

The Good That God Can Do In Bad Times

BY PASTOR BOB MASON
Kingsway Christian Church

Recently my youngest son and I drove through Mapleton, Iowa, on a Saturday when the weather forecast was warning of severe storms coming into the area. Six hours later the community was struck by a tornado that appears to have leveled close to half the town.

In reports to follow, citizens there testified that they believed that God had protected the community as there were no deaths reported and at least one church in the path was spared.

More recently, people in the south have not been as fortunate as in the states of Mississippi, Alabama Tennessee, Kentucky and others reporting tremendous damage and loss of life setting new records.

Economic forecasts are not encouraging, as our government faces economic forecasts that suggest there are major problems ahead in maintaining medical services and social security. Sometimes it seems that our attempt to achieve the American Dream is creating what could become a nightmare. Yet, in all periods of history it seems that each generation has faced its crisis and come through, leaving some to be optimists. I tend to be a pessimist focusing on

things around me but an optimist on considering God's plan and purpose in our lives.

I am speaking of the relationship that God seeks to develop with the believer after that person comes to Jesus Christ and receives Him as a personal savior. The Apostle Paul in writing to the believers in Corinth refers to this relationship as the God of all comfort (2nd Corinthians 1:3). Jesus teaches of this ministry of the Holy Spirit when He is ministering to His disciples shortly before He is crucified. In the Gospel of John chapter 14 tells them, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (KJV). Couple this with the invitation given by Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

I also see God not only as comforter but also as a counselor. In Isaiah 9:6, He is introduced by the prophet in the following manner. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of



REFLECTIONS

reading and meditating upon the word of God as the Spirit of God applies its application to the believer's situation. Jesus is the good shepherd described in Psalm 23. Is it necessary to count sheep when we lay awake at night counting sheep when we can talk with the shepherd? To sum it up, Psalm 119 puts it this way in verse 11: "Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

A comforter and a counselor, what else is there to look for in times such as we are living in? I believe that we need to be challenged because it is easy to become discouraged and give up. In his book, The Church Awakening, author and Pastor Charles Swindol makes this statement re-

garding postmodernism and the evangelical church. "I have never been more passionate or hopeful for the church to wake up, begin walking closely with God again, and engage our culture for Jesus. It begins now with you and me." He sees such awakening of going back to the early New Testament and challenging today's believers to focus on the record of Acts 2:46-47. The ministry of the early church simply consisted of teaching (including preaching), fellowship, observing communion and baptism, and prayer.

A book by David Platt titled "Radical" challenges Christians to wake up, trade in false values routed in the American dream, and embrace the notion that each of us is blessed by God for a global purpose. David Platt is the pastor of the Church at Brook Hills, a 4,000-member congregation in Birmingham, Ala. This is one of the southern cities hit by the violent tornados of April. He holds two undergraduate and three advanced degrees, including a doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. His challenge is the radical experiment.

Here are the five components to accomplish in one year. Consider them with me and pray for each other.

- Pray for the entire world (Operation World by Patrick Johnstone has information).
- Read through the entire Bible systemat-

ically from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.

- Sacrifice your money for a specific purpose. "Not easy, but dividends will pay."
- Spend your time in another context. (This may involve travel to a mission field.)
- Commit your life to a multiplying community (a local body of Christ).

Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade," was recently killed in a tragic auto accident in Texas on April 27. In 1958 he was drawn to New York City where he began a street ministry to young drug addicts and gang members, which he continued into the 1960s. He also founded "Teen Challenge," an evangelical Christian addiction program. His book, "The Cross and the Switchblade," sold more than 50 million copies in more than 30 languages.

For some closing words of comfort, council and challenge, let me share with you his last blog post stating the following: "To those going through the valley and shadow of death, hear this word: Weeping will last through some dark, awful nights," he wrote, "and in that darkness you will soon hear the father whisper, 'I am with you. I cannot tell you why right now, but one day it will all make sense. You will see that it was all part of my plan. It was no accident.'" — taken from Wikipedia.

Religions Have Different Customs When They Bury Their Dead

BY HELEN T. GRAY

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In Islam, the deceased are to be buried within 24 hours.

