

## Having Lost a Pope, Catholics Must Stem the Loss of the Flock

As millions of Roman Catholic pilgrims and much of the world demonstrated their affection for Pope John Paul II, his passing obscured the fact that the church's membership is in retreat in many countries around the world. Regular attendance at Mass is down – nowhere more than in the church's European heartland. The story is the same in the United States and in Latin America



Brazil, which has more Roman Catholics than any other nation in the world, is witnessing a boom in evangelical Protestantism. In fact, all over Latin America, home to nearly half of the world's Catholics, "believers are increasingly abandoning the Vatican's brand of Christianity in favor of the evangelical variety," reported an article in the April 15 issue of the Los Angeles Times. The article was part of a series called *Catholicism: The state of the church worldwide*.

"Experts say [the strong sense of community] is a major draw of evangelical churches, especially among migrants," the article continued. "Many converts are attracted to the pop-style music and dynamic liturgies, which are more suited to contemporary tastes than is the traditional Catholic Mass. Others cherish teachings that emphasize a direct, personal relationship with God and, sometimes, the promise of material reward for spiritual rectitude."

In most Latin American countries, Catholics at one time made up more than 90 percent of the population, but evangelicals are now a growing religious minority, sometimes with social and political clout beyond their numbers.

"In Chile, Honduras and Brazil, for example, about 15 percent of the population describes itself as evangelical Protestant. The figure rises to 22 percent in El Salvador; in Guatemala it's 25 percent. In Mexico's southern Chiapas state, local press reports estimate the evangelical population to be 36 percent of adults."

Paraguay, which is still overwhelmingly Catholic, has its first evangelical president, Nicanor Duarte Frutos.

A similar phenomenon is occurring in Ireland, according to a separate article in the April 17 issue of the Times.

"Overwhelmed by a tide of secularism and economic prosperity, challenged by a new mood of independence in the population and devastated by a decade of scandals involving serial child abuse by clerics, the Catholic church in Ireland finds itself demoralized, almost in shock.

"'Irish Catholicism as we knew it in Ireland is gone,' said Patsy McGlary, religious affairs writer for the Irish Times.

"The days when nearly everyone was a churchgoing Catholic, the parish priest was revered and church doctrine was central in public policy and private life are no more," the article said.

### Kingdom Briefs

#### Pope's Death Causes Boom for Catholic Bookstores

The sales of papal-related products at Catholic bookstores and Protestant stores willing to carry them have soared since the death of Pope John Paul II. The pope's last book, *Memory and Identity: Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium*, had been in big demand. The book was released in March by Italian publisher Rizzoli. (Source: **Christian Retailing**)

#### New Version of Pledge of Allegiance Raises Concern

A middle school employee's politically correct version of the Pledge of Allegiance has caused a stir among students and outrage among parents in a Colorado school district. The controversy arose when eighth-grade counselor Margo Lucero filled in for the absent principal of Everitt Middle School in Wheat Ridge. Among other duties, Lucero took over the responsibility of making announcements and reciting the Pledge over the Public Address System in the principal's absence. However, when she came to the part that usually states "one nation under God," she replaced the traditional words with "one nation under your belief system." Rick Kaufman, a spokesman for Jefferson County Public Schools, says the school counselor's actions were unacceptable. "We have a responsibility to uphold state policy," he explains, "[T]he Pledge of Allegiance is the accepted pledge in the United States at this point in time. And that is what we expect our staff who are reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to do – to recite it exactly as it is written and accepted." (Source: **Agape Press**)

#### 57% of Adults Favor Marriage Amendment

Nearly one year after same-sex "marriage" was legalized in Massachusetts, support for a marriage amendment to the U.S. Constitution appears to be at an all-time high, according to a new Gallup poll. The poll found that by a margin of 57-37 percent, adults favor amending the Constitution to protect the traditional definition of marriage, thus banning "gay marriage." It is a significant increase from last July, when only 48 percent said they favored a marriage amendment. It is the highest support for a marriage amendment since Gallup began asking the question. (Source: **Christian Times**)

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### THE PERFECT FUNDRAISER! GREAT FOR ANY SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION!

