



JUDGES, JWS AND JESUS

Three times in the last week we've been visited at home by some very earnest groups of Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

The Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs for short) have the more recognizable game play. These JWs on both occasions (first a middle-aged married couple and then a couple of West Indian ladies) introduced themselves as 'concerned members of the community.' They continued by asking me if I wasn't as worried as they were by the declining moral state of the world today. (I've never answered 'No, I'm not!' — for fear I suppose of being on the wrong side of the dividing line they're drawing, but next time they arrive at your door if you have a spare three hours and a confident grasp of the Gospel and the sovereignty of God, that might be a good approach). JWs are sincerely concerned not simply about the state of the world but about the world itself. They want nothing to do with it and their purpose in going door to door is to invite you to have nothing to do with it either. To outward appearances they seem like any other upstanding moralistic Christian sect. They seem to have a high view of the Bible (and a practically higher view of their magazine *The Watchtower*). They believe in God (Jehovah). They believe that Jesus, the only-begotten 'Son of God' died to atone for our sins. Were they to vote (which most do not) JWs would vote in support of the same kinds of issues values-voters evangelicals do. They believe (it doesn't take long to work this out) that the End of the World is very near.

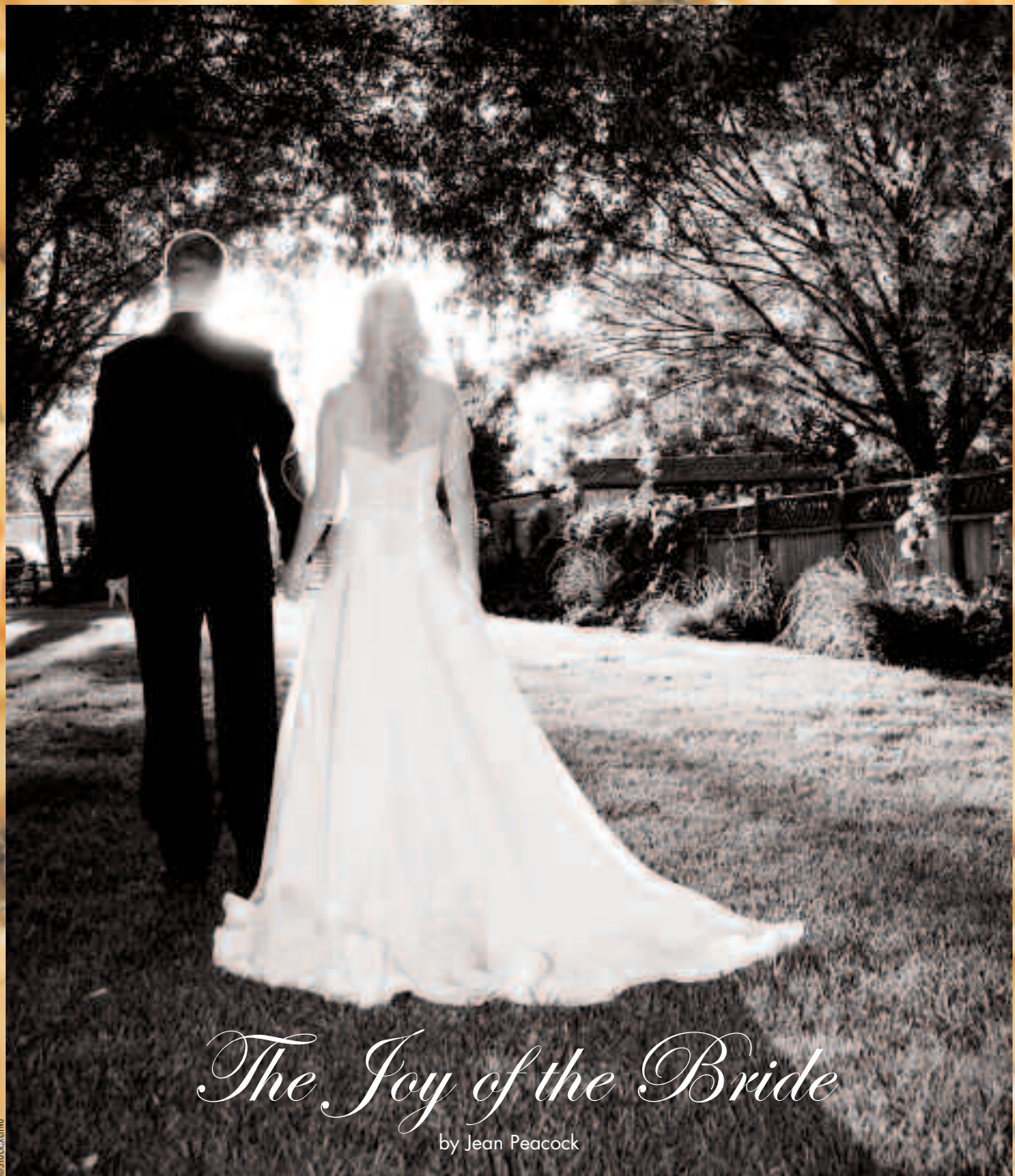
But there the similarity ends. Their moral concern—I don't think this I over-reaching—arises from their own deeply works-oriented view of salvation. JWs believe that 144,000 of them (the idea is based on their reading of 1 Corinthians 15) will be resurrected to join Jesus in heaven: these are the anointed who compromise in JW theology only a fraction even of JWs. They believe the majority of JWs will live in a lesser existence on earth. Yet, in all of this, there is no real assurance to them—even for the righteous, there is only a chance (to paraphrase their literature) of being judged righteous and living forever in Paradise.

