

Jan Markell's

Understanding the Times

Olive Tree Ministries



www.olivetreeviews.org

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July, August 2017

Convergence

By Jan Markell

A few years ago a Bible prophecy scholar wrote a book and included the opinions of other prophecy watchers. He asked them what the most prominent end-time sign was. He assumed they would all say it was Israel's re-birth almost 70 years ago. That was historic and God-inspired—and predicted in the Bible.

The response was greater for another marker: The convergence of several end-time signs that have occurred in the last ten to twenty years. And most agreed that the end isn't near—it is here.

Headlines will likely continue to be dark. We will never return to the time of happy endings that were characteristic in 1950 sitcoms, but we have the ultimate happy ending with eternity in view. We're in the home stretch. This sentiment is not based on emotions or wishful thinking; rather, the sentiment is rooted in the fact that predicted scenarios are in the stage-setting process.

Most of the prominent signs of the times will converge in the Tribulation, but we are seeing evidence of many of them now. And Jesus chastised the Pharisees for not knowing the signs of His first coming. Surely He wants us to be watching for evidence that the hour is now late.

Olive Tree Ministries has tapped into a new DVD product titled "The Coming Convergence." It blends drama and documentary and features commentary from Pastor Jack Hibbs, Pastor Tom Hughes, Pastor Ray Bentley, Kade Hawkins, Douglas Hamp, and others. Since a few scenes are drama from the early days of the Tribulation, it is also

a wake-up call. There are film clips of utter destruction similar to how things might play out during the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Neither you nor your loved ones should be left behind during this time of unparalleled destruction.

The date that ignited this convergence was May 14, 1948. That is the year the dry bones came back to life. The miracle of modern time took place when the Jews—dispersed to the four corners of the earth—returned to their ancient homeland. Early Zionists suggested that the homeland be away from the Arab world, perhaps in Uganda. As predicted, however, they came back to their God-given land.



Such a convergence is suggested in Luke 21:28: "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." "These things" refers to the convergence.

So what are some of the converging signs?

- There is a rush to the one-world system—the globalist Antichrist system. (Revelation 13)
- Violence fills the whole earth. (II Timothy 3)
- Israel is more and more isolated. (Zechariah 12:3)
- Many churches are falling more deeply into apostasy. (2 Timothy 4)
- There is a longing for a man who can bring order out of global chaos.
- Israel's Sanhedrin is acting to get the

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Convergence

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third Temple installed, also known as the Tribulation Temple.

- Natural disasters are now called “unprecedented” in scope and “record-setting.” Some of these birth pangs are of biblical proportion.
- The Mid-East players on the geo-political chessboard are moving around, getting their end-time assignments ready. There is a new union between Russia, Turkey, and Iran. Syria is almost begging Israel to attack Damascus as predicted in Isaiah 17. New wealth is being discovered in Israel, including natural gas, that could be the “hook in the jaw” bringing Magog into the region as prophesied in Ezekiel 38-39.
- Europe is preparing for the Antichrist. It is now a Godless culture that celebrates diversity and multi-culturalism while Islamic militants plot the demise of the continent so that it can be a part of the Islamic caliphate. Europe may soon honor a man who can calm the continent and restore order out of chaos. Many say Europe as we have known it, is at the end of its existence.
- Evil and lawlessness are celebrated, with evil being called good (Isaiah 5:20). Jokes abound about the assassination of our U.S. President. The Left celebrates this kind of insanity. Whoever expected to see “After School Satan Clubs” installed

in our public schools starting in 2016?

- “Days of Noah” perversions abound. People now want to marry animals, their computer, a tree, and even themselves. These days were predicted to return in a last generation. (Matthew 24:37)
- Christians and Jews are hated and even hunted down (Matthew 10:22). The persecution of Christians is similar to the days of Nero and could be called a holocaust.
- Nations are tangled in a web of “distress with perplexity.” (Luke 21:25) They have financial, political, immigration, and weather-related problems that are destroying them.
- Strong delusion has never been so rampant. In the Tribulation, it will be the factor that causes most to be fooled by the Antichrist. (II Thess. 2:11)

This is a short list that could actually fill a voluminous book! Yes, many are Tribulation events but they have a foreshadowing now.

