

# GATE BREAKER NEWS

MT. 16:18 "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."



Gate  
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Ministries

## Polygamy Pains



"Do you take these women to be your lawfully wedded wives?" Say what? When most people get married, they think in terms of *one* spouse for life, but not everyone.

The hot topic has even become entertainment. HBO's *Big House*, starring Bill Paxton as a polygamous man married to three wives, premiered March 13, 2006.

What is polygamy? It is defined as the practice of being married to more than one spouse at a time. More specifically, *polygyny* is one man with multiple wives and *polyandry* is the opposite. Bigamy is getting married a second time without telling your first spouse. All of it can be called *plural marriage*.

The United States is beginning to tinge from the pain associated with polygamy, which has gone largely unchecked by federal and state authorities. Alarming, the practice can have a negative impact on children and societies.

On April 3, Texas authorities raided the El Dorado compound of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), taking 460 women and children into custody, based on allegations of sexual, physical,

and emotional abuse. All of these were released on June 2 because the Texas Supreme Court said there was no proof.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, according to Carolyn Jessop, an ex-polygamous who escaped from the El Dorado compound with her eight children in 2003, the FLDS "practices pedophilia, torture, and child abuse under the guise of religion". Her husband, Merrill Jessop, controlled his wives by punishing their children if the mothers did something he did not like.<sup>2</sup>

Princeton Law professor, Marci Hamilton, recently warned that this decision by the court makes Texas "a very dangerous place for children" because Texas is basically inviting groups who want to "abuse children."<sup>3</sup>

The federal authorities did take action against the polygamous Warren Jeffs, the former leader of FLDS, when he was arrested and subsequently convicted on two counts of rape in September, 2007.<sup>4</sup>

But wait a minute - are the only issues here about rape and abuse? What about polygamy itself? In the United States polygamy is against the law, or at least it is supposed to be.

However, with current fights over the legalization of same-sex marriages, the next battle could easily be for polygamous unions. Some think that Canada is leaning toward legalizing it. Other western nations are at a loss as what to

(Continued on last page)

## Sunday Worship

Have you ever wondered why most Christians today worship on Sunday?

Meeting together on Sunday was accepted from the beginning. Jesus rose from the dead on this day and it instantly became the most important meeting day of the Christian week.

The driving thought of the early Christians was Christ's love, and Him crucified, risen, and living in His Church. This was celebrated every week, especially on the resurrection



day - Sunday.

The revelation of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27) brought it all home on a personal level. Sunday was a day of thanksgiving, joy, Scripture reading, preaching, communion, baptism, praise, worship, and more. At that time and in that culture, Sunday was the first day of the week, and after Christ rose from the dead, it was called *the Lord's Day*.

We see evidence of its importance in Scripture. Acts 20:7 - Paul preached to the

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### Inside this issue:

Polygamy Pains	1
Sunday Worship	1
Balloon Popping . . . Love	2
DVDs and book sale	3
Contact	3
Schedule	3
Prayer Power	4

disciples at Troas until midnight; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:2 - Paul ordered the Corinthians and Galatians at their weekly services on that day to give charitable contributions. John was worshipping and received the *Revelation* on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10).

The first Christians, called Nazarenes, still went to synagogue on Saturday, but it was primarily used as a launching place to share the gospel with  
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## Sunday Worship (Continued)

the Jews. A perusal of Paul's missionary journeys in the book of Acts reveals this. Well before the end of the first century, however, followers of the Lord Jesus were no longer welcomed in synagogues.

Sunday quickly became associated with Christian worship in contrast to Saturday as the Jewish Sabbath. Ignatius acknowledges this in 110 AD,<sup>1</sup> By the end of the second century, Tertullian associated Sunday with the idea of Sabbath rest.<sup>2</sup> Numerous early Church fathers speak about the significance of Sunday.

The fact that Sunday worship was not contradicted in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it was authorized by the apostles themselves and passed on as a part of tradition and the important standard of the early Church entitled *the rule of faith*.

