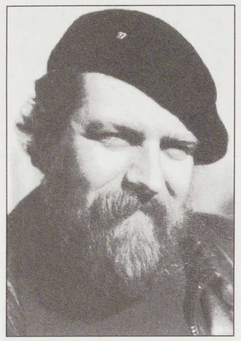

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord

by Paul deParrie

One of the most dramatic events of the New Testament was the confrontation of the Jewish religious leaders by Jesus in the Temple — the Holy Place of God.

After reaming them out about how ungodly and hypocritical they were, Jesus points out that they (and their fathers) *always* rejected the messengers that God sent (Matthew 23). He closed this jeremiad by saying, "You shall not see Me henceforth until you say'Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord.'"

By this, He means that no one can see Him until they can receive His messengers.

Christ then punctuated the point by leaving the Temple and saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"

It has long fascinated me that those called "God's People" — Old and New Testament — have nearly always rejected God's messengers. Nay, *destroyed* God's messengers.

Jesus, we were warned in prophecy, would be a man whose appearance would not particularly inspire us to follow. Was He ugly — or merely ordinary? Who knows? But it is just like God to send people to do His work that are not what we would want. Isaiah walked around stark naked for three-and- a-half years while he prophesied. Ezekiel lay on his side and cooked his meals over dung as a testimony to the religious leaders of the time.

For this reason, I am always keenly aware of my own reactions to people who "come in the name of the Lord." The Bible warning that we should "be careful" lest we entertain angels unawares comes to mind. Why would we have to "be careful" if all these angels appeared in an appealing form?

I believe this is also true of the pro-life movement — especially as it enters a particularly prophetic phase. More and more street-preachers seem to be popping up at pro-life events. More and more of them are chiding the public in the town squares of America about the great evil of abortion. And something I expect to see more of soon is people prophesying against churches for their apathy to the plight of the innocent children.

This brings me to my point. Churches naturally grow complacent over time and as their people and leaders prosper, they begin to judge more and more by the outward appearances — clothing, jewelry, "cultured" behavior. But movements can do the same.

Have we gotten so "sophisticated" that we no longer are willing to be seen with or work with people that don't meet our adopted (but unscriptural) criteria?

I think it has begun to happen.

In older times, it manifested itself as a disdain for the "screamers" (as I and others used to call them). It has since grown to more than that.

Pro-lifers are not only willing to "distance themselves" from other pro-lifers, they are willing to condemn them and even, at time, assist law enforcement in silencing them — even when they are guilty of nothing at all.

A case in point is one Daniel Ware. Daniel was *acquitted* of a trumped up gun charge in Pensacola, Florida and never even charged (except in the media) with the accusation that he wanted to shoot up an abortionists' convention.

Now Daniel has been an extraordinarily faithful pro-life activist. He is single, lives out of his van (with some assistance from local pro-lifers wherever he is), supports himself with odd-jobs, and prophetically preaches straight from the Word of God outside clinics wherever he goes.

But many pro-lifers shun Ware. He is not polished enough. He has a bad reputation (which he doesn't deserve). Some, more recently, have been willing to say things to federal agents (to keep themselves off the hot seat) that make Ware a suspect in some nefarious action. In the old days, the Pharisees would at least stone the person themselves. Today, we let the feds do it.

Ware requires very little maintenance — the occasional use of a shower and some other things. He depends on the assistance of pro-lifers for these things, but lately, people have been reticent. They have believed the media portrayal of Ware as a "dangerous man."

I seem to recall that Paul the apostle had the same problem with some Christians believing tales about him.

I'm not trying to put Ware on the same plane as Paul or one of the prophets, but I do believe he truly "comes in the Name of the Lord" in the sense we have been discussing.

And he is not the only one. There are many others who fit this category. Ware is merely a handy example.

But God, true to His nature, is sending us people who may be hard to take. They may not be pretty, or dress well, or be particularly articulate, but they are *His*. I expect more of this.

The Church — by and large — has rejected the prophetic call of those in the pro-life movement, but now the pro-life movement is itself calcifying and starting to reject the prophetic messengers.

Even in the Old Testament, God gave a lot of commands as to the proper treatment of strangers.

Take heed, pro-lifers, that you entertain strangers (no matter how strange) for you may be entertaining angels unawares — and even if you aren't, not even a cup of water given in the Name of the Lord will go unrewarded.

