

Saints and sinners: Getting more friendly with God

We don't want to get too chummy with God. A friend of mine addresses the Almighty as "Goddie, dear," in her prayers. That has always seemed to me to be carrying informality with the deity too far.

On the other hand, our religious lives would probably be more rewarding if we were on friendlier, less formal terms with God.

The Bible says that God spoke to Moses "as a man speaks to his friend." That, perhaps, is what we should strive for when we speak to God.

We ought to feel free to say whatever is on our minds, avoiding the stilted language that God can see coming whenever we fold our hands or get down on our knees.

Prayer should be a lively, spirited exchange

between parties who like each other's company — like Noah and De Lawd in Marc Connelly's classic play "Green Pastures."

De Lawd liked nothing better than to stand around and chew the fat with his people as he smoked a big cigar or enjoyed a fish fry with them.

His children even felt free to cajole him. When God told Noah he wanted snakes on the ark, Noah sensed an opportunity. "Maybe I better take a keg of likker," said Noah, "'cause some of them snakes can get pretty dangerous."

Noah figured he might be on a roll, so he didn't stop.

With all the different kind of snakes there are, he told God, maybe he had better take two kegs of "likker."



george plagenz

• saints & sinners

"I think one keg's enough," replied God.

"Just as easy to take two kegs, Lawd."

"One keg, Noah."

"Yes, Lawd, one keg."

"101 Ways to Talk to God" by Dandi MacKall

(Sourcebooks, 2001), makes practical, fun suggestions on how to converse with God:

— "Designate one chair in your home as your

own personal prayer chair. Make an appointment with God to meet there every morning and evening for a heart-to-heart talk."

— "Imagine what God might do in your place to make somebody's day. For instance, listen politely to an entire telemarketing pitch." (I have trouble with this one.)

— "Write down the ugly parts of your past — the regrets, the stupid things you wish you had never said or done. Then tear the list into tiny pieces and burn them. As the smoke rises, thank God for forgiveness and fresh starts."

— "Smile at strangers throughout the day. Don't be upset when you don't get a smile in return. (God is smiling at you.)"

— "When you climb into bed tonight, don't forget to tell God goodnight."

Children have a way of getting to the heart of the matter in their prayers. Here's a sampling of "Children's Letters to God" (Workman, 1991), compiled by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall.

— "I wish you would not make it so easy for people to come apart. I had three stitches and a shot." (From Jane)

— "Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you've got?" (From Mark) (That's one of the questions I've always wondered about myself but thought I was too old to ask.)

Compliment God from time to time.

I imagine he was very pleased with the letter from little Ruthie M., who said, "I think the stapler is one of your greatest inventions."

Ahead of Pope's visit, believers point to sites associated with St. Paul

By Hamza Hendawi

Associated Press Writer
KAWKAB, Syria — Father Matta Rizk stood outside his hilltop chapel Tuesday, pointing to the yellowing green hills dotted with olive trees before him to the south. To the north, Damascus was barely visible through the late morning haze.

"It happened somewhere here, but no one knows the exact spot," he said.

"It" is the vision of Jesus experienced some 2,000 years ago by St. Paul the Apostle on the road to Damascus.

Pope John Paul II's visit to Syria, which starts Saturday, was inspired by St. Paul. Following in the saint's steps isn't easy these days, as time and progress have erased memories, but the faithful point to a few spots as sacred.

John Paul has no plans to come to the area associated with St. Paul's vision because of his poor health and the busy schedule of his four-day stay in Syria,

according to Rizk. Rizk's church is at Kawkab, some 12.5 miles south of Damascus.

Paul, then a Christian-hating Jew named Saul, was on his way to Damascus to try to put down the new religion. The vision of Jesus both blinded and converted Paul, according to Christian belief, giving the newly born faith a man who spent a lifetime tirelessly preaching Christianity throughout the then all-powerful Roman Empire. Paul is believed to have been beheaded in Rome around 67 A.D.

Rizk's chapel, a modern structure built in 1965 with money donated by the Russian Orthodox church, is named after St. Paul, as is the Greek Orthodox monastery to which the Lebanese-educated monk belongs.

The 33-year-old Orthodox monk from Damascus shares something with the 80-year-old, Polish-born Roman pontiff. Both look to Paul as a model.

"It's Paul's love for Jesus that made me become a monk," Rizk said.

Back in Damascus, Straight Street is the spot where, following his vision, Paul was believed to have met St. Ananias, who was to baptize him. Today's partly covered Straight Street hardly seems a likely place for biblical miracles.

It is a bustling market where everything from Persian rugs to sweets, nuts and coffee are sold from tiny stores owned by Christians and Muslims. The place is also representative of Syria's rich mix of cultures and religions, with ruins from Roman temples, houses dating to the Ottoman era and ancient churches.

"If my priest says we don't recognize the pope as Orthodox Christians, that is his business. I'll bring my wife and two children to see the pope when he drives through this street," said George Boutros Habib, sitting at a sewing machine in his

small tailor shop on Straight Street.

An Orthodox Christian married to an Armenian, Habib declared: "The pope is for everyone."

Omar Ibrahim, who sells carpets on Straight Street, had just emerged from a mosque after noon prayers when he was asked about the pope's visit. "Syria is beautiful and everyone is welcome," he said.

A short walk from Straight Street near the Eastern Gate, one of seven on the ancient walls surrounding old Damascus, is the underground Chapel of St. Ananias, believed to be the place where Paul was baptized.

The dungeon-like church built with stones is down a 23-step flight of stairs. It will not be visited by the ailing John Paul, apparently because of the physical effort involved, but the pontiff will drive past it during his stay in Damascus.

