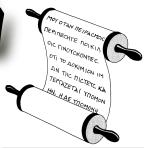




# THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church  
Livingston, Alabama



Volume XXIII, Number 1

January 2016



*January 2016*

## This Month's Cover

Our cover this month is *The Future Victims of the Coliseum* by Henryk Siemiradzki. Painted in 1899, it is oil on canvas, and is currently displayed in the Bishop's Seminary in Warsaw. It is a classic of the Academic style that was so popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and was an offshoot of Romanticism. The painting depicts a young couple and their daughter being instructed by what appears to be a composite of Saints Peter and Paul. The primary figures are in the shadows, while all the pagan glory of Rome is in the background in bright sunlight.

Siemiradzki was a prolific painter, and one of his favorite subjects was ancient Rome. He was fascinated by the culture of first century Rome, although many of his paintings are historically inaccurate. For example, the Coliseum was not built until at least ten years after Peter and Paul's deaths, and it was partially paid for by melting down the gigantic gold statue of Nero that stands beside it in the painting.<sup>1</sup>

Henryk Siewmiradzki was born in 1843 of a noble Polish family near the city of Kharkov in what is now the Ukraine. He studied painting at the Kharkov Gymnasium under a former student of the great Russian neo-classicist and romanticist Karl Bryullov. He went on the Kharkov University where he studied physics and mathematics, but he continued to paint. After graduation he abandoned his scientific career and moved to Saint Petersburg to study at the Imperial Academy of Arts. He was graduated with a gold medal, and was awarded a grant to study in Munich under Karl von Piloty. In 1872 he moved to Rome, where he built a studio on the Via Gaeta. He worked there in the winter, but spent his summers on his family estates in Strzałkowo in Poland.

Siemiradzki was showered with honors throughout his ca-

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<sup>1</sup> Nero's brutal spectaculars took place in other arenas, including the Circus Maximus. Vespasian built the Coliseum with funds obtained from the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the dismantling of Nero's obscenely lavish palace, which contained the huge gold statue.

reer. In 1873 he was declared an Academician of the Imperial Academy of Arts. In 1878 He received the French Legion of Honor, and was awarded a gold medal from the Paris World's Fair. During his lifetime there was a huge demand for his paintings from the leading art museums of Europe.

Siemiradzki died in 1902 at the age of 58. He was originally buried in Warsaw, but later his remains were removed to the National Pantheon on Skałka in Krakow.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***A Word From the Editor***

A recent report says that following the Islamic murders in Paris last month, French Jews are immigrating to Israel in such numbers that the State of Israel is having to make special preparations for the huge number of new residents. The Hebrew term for moving to Israel is *aliyah* (ascent), and Jews refer to “making *aliyah*.” Last year alone over 7,000 Jews left France to make *aliyah*, and this year the number is expected to be several times that many. The first question that one might ask is why anyone would want to move to Israel at a time when near-nuclear Iran is calling for Israel’s annihilation and ISIS, who hates the Jews just as much, is threatening to take over Syria right next-door. The answer is both encouraging and frightening. It is encouraging because it shows that the ancient sense of national unity among both secular and religious Jews, which was an important factor in their survival of the Holocaust, is alive and strong. It is frightening because it is rapidly growing French anti-Semitism that is spurring the emigration. One would think that after their experience with the Nazis only 75 years ago, Europe would be more

*The Epistle* is published monthly except August by Saint James’ Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 446, Livingston, AL 35470-0446, the Rev. Richard R. Losch, Editor. Phone 205-499-0968, email [loschr@bellsouth.net](mailto:loschr@bellsouth.net). Copyright © 2016 Richard R. Losch. Permission is granted to reproduce text items in parish newsletters or bulletins (but not on the Internet or digitized) as long as they are reproduced completely and in print, and credit is given.

sensitive to the evils of anti-Semitism. How quickly they seem to have forgotten!

Despite the horrors of the Holocaust, many today have indeed forgotten. When the Nazi death camps were liberated, General Eisenhower ordered that every army photographer available be sent there to take as many pictures as possible. His reason was that he wanted an indisputable record of it because “in 50 years some [bleep] will say this never happened.” Since the 1960s there has been a glut of Holocaust denial books (one is too many), and today the official stand of the Iranian government is that there never was a Holocaust but they are anxious to launch one. Even more disturbing, however, is the amazing ignorance about it among most young people today. I recently saw an interview of students at a prestigious American university in the Northeast. Most knew little or nothing about the Holocaust. One girl, a graduate student, was asked if she knew what the Holocaust was. She replied, “That was when the Germans were mean to the Jews a couple hundred years ago.” Mean to the Jews!

