

The Messenger



MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

Volume 28 Issue 6

June 2015

Many Professors, few Possessors

What do you really want out of life? When you seek to please someone with your life, whose blessing and approval do you seek? Are you the sole magistrate, the single evaluator, of your life? How would you know if you've accomplished anything worthwhile with your life? Whose evaluation of your life do you trust?

Reassessing our "life's Values" and accomplishments is one of the most recompensing endeavors do. When we sort these out however, we need to consider the evidence of its "Truth" based on criteria of what's measurable. Claims are many, authentications are few!

History records that a young prince in India decided to pursue the meaning and purpose of life. In many respects we could be referring to Solomon, King David's heir to his throne, but this time I'm referring to prince Siddhartha who lived around 2500 B.C. in a province of India near Nepal.

It's probable that many of you have never actually looked into the claims other religions make about their founders and writings so today I want to introduce you to the founder and claims of a group we know as Buddhists and give a cursory

comparison to the Holy Scriptures.

Many claims are made in association with the followers of, also known as the Buddha. Follow with me as we discover the path he took seeking enlightenment to be the awakened one. Ironically he took a similar path to discovery as Solomon did in the first seven chapters of Ecclesiastes. Prince Siddhartha focused his search on discovering the cause of and elimination suffering. He claimed success but he couldn't tell anyone what it was. He could only tell people to go through the same processes he went through and they might find the same answer he found.

Both men searched answers in science, philosophy, hedonism, greed, stoicism or asceticism egotism and religion; and both came up completely empty. Solomon expressed his frustration with that whole process as vanity, empty, like soap bubbles. Some pursuits looked attractive and promising on the outside but inside they were full of hot air and utterly failed to deliver what it promised.

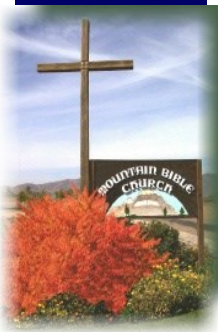
Buddha is a title that refers to an enlightened or

awakened one. The leader who founded the movement approximately 2500 B.C. was the Prince of the small kingdom of Kapilavastu, India.

"Prince Siddhartha renounced the worldly lifestyle and called himself Gautama. He wore ragged robes and wandered from place to place. In his search for truth, he studied with the wisest teachers of his day. **None of them knew how to end suffering**, so he continued the search on his own.

"For six years he practiced severe asceticism thinking this would lead him to enlightenment. He sat in meditation and ate only roots, leaves and fruit. At times he ate nothing, but this did not take him anywhere. He thought, "Neither my life of luxury in the palace nor my life as an ascetic in the forest is the way to freedom. Overdoing things can not lead to happiness. "He began to eat nourishing food again and regained his strength.

"On a full-moon day in May, he sat under the Bodhi tree in deep meditation and said, "I will not leave this



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spot until I find an end to suffering. **As the struggle ended, he claimed he realized the cause of suffering and how to remove it.** He claimed to have gained the most supreme wisdom and understand things as they truly are. He became the **Buddha**, 'The Awakened One'. From then on, he was called Shakyamuni Buddha" source - internet

Anyone who actually "understands suffering and knows how to remove it" is welcome if in fact they can back-up what he claimed! So we ask, "**Is there any evidence that he or his teachings, (Dharma's) have removed suffering from among his followers?**"

The answer to the question is a solemn and respectful but a "definite," No! Apparently he couldn't tell anyone else how to put an end to suffering. His Dharma's teach, if people meditate long and hard enough they might discover his answers also. It was and is a totally unverifiable theory which is a shame because it had and has appeal to most everyone; like a soap bubble.

Buddhism is an atheistic based religion which seeks to find the answers to meaning and purpose in life within one's self. The god referred to is apparently an incomplete and unsure entity. Some have described Buddhism as a

"Search for God." Put as a solicitation, a search for god is a search for one-self.

Where Buddha never acknowledged personal sin as a primary issue contributing to the suffering of man, he did encourage his followers to learn to help each other in their sufferings. Helping each other becomes the highest level of living as a Buddhist.