We should be filled with expectancy as the King is coming soon. And yet it seems that for many, a weariness has set in as the weight of the world’s sin presses down so heavily that it is harder and harder to keep going. Up is down, black is white, good is called evil. We’re tired of the Keystone Kops running the show in nearly every capital of the world. World leaders make promises they have no intention of keeping.

But those of us listening for a trumpet have a keen advantage. We can almost hear the hoof beats of the four horsemen in the distance. The end is near is not a silly saying on a sandwich board worn by some strange person downtown on Main Street. Rather, it is the hope of the believer. I call it the Rapture. And no, it’s not an escape hatch. It’s our “blessed hope.” (Titus 2:13)

Find this outstanding DVD, “The Coming Convergence,” visit page 18 and order by mail, online in our store, or by calling 763-559-4444 CST M – F.

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Donation receipts are sent in January.

Understanding the Times 2017 Conference



Presented by Jan Markell and Olive Tree Ministries

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES 2017

Saturday, October 7

Grace Church, Eden Prairie

9301 Eden Prairie Road, Eden Prairie, MN 55347 (*a southwest suburb of Minneapolis*)

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. • No cost or registration needed

Purchase a lunch ticket as you enter the church

Guest Speakers for 2017



AMIR TSARFATI

Amir is an international Bible prophecy teacher residing in Israel. He found the Lord through the "Jesus" film in Israel. He heads the ministry "Behold Israel." He is also a tour guide in Israel. Learn more at www.beholdisrael.org.



MICHELE BACHMANN

Michele is a watchwoman on the wall with insights into current events from a biblical perspective. She served in Congress as a Representative to Minnesota's 6th District from 2006 to 2015. She also ran for President of the United States in 2012. She has traveled the world and met with world leaders in dozens of countries and has special insight for Middle East issues.



PASTOR J.D. FARAG

Pastor Farag heads Calvary Chapel Kaneohe, Hawaii. His parents are Arabs from the Mideast but J.D. has a strong love for Israel and the Jewish people. He is well known from his weekly prophecy updates on YouTube where he reveals cutting-edge biblical insights as to the lateness of the hour.



DR. MARK HITCHCOCK

Mark pastors Faith Bible Church in Edmond, OK and has authored over 20 books on Bible prophecy. Mark also teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary. He has been at a number of our annual events.

2016 CONFERENCE



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Ask for the Olive Tree Ministries' rate.

Is France's New President an Apocalyptic Character?

By Jan Markell

Just who is Emmanuel Macron? He is the new French President. When a young, charismatic European leader comes along, who also is an ardent globalist, we need to pay attention. Macron is a "Europhile" who is solidly pro-European Union but is also a one-worlder.

Frontpage Magazine had a headline reading, "The Globalist Empire Strikes Back in France." The theme of the article was that in spite of Brexit, the E.U. is alive and well as is the dream of the globalists. He has been a Rothschild investment banker with zero political experience. It should be of no surprise that he was backed by chief globalist George Soros. He was trained in the Jesuit school system.

I am one who believes that Europe is the home of the Antichrist. Daniel 9 talks about "the prince who is to come" who will destroy "the city and the sanctuary." The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

I am not pinning the tail on the Antichrist and suggesting that Emmanuel Macron is the man, but he bears watching. It is a guarantee that he will rise to a prominent position in European leadership. He also represents all that is wrong in Europe: Socialism, no borders, immigration madness, Islam exaltation, and Godlessness. Clearly France continues on in their strong delusion and thus welcomed this globalist representative as their leader. Conspiracy theorists and Antichrist watchers are giddy in that he took 66.06% of the electorate.

Emmanuel Macron is the consummate establishment insider and came with the "hope and change" rhetoric of Barack

Obama, who endorsed him. He was the opposite of Marine LePen who focused on the problems of immigration and terrorism and who criticized the European Union.