Are you tired of the same old fundraisers that take lots of time and effort, but only bring a small return, if any at all?

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## Iranian Mother Discovers the Power of God

By REZA SAFA

My widowed mother is a very simple woman. When she first heard about my conversion to Christ in 1980, she thought that I had lost my mind, literally. She sent a telegram to the Iranian Embassy in Stockholm and inquired whether they should hospitalize me. For months and months she wept bitterly because she had lost me, according to her Islamic faith.

After four years of disowning me, she decided to visit in Spain in 1984. There she realized that I wasn't crazy and there the Lord healed her. Since then, she has visited me several times and each time she has come closer to acknowledging the lordship of Jesus. A few years ago when she was here in America, she prayed the prayer of salvation with me, but I was questioning how much of Jesus she understood. She hasn't dared to be baptized as of yet, because she is afraid she will lose her life.

Last year she called me and told me about her niece's son who acted strange, and would become angry and lose control. The boy would be attacked by the devil and several people would have to keep him down so that he wouldn't hurt himself and others around him. I told her that, more than likely, it was a demon operating in his life. I told her how she could cast it out.

Recently, she called me and told me that she had good news. A few days ago she went to her niece's house to visit, and the boy fell under attack. Four people held him down and took him to another room and shut the door behind them. My mother followed them. At first, they didn't want to let her in the room, because they were afraid that she might get hurt. My mother insisted that she be allowed to come in and pray for him. Then she said to me, "I prayed the prayer that you taught me in Jesus' name and then blew on him." As soon as my mother blew on her niece's boy, he was set free and the devil left him, and the attacks ceased. Then my mother instructed them to go to the church.



Isn't God good? This is the same mom who thought I was crazy and disowned me because of my faith. Now she is casting out devils in Jesus' name! Hallelujah! This is how God's Word is growing and increasing in Iran.

Just the other day we had at least thirty calls from Iran. So many are coming to the Lord. But I hear the sounds of several millions in the next two years. Please keep us in your prayers.

The Lord is good and His mercy endures forever.

*Reza Safa is an Iranian-born American who is taking the Gospel to his homeland through his Nejat (Salvation) Project, a historic outreach to win souls in the Muslim world. He is also founder and president of The Harvesters World Outreach in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He can be reached through his website addresses at [www.nejattv.org](http://www.nejattv.org) and [www.rezasafa.com](http://www.rezasafa.com). Mr. Safa has continually warned Americans of the attempt by some to infuse our public schools with Islamic propaganda.*

## Kingdom Briefs

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### The Passion of the Christ Wins Templeton Prize

Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* has won the prestigious \$50,000 John Templeton Foundation Epiphany Prize for the most inspirational movie of 2004. The award, presented at the 13th Annual Movieguide Faith & Values Awards Gala in Beverly Hills, was one of several presented at the event. "This is a very special night for us," said Jim Caviezel, who portrayed Jesus in *The Passion*. "This is one time you'll forgive me for saying, 'Thank you, Jesus.'" Each year at Oscar time, the Templeton Foundation bestows Epiphany Awards to films and television programs that are both well-crafted and have redeeming, uplifting, spiritual content that, above all, help increase man's understanding and love of God. With a prize of \$50,000 in each category, the Epiphany Award is designed to encourage producers to create more movies and television that have a positive and values-based message. (Source: **Christian Times**)

### Left Behind Writers Don't Like NBC's Revelations

After viewing NBC's new apocalyptic miniseries, *Revelations*, Jerry Jenkins dubbed the show "a mishmash of myth, silliness and misrepresentation of Scripture." Tim LaHaye called the show "unbiblical" and "weird." "This story is based on some writer's imagination about the book of Revelation. However, the writer clearly has not studied the book or maybe even read it," said LaHaye. Jenkins and LaHaye co-wrote the series of *Left Behind* books, which is a fictional representation of end-time events. The NBC television show stars Natascha McElhone and Bill Pullman. (Source: **Christian Retailing**)

