

Campus Chronicles

70 Little Books, Ancient or Fake? *by Paulina Quesada*

A public announcement of a potentially great archaeological find was recently made and then drawn into question: seventy small metal books. While some experts estimate that they date back to the first century AD, oth-



ers dispute their authenticity. If these tiny books are real, they have survived almost 2,000 years in a cave in Northern Jordan.

What could this mean? In simple terms, if authentic, they would surpass the letters of the

Apostle Paul as the oldest records of Christianity. These books may be Christianity's earliest written documents. There is an additional dispute as to when this discovery took place. A Jordanian Bedouin says they were found between 2005 and 2007 during a flash flood, which in turn exposed two niches inside a cave, one of them marked with a menorah (seven or nine branched candlestick of ancient Jewish religious significance). This Jordanian Bedouin states he never anticipated finding such a rare and valuable relic of early Christianity. It is alleged that he smuggled them out of Jordan to Israel through another Bedouin. The Israeli Bedouin who actually has possession of the books "says they are a family heirloom of more than 100 years old."

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, Jordan is one area where its residents fled. Marga-

ret Barker, an authority on New Testament history, points to out, "We do know that on two occasions groups of refugees from the troubles in Jerusalem fled east, they crossed the Jordan near Jericho and then they fled east to very approximately where these books were said to have been found," she says. "[Another] one of the things...most likely pointing towards a Christian provenance is that these are not scrolls but books. The Christians were particularly associated with writing in a book form rather than scroll form, and sealed books in particular as part of the secret tradition of early Christianity." The books are describes to be metal, bound by wire rings and no bigger than the actual size of a credit card. Each book contains between 5 and 15 leaves.

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Back to Basics *by Robin Pepper*



A disturbing trend seen too often in many churches is the apparent apathy of many Christians. They may attend services, but it appears that they are only “going through the motions.” In spite of their singing, their praying, their Bible study, and their zeal, the actions seem listless. Certainly, God desires more for His children.

I compare the problem to one of an athlete or a sport team, which is “in a slump.” Such a person or team “goes through the motions” but they are not performing up to their true potential. The solution in sports is to work on “the fundamentals.” The same is true with Christians. When we find ourselves “in a slump,” we need to stress the fundamentals. We need to get back to basics. I would like to focus on some of the fundamentals (basics) that we need to get back to when-

ever our lives are in a spiritual slump.

My first point would be to energize your faith. Faith in God is essential to pleasing Him. The Word of God produces faith. Through diligent reading of the Bible, we can energize our faith. When you find yourself in a spiritual slump, pick up your Bible and allow it to rebuild that confident trust you once had. It will also help you to fortify your hope. Hope is necessary to persevere; it is necessary to increase opportunities to evangelize. Nothing fortifies our hope better than those wonderful passages that reveal the eternal destiny of the saints. When an athlete gets discouraged, he or she is often told to “keep your eye on the prize.” In fact first Corinthians 9:24 reads, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” (ESV). Therefore, the Christian must also keep our eyes on the goal, and it is with the aid of God's Word that we can keep our focus where it ought to be.

Getting back to the basics will also include an effort to activate our love, and enhance our joy

through careful prayer and meditation upon what the Bible reveals about God's love for others and us. I cannot stress enough the importance of prayer. Enjoy your peace. Just as prayer can enhance our joy, so prayer can also help us to enjoy our peace that surpasses all understanding.

Faith, hope, love, joy, and peace are simple words yet so essential to the abundant life Jesus has to offer those who come to Him. Why are they often in short supply in the lives of many Christians? Simply, Christians too often neglect two fundamental tools: the Bible and prayer!

Brothers and sisters, whenever you find yourself in a spiritual slump, let these two avenues of communication with God be the key to energize your faith, fortify your hope, activate your love, enhance your joy, and enjoy your peace. Restoring the basic elements of the abundant life found only in Christ is not a mystery; receive the implanted Word of God and continue earnestly in prayer. It is just that simple.

Continued: 70 Little Books, Ancient or Fake? by Paulina Quesada

David Elkington, a British scholar of ancient religious history and archaeology.