A room next to the chapel is where Paul, according to tradition, was bap-

tized.

The stone walls are adorned with 29 color sketches telling the story of St. Paul in Arabic, English and French.

Another church associated with St. Paul, icons depict episodes from his life in Damascus, including his escape from

Poll: Contradictory desires in Bibles

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans have seemingly contradictory desires in choosing Bible translations, judging from a Gallup Poll for the American Bible Society.

The poll showed the Bible is the category of book Americans say they most often read regularly, and that 93 percent of American homes have one.

The King James Version remains the most revered translation, and yet Americans say the Bible should be easier to read and understand. In the poll, conducted in October, 36 percent felt the

Jews angered at his preaching.

This Church of St. Paul was, tradition says, built at the very spot of the dramatic escape. Paul was lowered in a basket to safety outside the walls of Damascus.

The pope was to visit the small, stone church built in the late 1930s.

Bible is not easy to understand, and 61 percent said the Bible should be easier to read.

The poll found in households with a Bible, 54 percent owned the King James, followed by 15 percent for the New International Version and single-digit responses for the updated New King James, the New American Standard Bible, Catholic editions and the New Revised Standard Version.

In the homes with more than one version the King James only edged the New International by 30 percent to 23 percent.



Seventh Day Adventist Church

Bible Baptist Church
Pastor: Don Crutcher
Fifth & Broadway
899-7368
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Worship Service: 10 am
Evening Service: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

Calvary Gospel Church
Pastor: Rev. Steve Rains
Fourth & College • 899-3605
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Morning Worship: 10:30 am
Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Family Night: 7 pm
Adult Bible Study and Youth Group
Saturday: Prayer Meeting: 5-7 pm
If you would like to receive a free newsletter, please call the church office.

Church of Christ
401 Caldwell
899-6185
Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:45 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of the Nazarene
Pastor: Matthew Delp
Third & Caldwell
899-2080 or 899-3797
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:50 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First Baptist Church
Pastor:
Fifth & Center • 899-3450
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Morning Worship: 10:30 am
Evening Worship: 6 pm
Tuesday: Mens' Prayer Group: 5:30 am
Thursday: Ladies' Bible Study: 10 am

Seventh Day Adventist Church
1160 Cattletrail
Pastor: Bobby Potter • 332-3956
Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 am
Worship Service: 11 am

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Pastor: Loren Strait
Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Worship Service: 10:30 am
Activities: Junior High & High School Youth Groups, Adult Bible Study, Choir, Men's and Women's Groups, Devotions Study, Monthly Fellowship
Special Notice: Handicap Accessible, Hearing Assistance Equipment and Infant and Toddler Nurseries Available

First United Methodist Church
1116 Sherman
899-3631
Pastor: Rev. Carol Moore-Ramey
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Worship Service: 10:30 am

Sonrise Christian Church
Ninth & Caldwell • 899-5398
Minister: Tony Kalka
Youth Minister: Doug Bean
Sunday: Worship Service: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
Wednesday:
Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm
Adult & Children's Classes: 7 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
13th & Sherman • 899-6161
Pastor: Scott Grimshaw
Sunday: Sunday School: 8:45 am
Worship Service: 10 am
Wednesday: Confirmation: 6 pm

Kanorado United Methodist Church
Pastor: Leonard Cox
399-2468
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Worship Service: 10:15 am

Goodland Bible Church
109 Willow Road • 899-6400
Pastor:
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Morning Worship: 11 am
Evening Worship: 6 pm
Wednesday: Call for location

Grace Fellowship Church
104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423
Pastor: Bob Snyder • Residence: 899-0134
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am
Worship Service: 11 am

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
13th & Center
899-2115 or Rectory 899-2114
Priest: Father Charles Schneider
Deacon: Gretchen Talitha
Saturday: Church School: 4 pm
Holy Communion: 5 pm
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm
Sr. Warden for emergencies during the week 899-2067

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO • (970) 664-2470
Sacrament Meeting: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
Priesthood/Relief Society: 11:30 am

Word of Life Foursquare Church
223 E. 10th
899-5250
Pastor: John Coumerilh
Sunday: Worship Celebration & Kids' Church: 10:30 am

United Methodist Church Brewster:
Pastor:
Worship Service: 10:45 am CST
Sunday School: 9:45 am CST
Winona:
Minister: Rev. Bob Winters
Worship Service: 9 am CST
Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

Iglesia Del Dios Vivo
La Luz Del Mundo
Spanish Speaking Church
Minister: Esteban Ortiz B.
1601 Texas • 899-5275
Daily Prayer: Sunday thru Saturday: 5 am & 6 pm
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Pastor: Father Daryl Olmstead
307 W. 13th • 899-7205
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 4:30-5 pm Saturday or by appointment
Mass Schedule:
Saturday: 6 pm
Sunday: 8 am and 10:30 am
Spanish Mass: 1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

Pleasant Home Church
Serving the rural community for over 100 years
Rt. 1, Box 180 • 694-2807 • 3190 Road 70
Pastor: Jim Cress
899-5784
Sunday: Worship Service: 9 am
Sunday School: 10 am
Evening Service: 6 pm

The following sponsors urge YOU to attend your chosen House of Worship this Sabbath:

Short & Son Trucking
Hwy. 24
Good Samaritan Center
208 W. 2nd

Koons Funeral Chapel
North Main
Goodland Motor Co.
Hwy. 24

Golden Wheat Ranch
Office 110 E. 11th

Goodland Daily News
1205 Main
Topside Office Products, Inc.
1110 Main