Macron is such a globalist that he has stated that "the French culture does not exist." He is delusional with regard to Muslim immigrants in France who have nearly destroyed the country. Nonetheless, he won the election promising that France would be "open and welcoming" to immigration from the Arab world. He also pledged to facilitate the construction of mosques in France.

He, like other European leaders including the Pope, are puppets of the globalists and do their bidding on a daily basis.



Emmanuel Macron

Because France—and all of Europe—have lost nationalistic pride, they are easily fooled by their resident jihadists. France, in time, could become a Muslim country, which is the goal of the Caliphate. Apparently this is fine with Emmanuel Macron.

At my 2016 "Understanding the Times" conference, Amir Tsarfati presented a stunning message titled, "Europe: Ready for the Antichrist." He cited all the ways in which evil is encroaching on the continent and sees this as a precursor to the one who will represent ultimate evil. While this may sound like bleak gloom and doom, if the world is readying for the Antichrist, is God not also preparing to send His Son for the Church in the Rapture?

I encourage you to get a set of DVDs from our 2016 annual conference so that you can watch Amir's presentation. Find them on page 18.

Summer Prophecy Class

Jan Markell is teaching a “Watchman on the Wall: Prophecy for Today” class this summer in the Twin Cities’ area. It meets Sunday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at *Kehilat Sar Shalom Congregation* in St. Louis Park every Sunday night in June, July, and August **except July 2 and August 13**. Seating is limited due to the large attendance.

We are offering CDs of the classes. You can get a single CD of one presentation for \$10 or the 11-week series for \$100. They can be mailed weekly or at the end of the summer. Call us M – F CST at 763-559-4444.

The address is 2734 Rhode Island Avenue, St. Louis Park, MN 55426.

Global Government Rising

In early June the Bilderbergers met just outside of Washington, D.C. for their annual meeting. Over 20 countries were represented. It is not conspiracy talk to reference this group, and many others, who are committed to a one-world government. They likely do not know they are paving the way for the Antichrist.

The number one item on their agenda was a discussion of President Donald Trump. He completely decapitated the globalist agenda with his victory last November and has set back the one-world efforts. He is a nationalist with an America-only agenda. Watch further newsletters and listen to forthcoming radio programs outlining more information.

The Bible does not use the terms “one-world government,” “globalism,” or even “one-world currency” in referring to the end times. It does, however, provide

ample evidence to enable us to draw the conclusion that all will exist under the rule of the Antichrist in the last days. John the Revelator goes on to describe the ruler of this vast empire as having power and great authority, given to him by Satan himself (Revelation 13:2), being followed by and receiving worship from “all the world” (13:3-4), and having authority over “every tribe, people, language and nation” (13:7). From this description, it is logical to assume that this person is the leader of a one-world government which is recognized as sovereign over all other governments.

Jan Markell will be offering a new DVD on this topic this fall. It will be in our September-October newsletter, will be available online, and will be available at our conference, Saturday, October 7. You can also call and ask for it by September.

Our Readers and Listeners Respond

A few years ago I was introduced to “Understanding the Times” radio and have been hooked ever since. It is also a priority to attend your conferences. Even though a lot of topics are heavy, I still come away uplifted and encouraged!—Dawna, IA

I am a millennial in New Zealand and your radio program is the highlight of my

weekend. I am in the vast minority in my country.—Amos

Jan, I am a longtime listener and conference attendee, and I want to say to all, if you aren’t listening to Jan and what her ministry produces, you have no clue what is going on. I also stream Amir and Jack Hibbs as I travel.—Kelley

Welcome to the Second Civil War

By Jill Martin Rische

What is happening in America today? A war between the states is raging -- the Democrats are seceding from the Union in every illegal way possible. Get ready for a rough ride.

In the public square, temperatures are past the boiling point, and it is only a matter of time before the fabric of society starts to unravel and people fight back against the violent left. Is this the way America will crumble? Is this why she is not named in prophecy?