### Aretha Franklin, Myles Munroe in Gospel Music Hall of Fame

Aretha Franklin and Myles Munroe join the Rev. F.C. Barnes, Luther Barnes & and the Sunset Jubilaires, John P. Kee, the Rev. Timothy Wright, Bishop Paul S. Morton, and the Rev. Lawrence C. Roberts as inductees into the International Gospel Music Hall of Fame and Museum. They all will be installed at the tenth annual ceremony on October 22 in Detroit. (Source: **Christian Retailing**)

### Jews Battle Anti-Christian Discrimination

A longtime columnist and author has birthed a new organization made up of Jews who are committed to battling anti-Christian bias and discrimination in the culture. **Don Feder**, a Boston Herald writer and syndicated columnist for 19 years, is president of Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation, or JAACD. Members of the group's advisory board include rabbis, commentators, academics, authors, activists, Zionist leaders and an entertainer. "Members span the spectrum from Orthodox to secular, but are united in their determination to support our beleaguered brothers and sisters in the Christian community," a statement from the organization said. (Source: **WorldNet Daily Exclusive**)

### On the Trail of Good News

Hey, we're sniffing around for news and other uplifting information that might appeal to our national audience. If you know of a unique Christian business, ministry or personality, or of something happening on the news front, give us a heads-up. You might want to send a clipping from your local newspaper or invite us to track down a story from the details you provide. Remember, all our stories are Christ-based and nationally oriented, though they may cut across entertainment, business, lifestyle, political or other lines. E-mail us at [newsletter@tkog.biz](mailto:newsletter@tkog.biz) or mail us your clippings at The Kingdom of God, P.O. Box 1147, Claremont, CA 91711.



## Christian Teacher Group Is an Alternative to NEA

By Randall Murphree (Reprinted from Agape Press)

"Parents must not abdicate their parental responsibilities to their child's public school," says Finn Laursen. Laursen is executive director of [Christian Educators Association International \(CEAI\)](#). He is himself a product of public schools and worked 32 years in public schools.

Founded in 1953, CEAI became the first national organization of professional Christian educators working in public, private and charter schools. From the beginning, the group has served the education community by encouraging, equipping and empowering Christian educators in public and private education.

For many, CEAI is the perfect alternative to the National Education Association, a teachers union that has been leaning hard to the political left for decades. Like NEA, CEAI provides many benefits for its members, such as professional liability insurance. It also views teaching as a God-given calling and ministry and promotes the Judeo-Christian ethic in public schools.

CEAI does not become involved in local school debates. However, when moral concerns or parental rights are at stake, CEAI is eager to see parent-friendly results. For example, in Lawton, Oklahoma, CEAI regional director David Williams learned in January that the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN, pronounced *glisten*) was attempting to form an affiliate at his son's high school. Lawton is a city of 81,000 in southwest Oklahoma.

Williams, who teaches in another school district, went into action. First he sought prayer from believers in the area. The local paper published his letter to the editor, and he enlisted the help of KVRS radio station manager Dan Allen. KVRS is the local American Family Radio station. Next came a local TV story addressing equal access and parental involvement. Local church members distributed materials by former homosexuals to students at the high school. Hundreds of e-mails went to local politicians, school board members, teachers and parents.

"To make a long story short," says Williams, "the club was voted down by the student government. What was intended to quietly appear without parent notification was thwarted." One result of the project was a practical 10-step plan of action that Williams will furnish to others who face the homosexual agenda in local public schools. (Williams can be contacted at [davidw@ceai.org](mailto:davidw@ceai.org))

As a former public school counselor and administrator, Laursen agrees that teachers legally function in the role of parents when they supervise and teach children during the school day. However, he says schools should always respect the parent-child relationship.