Here is what Justin Martyr (100-165 AD), one of the early Church fathers, wrote in *The Apology* about the importance of Sunday. You will notice the ancient manner of expressing the names of the days of the week.

"We hold our common assembly on the Sun's Day because it is the first day, on which God put to flight darkness and chaos and made the world; and on the same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead."

— Justin Martyr (100-165 AD)

"We hold our common assembly on the Sun's Day

because it is the first day, on which God put to flight darkness and chaos and made the world; and on the same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead; for they crucified him on the day before Saturn's Day, and on the Sun's Day, which follows Saturn's Day, he appeared to his Apostles and disciples and taught them these things, which we have handed on to you for your consideration."<sup>3</sup>

Sunday attendance of church services was not convenient for the first few hundred years. For instance, imagine if Wednesday became the most important day of the week for you, and you told your employer that it was your day for church attendance and worship. You might lose your job over such a request. Finally, under Emperor Constantine, Sunday became a legal holiday.

Of course, modern church services and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ are proper every day and every time of the week. Yet, Sunday will always be the most special day in Christianity because of the Lord's great victory over death on that first Easter morning.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians*, chapter 9 (110 AD), as recorded in Betty Radice, *Early Christian Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 73

<sup>2</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church - Volume 2* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), 201-204.

<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr, *The Apology*, as recorded in Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 63.



## Balloon Popping Done in Love



Have you ever tried to pop somebody's balloon? Probably. But did you do it with godly love? That's the real issue. The expression of balloon popping is associated with the idea of deflating someone's pride or, perhaps more often, someone's inflated ideas that you perceive are wrong. Christians are supposed to be "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) to one another, but sometimes we may be speaking the truth without love or humility.

The modern ideas about the word *love* vary. "I love pizza and ice cream" is an expression that may be heard. Yet,

this is not the same idea as conveyed in, "I love my spouse". In modern society, the word *love* is often used to refer to an emotion or a whole

range of feelings, states, or attitudes. By saying *love* we sometimes mean "I like the taste of..."

Of course, the word can be a verb (action word) as in "God loves you". It can be a noun (person or thing); 1st John 4:8 actually says that "God is love." There are also descriptive types of love. In the New Testament Greek, *agape* is godly love, *phileo* brotherly love, and *eros* the intimacy between a man and woman.

In June of this year, I was privileged to teach at a senior leaders' retreat for the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin, Ireland. Pastor Cedric Chau and I have been friends for years, and I am a council member of the excellent church he pastors.

At the retreat, I taught on some of the concepts mentioned above. The teaching to the leaders was done in accordance with the church's theme for 2008, which was also the theme for the conference: *Dare to love; dare to be loved*. It encompasses some truths that are important for all Christians.

Of the many things that the Bible tells us about love, three simple truths emerge: 1) God loves us; 2) We are to love God; and 3) We are to love one



Senior leaders of the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin, Ireland. Pastor Cedric Chau is on far left.

another. *Dare to love* expresses the notion of Jesus regarding the first and second greatest commandment: loving God with all that we have and loving others as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-38). *Dare to be loved* means opening up ourselves to be loved both by God and by others.

Loving and being loved are not easy for many people, including Christians. Learning to love God can be a life time of wonderful encounters and adventures. Letting the Father truly love us in the way He desires requires a great softening of our hearts to Him. He wants to heal our wounds and make us emotionally wholesome. Daring to let others love us requires a dropping of defenses and an openness to let others speak the truth to us in love.

Sometimes the truth we need to hear or the truth we need to speak are like walking on a balance beam. If we lack practice or if we aren't careful, we will fall off into a posture of defensiveness or into a position of offense where we have overstepped our boundaries.

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Activity: The comical, jumping task of the leaders popping each other's balloons in truth with love without stepping backwards into the snare of the devil. It is not as easy as you may imagine.