At least Solomon had the humility to search for answers to life's questions outside of himself. Meditating longer and harder on a soap bubble will never fill the soap bubble with meaning and wisdom. In application; stop seeking life's answers among the created things, rather, seek the answers from the creator.

Solomon discovered that God is the one we need to please and not ourselves. God's approval means eternal life where man's approval only means a good feeling for the moment in time.

Solomon acknowledged one's reputation among man is very valuable, it's not the panacea of life. People are prone to evil and therefore not always reliable. Though man's opinions are unreliable, our Creator's opinion is impeccable and always reliable. In Ecclesiastes 7 Solomon addresses both issues.

Ecclesiastes 7:1 (NLT) "A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume. And the day you die is better than the day you are born."

Ecclesiastes 7:1 (CEV) "A good reputation at the time of death is better than loving care at the time of birth."

Ecclesiastes 7:20-23 (NLT) "Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins. (21) Don't eavesdrop on others—you may hear your servant curse you. (22) For you know how often you yourself have cursed others. (23) I have always tried my best to let wisdom guide my thoughts and actions. I said to myself, "I am determined to be wise." But it didn't work."

Ecclesiastes 7:29 (NLT) "But I did find this: God created people to be virtuous, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path."

Though both Solomon and Buddha exhort people to stop living egocentric lives and help each other on the way; for Solomon that is only one step along the path, for Buddha it's the destination where the path leads.

Solomon went on to say the path that leads to life's answers begins with our Creator.

Ecclesiastes 12:1-4 (HCSB) "So remember your Creator in the days of your youth: Before the days of adversity come, and the years approach

when you will say, "I have no delight in them"

Solomon didn't seek a cure for suffering in this life because he discovered from his Creator that suffering is a result of man's sins and hate and jealousies. The solution then isn't to set under a tree and think about eliminating suffering, the solution is to find a remedy for man's sinful behavior.

Christ claimed to be the way the truth and the life, anyone who wished to come the Father must come through Him." So, the path to ultimate enlightenment is Jesus. The way to eternal life is also through Jesus, because He is the "Truth."

Christ answer man's sin problem is also in Christ. He came to be our Redeemer and purchased our redemption by His sinless life and his vicarious death on the cross. The proof that He did what He claimed is that three days after His crucifixion, He bodily arose from the grave revealing His victory over death and the grave. That's why Jesus could promise eternal life to his followers.

Romans 6:23 (HCSB) "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Next month I hope to give another synopsis to compare.

Have a wonderful and safe June!

Pastor Marv

Early Church History by Jerry Henry

I have been blessed with the ability to teach others and to that end I have been leading Bible Studies at Mountain Bible Church for close to 20 years. Almost a year ago I was teaching the Book of Acts to mostly retirees on Monday morning. At the end of the end of that study I was asked to lead a study on what happened to the Church after the end of the Book of Acts in 62/63 AD until Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 323 AD and to talk about how the Bible that we know today came about. This has been a very rewarding experience for me since the teacher always learns more than the students. Pastor Marvin approached me not long ago to summarize the study in a group of articles for the messenger and this will be the first in that series.

However, before I begin, I want you to know that all of the information in this study is available to anyone who is interested on the internet. First and foremost, I used Wikipedia a great deal, however, Wikipedia needs to be verified especially concerning religious subjects. There is a great deal of false information out there on the internet about religion. So to veri-

fy my information was correct I used a number of Christian sites to ensure I had a consistent message of truth. Many of the original material from church leaders after the Apostles are available, such as church historian Eusebius, who wrote in the 3rd and 4th Century AD and Josephus, who wrote Roman History in the 1st and 2nd Century AD. Due to the extensive research; I will not be giving you a detailed bibliography on each source used.