Sedition

Since the election of Donald Trump, the Marxist agenda has empowered the Democratic Party and focused it like a laser beam on sedition, a serious word with a dangerous purpose. In this case, sedition is organized resistance to an elected President with the intent to bring down his government.

Virtually every article, every sound bite, every piece of video is focused on one negative message: Trump is the illegitimate President who can do nothing right -- ever. He must be stopped even if it means fabricating Russian conspiracies and leaking classified information, and even if it takes violence to do it. This is rebellion against a duly elected President, not the exercise of free speech. *This is sedition.*

Truth and Justice are Irrelevant

It began with harassment at campaign rallies and grew into riots, property destruction, and assault. A Communist-style disinformation campaign infiltrated the American media, printing anything without sources or evidence. Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals* remains the playbook, and the current focus is on Rule 13, "Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it." Make sure you always portray your enemy as 100% wrong 24 hours a day.

As bad as the Left's propaganda has been, the intelligence community's plot to leak private conversations of the President is extraordinary and very well-orchestrated. This is a strength of the Democrats, the ability to plan ahead. Before Trump entered the Oval Office, Obama transferred political operatives into government jobs where they cannot be fired without a fight.

President Trump added to that damage by employing Obama and Clinton people in the West Wing itself. One example of many is Ivanka Trump's choice of advisor, Clinton mega-fan and well known "Swamp Queen" Jamie Gorelick -- a woman who was second in command in the Clinton Justice department, a well-known terrorist advocate, and member of the *September 11 Commission*.

We Must Resist!

This is the mantra, the slogan, and the war cry of the left. Gone is even a semblance of decency or fair play. Trump embodies every form of evil.

How do we stop the madness?

Bill Wilson, writing for *RaptureReady.com* puts it all in a nutshell, "*This is a growing civil war in America -- pitting people against people, neighbor against neighbor, family members against family members. The organizers are using fake news hysteria against President Donald Trump as their catalyst. He is their number one target because of his strong pro-American patriotic viewpoints. We must pray and act. We must stand in the gap and make up the hedge.*"

Welcome to the Second Civil War

This is a high-powered, all or nothing game for control of America, and we must fight back. Anyone who believes Barack Obama is not a factor because he's no longer in the White House should remember this:

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Welcome to the Second Civil War

By Jill Martin Rische

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It was Obama's candidate, Marxist Tom Perez, who won the election for Chairman of the Democratic Party. Once again, Barack Hussein Obama is leading from behind only this time, it's with a force of more than 30,000 community organizers across America -- all working to freeze and polarize Donald Trump. *Obama's Shadow Presidency has begun.*

Globalist powers divided and dismantled the Union in a big way during his eight-year term, and they will not stand idly by while Donald Trump repairs it. And that is what he must do or America cannot stand. The American motto of "E pluribus unum" meaning "out of many, one" will fall to Marxist identity politics of divide and conquer.

Saving the Union

Donald Trump must take the same stance that Abraham Lincoln did during the first

Civil War. At the beginning of his term, he wrote, "I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution."

We must do our part through prayer and participation to protect our families and communities. They believe we are frogs sitting in a pot, oblivious to the water temperature. They believe we are powerless and ignorant but this is not a war rooted in flesh and blood, and it will not be won on the human plane. And in this battle, we have the advantage. "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm." (Eph 6:13)

(Jill Martin Rische is the daughter of Dr. Walter Martin. She is our frequent columnist and radio co-host. She also manages Olive Tree's social media. Learn more about her at www.waltermartin.com.)



In June, Jan Markell traveled to Dallas to join Dr. Dave Reagan and Nathan Jones on "Christ in Prophecy" TV, seen around the world. Watch local listings for airings or check with *Lamb Lion Ministries*. It could be a few months before it airs.