A much overworked but very true adage is that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Unfortunately the rest of us will have to repeat it with them, and we are now on the verge of doing so. Not only is anti-Semitism growing rapidly across Europe and America, but there is also a rising surge of anti-Islamism. In Europe there are anti-Islamic riots and the burning of mosques, and some countries are passing anti-Muslim legislation. The sparks of this are also already being fanned in America. While the reason for this anger is understandable, it is by no means justifiable, and it is nothing less than sinful and evil. In the 1930s Nazi propaganda exacerbated the already present European anti-Semitism. The inevitable result was *Krystallnacht* and ultimately the “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem,” the death camps. We may not be that far behind today as we see the flames of anti-Islamism being stoked by vile rhetoric.

Don’t get me wrong—I am not advocating a *laissez-faire* policy regarding radical Islam. We have a critical problem

with Islamic fanaticism, and we must deal with it with a strong hand. Their goal is to drag us back into the Dark Ages, and their most effective tool is fear and hatred. But if we succumb to the same kind of thinking as theirs, we will accomplish nothing more than to assist them in achieving the very goal they seek. Pray heartily, my friends, because Christians are also on the verge of being added to the list of the hated.

*Father Rick Losch+*

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## ***Be Wordly Wise***

### ***The Good News***

We have all heard that the term Gospel means good news, and that is true. We have also heard that the origin of the word is the German *Gottespiel*, God play, and that is not true. It derives from the Old English *god*, good and *spel*, news or story, so it literally means good news in Old English.<sup>1</sup>

The biblical word that is translated gospel is the Greek *euan gelion* (ευαγγελιον). Not surprisingly, this is made up of the prefix *eu-*, good or well,<sup>2</sup> and the root *angelion*, news or message. Again, the word literally means good news. We get the word angel (Greek *angelos*, ἀγγελος), messenger, from the same root.

Evangel is an archaic word for Gospel, and although it is rarely used today, many derivatives of it are. To evangelize is to spread the gospel, and one who does so is called an evangelist. Originally the term applied primarily to Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Today it is most commonly used to mean a radio or TV preacher, and its derivative evangelical popularly means a conservative Protestant Christian.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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<sup>1</sup> The German word for Gospel is not *Gottespiel* but *Evangelium*, which is a Latinized form of the Greek word *euangelion*.

<sup>2</sup> We see this prefix in many words, such as eugenics (good breeding), euthanasia (good death), eulogy (good word), euphony (good sound) and Eucharist (good grace).

## **Community Fifth Sunday Service**

St. James' will be hosting the Community 5th Sunday Service on Sunday, January 31st. Please make your plans to attend and invite your friends and neighbors and help us to continue this Livingston tradition.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## **Annual Parish Meeting**

At the Annual Parish Meeting held on Sunday, December 6th, Rosalie Dew and Jim Rankin were elected to the Vestry for terms expiring on December 31, 2018, replacing Mary Helen Jones and Barry Green-Burns whose terms expired December 31st, 2015. Other members of the Vestry are Roy Underwood and Ethel Scott, whose terms expire on December 31, 2016, and Madelyn Mack and Hiram Patrenos, whose terms expire on December 31, 2017. The Vestry met following the Annual Meeting and elected the following officers for 2016: Roy Underwood, Senior Warden; Hiram Patrenos, Junior Warden; Raiford Noland, Treasurer; and Fr. Losch, Clerk. Thank you to Mrs. Jones and Dr. Green-Burns for their dedicated service to the Vestry and St. James.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## **Every Member Canvass**

Thank you to everyone who has returned their pledge cards. If you have not yet completed your pledge card, it is not too late. Pledge cards are available on the table at the rear of the church. Please prayerfully consider your commitment to St. James'. Cards may be placed in the Alms Basins or mailed to the Treasurer, T. Raiford Noland, St. James' Church, Post Office Box 446, Livingston, Alabama 35470.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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*Whose cruel idea was it to put an 's' in the word lisp?*

## ***Wilmer Hall Christmas Contribution***

Thank you to everyone who contributed towards our special gift to Wilmer Hall for its Christmas needs this year. Through your generosity St. James' contributed \$1,000.00 for the Christmas needs of the children. A letter of thanks from Wilmer Hall has been posted on the bulletin board in the parish house.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***Parish Directory Update***

We will be updating the Parish Directory during January. Please review it for an errors and/or omissions and give any additions or corrections in writing to Hiram Patrenos, or e-mail them to him at [patrenoj@bellsouth.net](mailto:patrenoj@bellsouth.net). The updated directory will be available on the first Sunday of February.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***Thank You***

St. James' received the following note from Mrs. Hatchett. It is posted on the bulletin board in the parish house:

Dear St. James,

I would like to thank you all for the love you showed Father Hatchett. He always said the time he was at St. James was the most special love filled he'd experienced.