The **Apostolic Age** extends from the Day of Pentecost to the death of the Apostle John, and covers about seventy years, from A.D. 30 to about 100. The field of action is Israel, and gradually extends over Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The most prominent centers are Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome, which represent respectively the mother churches of Jewish, Gentile, and ultimately Roman Catholic Christianity. Next to them are Ephesus and Corinth. Ephesus acquired a special importance by the residence and labors of John the Apostle, and made themselves felt during the second century through Polycarp and Irenaeus (who will be discussed later in this series). Samaria, Damascus, Joppa, Caesarea, Tyre, Cy-

prus, the provinces of Asia Minor, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Crete, Patmos, Malta, Puteoli, come also into view as points where the Christian faith was planted. Through the eunuch converted by Philip, it reached Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. As early as 58 AD Paul could say: **"From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."** He afterwards carried it to Rome, where the gospel had been known previously, and as far as Spain, the western boundary of the empire before Paul was martyred in 67AD in Rome. The Book of Acts gives the historical account of much of this through the eyes of Luke, who is travelling with Paul.

So What Happened to the Apostles and Leaders After the Book of Acts? Simon called Peter

In a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples (Matthew 16:13-19), Jesus asks, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" The disciples give various answers. When he asks, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answers, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus then declares:

Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter (Petros), and on this rock (petra) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

In a strong tradition of the Early Church, Peter is said to have founded the church in Rome, served as its bishop, authored two epistles, and then met martyrdom there as did Paul. Later accounts expand on the brief biblical mention of his visit to Antioch. The Liber Pontificalis (9th century) mentions Peter as having served as bishop of Antioch for seven years and having potentially left his family in the Greek city before his journey to Rome. Subsequent tradition held that Peter had been the first Patriarch of Antioch.

The death of Peter is attested to by Tertullian at the end of the 2nd century, and by Origen in Eusebius, Church History III.1. Origen wrote: "Peter was crucified at Rome with his

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...Continued

head downwards, as he himself had desired to suffer." The Cross of St. Peter inverts the Latin cross based on this refusal, and claim of unworthiness, to die the same way as his Savior. Later historians attest that Peter died on 13 October 64 AD during the festivities on the occasion of the "dies imperii" of Emperor Nero. This took place three months after the disastrous fire that destroyed Rome for which the emperor (Nero) wished to blame the Christians. This "dies imperii" (regal day anniversary) was an important one, exactly ten years after Nero ascended to the throne, and it was 'as usual' accompanied by much bloodshed.

Next month we will continue to discuss what happened to the Apostles and church leaders mentioned in the Book of Acts. Later we will discuss Roman religion at the time and the persecution of Christians as well as the Jewish Roman wars. Christian leaders between the Apostolic Age to the 4th Century, Constantine and the Books of the Bible. It is my sincere wish that you enjoy this series and I look forward to your feedback, both good and bad.

~Jerry

Cappy's Corner

- **WHAT A JOY!** The play **Princess Kim** was so good! Starring our own Cali Mason.
- **The National Day of Prayer** was well done and well attended. May we see evidence of repentance turning to Jesus.
- The **Chili Cook Off** was a delicious success with many testing the taste. Want to know the winner. Check page 7.
- **Good News Clubs**, Tompkins, Goldhills, and the park are winning the hearts of many kids. A new leader will be putting her hat in at Golden Hills Club. Praise the Lord for Diane Hart for faithful leading this year.



Walking the Daily Path

I wake up cheerfully saying, Good morning Jesus!! With joyful enthusiasm. Reading my devotions, songs in my heart. Loving the Lord completely. I am a morning person. Throughout the early part of the day I greet people with smiles and all of the Christian passion, truly meaning it. Helping out where I can, when I can. By noon, I seem to start drooping, no not my wrinkles, they're there all the time. I mean my spirit. The daily burdens start to weigh on my shoulders. As I continue to walk through the day I literally feel the tension throughout my body. From work, grocery lines, or finding out my kids have a school project due yesterday. The people I run into in the afternoon only get half of me and half of my "Christianess". By 2:00 or 3:00pm it isn't "HELLO! HOW ARE YOU? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?" It's more of a ..."hey, have a nice day."

As the day progresses my "Christianess" is dragging. My attitude, my smiles, my love for one another slows down and my family gets what is left of me. My husband. My kids. My family gets

my leftovers? Why do I as a Christian think this is ok? That this is what we should be expressing to others?