He told the BBC they could be "the major discovery of Christian history and he believes the most telling evidence for an early Christian origin lies in the images decorating the covers of the books and some of the pages of those which have so far been opened." Philip Davies, emeritus professor of Old Testament Biblical Studies at Sheffield University, agrees that the images on the books could be Christian in origin, describing one plate that is a picture map of the city of Jerusalem. "There is a cross in the foreground, and behind it is what may be the tomb of Jesus, a small building with an opening, and behind that the walls of the city. There are walls depicted on other pages of these books and they almost certainly refer to Jerusalem. It is a Christian crucifixion taking place outside the city walls." Although, Davis concluded, "if this is a hoax then it is incredibly elaborate" (bibleplaces.com).

A professional Aramaic translator, teacher and consult-



© David Elkington/Rex Features

ant, Steve Caruso, has disputed the authenticity of the codices. He says that his analysis of the text shows a mixture of Aramaic scripts from 2,500 years old to only 1,700 years old—more recent than the declared age of the lead pages. "There were inconsistencies in how they did the stroke order, which you would never have seen. Scribes had very specific ways of doing things," Caruso said. Furthermore, several characters appeared 'flipped' — a mistake that would imply they were hastily copied rather than original" (Life's Little Mysteries).

How could this discovery

compare to the Dead Sea Scrolls? If the relics are, indeed, of early Christian origin rather than a hoax then they have great significance. Furthermore, very little is known first-hand what took place immediately after Jesus' crucifixion. Many years later, it was the letters of the Apostle Paul, which gave us a direct look on the westward spread of Christianity outside of the Jewish world. As the author of a significant amount of the New Testament, I will keep my focus on God's Word.

Robots That Look Like Us *by Steve Pepper*

They are here - Robots that look like us. I never thought I would live to see the day when we would have humanoid looking robots in society. We are seeing science fiction come to life right in front of us. Technology has been advancing at such a fast pace that it is hard to keep up with. Whether you are buying a computer, a smart phone or any other electronic device, you can guess that as soon as you get it it becomes obsolete. It is very frustrating to me that as soon as I get a new cell phone a newer version will shortly be available with updated features. Do you think they

plan this out, to keep us upgrading our phones, our computers, and anything else we might have that is electronic in nature?

What is happening in the field of robotics is especially fascinating. Japan has recently introduced robots that not only look like us, but they dance, walk, talk, and are capable of teaching our children in a classroom environment. What do you think about robots educating your kids? The concern arises: How does this effect a child's social development?

In Texas, David Hanson has *Hanson Robotics* that has created a robot companion he calls a *Zeno*. At 17 inches tall and 6 pounds, the artificial Zeno is the culmination of five years of work by Hanson and a small group of engineers, designers and programmers at his company. "They believe there's an emerging business in the design and sale of lifelike robotic companions, [also known as] social robots. Unlike clearly artificial robotic toys, Hanson says he envisions Zeno as an interactive learning companion, a synthetic pal who can engage in conversation and convey human emotion through a face made of a skin-like, material Hanson calls *frubber*" (AP). Hansen was inspired by the movie "*Artificial Intelligence: AI*." He plans to make little Zenos available to consumers within the next three years for \$200 to \$300. Somehow, this just doesn't seem right to me. What do you think? What would Jesus have to say about this? What does the word of God say about raising our children? I think, as Bible college students, we know the answer to that!



Hello everybody,

This is Jonathan in Japan again. I want to thank you so very much for continuing to pray for my work here and for Japan as a nation!!!

This last week a team from Somebody Cares Interna-



tional (the Christian disaster relief NGO my dad has become the representative of) and a few of its partners came to Japan. During their stay we went to Natori, a town devastated by the tsunami. Attached are some of the photos I took there. We



also had two seminars at which trauma crisis Edward Smith taught counseling from Victim Relief Ministries. We had one

seminar in our area and one in Tokyo area.

The most fruitful part of the trip, however, I believe, was the last two days. On Monday morning, we talked to welfare volunteer organization of our area (basically the hands and feet of the government for disaster relief and social welfare). In the afternoon, we talked to Kiyomi Tsujimoto, the woman appointed by the Prime Minister to oversee all disaster relief. In the meeting, we learned that Tsujimoto has created an or-



ganization that acts like a side door for relief supplies to be given to the people in need. On Tuesday morning, we met with the vice president of the Japan Medical Association and one of the doctors who has been working in the relief of the affected areas. My dad and I believe that the result of this meeting was the most promising. In this meeting the doctor from the affected area basically said, "You



bring it in, and I'll take care of the rest." The door to bringing disaster relief goods, including medical supplies -- especially unbelievable—has been opened wide.