This was highlighted in media reports of the death of Osama bin Laden. And controversy arose over bin Laden's burial at sea.

Each major religion has its customs concerning burial. Although they vary widely, the one common denominator is respect for the body.

ISLAM

Russell Mohammed, a director of the Mid-America Muslim Cemetery, said the 24-hour burial is not in the Qur'an but is a cultural practice from the faith's desire to respect the body and to avoid decay.

Since autopsies would injure the body, those are to be avoided, he said.

"Also, we don't embalm," Mohammed said. "This is disrespecting the body."

Since the cemetery is near the Islamic Center in south Kansas City, Mo., washing of the body is done at the center, he said. Then it is wrapped in a white shroud.

After that are prayers, and the body is taken to the cemetery.

"We don't normally use caskets, just bury in the ground, where it (the body) becomes part of the soil," he said. "The upper part of the body, the head, is turned toward Mecca.

"We respect the deceased just as if they were alive. The washing and the wrapping with a shroud is done carefully. We do not allow viewing of the body except for the immediate family after the washing."

Mohammed said some Muslim countries do not

allow women to go to the cemetery because they think they will be too emotional.

"We allow them to stand at a distance, and after the burial site is covered, they can come closer."

Mohammed said that in some Muslim countries there are processions in the streets with the body in a casket. But that is not done in the U. S., he said. "And we do not do a eulogy," he said. "Whatever you are going to say about someone, you say it while the person is alive."

Some Islamic clerics said bin Laden's burial at sea violated Islamic law. White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan said that the Obama administration consulted "appropriate specialists and experts" before making the decision and that finding a country to accept bin Laden's body and making burial arrangements would have taken longer than 24 hours.

JUDAISM

Similarly, the traditional Jewish custom is to bury the deceased within 24 hours or if not, within 48 hours, said Rabbi Herbert Mandl of Kehilath Israel Synagogue.

"We don't embalm," he said. "Embalming is against Jewish law because you are not to tamper with the body. You are supposed to return the way you came, and embalming radically affects the body."

"Also, cremation is forbidden," Mandl said. "This is a major violation of Jewish law because you are destroying the body. If you have to keep the body for a few days, perhaps if a relative is coming from a distance or other extenuating circumstances, we would refrigerate."

Wooden caskets are to be used so they deteriorate in the earth, he said. The deceased is buried in a white garment similar to a gown, and the casket is closed at the funeral, which is a simple service with Scripture, prayers and a eulogy.

Services are usually conducted at funeral homes, and then the people go to the cemetery.

"Traditional synagogues usually do not take the body inside the synagogue," Mandl said.

Among Reform Jews, many of the deceased are buried in regular clothing, said Rabbi Mark Levin at Congregation Beth Torah in Kansas City. Burial generally is within two days, he said.

Following the funeral, traditional Jews would do an evening service at the home of the deceased's family for seven days, while Reform Jews do it for one, two or three days, he said.

The location of a Reform Jewish funeral depends upon the custom of the city, Levin said. In the Kansas City area, for example, the custom is mostly to have it at a funeral home. However, many of his members' funerals are held at the temple.

PROTESTANTS

Requirements for Protestant Christian burials are few, said the Rev. J. Lowell Harrup of Northland Cathedral in Kansas City.

Although there is no required time frame, most funerals and burial are within three to four days, he said. Also, cremations are acceptable.

"There is great respect for the dead," he said. "The body is created by God and destined for resurrection, so we see sacredness in death itself."

People often specify what they want to be buried in, he said.

At the church, the tradition is for the funeral to recount the good of the person's life, and a Bible-based sermon is preached.

"People need hope and encouragement that there is more to this life than right now," Harrup said. "I want to bring comfort but also remind people that this is something we will all face, and we need to be aware that there is an eternity beyond. I emphasize that Jesus has provided a place."

In most African-American churches, the funeral includes prayer, Scripture, music, condolences from organizations the person was involved in, remarks from family and friends and a eulogy.

The casket usually is closed during the service

and often re-opened afterward for the final viewing, but in some churches that is being discouraged because it is stressful for the family, said the Rev. Brenda Hayes, a pastor in St. Louis.