As an example Laursen recently commended the school board in Roseville, California, for its decision regarding students leaving campus for medical procedures, including abortion. The school board was expected to amend district policy to allow students to secure such procedures without parental knowledge.

However, when parents learned of the proposed change, they packed the January 4 board meeting and found the board responsive to their concerns and rights.

School spokesman Larry Brubaker told *AFA Journal* that, while this issue is certainly divisive in many school systems, the Roseville board stood with their parents. "The school will not release students for medical reasons without parental permission," he said. The city of 45,000 is near Sacramento and has 8,000 students in its school district.

CEAI is not politically aggressive, and its leaders take care not to enter the public arena in a combative stance. One CEAI vision for 2005 is to improve education in America through prayer and networking. The current prayer campaign is called "[Raise Your Hand](#)."

"The goal [of the campaign]," said Williams, "is to enroll one million prayer partners who are committed to praying for their own local schools. The prayer focus is to have a teacher encouragement group offering prayer support in every school nationwide."

The overriding purpose of everything the group does is defined in this – to preserve traditional Christian values of faith and family in our schools. CEAI offers personnel in public or Christian schools – administrators, teachers and support staff – a place to call their professional home.

Randall Murphree, a regular contributor to *AgapePress*, is editor of *AFA Journal*, a monthly publication of the American Family Association. This article appeared in the April 2005 issue.

## How to Respond to a Gay-Straight Alliance

(A response to GLSEN)

### Ten Steps to Success

**1. Pray.** Pray for young people who are being led to start a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) student organization. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Ask others to pray for you. This is a spiritual battle and God's protection is needed. Fear of lawsuit and intimidation are the tools of those who are pushing the gay agenda on our students. Respect, hope and love are the responses that are needed.

**2. Follow Guidelines.** Respect is the key word in all activities. Legally, students have complete freedom of expression on a campus. Just as Christian-based clubs have access, so do gay-lesbian clubs. Usually, student governments have the final say in adding new clubs. A vote process of some kind is usually in place. If only one perspective is presented, the clubs get started. Biblical viewpoints on the issue will not be accepted by most young people. It is better to approach it from the issue of balance. The ex-gay perspective (change is possible) must given equal time.

**3. Find a Faculty Advisor.** Locate Christian teachers at the school and inform them of your activities. Most school administrations, by law, approach this issue from a civil rights perspective. Teachers can also insist on equal access for the ex-gay perspective. Information about starting a PFOX (Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays) chapter as an alternative on campus can be found at [www.pfox.org](http://www.pfox.org).

**4. Find Other Students.** Students of faith must be taught about this issue from parents and pastors. Generally, the culture presents only one view. Students can encourage their peers to check out the numerous websites of ex-gay (Christian) groups to inform them about all theories of the origin of homosexuality ([www.drthrockmorton.com](http://www.drthrockmorton.com), [www.inquery.org](http://www.inquery.org), [www.nea-exgay.org](http://www.nea-exgay.org), to name a few). Students of faith must go through a school process if they feel led to start a student club that shares the ex-gay perspective.

**5. Inform the School's Administration.** Let school administrators know what you are doing. They can keep the community, other faculty members, and the school board informed. Ask to get on the next board agenda to find out if students were presented with both sides of the homosexuality debate prior to the decision to add a GSA to existing student organizations. The process is public knowledge. Petitions, purpose statements, and draft constitutions of GSAs can be requested by any citizen. If needed, legal advice can be given by contacting Liberty Counsel [www.lc.org](http://www.lc.org) or at 407-875-2100.



**David M. Williams**  
CEAI Regional Director

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## The Gay Agenda Isn't About Gays

By Lee Duigon  
Reprinted from Agape Press



Is it really "gay rights" that they're after, or is it something else? The San Francisco judge who stood the Constitution on its head so that persons of the same sex can be "married"; the gay militants who plan a mass rally this summer in the Holy City of Jerusalem; the liberal church leaders who boldly contradict the Bible – are they making all this fuss only because their hearts bleed for the gays?

