by ugly and pervasive sin. People sin and are sinned against; and, as recent school shootings have shown us, even our schoolchildren are not exempt from this cycle. As I researched each heart-breaking school shooting incident, the situation seemed hopeless and confusing.

Then I remembered Simon Peter’s words, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” There is nowhere else to go. No other answer. No other way to sort through the confusion. Jesus Christ’s words are the guide for our response as Christians and the only hope for a world twisted by transgression. His words are peace, life and beauty for they are freedom from the bondage of sin.

One student enrolled in CBI’s Tier 2 Graduate Studies Program is serving time for his part in a fatal school shooting. He still lives behind bars; in fact, he may be there for the rest of his life. But CBI’s Instructors have

taught him that amazing grace can set him free! He has learned that there is only one way to break the cycle of hurt and hurting others; it’s the Gospel of grace, forgiveness and restoration. In contrast to the dark and chaotic stories we hear on the news, how beautiful it is to see a new life changed in Christ! This brings perspective and hope in the midst of confusion.

In a cycle of sinning and being sinned against, everyone is both the hurting and the guilty. The boy who carried the gun and the wounded little girl equally need the words of eternal life. And while we earnestly continue to seek answers, prevention and justice, our prayer is that CBI will continue to reach out with words of eternal life to a world torn by sin.

Lael Griess is an Assistant Editor at The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute.



IN THE NEWS...

KUNST-ESSAY:
Situationalistisk
Internationale, A
Placement Group
Weeks' Coalit
eksempler fra



Study Finds Radical Islamic Recruitment Increasing in U.S. Prisons

WASHINGTON, DC—A recent study conducted by George Washington University and the University of Virginia reports that the U.S. prison system is an optimal breeding ground for Islamic terrorist recruitment. The study found the problem to be the lack of preventative initiatives. Prisons are short-funded and short-staffed in their attempts to investigate and follow up on leads of terrorist recruitment and radical behavior. In fact, officials in California told the Associated Press, “every investigation into radical groups in their prisons uncovers new leads, but they simply do not have enough investigators to follow every case of radicalization.”

Corrections Officer Doubles as Chaplain

TAYLORVILLE, IL—Stephen Wright, after converting to Christianity three years earlier, felt called to become a minister in the prison where he worked as a corrections officer. Wright, 47, confessed a former alcohol addiction and said that he hated his job and often harassed the men behind bars. With an altered attitude and lifestyle because of his faith in Christ, Wright then went to the prison chaplain to pursue his calling. Some doubted the effectiveness of his ministry as a chaplain because of well-known animosity toward corrections officers. However, in the few years since Wright’s calling, he has led hundreds of worship services in prisons and has been well received.

Inmates “In the Pink”

MASON, TX—Those incarcerated in the Mason County Jail are surrounded

by pink walls, pink bars and pink clothes. Sheriff Clint Low made the change eight months ago in an attempt to reduce recidivism rates. The sheriff claims that his program is working, though no scientific studies have been conducted to back his claim. The men reportedly refuse work duty in fear of being spotted and humiliated by those who pass by. One incarcerated man, who did not want to be identified, said, “The county would have more inmate labor without them [pink jumpsuits].”

Iowa Halfway House Protested

ALBIA, IA—Some Iowans are objecting to a church-affiliated program that houses men and women recently released from prison. The home is situated in a residential neighborhood near a school. Alcohol and illegal drugs are banned from the home. Those formerly incarcerated must apply for residence, and those with sex offenses are not accepted as applicants. The purpose of the home is known to neighbors, and some recently attended a City Council meeting in protest, reports the *Des Moines Register*. In the 2006 fiscal year, 6,337 men and women were released from Iowa prisons, and the home aims to restore some of that number from prison to society.

Prison Raid in Guatemala

FRAIJANES, Guatemala—Three thousand soldiers and police raided a Guatemalan prison after extensive illegal activities were discovered inside. The prison contained an entire “town” including restaurants, pubs, drug laboratories and two churches: one Roman Catholic and the other evangelical. Corrections officers had only patrolled the perimeter allowing those impris-

oned to do as they pleased for at least 10 years. The raid killed seven incarcerated persons in a shootout at the grounds of an imprisoned Columbian drug trafficker known as El Loco. The drug trafficker had high-speed internet access and a large screen television. The alleged leader of the operation, Luis Alfonso Zepeda, was also killed in the shootout. He was reported to have made \$25,000 per month in U.S. currency from extortion, drug trafficking and renting prison grounds to other incarcerated people. His son lived in the prison without a criminal conviction in order to help run the operation.