Thank you all for the kindness you showed to my family and myself.

May God Bless each of you.

Joy Hatchett

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*Where is the logic of this? Watching two hours of violence in a movie or video game has no influence on our behavior, but a 30-second Super Bowl ad is worth \$3.8 million because it will make us run out and buy the product.*

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## Cross and Crucifix

Although many people use the terms cross and crucifix interchangeably, they are not actually synonyms. The cross is a representation of the cross on which Christ was crucified, and it may be plain and bare or highly decorative, but it does not bear any figure on it.<sup>1</sup> A crucifix, on the other hand, is a cross bearing the figure of the suffering Christ. Some crucifixes are realistic and some are quite



Crucifix

stylized, but it is the figure that distinguishes it from a simple cross. To be a crucifix the figure must be of the suffering Christ. A variation of this that is popular in many Anglican and some Lutheran churches is the Christus Rex (Latin for Christ the King). This is a cross (usually decorative) bearing a figure of the Glorified Christ, generally dressed in a priest's Eucharistic vestments. The bare cross is a reminder of the death of Christ, but being empty it looks more to the Resurrection; the crucifix emphasizes the sacrifice of Christ for our sins; and the Christus Rex emphasizes the Resurrection, while its cross reminds us that the glory of the Resurrection came only after the suffering of the Crucifixion.



Crosses, plain and ornate



Christus Rex

*Richard R. Losch+*

<sup>1</sup> Christ was crucified on a T-shaped cross, not the traditional so-called Latin cross. The upright, which had a deep notch in its top, was already secured in the ground. The victim carried only the cross-piece—very few men would be strong enough to carry a full cross, especially after the beating that preceded the crucifixion. At the site the victim was tied or nailed to the cross-piece he had carried, then he was hoisted up, the cross-piece fitted into the notch, and his feet nailed or tied to the upright. The tradition of the Latin cross goes back to the early Middle Ages.

## The Menorah

When we think of the Menorah the first thing that generally comes to mind is the nine-branched Hanukkah menorah that we see so often in December.<sup>1</sup> That is actually a relative latecomer in Judaic tradition, because Moses made the first seven-branched menorah about 1200 years before the 8-day Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) was instituted (Ex. 25:31ff).<sup>2</sup>



Temple  
Menorah

We also think of it as being a candelabrum, and for modern times this is true. Candles were not known in the Middle East until about 400 AD, however. The ancient menorahs were designed to hold pure olive oil that was wicked to form a lamp. Each branch held enough oil to burn from sundown to sunup, although one menorah in the temple burned constantly. The menorah as commanded in Exodus burned in Moses' tabernacle, where the Ark of the Covenant resided. During the wars with the Philistines it burned wherever the Ark was kept, and finally when David moved the Ark to the tent-tabernacle in Jerusalem it was surrounded with menorahs. Solomon's, Zerubbabel's and Herod's temples were all graced with several solid gold menorahs, right up to the time of the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, when all the gold of the temple was taken to Rome and melted down to help pay for the building of the Coliseum.

The word *menorah* (מְנוֹרָה) is Hebrew for lamp. It derives from *nur* (נָר), flame or torch.<sup>3</sup> While the original menorah



Hanukkah  
Menorah

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<sup>1</sup> There are eight branches that honor the eight days of the celebration, and a light in the center from which each of the others are lit, one more each day of the feast.

<sup>2</sup> It was actually made by Belzaleel at Moses' command (Ex. 37:17).

<sup>3</sup> The eternal light that burned in the temple constantly as a reminder of the eternal presence of God was called the *ner tamid* (נר תמיד, eternal flame), which derives from the same root. The sanctuary lamp that always burns in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in Christian churches is rooted in the tradition of the *ner tamid*.

was made as a ceremonial light to accompany the Ark of the Covenant, it is believed that the main lighting in the temple was also from menorahs. In fact there is no mention of the menorah as such after the account of the Israelites crossing the Jordan. There are dozens of references to lampstands in the tabernacles and temple, however, and most scholars believe that these lampstands were menorahs.