OLIVETREEMINISTRIES

An Open Door Closes

By Jan Markell

When I began *Olive Tree Ministries* years ago, I ministered in hundreds of churches, home fellowships and women's groups. Every week I would pile my small vehicle with a 12-string guitar, sound and audio-visual equipment, books, and a map, and head toward destinations large and small. My audiences were enthusiastic as I shared messages focusing on Bible prophecy, Israel, Israel in prophecy, Christ in the Passover, Jewish evangelism, and current events.

I could not keep up with the demand. I could have ministered 5-6 times a week. This was more than a decade after Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*. That book opened the eyes of a lot of people and caused them to want more insight. The one-third of the Bible that referenced prophecy was for real and could no longer be ignored. *It was for today.*

How Times Have Changed

Today about 90% of these doors have slammed shut. It is not just indifference, it is outright hostility towards topics that a few years ago generated great enthusiasm. Yes, there are small pockets of interest that remain but opportunities continue to shrink.

We are now in the days of 2 Peter 3:3: The mocking and scoffing generation as to end-time events. We are in a time when Israel has been so maligned that even within evangelicalism, she is seen as an "apartheid occupier" more than God's Chosen People. Anti-Israel sentiment is global. Anti-Semitism is raging. Entire denominations are engaging in the *Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Movement* that harms Israel economically.

If I were to still make my living by visiting churches across America tapping into these very same topics, I would be out of business.

How Did This Happen?

I've reported on Pastor Tom Hughes' excellent article before about church indifference to eschatology. He pastors the Calvary Chapel 412 Church in San Jacinto, CA. Tom writes that many pastors refuse to touch the topics of Bible prophecy and Israel because (1) They don't understand it; (2) They fear offending members; (3) They are concerned about scaring people; (4) They fear losing the tithes if they talk about end-time events; (5) They are afraid of being identified with the "loony fringe" such as Harold Camping.

Consequently, 90% of our church pulpits today are *totally silent on the good news that the King is coming.*

The Cry of the Young: Social Justice!!

As a young person, I loved these topics. Bible prophecy ignited my spiritual life which was slipping into complacency. My trip to Israel at age 30, plus my Jewish heritage, allowed me to have an all-new worldview that was actually Israel-centric because the Bible is Israel-centric!

The *Pre-Trib Research Center* has an excellent article written by **Dr. James Showers** on the eroding evangelical support for Israel. He addresses one major area that is problematic: *Young people are more troubled by injustice than they are inspired by Bible prophecy.* They perceive some injustice and consider the "occupation" of the Palestinian territories. They have bought into the propaganda that Israel is an abuser of the Palestinians. I will list the Pied Pipers who have taught them this in a moment.

Showers suggests that the old adage that we support Israel "because the Bible tells me so" is over. As a result, there is a trend among younger people to leave the evangelical nest previous young adults

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occupied to fit into their new postmodern worldview. Postmodern/Emergent leaders only reinforce this as across-the-board they are anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian, and pro-Islam.

Proponents of this include **Shane Claiborne, Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo**, and the “Christ at the Checkpoint” crowd. They are turning almost all Millennials against the Jewish state.

Showers accurately states that young adult evangelical events such as the *Justice Conference* and *Catalyst* have become pulpits for pro-Palestinian groups to come in the name of peace and blame the lack of peace on Israel. The *Justice Conference* emphasizes Leftist politics and features the likes of Marxist Cornell West. The annual *Catalyst* event will not have one Israel-friendly or prophecy-oriented representative.

Evangelicals Who Influence

We expect the postmoderns and the religious Left to distort truth, but in the last 20 years, evangelicals have been in the forefront of discouraging believers on these topics. I will now name some names that will trouble some people. I am not attacking these individuals. I am just reporting on what they say.

Popular blogger **Tim Challies** wrote back on January 31 that there are seven “false teachers” in the church today. One category of false teacher he labels as “the Speculator.” He says that, “Today, as in every age, the ‘Speculator’ *obsesses about end-times and somehow his failed predictions dissuade neither himself nor his followers.*”

Dr. John Piper wrote in 2002 and again in 2014, “Israel has no warrant to a present experience of divine privilege when she is not keeping the covenant with God. Israel has no divine right to be in the land of promise when she is breaking the covenant of promise. For now, the people are at enmity with God in rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ, their Messiah.”