"The service is viewed as a celebration of the life that was lived and a victory won through faith," she said. "The mood is upbeat, recalling the Scripture that those who die in Christ are absent from the body but now present with the Lord."

"Sometimes it is called a 'Homegoing Celebration,' going home to be with the Lord. The music is more about rejoicing. Prayers also are offered at the gravesite as the deceased is committed back to God."

What used to be called a wake now is called family visitation, Hayes said.

"The wake used to be the night before, and often the body would be in the family's house, and people would come there and everybody would be sad."

Now, the visitation is often right before the service, and cremation is becoming more common, she said.

Sometimes it is several days to a week between the death and the funeral, especially if a lot of family members are coming from out of town.

Also, in the African-American tradition, "We dress them up," Hayes said. "Dressy dresses or suits, hair done, makeup, jewelry, things that were the person's favorite."

CATHOLICISM

In the Catholic tradition, the deceased is buried as soon as arrangements can be made, said Deacon Ralph Wehner, director of sacred worship for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

"The church prefers that the body be present for the funeral and if the person is to be cremated, that is done after the funeral," he said. "We require ashes to be buried in an urn, not scattered or sit on someone's mantle."

"The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and

that body must be respected, and it is not respectful to scatter ashes or leave them somewhere."

A vigil most commonly is held the night before the funeral, he said. "Vigils used to be in the funeral home but a trend is to have it at the church."

"The funeral Mass includes the reading of Scripture and prayers for the soul of the deceased and the family, prayers that express the hope and mercy of God and prayers for the saints in heaven to assist this soul and for all who have died."

Wehner said most people choose what they wish to be buried in.

If a person is buried in a Catholic cemetery, the ground already has been blessed. If buried in a non-Catholic cemetery, the priest would bless the gravesite. This would happen, for example, for a military person who is buried in a military cemetery.

Finally, even if the spouse is not Catholic, he or she can be buried with the Catholic spouse in a Catholic cemetery, Wehner said.

HINDUISM

In the Hindu faith, there is no burial. The bodies are burned.

In India ceremonial customs vary depending on the region, said Atul Trivedi, an area Hindu priest.

And in India, the body is burned in a special ceremony, he said. In the United States, cremation takes place at a funeral home, and the ashes are put in an urn and given to the family, if requested.

At the ceremony before the cremation, everybody wears white, and the priest offers prayers that the soul finds peace, said Arvind Khetia, an area Hindu.

If possible, the ashes are taken to India to be spread in holy water.

"There is no burial because the soul already has moved out," he said. "The body is a temple as long as the person is alive."

CHURCH SCHEDULES

Abundant Life

ABUNDANT LIFE MINISTRIES, 517 Burleigh, Lawrence and Barbara Hladky, pastors. 665-0889. SAT 7pm Praise and worship celebration. SUN. 10am Worship. WED. 7pm Worship. Teens prayer daily 10am.

Alliance of Renewal Churches

LIVING WATER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, Sun. 10am Yankton Middle School (2000 Mulberry) Weds. 7pm Prayer. David Olson, pastor. (605)260-2138.

Assembly of God

ASSEMBLY OF GOD, 801 W. 25th, Jeff Mantz, pastor. 665-6362 (office). SUN. 10am Worship Celebration. WED. 7pm Midweek service and Bible study for all ages.

Baptist

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, 221 W. 3rd, Kevin Caskey, pastor. 665-0066. SUN. 9:30am Sunday School, 10:45pm Preaching Service, 4pm Afternoon Service. THU. 7pm Preaching & Prayer Service.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, 303 Ohio St., Wakonda. Mike Lindsay, pastor. (605)759-5020. SUNDAY Worship. 11:00a.m. evening 6:00pm WEDNESDAY Bible Study 12:00pm

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, 2407 Broadway, Yankton. (605)665-5594. Rev. Jon Cooke, Pastor Jeremy Nelson, and Laura Kotalik. www.cbchurch.com SAT-URDAY May 14 8:00 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast SUNDAY May 15 8:30 AM Intercessory Prayer Time 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM Worship Services Message "Praying for Those Who Are Straying" MONDAY May 16 9:00 AM Ladies Prayer Time 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study 7:30 PM Service broadcast on Channels 3 & 98 TUESDAY May 17 WEDNESDAY May 18 6:00 PM Intercessory Prayer 7:00 PM Bacca-laureate (YHS) 7:00 PM Adult Bible Study THURSDAY May 19 7:00 PM Celebrate Recovery 7:33 PM Dorcas' Hands FRIDAY May 20 7:00 PM "Cruisin'" 24/7