But when they come turn up on your door-step, none of that, I think, matters. Since the 4th century Arian heresy and an earlier (now recycled version of the same idea), the chief sticking point has always been Jesus. Jesus, JWs believe, is a mighty being but he is not God. He is a 'son of God'—a lesser, created spirit; not equal to the Father, and someone who they'll seek to persuade you in his humility never claimed to be God. Jesus died on a stake not a cross. He was a perfect human being, they say, who achieved only a human salvation and achieved a spiritual not a bodily resurrection. So I say to JWs—and it has to be said—"Listen, thank you for introducing yourselves but I can assure you we are not going to agree. We will disagree about

Jesus. Christians have believed from the beginning that Jesus Christ was and is none other than God himself—and you cannot be Christians because you contradict that claim. Yet take away Christ's identity as God and his historical presence as a flesh and blood man and you strip him of his authority to rescue us and his experience to reclaim us—sinners who have received God's rightness through Jesus. Now you may not want to put it that way. You may have your own tactic with various religious sales people who come to the door—but that is always the central issue. No matter how nice the people, how moral, how well-dressed, how accurate their evaluation of the world, how just like the Church they sound, or how well they seem to know the Bible—if they don't proclaim Christ as God Himself—whatever they're selling you, it ain't Christianity. Judges tells us that in that day "every man did what was right in his own eyes because there was no king in the land"—which king do you think the Bible has in mind. There can be only one.

In this issue:

The Joy of the Bride Birthdays	2-3
Watch & Pray	3
Wondering & Wandering	4
Book Review	4
Women's Ministry Events	5
	5



The Joy of the Bride

by Jean Peacock

I have seldom felt so much accomplishment in going to the post office! But, I dropped off something like 35–40 wedding invitations this morning and I only have a handful more to send out. *Ha!*

Brides often complain about the invitation process... and, admittedly, it has taken a bit of time to get my invitations the way I wanted them. (In fact, I watched the entire movie of Ben Hur the other night while I was finishing up addresses and stamping invites!) But, this morning, I felt like I had a handful of blessings in all those

invitations. Not only does Ben love and cherish me, there are more than 40 people who love me or Ben enough to be invited to our wedding. The hardest thing about composing my guest list was narrowing it down! I find myself continually thinking about other people who I want to invite, but simply don't have enough room for!