What kind of world do they offer us – these self-anointed judges, militants, renegade clergy, Planned Parenthood, GLSEN? These academics, pundits, and movie stars? Ignoring the obvious folly of promoting high-risk behavior in an age of AIDS, where are they going with this business?

Quite simply, to a world in open rebellion against God.

And why?

Because they wish to be as gods themselves.

Why else overturn

timeless, universal taboos? Why else redefine and reconfigure institutions as basic as marriage and the family?

What these people seek is the authority to define how we shall live. They reject the biblical view that *"it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture"* (Psalm 100:3).

God has not made us, they say. We are the product of random natural processes by which inanimate matter became life and evolved into human beings. The Earth is not the Lord's. It belongs to those who are powerful enough to rule the others.

Secret societies have always bound their initiates by getting them to violate the most profound taboos. It's a way of radically cutting them off from the rest of society. The Bacchic Conspiracy, aimed at subverting Rome in the 2nd century B.C., used homosexual orgies as its initiation ritual. It was intended to alienate young men and women from their families.

Today, we see this being done openly instead of in secrecy, and on a global scale. To take God's place as the shepherd, the self-anointed of this world first need to rustle His sheep. As G.K. Chesterton observed, when a man ceases to believe in God, he doesn't believe in nothing; he believes in anything.

The plan here is to lead God's people into rebellion, encourage them to violate God's laws governing marriage and the family, and leave them with nowhere to turn, in the end, but to the wise, worldly powers who brought them to this pass.

It's not about "helping" gays. It's about grabbing for the power to define good and evil.

It won't work, of course. Nothing *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:39). God won the battle for men's souls when Christ died on the cross. It is not possible that He will abandon his sheep to the care of other sheep disguised as shepherds. The self-anointed offer us slavery disguised as freedom, nothing more. They have deceived many; they have especially deceived themselves. Someday their whole enterprise will be brought crashing into ruin.

We who have not followed them into moral chaos have one duty: to stand firm, and bear witness that God's Word is truth.

## How to Respond to a Gay-Straight Alliance

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**6. Inform Employees of the School District.** Go to the school website to locate the email addresses of teachers and administrators in the school involved. Email them the GLSEN article found at the Focus on the Family website, [www.family.org](http://www.family.org). Type GLSEN in the search block. This is a great article to forward throughout the community to any interested individuals. The Lord may lead you to inform other districts as GLSEN activities are student generated. Parents may be completely unaware of GLSEN activity. Place notes in your student's school file that you want to be notified if sexual orientation is introduced in any class. Request that parental permission be sought prior to student involvement in any extracurricular activity or sign an opt-out note for your child.

**7. Inform Local Churches.** Write or call local pastors and let them know of the activities at your school. Youth pastors can help students get out the message by passing out ex-gay literature to their youth group to distribute on the school campus. (Sample letter can be found at [www.ceai.org](http://www.ceai.org))

**8. Inform the Community.** Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and call TV and radio station managers to see if they would do a story. Remember to not appear as a radical right wing extremist. Keep the story focused on the balance of presenting both perspectives on human sexuality as found in the resources listed above. (Sample letter can be found at [www.ceai.org](http://www.ceai.org))

**9. Contact the School Board.** Most school boards are given information by the superintendent. In many cases he/she is making decisions based on advice from attorneys that hold to a particular view on the issue. The board members may never have heard of the ex-gay perspective. Your letter can help. Attend board meetings regularly to stay informed. Pray before school visits or when asking questions of staff.

**10. Pray.** In Mathew 19: 6,7 the Lord Jesus gives a stern warning to those who take part in teaching children harmful things. It is our obligation to get involved. You may not have children in public education but your tax dollars pays for it. And in addition, there are many teachers who struggle daily to shine light in a dark place. Pray for them. And when you pray, expect the Lord to send you out. And again finally, pray for those who are trapped in a lifestyle that brings so much pain. Deliverance is possible through Jesus Christ.

Pray for Education in America  
<http://www.raiseyourhand.us>