Lynne Hybels, wife of Willow Creek’s Bill Hybels, has been an outspoken proponent of Palestinian issues and a prominent critic of Israel’s wall of partition. This was built some years ago to stop

the slaughter of innocent Israelis by the Palestinians. She states, “I believe that the ongoing military occupation of the West Bank and the continuing blockade of Gaza is a violation of human rights; as such, it deeply harms the security, freedom, and dignity of both peoples.”

First, she states she is both “pro-Israel and pro-Palestine,” but then she suggests there be a one-state solution. She is deceived thinking that the Palestinians want to live in a peaceful co-existence with Israel. Her one-state solution would only be for the Palestinians. Hybels softened her tone after a visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial.

Pastor Brian Brodersen, son-in-law of Calvary Chapel’s founder Chuck Smith, recently told Calvary Chapel pastors to avoid the “gloom and doom” of eschatology. Calvary Chapel may be the last denomination in the world that has maintained an eternal perspective with an emphasis on end-time issues. Now they are encouraged to dump the topic and cater to younger people. *Many Calvary*

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Chapel pastors will never give up the prophetic word and have so stated.

Pastor Rick Warren writes in his *Purpose Driven Life* book, “When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world. Jesus said in essence, ‘The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I have given you. Focus on that.’ If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy.” (See pages 285-286)

I have previously written that the *Bible Answer Man*, **Hank Hanegraaff**, states often on his call-in radio program that God’s Chosen People are only Christians. He says God is not a land-broker and suggests Israel does not belong to the Jews. Hank says the Rapture is “nonsense” and is forced into the biblical text. His listeners have had a nearly 30-year diatribe of error in these areas. Many have been turned off on these issues for life. Hank has just been diagnosed with cancer that may be untreatable and could use prayer support.

Space does not permit me to quote many other leading evangelicals and evangelical organizations who take negative positions on these topics. **World Vision** is just one organization that has been anti-Israel for decades. They were recently caught funneling their humanitarian funds to Hamas though they denied it.

Dispensationalism Declines

Eschatology and pro-Israel sentiment have always found a home within Dispensationalism. Twentieth Century teachers John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Tim LaHaye, Hal Lindsey, Chuck Missler, Mark Hitchcock, Ron Rhodes, Dave Reagan, Thomas Ice, Ed Hindson, and

many more, have educated millions.

The rise of Amillennialism, Preterism, Dominion/Kingdom Now Theologies -- and what often comes with them, Replacement Theology -- are crowding out Dispensationalism. Dr. Jim Showers says, “Dispensationalism has become a dirty word in many corners of Christian higher education.”

Showers continues, “The next generation of ministry leaders, at best, sees no value in studying future prophecy and, at worst, views it with disfavor or as something to be avoided entirely.” He suggests even those who hold to Dispensationalism and a Christian Zionist view of Israel, born out of a literal interpretation of the Bible, are distancing themselves from these topics.

At a time in history when headlines are at best maddening and bleak, the very theologies that make sense of them are declining in favor of theologies that fill pews and offering plates.

This ministry encourages you to tell the inconvenient truth as it concerns our times no matter how unpopular it makes you. God will honor you some day.

But the conclusion here is that the days are gone when to be an evangelical Christian was nearly synonymous with being pro-Israel and pro-prophecy. It’s a new day and not a happy one. Yes, the Bible states that Israel will be on her own someday (Zechariah 12:3), but watching the process unfold remains heartbreaking.

In spite of this, the King is still coming, stage-setting signs are escalating, a trumpet is about to sound, and the Church will vanish soon.

Let your voice be heard! And be encouraged!

Contentious Contending for the Faith

By Jan Markell

My radio co-host Eric Barger wrote an excellent commentary a few years ago titled, “When Discernment Turns Ugly.” I would like to quote from it and add some comments of my own. I have watched as fellow Christians have torn into one another, slandered Christian brothers and sisters, tried to harm successful ministries, and behaved in such a manner that the unbelieving world would flee from them.