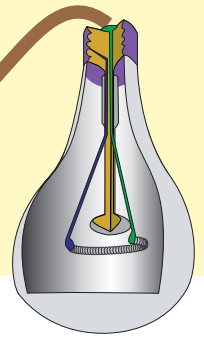


Street camera helps to prevent crime.

Cameras and Loudspeakers Used to Prevent Crime

MIDDLESBROUGH, England—Officials in England have affixed microphones to seven closed circuit cameras in Middlesbrough so that those who choose to break the law can be verbally confronted by a disembodied voice from above. City Counselor Barry Coppinger told the AFP, “It is like a public humiliation in a way, but it means that the person won’t do it again. For example, the voice directly addresses the person who is littering by saying, ‘Could the person in the green jacket please pick that up?’ It can be embarrassing.” The cameras, the AFP reports, are manned by closed circuit television operators and linked to police headquarters. The system is reported to have located 15 missing persons and to have helped catch 678 lawbreakers in the last year.

QUESTIONS FOR CROSSROAD



Student Frightened by Prison Violence

Q. My student says that he is depressed and afraid because of the violence and fighting going on in his prison. How can I encourage him?

Instructor in Minnesota



A. We hear news of violence, prison lockdowns and gang rivalry all too often. This is a challenge that many of our students face everyday. Be careful not to be trite with your encouragement because most of us have no idea what these students are going through. Try to empathize as much as you can. Then go ahead and share some key Scriptures with your student such as Psalm 23; Isaiah 43:2; Habakkuk 3:17-19; Romans 8, etc. Let your student know that you will be praying for his peace and safety. RBC also has some helpful booklets you may want to send: "When Hope is Lost" and "Finding Peace in a World of Racial Conflict."



Q. May we send birthday cards to our students? Do the cards need to be included with a lesson or can they be sent separately?

Instructor in Michigan

A. Yes, you may send birthday cards. In fact, we encourage you to do so. Remembering your Tier 2 or The Center for Advanced Studies student's birthday is a great way to show the love of Christ to him/her. There is a place to write down your student's birthday on the Instructor Log, and you may want to highlight it, or even write it on your calendar so that you don't forget it. You may include the card with a lesson or send one on its own using the CBI return address. The card can also double as a touch-base note reminding your student to complete and return the next CBI lesson.

7 Ways to Remember CBI in Your Estate Planning



- 1. BENEFICIARY:** Entrust CBI as the primary or only beneficiary in your will to carry on your stewardship responsibilities.
- 2. "CHILD'S PORTION":** Name CBI as one of your "children," factoring one more child into the division of your will.
- 3. TITHE OF ESTATE:** Specify a percentage of your estate or decide on a specific dollar amount for CBI to factor into your estate plan.
- 4. APPRECIATED ASSETS:** Donate any appreciated property, securities, charitable trusts, stocks or annuities to CBI. Doing this in your lifetime will reduce the size of your estate, thus reducing estate and inheritance taxes and eliminating capital gains taxes.
- 5. ENDOWMENT FUND:** Use your estate to set up an endowment fund at CBI in memory of a loved one or in your own name.
- 6. LIFE INSURANCE:** Make CBI the beneficiary of your life insurance policy, and you not only make your premium tax-deductible, but you also have the opportunity to donate that large gift you've always wanted to give!
- 7. ANNUITY: LIFETIME INCOME AGREEMENT:** Receive a guaranteed income for life, and help support CBI's ministry to people in prison through a charitable gift annuity.

Call or e-mail CBI today about how to write CBI into YOUR estate plan.

E-mail CBI at rachelle@crossroadbible.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 616-530-1300

MEMORIAL GIFTS (GIFTS RECEIVED AS OF 10/18/06)

IN HONOR OF:

Dan & Matilda Alons
60th Wedding Anniversary
Loren & Judi VanDuyn and children

Bertha Balkema
Marv & Nell Feddes

Dave & Judy DuMez
Larry & Sylvia Zevenbergen

Henry & Anne Hiemstra
40th Wedding Anniversary
Andy Hiemstra

John & Irene Izenbaard
60th Wedding Anniversary
Marv & Nell Feddes

Stanley Meyers
Heiman & Marie Bosman

Lois Postma
50th Birthday
Loren & Judi VanDuyn

Loren & Judi VanDuyn
40th Wedding Anniversary
Adam VanDuyn
Nathan VanDuyn
Lora Walleck