"A cheerful heart is good medicine but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22.

With such an easy fix to stay on His path throughout His day, yes I said His day, we can periodically stop, and recharge our spirit. Pray. Read scripture. Thank Him and ask for Him to lift our burdens.

"Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you..." Psalm 55:22

I pray that I take my advice and continue to walk on His path daily. If I have given you half of me, forgive me and please send me to the corner for quiet time.

~ A Christian Mother

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Let's Give Them Something to Talk About

This year our MBC students are making headway in their academics. We are proud of each one and look forward to their success as they set out.

Master Degrees

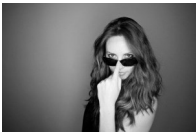
Lisa Chavez

M.A. in Accounting from Case Western Reserve University Weatherhead School of Management



Jaclyn Smith

M.A. in education, specialized in applied behavior analysis from National University



College

Kyle Conklin

B.A. in History/Political Science from The College of Wooster (Thesis: Peace and Stability in West Africa focusing on Boka Haram



Rachel Duff

B.S. in Criminal Science from Fresno State University (Magna Cum Laude)

Caleb Geiger

B.S. in Mathematics from UC Irvine (Pi Mu Epsilon, Honors in Mathematics, Outstanding Senior in Mathematics, Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude)

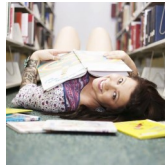


Sarah Geiger

A.S.N. (R.N.) from Bakersfield College

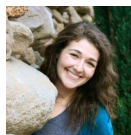
Heather Lange

B.A. in Liberal Arts from La Vern University



Rachel Vespeller

B.A. in Spanish, BS in Music from Pacific Union College (Graduating with honors – Cum Laude)



High School

Brooke Boyd – Tehachapi High School

- Favorite Scripture Today: 1 Timothy 6:11-12
 “But you, Timothy, man of God: Run for your life from all this. Pursue a

righteous life—a



life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy. Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to, the life you so fervently embraced in the presence of so many witnesses.”

Ruby Gillies – Valley Oaks Charter - Favorite Scripture Today:

Psalm 145:8-9

“The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. Slow to anger and great of mercy. The Lord is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works.”



Kaylee Lambert - Laguna Creek Charter



Mark Reuter - Valley Oak Charter



Dylan White – Hope Academy - Favorite Scripture Today:
 Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”



8th Grade Promotion

Elijah Annonson

- Jacobsen Middle School



Sarah Bantilan - Jacobsen Middle School



Jaret Boston- Jacobsen Middle School



Emily Bowman- East Kern



Tristan Visscher - Jacobsen Middle School



Jillian Wood - Jacobsen Middle School



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We are proud of our MBC Graduates,



Why Coach?

Dennis Collins was in the booth one Sunday morning when I looked at him and said “Ugh... I just said yes to coaching Frosh softball. Why would I do that?” Dennis (A seasoned softball coach) started thinking then he said “Ok, I am in.” Then I shared my plight to Andy Ohmit (a great pitcher) and soon he said “Your team has to start the season with no pitchers, well I could help.” I almost had my bases covered and with a text here and there I got Vern Eastham to coach hitting. I am a genius!

Day one it was evident that Dennis needed to become the head coach. He

had obviously done this before. I wonder around asking myself “Why did I say yes?”

We barely had 9 players. At three levels of ability. The newbies asked questions that made me ask. “Why did I say yes?”

We had to drive to Bakersfield for 10 games. My parents had to pick up my kids and run them around to their activities and I would drive to these games and asking myself “Why did I say yes?”

Each freezing cold Tehachapi game I would ask everyone “Why did I say yes?”

Dennis built relationship, fixed gear, raked the field, bought girls softball gloves, drove vans, set the line up, and always had an encouraging word, I stood on 1st base thinking “Why did I say yes?”

God works in amazing ways and just this morning Dennis was at the church office and wanted to share a handwritten note that one of our players had written to him.

Our frosh team was undefeated in our D2 league. We strived not to run the score up in our games. Often we created outs to help out our opponents. Yet, we out scored

our opponents by 240 runs. Yes runs.

