

Saints and sinners: Long life not always seen as a plus

If heaven is the wonderful place we are told it is, why do we devote so much attention to living longer here on earth?

Science and the medical profession are proud of their successes in keeping more and more people alive into the second century of their lives. In 1940 they were 3,700 people in the United States who were 100 or older. Today they are 65,000. Futurists predict that by the year 2025 there will be 220,000 centenarians in the country.

Even for those who don't reach the century mark, life expectancy is up.

But reaching 100 might not always be the cause for celebration Willard Scott makes it out to be as he introduces us to those "purdy little ladies" (and occasional men) who have made

it to the fivescore mark. Some of them must wonder if being old is worth all the fuss.

While an increase in life expectancy might be a reason for the medical profession to stand up and take a bow, not all the elderly are applauding. For some, living longer is just a euphemism for dying longer. They linger in nursing homes as the quality of their lives continues to decline and the years drag on.

Three things are necessary for a happy old age: health, money and friends.

One survey of people over 70 revealed that given a choice between being rich and being healthy in their sunset years, many would choose being rich.

"Money gets you attention. Sometimes it is the only thing that does, even from your own



george plagenz

- saints & sinners

family," answered one respondent.

Loneliness can be even deadlier (literally) than poor health or poverty when you are old, says a psychologist who has studied the effects of aging. He cites a study of elderly heart patients, which found that those with two or more close friends enjoyed twice the survival rate of those who were completely alone.

The great majority of suicides over age 75 are men who had lost their wives and were living alone.

What made George Burns such a marvel was not that he lived to be 100, but that at 100 he enjoyed the pleasures of a man half his age — a good cigar, a martini before dinner and an active social life.

Increased sensitivity to the sufferings of the aged has spurred today's interest in euthanasia and medically assisted suicide. (Euthanasia is a Greek word meaning "easy death.")

The dean of St. Paul's cathedral in London, the Rev. W.R. Inge, lent his considerable prestige to the euthanasia movement in the 1930s.

Inge said: "It seems anomalous that a man may be punished for cruelty if he does not put a

dog or horse out of his misery but is liable to be hanged for murder if he helps a cancer patient to an overdose of morphine. I do not think we can assume that God wills the prolongation of torture for the benefit of the soul of the sufferer."

One of the arguments against euthanasia is that those who assist in the death of the terminally ill person are "playing God." The pro-euthanasia people answer by saying that, if it is up to God to decide when life shall end, then all of the medical profession's attempts to lengthen life might be thwarting God's will, too.

While there are those who hail the advances of science in extending life, others see this as causing an unwanted delay in their arrival into the next world, where pain, suffering, crying and sorrow are no more.

Hinduism conference gives chance for both faithful and curious to learn

By James Richard
Associated Press Writer

GANGES, Mich. — Janet Poole was raised as a Protestant and considers herself a Christian. Recently, however, the 35-year-old has found herself heading East on her spiritual journey.

A few months ago, Poole, an administrative assistant from Naples, Fla., started exploring Hinduism, the world's third-largest religion behind Christianity and Islam and the dominant faith in India and Nepal.

"I'm just discovering all about it, and it's fascinating what I'm learning," she says.

Poole hopes to find out even more during a three-day conference running through Sunday at the Vivekananda Monastery and Retreat.

The event, "Vedanta in the Third Millennium," is expected to attract

about 500 people to Ganges, a village in southwestern Michigan about 90 miles from Chicago. Ganges was chosen as the monastery's site in the late 1960s because it shares its name with India's holy river.

Vedanta, the philosophical foundation of Hinduism, says all religious traditions are equal, that people's true nature is divine and people do not need to be saved. It also teaches that followers can realize their true nature through selfless work and devotion to God.

The conference will feature worship, meditation, discussions, devotional music and cultural events. Fourteen North American swamis — Hindu monks and spiritual teachers of the highest standing — are scheduled to attend the Ganges conference.

"We're just going to kind of examine the role of Vedanta, the Hindu phi-

losophy, in the new millennium, meaning the idea that the millennium represents to a lot of people kind of a new, more spiritual age," said Swami Varadananda of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, which operates the monastery and is organizing the gathering.

Estimates of the number of Hindus worldwide vary, with most researchers putting the figure around 850 million.

About 1 million Hindus live in the United States, according to the World Christian Encyclopedia. The Vedanta Society now has 12 spiritual centers known as ashrams in the United States and one in Canada, and is among many Hindu sects worldwide.

Poole, who met Swami Chidananda of the Vedanta Society of Chicago when she visited his ashram a few

weeks ago, said "just being in his presence is uplifting," because of his serenity and confidence in his beliefs.

It's clear Hinduism offers a different world view than Western religions, said Poole, who is still deciding whether to join.

The Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago gets its name from Swami Vivekananda, an Asian Indian who founded the order. He taught that Vedanta's principles, based on ancient scripture, could be applied easily to modern life.

Vivekananda introduced Hinduism to this country in 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religion. The event, held in conjunction with the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, was a landmark meeting between religious leaders from Eastern and Western cultures.

Over the next several decades, the Vedanta Society attracted secular seekers interested in yoga, and liberal Christians, drawn by the movement's belief that all religions are equal, according to Diana Eck, a Harvard University professor and author of "A New Religious America."

"There's no belief in its superiority," said Frank Parlato, a Vedanta scholar and journalist. "The Hindu always accept other religions as true."

The Vedanta Society historically has been mainly white, but in the last decade, as more Indians have moved to the United States, many have joined the movement, Eck said. In New York City, for example, Hindu immigrants comprise nearly half the Vedanta congregation, she said.

"The highest level of Hinduism is, we see the spirit of God in everything,"

says Lakshmana Rao, managing editor of the India Tribune, English-language newspaper published weekly in Chicago, New York and Atlanta. "If you look deep down in your heart, we are all one."

Shyam Bhatia, a Vedanta scholar and professor of international economics at Indiana University Northwest in Gary, Ind., says the Ganges event is aiming to help attendees of all faiths feel more spiritual.

"People all over the world are aspiring for peace and harmony, and we find that religion should ... harmonize people's aspirations and not cause more conflict," he said.

On the Net: Vivekananda Monastery and Retreat: <http://www.vedanta-society-chicago.org/ganges-retreat.htm>; Hinduism Online: <http://www.himalayanacademy.com/>

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

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Pastor: Loren Strait
Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233
Sunday: Worship Service: 9 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: 10:15 am
Worship Service: 9 am

Sonrise Christian Church
Ninth & Caldwell • 899-5398
Minister: Tony Kafka
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 9:30 am
Spanish Mass: 1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

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Sunday School: 10 am
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