
News Updates

JOURNAL MARKS 100TH ISSUE

This issue of *The Quarterly Journal* achieves a milestone for the ministry of Personal Freedom Outreach. It marks our 100th issue. In 1981, PFO began publishing its quarterly newsletter. This periodical was developed to provide the Christian body with articles, editorials, news items, and book reviews on current cult-related and apologetic subjects. During the past 26 years some things have changed, including the design, size, and name of our newsletter publication, yet its purpose has remained unchanged.

TQJ has been called a tremendous resource to assist the Christian's spiritual discernment. It has been heralded by many within the apologetic community for its careful and thorough research and cutting-edge articles. PFO is grateful for the respect we've earned and for the accomplishment of one hundred issues in which to share, to serve, and to make a difference.

—MKG

DAN BROWN CLEARED OF PLAGIARISM CHARGES

Author Dan Brown escaped from his own drama involving a plagiarism case brought against him over his best-selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. In April, England's High Court dismissed the copyright infringement charges aimed at him.

Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, two of the three authors of a 1982 fictional work, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, sued Brown claiming that he had stolen their central theme for his own volume. Following a five-week trial, the British court issued a 71-page ruling which stated, "Even if the central themes were copies, they are too general or too low a level of abstraction to be capable of protection by copyright law."

Baigent and Leigh's novel proposes that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and produced a child through the union whose lineage continues to this day. Brown's storyline in *The Da Vinci Code* closely parallels this thought, alleging that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married, with Mary giving birth to a daughter following Jesus' crucifixion. During the trial, Brown admitted that *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* was just one of several sources which he utilized in study for his own work.

The court, by ruling in Brown's favor, cleared the way for an unimpeded May 19 premiere of *The Da Vinci Code* motion picture. If the court had ruled against Brown, the release of director Ron Howard's film adaptation may have been delayed. The movie, starring Tom Hanks, was budgeted at \$125 million. Columbia Pictures paid Brown \$6 million in June 2003 for the film rights.

Baigent and Leigh lost more than just the case when the court tossed out their charges. According to a Religious News Service report, the judge ordered the pair to cover 85 percent of the estimated \$2.25 million in trial expenses incurred by Random House, Brown's publisher. The judge also refused any right for Baigent and Leigh to appeal the court's ruling.

The Da Vinci Code was first published in 2003, has sold more than 40 million copies, and has been translated into 44 languages. News reports disclose that Brown is the highest-paid author in history and that he earned an estimated \$78 million in a single year.

—MKG

PENTECOSTAL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATED

Tens of thousands of people assembled April 25-29 in Los Angeles to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street Revival, the event which is said to have birthed the Pentecostal movement. The first day of the historic gathering drew 25,000 people from more than 100 nations.

The five-day celebration featured over 150 speakers, including Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, T.D. Jakes, Rod Parsley, Reinhard Bonnke, and Creflo Dollar. The roster also included names not generally recognized as prominent within Pentecostal or Charismatic circles. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Southern California, made a two-part presentation on the opening day in which he presented "the key characteristics of a Spirit-filled local church."

On April 14, 1906, Pastor William Seymour held the first service of his Azusa Street Mission in a converted livery stable. The principal attraction of the services was glossolalia, which the *Los Angeles Times* labeled a "weird babel of tongues" amid "wild scenes." Seymour, a disciple of Charles Fox Parham, a Holiness preacher from the Midwest, fostered the belief that tongues were a modern day sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. For

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to spend time, “in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21).

The fact is that there are few safe publishers anymore. And “Christian” bookstores? Forget that myth. And it is not just minor errors. Heresies and false teachings are being sold by the barrel. Those who object are castigated and relegated to the nether world of “phariseeism” or called small-minded cranks or narrow-minded judges. Some really understand what is really going on: The most vulnerable area of a person’s body is his wallet pocket.

Actually, it is Acts 19 all over again: “For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen (v. 24). Demetrius called together all of his buddies and business partners and said, “Guys, we have a problem.” His point was, “You know that we have our prosperity by this trade.” The true Gospel was crippling the false teaching. The problem was not the false teaching and not the error. Paul had to go because this was about profit. Acts goes on to say that all that was produced was incredible confusion (19:32). And so it is the same today: Fighting error — especially profitable error — is never easy.

However, there is a cost not measured in dollars: The countless souls being misled, confused, and taken down not only perilous trails in life, but for eternity.

Here’s a plan, albeit a radical one: Because it is getting so serious and the sewage that is spilling through our land is often so vile and so sickening, we would do better to stay out of the “Christian” bookstores and realize that we are being marketed to death at every turn. It might be beneficial to limit the number of “Christian” programs we listen to (because there is a sales gimmick on most) and get back to some quantity and quality time just in our Bibles. It would also help if we attended a good, local Bible church more consistently. It will only cost us time and will pay off with great spiritual benefits. There is an organization called “Back To The Bible.” That’s a great idea on a personal level and perhaps a great slogan for the coming years.

We might do well to take seriously the words of David Kupelian:

“It’s often said the Christian church in America needs revival. But this doesn’t necessarily mean ever-bigger tents with tens of thousands of us swaying back and forth, singing songs, giving speeches, and getting pumped up — and then going home and watching television. America’s real revival and genuine rebirth will be much less dramatic in the beginning. We might never even realize exactly how it came about. But it can happen, and we must pray that it will. How will it come to pass? It’ll happen, dear friends, when we all simply go to our rooms, close the door, take a deep breath, and

take a good, long, hard, honest look at ourselves. And then, quietly and humbly and fervently, we ask the living God for help, for insight, for direction — for salvation. When that happens, the spell will be broken, the sun will shine again, and every marketer of evil will have to go out and get an honest job” (*The Marketing of Evil*, pg. 240).

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

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the next three years, Seymour’s meetings grew in reputation and influence. Eventually strife between Seymour and other central figures of this new Holiness-Pentecostal experience, including Parham, eroded Seymour’s role as a leader in the movement. By 1914, the Azusa Street Mission had effectively become a local black congregation with an occasional white visitor. Seymour died in 1922, at age 52, from a heart attack.

Charisma magazine devoted much of its April 2006 issue to highlighting the 1906 revival, calling it the event that “rocked our world.” It is claimed that worldwide there are more than 600 million Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians whose roots can be traced to the Azusa Street Revival.

—MKG

CHURCHES CELEBRATE “EVOLUTION SUNDAY”

Claiming that evolution and the Christian faith are compatible, over 400 churches across the United States commemorated the 197th birthday of Charles Darwin in February. The churches dedicated programs and sermons in an effort to stress that there is no conflict between biological evolution and the Scriptures.

The event was spearheaded by Michael Zimmerman, dean of the College of Letters and Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Zimmerman’s campaign was directed against those he labels as “shrill fundamentalist voices” and “fundamentalist leaders” who contend that biblical faith and evolution are incompatible. “It’s to demonstrate, by Christian leaders and members of the clergy, that you don’t have to make that choice. You can have both,” he told the *Chicago Tribune*.

Churches from a wide spectrum of various denominations, including Baptist, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and United Church of Christ, took part in the observance known as “Evolution Sunday.”

—MKG