Of course, some of my very dear family members won't be able to attend the wedding for various reasons. All of my grandparents have gone home to be with the Lord, my twin sister, Kate, is in Scotland with her husband with a visa that won't be renewed in time for another trip to the states. Many family members have other limitations that prevent them from traveling; health restrictions, work demands, and financial limitations. It seems the bigger one's family, the harder it is to all be together and the more painful the gaps in the photo album when people are missing from special events. But, it is a good thing for life to be bittersweet because we can thank God for the sweet parts and look to Heaven to heal the bitter parts. Looking heavenward as been something of a challenge these days as I'm caught up in wedding details and other more earthly necessities. In one of our pre-marriage counseling sessions, Pastor Frank asked Ben and I if we would be disappointed if Christ returned before our wedding. After all, there is so much expectation set on our own wedding right now, would we be disappointed if God's plans upset our own?

It has been this question, along with thoughts of my guest list that has started a train of thought about Christ's return and the "marriage supper of the Lamb." Can you imagine what a glorious event this will be? When the wheat is all gathered safely into the God's storehouse and we are all glorified to spend an eternity with Christ! The entirety of the renewed world will be the location, all the sweetness of the earth our food, the best wine (better than that at the marriage of Cana) will be served with the greatest cheer, and choirs of angels and saints will resonate across the earth in celebration. There will be no need for tears, because we will all be united; not just with our immediate families, but with our grandparents in the Lord, with all the saints in time and space, with the Church Fathers,

with the martyrs, with poets, composers, intellectuals, the humble and mighty. There will be no bitter ring in the marriage vows; with no shade of "until death do us part" to chill and sober the ceremony because death itself will be swallowed up in victory and conquered for God's children. Not only will we all be together, but we will also be united in spirit as harmonious "yoke fellows" in Christ's work. Christ will be our all in all—His will and pleasure will be our peace.

When it comes to deciding between a heavenly marriage ceremony and an earthly one, I think it's obvious which one will be the most glorious. There is no way my meager event can begin to compete with the celebration of our creator God! There are going to be mistakes in my wedding; perhaps shoes that don't fit, a smudge or two on the cake, technology that fails to work, guests who aren't able to come or who are disgruntled because one thing or another, broken dishes... you know... the regular trials and accidents that can happen at an event. But the wonderful thing about our ceremony is that just like the old testament temple was a foreshadowing of Christ's person and redemption, our wedding will be a foreshadowing of our glorious union with Christ at the end of the age. (How amazing... what a privilege Christian marriage is!)

These thoughts, with the knowledge that Ben loves me so dearly along with the rest of my friends and family, seem to keep a bubble of happiness around my heart—that inner bride glow which keeps me laughing—practically floating around as I work out wedding details. But the best thing is that I am not only Ben's bride... I am also a part of the church, the Bride of Christ. Long after being united with Ben, I can continue to rejoice in the expectation of loving and being loved for eternity by our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

Birthdays
SEPTEMBER

09/01 JON LEHMAN
JESSICA NEW

Spencer Cox
Rick Mattes
Nick Skaperdas 09/02

Layne Hopkins 09/04
Brian Whisler

Sloan Hiscock 09/06 Hayley Wozny

Jenna Murphy
Timothy Edwards
John Schone

MARY JO
ELLIS
09/09

gary
grab 09/10

Robert Wall
CARMEN
JOHNSON
NINE/FIFTEEN

09/17

Charles Lambert
Donna Wellman

Melanie Jones
09/18

anna poole
09/20

Bobby
KELLAND
09/22

Danny Wheeler

Eileen
Elder 09/21 Ben
Herzig

Katherine Dowell
Matt Edwards

Jessica Dowell
Luke Jenkins
Kristopher Martin
Tim Mauney
Rob Pfeifer
Melissa Schneider

09/24
Maluki (Luke)
Montgomery

09/28 millie rice

Tim
09/29
Daly

jesse mattes 09/05

09/30 angie vardell

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

watch/pray in september

Here are selections from *Watch & Pray* for this month. You can pick up a paper copy at church and come to pray at Stony Point at 6:30 PM on first Sunday evenings.

come

7-9

As the fall season of congregational life begins, pray that every member of our family will eagerly engage.