Baptist

HARVEST INDEPENDENT BAPTIST, 100 W. 3rd, Mission Hill. Pastor Nathan Martin, 668-0708 (ch.) 665-1481 (home). SUN. 9:30am SS. 10:30am Worship. 5:30pm Worship. WED. 7:00pm Worship.

YANKTON BAPTIST CHURCH, SBC, Pastor Matt Green, 607 East 15th St., Yankton, 665-7587. SUN. 9:30am Bible study, SS; 10:45am Worship. WED. 7pm Midweek service.

Bible Church

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH, Meeting in Home Fellowship groups for Spring of 2011. Call Pastor Joel Finck for times & locations. (605)760-4701.

Catholic

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Immaculate Conception), St. Helena, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen. (402)357-2400. Mass: Saturdays 5pm

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Sts. Peter & Paul), Bow Valley, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen (402)357-2400. Mass: Sat. 8pm & Sun. 11am.

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Sacred Heart), Wynott, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen. (402)357-2400. Mass times: Sundays 9am.

MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE, Peace Chapel, MMC campus. SUN. 10am Mass with the Sisters in the Bishop Marty Chapel. Public is welcome to attend.

ST. AGNES PARISH: SIGEL, rural Utica. SUN. 9am Mass, confessions 1/2 hour before Mass.

ST. ANDREW'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Bloomfield, NE. Fr. Michael Schmitz SUN. Mass: 10:30am; TUE. Mass: 8am; THUR. Mass: 7pm. Confessions: THUR. 6:30-6:55pm.

ST. BENEDICT CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1500 St. Benedict Drive, Yankton, Father Ken Lulf, 664-6214 (church). Masses: SAT. 5pm. SUN. 8:30am & 10:30am.

ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH, Menominee, Neb., Rev. David Fulton, pastor. SUN. 8:30am Mass.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC, Lesterville. SUN. 10:30am Mass.

Catholic

ST. COLUMBA CHURCH, rural Irene. For weekend Mass info see church bulletin or Rev. Mathew Vazhappally, (605)583-4318.

ST. GEORGE CHURCH, Scotland, SD. Rev. Mathew Vazhappally. For weekend Mass info see church bulletin or call (605)583-4318.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC, Fordyce, Neb. Rev. David Fulton. SUN. 10:30am Mass.

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Constance, Neb., Fr. David Fulton, pastor. SAT. Mass: 7:30pm.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC, Wakonda, Rev. Scott Trayner, 624-2697. SUN. 8:30am Mass.

ST. ROSE OF LIMA, Crofton, Neb. Fr. Michael Schmitz. SAT. Mass: 8:00am & 5:30pm. SUN. Mass: 8:30am. WED/FRI Masses: 8:15am. Confessions: WED. 11am-11:30am. SAT. 5-5:20pm.

ST. WENCESLAUS, Tabor, (605)463-2336. Rev. Joseph Puthenkeathil, SAT. 7pm Mass. SUN. 8:30am Mass.

THE HOUSE OF MARY SHRINE, 6-mi. W. Yankton, Hwy.52. Masses: Monday 8:30 through October. Masses Saturday 9:00 every Saturday. Rosary Sunday 4:00. Rosary 4:00. Open 7 days a week for prayer. Join us as we celebrate the 30th annual Easter Sunrise at the House of Mary Shrine starting at 6:05am Deacon Kristopher Cowles will be the guest homilist. thehouseofmaryshrine.org

Charismatic

YAHWEH-SHALOM CHARISMATIC, St. Benedict Catholic Church. MON. 7:30pm prayer meeting

Christian

KINGSWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 19th & Burleigh, 665-6317. Joseph Mason, Pastor. 9am-SS; Worship 10:15am. Wed.-6pm-Kids games; 7pm Kids for Christ & Adult Bible Study.