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**SOME MINISTRY PLACES & TOPICS**

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August - November, 2008

- 8/22 - 24: Moses Lake, WA - *History of the Early Church Seminar* at Grace Harvest Church
- 8/28, 9/11, 9/25, 10/9, 10/23: Boise, ID - *Minor Religions* at the Biblical Studies Center
- 9/17 - 19: Meridian, ID - *HEC Seminar* for interns at Capital Christian Center (CCC)
- 10/22 - 24: *Answering Cults* at CCC
- 11/7 - 9: Schenectady, NY - *Gate Breaker Conference* at Abounding Grace Christian Church
- 11/12 - 14: *Prayer & Prophecy* at CCC
- 11/16 - 17: Aberdeen, WA - *Gate Breaker Conference* at Cornerstone Community Church
- 11/18 - 20: Vancouver, WA - *Answering Cults and the Occult* for interns at City Harvest Church

**Balloon Popping Done in Love**  
(Continued)

Then there is the devil. He shoots fiery darts and seeks to disrupt effective communication between Christians and possibly even more so between Christians and those who do not yet know Christ as Savior. Have you ever started a conversation with a positive demeanor, only to discover that somewhere in the midst of it you felt sideswiped by negativity and cheated from your original intention? Sometimes, not always, the problem is that we did not account for enemy attack or snare baiting while we were simply trying to have a truthful conversation with someone (Ephesians 6:12).



Sometimes the truth we need to hear or the truth we need to speak are like walking on a balance beam. If we lack practice or if we aren't careful, we will fall off into a posture of defensiveness or into a position of offense where we have overstepped our boundaries.

At the retreat, I put the leaders into teams, facing each other. Each had a balloon tied around one foot. The idea was to pop the opposing team member's balloon without getting their own balloon popped. Just like there are principles in how we should approach each other to speak the truth in love, there were rules to the game. Only one foot could go over the line in front to pop the opponent's balloon; otherwise the player was getting offensive and overstepping boundaries. The line behind each player was the line of temptation.

By stepping back over that line in an attempt to avoid one's balloon being popped was giving into defensiveness and being snared by the devil.

It was great fun and everyone showed wonderful sportsmanship. The winning team had the privilege of praying for all the others and assimilating them into the love of the winning team.

Love is the thing that is needed in every aspect of our lives, especially our conversations. 1st Corinthians 13:7-8 [Love] "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." Also, love is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Fruit grows and so should our love.

The next time you feel the need to speak the truth to someone about something important, ask the Lord for His love. When someone approaches you, do the same thing. God's love produces harmony. There is no need for fear. 1st John 4:18 "Perfect love casts out all fear," and if you are on the receiving end, a little *death to self* is okay. Remember the Song of Solomon 8:6, "For love is as strong as death."

The children of God are born again to learn to see with spiritual eyes, hear with spiritual ears, and grow strong in the Father's love. Love God, love others, and be open to receive that same love.

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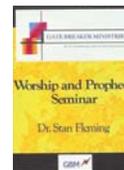
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## Polygamy Pains (continued)

do. With the increase of Muslim immigrants, countries like England, France, and Italy are unable to stem the tide of polygamy.<sup>5</sup>

Statistics about those practicing plural marriage is sketchy. Various religious groups practice it, such as Islam and over a dozen Mormon sects. One report says that there are between 50,000 to 100,000 polygamous Muslims in the U.S. With regard to Mormons sects, different reports say that Utah alone has 30,000, 60,000, or even 110,000 people living in polygamy. There are other places, like Colorado City, AZ, in which the entire community is thought to practice it.<sup>6</sup>

Since the practice is frowned upon by society, it is difficult to get accurate statistics.

Those living in polygamous relationships frequently do so without marriage licenses. The first marriage is often legal but the following ones are done in ceremony without legal documents. State or federal laws prohibiting polygamy are not normally enforced, any more than those which prohibit adultery or fornication, except in the case of minors.

Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, had over fifty wives. Through his teachings, polygyny became a major part of early Mormon doctrine. Another leader in early Mormonism, Brigham Young, taught that the only men who become gods are those who enter into polygamy.

In the late nineteenth century, LDS president Woodruff supposedly had a revelation from God that polygamy was no longer necessary or permitted. Actually, this revelation was a response to the demands of the United States government, which would not allow the territory of Utah to become a state if it allowed polygamy. While mainstream

Mormonism (LDS) today rejects plural marriage, there are some Mormons who have always connected it with salvation. In modern times, the FLDS teaches that a man must have at least three wives to be saved.

Christianity, as a whole, teaches monogamy, that a proper marriage should be between one man and one woman. On the subject of marriage, the Lord Jesus referred to the creation account in which one man and one woman would wed (Matthew 19:3-10). The apostle Paul's passages on marriage only make sense in terms of monogamy (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1st Corinthians 7:2). Early Christian leaders could only have one wife (1st Timothy 3:2). Many even leaned away from marriage altogether and towards celibacy. The New Testament encourages monogamy.

Some justify polygamy by referring to certain Old Testament men who had multiple wives. Yet, let's consider some of their circumstances. Deadly rivalry broke out between David's sons from different wives, almost costing David his life. Solomon's many wives led him into idolatry. He should have read the warning to Israel's Kings in Deut. 17:17 "He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray" (NIV).

Abraham and Sarah would have been monogamous, but at a low point in faith when Sarah was barren, he took Hagar as a second wife. The painful outcome has been generational animosity and war between Hagar's line (Ishmael) and Sarah's line (Israel). Jacob only wanted Rachel but was tricked into marrying her sister, Leah. Then at their urging, because of sibling rivalry, he also had children with their maids, Bilhah and Zilpah.<sup>7</sup>

Even though polygamy was permitted in the Old Testament (Ex. 21:10), so was divorce (Deut. 24:1-4); yet, Jesus says it was allowed due to "the hardness of their hearts", but He emphasizes the matrimony of one man to one woman as in the beginning (Matt. 19:4-8).

The answer for America in this as in so many other things is found in 2nd Chronicles 7:14 "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

### Notes

1 Thomas Burr, "Cult Expert: Texas Shouldn't Have released FLDS kids", *Salt Lake Tribune* (06/29/ 2008). <[http://origin.sltrib.com/news/ci\\_9729470](http://origin.sltrib.com/news/ci_9729470)>

2 Mike Celizic, "Woman describes escape from polygamy, *Today Show* (April 8, 2008) <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24009286/>>

3 Thomas Burr, *ibid*.

4 Wikipedia on Warren Jeffs.

5 Miss Kelly, "Polygamous marriages on the Rise in Italy", (April 2, 2008), <[http://misskelly.typepad.com/miss\\_kelly\\_/2008/04/polygamous-marr.html](http://misskelly.typepad.com/miss_kelly_/2008/04/polygamous-marr.html)>

6 Various sites: [apologeticsindex.org](http://apologeticsindex.org), [Absalom.com](http://Absalom.com), [Religionnewsblog.com](http://Religionnewsblog.com)

7 Dr. Jonathan Sarfati, [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org)

## Prayer Power



Prayer is powerful; it is not omnipotent - only God is that, but it can be a mighty weapon for Christians.

Tertullian, the early Church Father, wrote about the power of prayer in the late 2nd / early 3rd century. Here is an adaptation of what he wrote:

Prayer recalls people from the path of death, transforms the weak, restores the sick, purges the possessed, opens prison bars, and looses the bonds of the innocent. Likewise, it washes away faults, repels temptations, extinguishes persecutions, consoles the faint-hearted, cheers the exuberant, escorts travelers, pacifies waves, disappoints robbers, nourishes the poor, governs the rich, raises up the fallen, and confirms the upright. Prayer is the wall of faith against the foe. Never walk unarmed.<sup>1</sup>

1 Tertullian, *On Prayer*, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume 3* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 691.