The actual shape of the ancient menorahs is not clear. The common image today is of an upright bearing three semicircles, forming a total of seven lamps at the ends. There is some evidence, however, that the six branches may have been straight, or have consisted of two or three straight sections. There are also some ancient descriptions that indicate that they may have been elliptical. It is also possible that all these variations may have existed in ancient times. The Arch of Titus in Rome commemorates the looting of the temple in 70 AD, and has a frieze depicting Roman soldiers carrying the temple treasures. One of these is a menorah with semicircular branches, thus supporting the modern image. The Arch was built in 82 AD by the emperor Domitian in honor of his dead brother Titus, who had been the general in charge of the destruction of Jerusalem, and later became emperor. Some say that the frieze was based on eyewitness accounts, although it was carved more than 10 years after the temple vessels had been melted down, and the eyewitnesses were Romans who were not familiar with the contents of the temple.



*Frieze from the Arch of Titus in Rome*



*Salvia  
palaestina*

This was the oldest image of a menorah until 2009, when a stone was unearthed in the ruins of a synagogue in Magdala. It predates the destruction of the temple, and it depicts a menorah whose branches are made up of three straight sections each. Also, it has a three-legged base rather than the traditional graduated pedestal. One of the arguments for the circular or elliptical arms is that the menorah bears a striking resemblance to the plant *salvia palaestina*.

*laestina* that grows commonly in the Middle East. A close look at the plant, however, can also support the argument for straight arms. At this time scholars remain unsure as to what the menorah's original shape was.

A number of explanations have been given as to why the menorah has seven lights. One is that it represents the six days of creation, with the center representing the Sabbath. Another is that it represents the seven liberal arts and sciences (grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). It is not likely that this was an early meaning, however, as this listing was a medieval concept. It may have been taught by the rabbis in the Middle Ages, however. An ancient rabbinical interpretation was that the Menorah represents enlightenment, which is a virtue that the Jews have admired since ancient times. The seven liberal arts interpretation may have grown out of that. The menorah is also said to represent the burning bush from which God first spoke to Moses.

Richard R. Losch+

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## ***Election Day***

The Constitution sets the national Election Day on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November. Did you ever wonder why? Early America had an agrarian economy. Voting often required traveling a long distance to the polls. Most farmers observed Sunday as a day of rest and would not travel on that day, so they could start out on Monday, vote on Tuesday morning, and be back home in time for the markets, which were always held on Wednesday. Early November was the ideal time, because the harvest was in and the winter planting finished, yet the hard winter weather had not yet set in. Why the first Tuesday after the first Monday? This way Election Day could not fall on November 1. A majority of the Founding Fathers were Anglicans, and November 1, All Saints Day, is a major holy day in the Anglican Church.

Richard R. Losch+

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## ***So Many Bibles***

It probably would not surprise a Bible reader to learn that there are over 1000 English translations of the Bible, but it might surprise him to find that there is no universally accepted definition of what the Bible contains. The Bible is not a single book, but rather a library of books that are sacred to Christians and Jews. Unfortunately, there are differences between religious groups as to what books should be included in the collection we call canonical. The canon of the Bible is the official list of books that are believed to be inspired by God, and are used in liturgical worship and for the formulation of doctrine. Some people believe that the Bible was dictated word for word by God to a series of human scribes and prophets. Most, however, believe that God inspired the books of the Bible in the minds of selected men and thus they contain no error that can imperil our salvation. Yet because of human frailty they can contain inaccuracies and contradictions, although none that can endanger our faith or interfere with our relationship to God. It is our responsibility, guided by the Holy Spirit, to discern which books are inspired by God and can thus be considered Holy Scripture, and which are of purely human origin. We must remember that the Church produced the Bible, not the other way around. Christ gave us the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, decades before any books of the New Testament were written. It is the Church, therefore, that has the authority to interpret Scripture.

The Jewish Bible is called the Tanakh.<sup>1</sup> It contains 24 books, but since 20 of the books in our Old Testament are combined into 5 books of the Tanakh,<sup>2</sup> it actually contains all

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<sup>1</sup> The word Tanakh is a Hebrew acronym for Torah (Teachings [5 books]), Neviim (Prophets [8 books]) and Khetuvim (Writings [11 books]), the three groups into which the sacred Scriptures are divided.

<sup>2</sup> The two books each of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are combined into 1 each; Ezra and Nehemiah are one book; and the 12 Minor Prophets are one book divided into 12 subdivisions.

the same 39 books of the so-called “Protestant” Old Testament (we will explain that term below). The Tanakh, then, is essentially the same as the Old Testament, even though some of the books are in a different order. The canon (official list of books) of the Tanakh was not secured until about 200 AD. Before that time there were many books that were generally considered inspired sacred writings,<sup>1</sup> but there was no official list. Similarly, the canonization of the Christian Bible was not secure until the 4th century, and even then there was a disagreement between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church about its content.