10-12

Th. evening (9/11), small group leaders and other key people will gather for the first of several leadership gatherings planned for the coming months. Pray that each proves effective in building relationships encouraging discipleship.

13-15

On Sun. evening (9/14), a parents' orientation for the *Children Desiring God* material being used for kids through 6th grade. Pray that parents would see this great resource in helping them raise children.

grow

16-18

Pray for the transforming power of God's Word as it's preached, taught and studied among us. We have many and varied venues to exposure to the Word, but only God's Spirit convinces and motivates.

19-21

Zac Collins starts on the 21st as our new youth coordinator. Pray that Zac, his wife Bethany, and son Sam will soon enjoy the same loving welcome and support the rest of us on staff have experienced.

22-24

Deacons meet Mon. evening (9/22). Pray for men who have been nominated for office and are now considering whether or not to accept.

go

25-26

The Mission CAT will submit a budget that moves Stony Point closer to 60% local, 40% abroad support ratio. Thank God for new chances to serve and to support local efforts.

27-28

Jordan Maroon asks for prayer to reach freshmen; that Christian freshmen would find a community to build their walk in Christ, and non-believers find a community that presents the gospel in a loving, but bold way.

29-30

Pray for Richard Crane, whose pastoral training ministry is reaching men living in Latin American countries now hostile to the U.S.A., such as Cuba and Venezuela.

WONDERING & WANDERING

...about immigrants

A regular column by Ruth Ann Wall

My dad's family came to the United States in two groups. First, the father and two children. They were on the S.S. Columbia. They sailed from Glasgow, June 26, 1909 and arrived in New York, Sunday, July 4th 1909.

I have often thought what a wonderful day July 4th would have been for an immigrant to arrive. However, in those days July 4th celebrations were not allowed on a Sunday.

Dad's mother and the other eight children left Glasgow on September 25, 1909. Dad was three and the youngest of the bunch. He always claimed that they also brought a cat with them. They arrived in New York on the S.S. Furnessia, October 5th, 1909. Now you know the background, so on with the story.

Many years later, my dad, a member of the Clan MacFarlane, and a Presbyterian, married my mother a Baptist from the Clan Campbell. Dad was disowned except by his mother who loved him dearly. Enough about Clans.

The only person in my dad's family I ever knew was his mother who came to live with my parents after they were married. She never learned to speak English without a heavy Scottish brogue, and I eventually became the interpreter between my mother and my grandmother.

The real part of this story is: We are all immigrants. God has allowed us to be part of his kingdom. He will teach us like small children with much love and patience. He will also remind us when we start down the wrong path. We are so blessed, for we may say, "Savior, Teach Me, Day by Day."

The Political Season Is Upon Us

Just How Stupid Are We? Facing the Truth About the American Voter
by Rick Shenkman

With the Democrat Party's Convention complete, and the Republican Party's Convention underway, this seemed an appropriate book to review. The author compiles the results of many recent studies that illuminate just how much (or how little) the American voter knows and chooses to know. As a former civics teacher, his research while not surprising, is still appalling. For instance, how many people don't bother to read the front page of a newspaper. If they do happen to read the front page, many don't read the in depth story (on foreign policy, for example) within the A section of the same newspaper.

This author is politically liberal, and clearly not a fan of the current President. I found his language to be a bit arrogant and maybe a little reminiscent of his political opposite, Rush Limbaugh. Therefore, this book is not for everyone. If you are a conservative, this book will probably make you angry. If you are an educator or a political/policy wonk, you will find this book interesting. The author does offer suggestions for encouraging the voting population to boost its knowledge of general current events as well as getting to know political candidates.

Virginia is going to get a great deal of attention in the upcoming presidential election. That means that every time we turn around, there will be literature on our doors or windshields or in our mailboxes. There will be political ads on t.v., radio, and the Internet. We have plenty of access to information about our presidential candidates. This book is a challenge to us all to look beyond the 30 second soundbites and truly participate in the process and exercise our right to vote with the intelligence it deserves.

