

RELIGION

What is God's Will for You?



BY REV. **ETHEL J. BATES** FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

I think that it is safe to say that the question of what is God's will for us, His children, is one of the most frequently asked by sincere Christians who are in love with God. And just as we are enraptured with the desire to please the option of our earthly affection, when we fall in love with God we become obsessed with the desire to please Him and to know His will for us.

How do I know the will of God for my life? How do I know when in a situation where I have two options which way God wants me to go? How do I know which person I am supposed to marry? How do I know when to change jobs? How do I know if I should stay in the job I am in? What school should I put my kids in?

In John 14:21, Jesus puts it this way: He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by My Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

As Christians, we believe that God is interested in our decisions and has a plan for our life. We believe that God has a preference as to which direction we should take. But discovering His will can be a frustrating process.

God definitely has a will for you. If you were to take a concordance and look up the phrases "the will of God" and "God's will," you would

find that in the New Testament, the phrases fall into two categories. One category is "God's moral will," and the other category is "God's personal will." God's moral will in Scripture is the "dos" and "don'ts," the "Thou shalt do this" and "Thou shalt not do this."

Men and women who develop a lifestyle in harmony with God's moral commands will experience God's guidance in a special way. When you and I live lives of obedi-

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ence, we are in step with God's thoughts and God's way. It makes sense that we are able to discern His voice more easily. Any decision you make or any option you are looking at that is in conflict with God's will is not of God.

If you have sin in your life—willful, deliberate sin — trying to discover God's will is frustration. You are saying, 'God, I really want to know your will in this area. Whatever you say to do, I am willing to do. But God, don't worry about this area of sin right now. I'll take care of that later.'

God is not going to let you ignore sin. I am not saying you will never know the will of God if there is sin in your life. Sometimes, God may show you exactly what to do,

but He will say it will never work until you deal with the sin problem.

There is danger in praying and asking for God to show you His plan in a major decision when there is willful sin in your life. Something is already wrong in your thinking process if you are tolerating sin. You have rationalized a given area that God says must be dealt with. Here is the problem: our evaluation of sin is not the same as God's! He hates it! He wants it out of our lives, and sees it as a stumbling block to His best for us.

I am the recipient of divine intervention and I have no choice but to seek His will for my life and do whatever He asks of me. Not that I deserved to have been saved from an early grave, but it was for His good pleasure that He chose to heal me of cancer and restored my life. Now I'm on a mission. I'm determined to know what God's will is for my life, and with every breath in my body, I will not allow any earthly entity to deter me!

One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord, All the days of my life 'To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple.' That is God's will for all of us!

Do you know God's will for you? Do you not know that you have a special job to do in your limited time on this earth? Many Christians have missed the blessed experience of walking in God's will for their lives. It is time to be about our Father's business!

Ethel J. Bates is a minister for the Allen Temple CME Church in Portland.



King Remembered

Marvin Johnson, 19, walks in the courtyard of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn., Thursday. The museum is housed in the Lorraine Motel and the warehouse where James Earl Ray shot Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968. Thursday marked the 35th anniversary of King's assassination. Several hundred people marched more than a mile from the site of his death to the Mason Temple, a church where King gave his "I have been to the mountaintop" speech the night before he was killed.

Nuns Stand Trial for Peace Protest

(AP) — Three nuns have been accused of defacing a missile silo. They swung hammers and painted a cross on it with their own blood. This was called a peaceful protest by their defense attorney.

Sisters Ardeth Platte, 66, Jackie Hudson, 68 and Carol Gilbert, 55, are

accused of breaking into a Minuteman III missile silo site on Colorado's northeastern plains Oct. 6. They have been charged with interfering with the nation's defense and causing property damage.

Hudson's attorney, Walter Gerash, said the sisters entered the

N-8 site to protest. They read Bible verses about pounding swords into plowshares and sang hymns.

The nuns said they were compelled to act as war with Iraq moved closer and because the United States has never promised not to use nuclear weapons.

Christian Relief in Iraq Opposed

American Islamic advocacy group upset effort includes Muslim critic

(AP) — U.S.-based Christian relief organizations are poised to offer medicine, food, and other supplies to needy Iraqis once the war ends, but critics are concerned the groups may use humanitarian aid to make inroads in the predominantly Muslim nation.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Washington advocacy group, said it was especially upset to hear that the relief agency Samaritan's Purse, run by the Rev. Franklin Graham, planned to work in Iraq. Graham has called Islam "a very evil and wicked religion."

"It's particularly disturbing that a group headed by a man who openly states he believes the faith of Islam is evil would enter into a Muslim country in the wake of an invading army," council spokes-



Rev. Franklin Graham

Graham wrote in an opinion piece for the Los Angeles Times' Thursday editions.

"We don't have to preach in order to be a Christian relief organization. Sometimes the best preaching we can do is simply being there with a cup of cold water, exhibiting Christ's spirit of serving others."

Samaritan's Purse says it's prepared to provide drinking water for up to 20,000 Iraqi families, build temporary shelter for more than 4,000 families and supply packages of household items for 5,000 families.

We don't have to preach in order to be a Christian relief organization.

—Rev. Franklin Graham, who will provide aid in Iraq after calling Islam 'a very evil and wicked religion'

man Ibrahim Hooper said.

Like most Christian agencies, Samaritan's Purse says it won't proselytize.

"In Iraq, as is the case wherever we work, Samaritan's Purse will offer physical assistance to those who need it, with no strings attached,"

Trent Wheeler, spokesman for Healing Hands relief group, said the approach of Christian relief groups has shifted. "It used to be primarily, 'Preach, preach, preach,'" he said. The new strategy is to help first and explain Christianity later, Wheeler explained.

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