Added to this is a new contention online, particularly on social media. Disagreements over even minor issues often result in name-calling and denigrating one another.

I have watched mean-spiritedness coming from Christian “leaders” that might make the secular world blush, but it is coming from fellow Christians. It is “friendly fire” that isn’t so friendly. And if I publicly chastised them and named their names, they would reply with even more vindictive blogs, radio programs, articles, commentaries, and YouTubes. They can dish out the chastisements but they cannot take an ounce of correction.

Yes, there is raging apostasy. The most frequent email to me is, “Can you recommend a church in you-fill-in-the-blank city?” Many churches have caved to *the most unsound doctrine*. True heresy needs to be called out with the naming names and citing the aberrant theology. But today’s discernment crowd hides in the bushes, waiting for a Christian leader to make a single misstep. They are then pounced on, labeled a hopeless heretic, and marginalized by others in that community. And if you associate with them, feature them, quote them, or publicly show approval of them, you have lost all

common sense, discernment, judgment, and more.

Eric writes, “Both Jan and I have become increasingly uncomfortable, even disturbed, with the tone and lack of civility being portrayed by some within the apologetics and discernment community of speakers, writers, and commentators. We’ve watched, listened, and have tried to intervene as assorted discernment ministries have fired shots at others inside Christianity over issues that fall miserably short of what has always been considered heresy.

“A troubling precedent has been spawned by some, lending validation to the idea that it’s perfectly acceptable to publicly rake *anyone* over the coals for nearly *any* theological reason.

“Jan and I are not alone in our dismay with what is happening. Other leaders have voiced the same concern to us in recent days and mind you, the issue is not concerning any rejection of the virgin birth

or the bodily resurrection of Christ. Nor is it related to the pseudo-Christian yet cultic Emergent heresy or the seducing web with which spiritual liberalism ensnares so many.

“The type of ‘discernment’ that I’m referring to here doesn’t involve someone’s denial of the essential doctrines of the faith. Instead, what these squabbles really amount to are nothing more than disagreements on secondary doctrines, styles of worship, and peripheral practices.”

I am puzzled as to why this ministry has been the brunt of constant attack for years. In my last print issue, I reported that Hank Hanegraaff, the Bible Answer Man, called *Olive Tree Ministries* a “blight on our times”

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Disagreements over even minor issues often result in name-calling and denigrating one another.

Contentious Contending for the Faith

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and “reprehensible.” This and more was stated on his national radio program. I think we are doctrinally sound. I have sometimes featured guests on air or at conferences with whom I have some minor theological disagreements. I have felt that what they have to say is important enough that I will not let secondary issues stand in the way.

But I have begun to wonder if the contentious discerners expect a background check of everyone with whom one associates? And if so, has the standard been set so high that no imperfect human being can qualify? Do these folks think, then, that they have no flaws, no theological weaknesses, and have attained a level of such perfection that they have become, in essence, a sheriff for the church? They must stamp their seal of approval on everyone?

This past spring I was made aware that an entire YouTube had been made denouncing me personally for my associations. I was being attacked for associating with a wonderful pastor, J.D. Farag. I am honored to be working with pastor J.D. He is a humble servant who has a love for Bible prophecy and is a part of the Calvary Chapel movement in Hawaii. In spite of his Arab heritage, he has a special love for Israel and the Jews.

I was saddened to see Pastor Farag's very character attacked in the same video over a disagreement about two verses in the Bible! He was then insulted as someone who needed more theological education in Greek and Hebrew. After an hour of insults, any sound believer would be heartsick and an unbeliever would flee from our camp observing that his unbelieving friends would be far more gracious to him should he make a mistake or have a disagreement.

Eric writes, “I think it's needful for each Christian to be able to express positions

or hold beliefs on the so-called secondary issues, but is biblical apologetics about denigrating others and in effect besmirching entire ministries based on disagreements about side issues? For some, this is what it's become, and worse. The field of discernment has, at least in part, become a hotbed of separatism that seems to far exceed biblical standards.”