And we won't see Him until we say, "Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord." ■

True dreams

by Anne Foreman

From the beginning of time, every little girl's dream has been to be a good mother. In their little girl games, their own confidence to be able to carry out this task was evidenced by how many children they pretend to have.

I was no exception. I always dreamed of having six children. (My own mother had five children, so I guess I had a certain confidence that I could be an even better mother than she had been!) The idea of choosing anything other than motherhood never crossed my mind.

But then Margaret Sanger came along to free women from the burden of motherhood and to set the hearts of little girls towards higher aspirations and careers! Her own goals were quite clear. She saw limitless possibilities in ridding the world of all that was unlovely; and, through chemical selection, of propagating a perfect race. She had many socialist friends who were committed eugenists and was thoroughly convinced that "inferior races" were in fact "human weeds" and "a menace to civilization." To her, Hitler was a hero. In her twisted mind, like him she had hopes of creating a race of "thoroughbreds."

Of course, sixty-five or seventy-five years ago birth control was not legal in society at large, much less thought of within the walls of the church. But from the time of the Great Depression on, the church was prepared for Sanger's new theories. People began to believe that children were expendable, that material possessions, and understanding and glorifying the self, were essentials for survival. In this climate, motherhood became viewed as binding, limiting, claustrophobic. Sanger's view of birth control, once ludicrous and seen as tainted with evil consequences, was now embraced with open arms and practiced widely within the church as well as in society at large.

I remember, even as a young child, thinking that birth control couldn't possibly be right. Wasn't God the author of life? Wasn't it the Lord who gave and took away? But I buried those feelings for years. Everyone around me not only accepted but expected the practice of birth control . . . so I imagined that I was the one who was mistaken.

More and more, even within the church, the acceptable notion became that a small family is a good and responsible family and that certainly we must choose what is best for us and the world.

Sanger became a hero. Her organization, Planned Parenthood, was seen as a wonderful, warm, God-fearing, woman-and-family-loving institution. And women waited expectantly, not for children to fill their arms, but for more effective means to avoid and even destroy them if an accident occurred, so that they could get on with what was really important in their lives and in the world.

Somehow, Christians had totally forgotten that God says that children are a blessing, that "Blessed is he who has his quiver full of them"; That God loves children, or why would he have made women, unlike animals, to be able to conceive during 80% of their lives.

Christians began to imagine that certainly God would not impose such a burden on women! So, as Christians focused in on the good stewardship of a small family, they unwittingly pushed the door wide open for abortion. For if even Christian women didn't want children and avoided them at almost any cost, then it was only a small step to the point of seeing an accidental conception as a mistake which needed to be taken care of. Planned Parenthood's own rhetoric told women that "that was why pencils had erasers." Abortion was like an eraser for those little mistakes.

But God has made very definite promises to us, and one of His greatest promises is our inheritance: our children.

The world says that our mark of fulfillment and greatness and dominion is our career. God says, "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth and rule over it." God's keys to greatness and dominion are children and how we raise them.

The world says that a fulfilled woman is one who embraces functional sterility and a great career. God says, "Blessed are those whose children rise up to call her blessed . . . whose children are like olive shoots around your table."

The world says that in today's technological society, children cost too much. "They make you poor and weak." "You can't afford many children!" But God says, "Like arrows in a warrior's hand our children will speak with the enemy in the gate. Blessed is the one whose quiver is full." Children are God's provision for the future. You can't afford not to have them! As a wise man has said, "In a technological age, I would rather depend on the income potential of my seven or eight children than on the failed promises of the Government's social security check."

Though the world's view is often attractive and even compelling; the fruit of the world's thinking is clear. Wherever one group of people are viewed as a resource controllable by another group of people, the inevitable result will be that population control is thought to be good in any form, and that in its ultimate eugenic form, is best. It may sound reasonable, but it inevitably takes on George Orwell's 1984 model, and sings of heroines such as Margaret Sanger. So it should be no surprise that such thinking always runs parallel with world socialism, abortion on demand, and goverment-forced abortion.

But we are not left with these depressing thoughts; the fruit of God is the joy of families. The fruit of the womb is His reward.

I have found that what is true on the international level is even more true on the home front, for God has given us seven wonderful children. These are gifts which will change the world. As a woman, I want to lead a life which pleases God and brings good changes into the world.