Thank you so much for praying, and I urge you to keep praying for Japan. The Japanese people need for their cultural self-sustained attitude to be broken. They need to realize that hope put in the world will disappoint, and that in the end, only trust in God will matter.

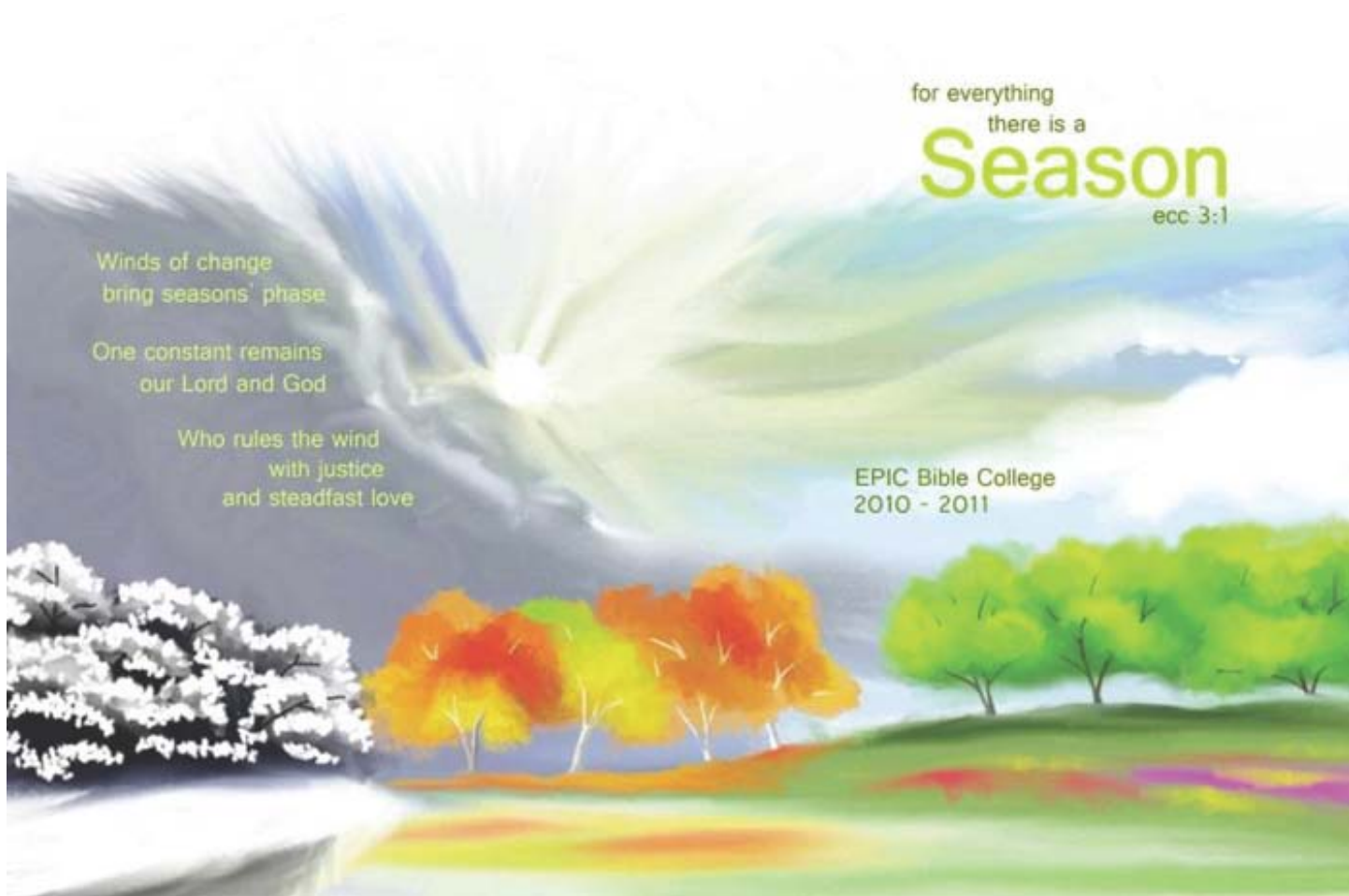
This disaster is just that--a disaster--something horrible and not desired. However, God can use this as an opportunity to heal and bring this nation to salvation. In that, your prayers are essential.

*In Christ's Love,
Jonathan Robbins*

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