As I read the letter Dennis had received, I thought of my hand written letter that I had received. The night of May 28th was our awards banquet. Parents and players appreciated us and we appreciated them. It was an emotional night because I was apart of something bigger than a sport, bigger than our record. I was apart of our community making a difference.

Dennis waited for me to finish reading his note and when I looked up he said “That’s why we coach.” Christy Boyd

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Awesome Attendance!

Congratulations to the following kids for awesome attendance: Amanda Bishop, Dylan Collins, Jonathan Geiger, and Danny Smith. You guys have done a great job coming to Sunday school.

A big thank you to your parents for making Sunday school a priority in your lives.

~Lori Henry

Children's Ministry



Ayyy Papoy, Good Job

Memorial Day Chili Cook Off

What a great turn out! Many of you came out to celebrate Memorial Day and taste lots of different chilies. Ten brave souls prepared chili for all of us to taste. Thank you to all of the people who entered the contest. It was so much fun and what a big difference between all the chilies. This year's winners are: 3rd place—Lee Robertson for awesome beef chili, 2nd place—Betsy Conklin for really yummy buffalo chili, and 1st place went to—Bill Kuithe for terrific turkey chili! A big thank you to the kitchen staff for all their hard work and to the judges for doing such a good job and ,a **super big thank you** to my friends who came late on Saturday to help set up. You know who you are and I appreciate all you did.

Worship Services:
8:30 & 10:30am

Mountain Bible Church
630 Maple Street 661.822.7541

www.mountainbiblechurch.org

SonSpark Labs-Vacation Bible School

Mark your calendars, tell your friends, and plan to join us for another great week at Vacation Bible School. This will be a week packed with stories, games, crafts, snacks and lots of silly adventure. Vacation Bible School is designed for kids **going into** kindergarten through kids **going into** 6th grade.

When: July 13-17

Where: Right Here! (Mountain Bible Church)

Why: It's fun!

Who: Kindergarteners through 6th graders

Adults and youth (8th-12th) who want to be helpers (lab assistants) should let Lori Henry know. Call the office at 822-7541 and leave a message or write a note on the back of your attendance slip.

Yard Sale June 19th and 20th

It's that time of year, friends, YARDSALE! Heather is looking for volunteers to help with set-up, selling items, and clean-up. So set

aside the dates of June 19 and 20th. And you can start dropping off your stuff at church now. Everything goes to room 1.

Please contact Heather White if you are willing to volunteer. She needs help!!!!

For Help and Answers

Call the church office-----822-7541
 Crisis Prayer requests-----Call Carol, 822-5479
 Change address or phone-----822-7541
 Doctrinal questions-----822-7541
 Wedding questions-----822-7541

Hospital visits-----822-7541
 Counseling Information-----822-7541
 Child dedication Service-----822-7541
 Student Ministries (Junior High to College)-----822-7541
 Membership/Baptism-----822-7541

The Messenger of Mountain Bible Church

Office Manager and Editor: Rachel Smith

Contributing Writers: Pastor Slifer

Distribution: Neya Kuithe

Sunday Morning Services at Mountain Bible Church: 8:30 and 10:30

Children's Programs are available at the same times.

Infant care (0-2 years) is available in the nursery

Senior Pastor: Dr. Marvin D. Slifer

Children's Ministries Director: Lori Henry

Youth Ministries Director: Christy Boyd

Human Resource Director: Christy Boyd

Trustees for 2015: Andy Eloff, Robert Garcia, Paul Hughes, David Lange, Chuck Reuter, Paul Smith, and Ed Weston

Elders for 2015: Dennis Collins, Dae Lantz, Tom Lichtenwaldt, Darrin Mason, Andy McCain and Andy Ohmit

The Messenger is published monthly. All submissions to *The Messenger* are due the twentieth (20th) of each month. We would like contributions of news articles, photos and other information from the Youth Group, Men's and Ladies Bible Studies, Missions Team, Let's Eat Cafe, Energizers and Praise Team. Please remember to put your name on the article so we can give proper credit.

The Messenger is published by:

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