

FeedBack

A Bishop in the Senate

As an African-American, I was pleased to see that Bishop Keith Butler is running for the U.S. Senate ("The Bishop's Campaign" by Valerie G. Lowe, February). I believe he is a man of integrity with strong moral values, unlike some of my brothers and sisters in leadership today.

For example, I was troubled by the disrespect shown to President George W. Bush by Joseph Lowery and Earl Graves at Coretta Scott King's funeral. Some, if not many, African-American leaders have disregarded God's Word, which says we should honor those in authority. My prayers go with Bishop Butler, and I encourage black America to please get informed and get back to the Bible.

Rev. Hattie L. Ray
Laurinburg, North Carolina

I am concerned that Charisma consistently serves as a religious arm of the Republican Party. Although the godless secularism that seems to pervade the Democratic Party cannot be defended, you ignore the danger of proclaiming a human political party as God's party.

Charisma has hurt the cause of God's kingdom by bowing before the idol of human political power. You recently advertised Keith Butler on your cover as "Campaigning for God." Under what scriptural authority can you insinuate a claim to speak for God and decide whom He has chosen?

Dave Brougham

Pasadena, California

Stop the Pain

Thank you for the article on the problem of teenagers who cut themselves ("Bleeding Hearts, Wounded Souls" by Anahid Schweikert, February). A year and a half ago I discovered my daughter was a cutter. Her youth and counseling pastors came alongside and helped us through it. She now helps others going through the same thing. Thank you for bringing this to the attention of the church. A note to parents: Don't beat yourself up about this. We had no idea it was going on.

Donna Pheneger

Lake Wales, Florida

I was disappointed by your emphasis on counseling. I am the chaplain of a youth detention facility, and on occasion I pray with young girls who cut themselves. I read Mark 5:5 to them and suggest that it is the enemy who inspires these young people to mutilate themselves. Then I quietly pray for their deliverance.

Although I understand the need for ongoing counseling, I don't think we need to waste time with that. We are called to set them free.

name withheld

Self-injury or "cutting" needs to be urgently addressed, but to approach it with behavior modification ignores the spiritual source of the problem. In Mark 5, Jesus cast out the unclean spirit and the man was restored to his right mind.

After cutting myself at 13, I was tormented by urges to cut myself during stressful times in my adult life. After some

Christians led me in a prayer of renunciation, repentance and agreement, the spirit no longer tells me to cut myself. Jesus instantly delivered me.

Vera Pifer

Oakland, California

Narnia and C.S. Lewis

I disagree with Charisma reader Diane Valentine, who objected to the movie The Chronicles of Narnia (My Turn, February). I would encourage her to rethink her concerns about Jesus being depicted as a lion. Jesus is described as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” in Revelation 5:5 (NKJV). It was God’s idea to use the metaphor of a lion in describing Him. C.S. Lewis used a scriptural model.

For too long Christians have avoided the arts and other creative expressions of the kingdom of God. I encourage believers to reject fear and embrace the incredible creativity the Lord uses to describe His character. After all, we are made in His image.

Sally Ribera

Midland, Texas

Diane Valentine’s dissatisfaction with The Chronicles of Narnia is ill-founded. If she is not very familiar with elements of literature, then she has no basis for her criticism.

No one is actually saying that God is a lion or that Aslan’s breath is just like the Holy Spirit. Lewis created these elements as metaphors—not a sermon—to incorporate great Christian truths into a fictional story.

Ray Horton
Erie, Pennsylvania

Please tell Diane Valentine not to worry! Scripture often refers to Jesus using the imagery of a four-footed beast. He's called the "Lamb of God" in John 1:29. Also, when C.S. Lewis depicted Jesus as Aslan the Lion, he was following Revelation 5:5, where Jesus is described as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." There is nothing unsound or creepy about using legitimate biblical imagery in a movie!

Elizabeth Moberly
Durham, England

The Chronicles of Narnia is a powerful movie, but I don't see how one could call it Christian. The lion gave his life but did not bleed. Without the shedding of blood, there is no Christianity.

Roy Proctor
Middleburg, Florida

End of the Spear Gets Speared

I read Phil Cooke's column about the movie End of the Spear, and I think you are sending mixed messages (Media & Culture, January) to the church. Some believers promoted the movie as a Christian film, yet an openly gay actor was cast in a leading role in the movie. Is it OK to cast gays in Christian films and then turn around and market those films to believers?

name withheld

I saw actor Chad Allen on television using the movie End of the Spear to talk about his gay lifestyle. Why would the people who made this film choose a gay actor and then promote

the film as a Christian movie?

Allen stated that he was a Christian, and that God is pleased with him and his life. Wrong. He is totally deceived. Could it be that the church is not speaking up enough to make people aware? I know we need to pray for Allen, but Every Tribe Entertainment could have chosen another person for his part.

Myra Lois Cramer

Colorado Springs, Colorado

I wholeheartedly agree with your desire to see "a renewed missionary spirit" arise in the church. However, I was somewhat shocked at Charisma's endorsement of the movie End of the Spear. This movie was weak, and it makes me furious to think that a "Christian" company hired a homosexual, Chad Allen, for a role.

Allen has appeared on the cover of Advocate, a gay magazine. I say to Every Tribe Entertainment: Do your homework! Or do you not care?

Rev. Mark Holliday

Roseville, California

Who Is the Real Israel?

One person wrote a letter to Charisma saying that it is dangerous to believe that natural Israel broke covenant with God (Feedback, March). As I understand covenant, both parties are obligated to keep their part. Israel didn't, and they actually realized it in Matthew 21:33-45 when Jesus, after illustrating this point with a parable, said: "'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.'"

Peter tells us that the church is now a holy nation and a holy priesthood. Only natural Israel formerly held those titles. Now he says they belong to the people who are proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus Christ. That is the church.

Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:22-28 says natural Israel is like Ishmael and the church is like Isaac. He says this after he explains that the true seed of Abraham are those who have accepted Christ by faith. Hebrews 8:6 says we have a more excellent covenant, and verse 13 says the first one is obsolete. Because the Word is clear, how can it be dangerous to believe it?

Vernon Ellsworth

Weslaco, Texas

Correction: In our news story about African-American adoptions (February), we misspelled Leslie Hamlett's name. Charisma regrets the error.