Eric continues, “From what is sometimes only one pen or keyboard, judgment is meted out against the suspected offender as newsletters are printed, blogs are published, seminars are given, and whole ministries and reputations are possibly done irreversible harm. All this takes place no matter how flimsy the evidence presented may be, and often over non-essential theologies! This should disgust the Christian community and I fear for the next generation of apologists (and those they'll likely influence) who are being schooled by this example.”

I think that God is saddened that elements in the apologetics' world behave no better than the Pharisees of Jesus' day. As flawed human beings, we make missteps and we certainly make mistakes. As each day dawns, I ask God for sound judgment for the many major decisions I will face that day. I don't want to mislead anyone or introduce them to unsound doctrine. I likely am not batting 1,000. In that teachers and leaders have a higher accountability, I would ask you to pray for all of us.

Closing thought: II Timothy 2:24-25: *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.....*

(Find Eric's entire article, “When Discernment Turns Ugly,” at www.ericbarger.com.)

OUR THANKS

Olive Tree Ministries has never sent a fundraising letter or e-mail, but we live in a very real world with expenses that must be met. Thanks to those of you who partner with us prayerfully and financially. Our radio expense, with production costs and air time, amounts to more than \$600,000 a year.

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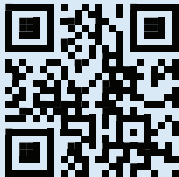
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- Sign up for our e-alerts (also referred to as e-newsletter) at the website. This is sent about twice a month
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The Vice Chairman of our Board of Directors, Karl Irwin, passed away last spring. He was an invaluable servant to this ministry and to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our thoughts are with his wife Pam.

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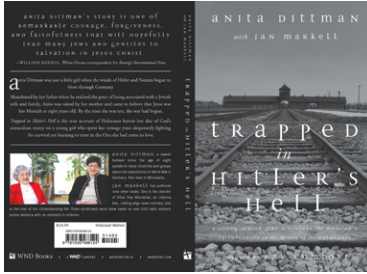
In Romans 9 - 11 the olive tree is the symbol of the spiritual heritage of Israel and the Jewish people. By God's grace, other peoples now share equal participation in His promises of eternal life and blessing.

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Resources by Jan Markell



Trapped in Hitler's Hell: A Young Jewish Girl Discovers the Messiah's Faithfulness in the Midst of the Holocaust"

By Anita Dittman and Jan Markell

Book: \$11 – 206 pages – softbound

Jan's classic book, now celebrating 35 years of making a difference. The remarkable story of Anita Dittman and her miraculous survival during the Hitler years. The story spans 12 riveting years of

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DVD: \$16 – 75 minutes, full color, produced by George Escobar

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Sons from Afar

\$10 – 173 pages – softbound

This book by Jan Markell is a re-do of her classic *Gone the Golden Dream*. It is the true story of Joe Lessin and his sons. Joe's Judaism leaves him empty and he has a God-shaped vacuum in his heart. After he finds the real Messiah, Jesus Christ, he must win his family to Christ. His sons rebel for years, but then as it is promised in Isaiah 60:4, his sons come from afar and commit their lives to the true Messiah. Witness the power of a simple Gideon Bible hidden in a hotel drawer.

"This book is a powerful tribute to God's Word and the keeping of His promises. A double wow after reading it. For those struggling with unsaved loved ones, they need this awesome book!"—Dennis Rattenbury, MN



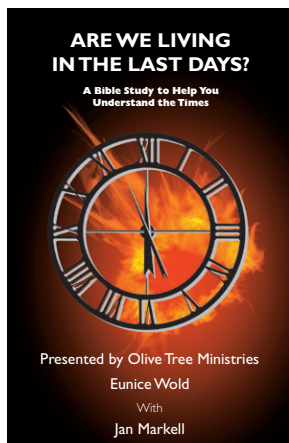
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