Jack & Marlene Vos
50th Wedding Anniversary
Elmer & Wilma Vos

Raymond Zieglers
Heiman & Marie Bosma

IN MEMORY OF:

Maggie Alons
Loren & Judi VanDuyn
and Lora, Adam & Nathan

Louise Boverhuis
Henry & Grace Bos
Terri Weeks

Lauren DeTroye
Memorial Fund through
Bethel OPC, Oostburg

Rosell Dys
Eleanor Dykema

Ernest Iwena
Bernie & Pearl Bandstra

Myrna Koldenhoven
Fanny Haagsma

Peter I Noteboom
Leona Noteboom
Darrell Noteboom
Mark Noteboom
Peter A Noteboom

Henrietta Rolffs
Ivan & Ruth Mulder

Jacob David Schuringa
William DeLuca, Jr.

Ruth Ten Harmse
Eleanor Dykema

Bill Timmer
Rev. Ronald & Ivamarie Kelly

Marian Vredevelde
John & Milly Baker
Ted & Ruth Borduin
Ken & Phyllis Dornbush
Eric & Evelyn Falkenstine
Ray & Delores Frazier
Kenneth & Joyce Frens
Gerrit Geers
Ralph & Carol Haan
Helen Hyma
Gertrude Iverson
Norman & Doris Jacobson
Lois Jordan
Josephine Luchies
Jack & Mary Meyers
John & Beatrice Poel
Karen Racek
Stan & Peg Rop
Verlyn Schultz

Dorothy Snow
Gordon & Tena VanSingel
Richard Vredevelde
Dan & Joni Wagenmaker
Mike & Elaine Weesies
Dykema Development
Sutherland Springs Condos

Rosella Walters
Stuart & Emily Bouwman
Joyce Brinkman
Lawrence & Joyce Brouwer
Dick & Marian DeMol
Glen & Esther DeVries
Mabel Haan
Alvin & Barbara Jager
Lloyd & Sandra Koops
Ken & Sharon Machiela
Robert & Carol Mannes
Arnold & Wilma Reenders
Dan & Bonnie Scholten
Leona Scholten
John & Sara Simmons
Mitch & Stephanie Smith
Gwen Sneller
Brian & Lisa Sooy
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Sooy
David & Marilee Vandenberg
Don & Kris Watjer
Thom & Julie Working

CBI gratefully acknowledges a generous gift from the ESTATE OF:
Peter I Noteboom

Correction: We apologize that in the September 2006 CNN, Marge Van Surksun was inadvertently omitted from the listing of Instructors honored for 5 years of service.

The Center for Advanced Studies
at Crossroad Bible Institute presents

CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINARS

December 2006 - February 2007

OPEN TO CBI INSTRUCTORS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

All seminars are free of charge, but advanced registration is required. You can register online at www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org or by calling the CBI Headquarters at 800-668-2450. The seminars are sponsored by The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute.

DECEMBER 2006 - FEBRUARY 2007 SEMINARS

How Restorative Justice Aims to Resolve the Crisis in Criminal Justice
Dr. David Schuringa
Almond Valley CRC, Ripon, CA
1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m., Sunday, December 10, 2006
Registration Deadline: December 4, 2006

How Restorative Justice Aims to Resolve the Crisis in Criminal Justice
Dr. David Schuringa
Phoenix CRC, Phoenix, AZ
3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m., Sunday, January 21, 2007
Registration Deadline: January 12, 2007

How Prison Ministry Is Transforming the Church and Its Worship
Dr. David Schuringa
Calvin Symposium on Worship
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI
12:15 p.m.-1:15 p.m., Friday, January 26, 2007
Registration Deadline: January 12, 2007

Countering the Cults with Trinitarian Doctrine
Rev. Allen Vander Pol
Marco Presbyterian Church, Marco Island, FL
7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Monday, February 5, 2007
Registration Deadline: January 29, 2007

How Restorative Justice Aims to Resolve the Crisis in Criminal Justice
Dr. David Schuringa
North Lake Presbyterian Church, Lady Lake, FL
3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m., Sunday, February 18, 2007
Registration Deadline: February 9, 2007

Countering the Cults with Trinitarian Doctrine
Rev. Allen Vander Pol
Bradenton CRC, Bradenton, FL
7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Monday, February 19, 2007
Registration Deadline: February 12, 2007


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