Church of Christ

CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1114 West 12th, Yankton, 665-6379. SUN. 9:30am Bible study; classes for all ages. 10:30am Worship.

Church of Jesus Christ

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 2300 Douglas, Yankton. Randy Campbell, (605)565-2016. Family History Ctr 665-0901. SUN. 10am Sacrament meeting.

Episcopal

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 517 Douglas, Yankton. Rev. James Pearson, (605)665-2456. May 15 9:00 Serenity 10:15 The Holy Eucharist May 18 Noon The Holy Eucharist.

Evangelical

Cornerstone Evangelical Church, Pastor Oliver Omanson, Stewart Elementary School; Morning Service 10:30 a.m. Wednesday College Bible Study 1306 Maple Street. Mike Stevens 665-8750.

EMMANUEL CHURCH YHS Theater, 1801 Summit, Sunday School 9:30, Worship Service 10:45. www.emmanuel-yankton.com (605)665-0404.

Jehovah's Witnesses

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, 2215 Douglas, 664-2249. SUN. 10am Public Bible lecture, 10:35am Watchtower. WED. 7:30pm Bible Study, 8pm Ministry School, 8:35pm Service meeting.

Lutheran

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH: 305 W. 25th, Yankton, 665-8848. Rev. Dani Jo Ninke. SUN: 8:30am & 10:45am Worship, SS-9:45am.

FAITH UNITED LUTHERAN, 44874 303rd St., Volin SD 57072, (605)267-2277. SUN. Worship Services 9:30am. Children's Education WED. Evening (WOW) 6:30-7:30pm.

FIRST AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC 300 S. Carpenter St., Tripp. (605)935-6941 SUN. 10:45 Worship 9:30am Sunday School. firstshope@santel.net

GAYVILLE-BERGEN LUTHERAN Pastor Ralph Egbert. (605)267-4342 (church) Sunday Worship: GLC 9am; Sunday School 10:15am; Bergen Worship 10:30am; Sunday School 9:15am.

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC 200 South Wilson, Delmont. (605)935-6941. SUN 9am Worship. firstshope@santel.net

OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN, rural Irene. 263-3724. SUN. 9am Worship.

Lutheran

Martinus Lutheran Church, Utica. Pastor Dean Schroeder Sunday Divine Service 10:30am (605)589-3195 www.MartinusLutheran.org

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN, 29219 431st Ave., Menno. Rev. Bradley Danielson. SAT. 7am Men's prayer breakfast. SUN. 9am Worship. 10:30am SS.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN, LCMS, 12th and Elm, Springfield. Rev. Kenneth Johnson, pastor. SUN. 8am Worship, 9am SS. THUR. 7pm Adult Bible study.

PRINCE OF PEACE, Wisconsin Synod, 201 East 25th St., Pastor Werre, 665-4793. Sat. 6pm Worship.

South Dakota Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, MAIN STREET LIVING television program, 10a.m. (CST) on KDLT-NBC; and 11a.m. (CST) on KAUN-PAX; and 10a.m. (MST) on KKRA-PAX.

St. John Lutheran Church, Tyn-dall. Pastor Dean Schroeder. Sunday Divine Service 8:30am (605)589-3195. www.StJohnsTynDallLCMS.org

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMS), 1009 Jackson. David Gunderson, Pastor. SUN. 8am Worship, 9:15am Education Hour, 10:30am Worship.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, 403 Broadway, Yankton, 665-7415. Worship Saturday, 5:30pm, Sunday, 8:15am & 10:45am. 9:30 coffee fellowship.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Hartington/Crofton, NE. Bob Bryan, pastor; (402)254-6606. SUN. 9am Worship (Hartington), 10am SS (Hartington), 11am Worship (Crofton).

TRONDHJEM LUTHERAN CHURCH (AFLC), rural Volin. 263-3841. SUN. 9:15am; 10:30am Worship.

VANGEN LUTHERAN CHURCH, Mission Hill. 665-5426. Rev. Lance Lindgren, Pastor. Worship 10am; Coffee Fellowship 11am; Sunday School 9am; Wednesday Evening Worship 6:30pm; Quilters each Wed. 9am; WELCA 3rd Thurs. 1:30pm; Senior