In the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC in Alexandria in Egypt, the sacred books of Judaism, originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic, were translated into Greek. The reason for this is that Hebrew was a dying language, and the scholars feared that if it were lost then no one would be able to read the Scriptures. Greek was the *lingua franca* of most of the known world at that time. The project took almost two centuries, although legend says that 72 scholars, working independently for 70 weeks, each came up with identically the same translation. This is pure myth, but it lived on. In the 16th century AD the translation came to be called the Septuagint, from the Greek word for seventy.<sup>2</sup> Often called the Greek Old Testament, it contains 52 books. Five of these books and one Psalm (151) are of questionable origin; The Psalms of Solomon and a book of additions to Daniel are not included in the canon of any Bible. Four others, 1 Esdras, 3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151 are found only in the canon of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The remaining 46 books were accepted as the canon of the Christian Old Testament. There was no official Jewish Bible until about 200 AD, but the Jewish sacred writings go back centuries before that. In the New Testament, all

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<sup>1</sup> There was no official Bible in Jesus’ time. When he referred to the Scriptures he was referring to this generally accepted but unofficial collection of sacred writings.

<sup>2</sup> Septuagint is usually abbreviated as LXX, the Roman numeral for 70.

the quotations from them are from the Septuagint.

In the 7th to 11th centuries AD a group of rabbinic scholars based mainly in Palestine, known as the Masoretes, scoured the Hebrew and Aramaic scriptures to determine which they believed were truly divinely inspired. They eventually settled on 39 books, which are the same as those now in the Tanakh and in the so-called “Protestant” Old Testament. This is known as the Masoretic Canon. The other books of the Septuagint are acceptable to Jews for personal edification and meditation, but they are not considered to be divinely inspired sacred scriptures and are not generally given the depth of scholarship and spiritual study that is given to the Tanakh.

When the Christian Church was trying to decide on a canonical list of sacred books, it settled on the 27 books that are today accepted by all Christian denominations as the New Testament. It also accepted 50 of the 52 writings of the Septuagint as divinely inspired, although the west (centered in Rome) rejected four of these as described above. Thus the Roman Catholic Bible contains 73 books, of which 46 constitute the Old Testament and 27 the New. The Eastern Orthodox Bible contains 76 books and Psalm 151, with 49 making the Old Testament and 27 the New. The schism between the Roman and Eastern Churches in 1054 put an end to any further discussion toward an agreement on the Biblical canon.

In the 14th and 15th centuries dissent began to arise in the Church that would eventually erupt into the 16th century Protestant Reformation. Many of these early reformers argued that the Old Testament should contain only the 39 books of the Masoretic Canon. When Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and William Tyndale translated it into English, they translated only these 39 Old Testament books. That became the generally accepted canon among most of the Protestant and Anglican reformers, and to this day it is commonly known as the “Protestant Bible.” The books that were rejected, along with a few others, are gathered into a collection known as the Apocrypha (from the Greek for “Hidden”).

There is no canonical list of Apocryphal books. What should be in the Apocrypha generally depends on whom you are asking. Anglicans and Lutherans list 15 books. Most Protestants reject the Apocrypha altogether, not using it in liturgical worship and not recommending it for personal spirituality. Anglicans and Lutherans use it in worship and for personal edification, although the Apocryphal books are not used for the promulgation of doctrine or as an authority for the substantiation of doctrine or liturgy.

The exclusion of these books from the Protestant Bible is based on the arguments used by the Masoretes for their exclusion of them from the Tanakh. Many Protestants today argue that they were excluded because they were not quoted in the New Testament. While many (but not all) of the Old Testament books are quoted in the New Testament, this is a completely specious argument that is rooted in ignorance. Their exclusion is based on the arguments of the Masoretes that came from centuries of intensive study of the texts. Whether or not one agrees with those arguments, they are certainly more compelling than whether or not some early Christian writer chose to quote from the old writings.

In summary, then, there are four major versions of the Bible: the Jewish Tanakh, and three Christian versions each of which contains the same 27 books of the New Testament. The Protestant Bible has 39 Old Testament books, the Roman Catholic Bible has 46, and the Eastern Orthodox Bible has 49 and an additional Psalm. At least all Christians are agreed on the content of the New Testament, which contains the Gospel of our salvation.

*(Next month: So Many Translations)*

*Richard R. Losch+*

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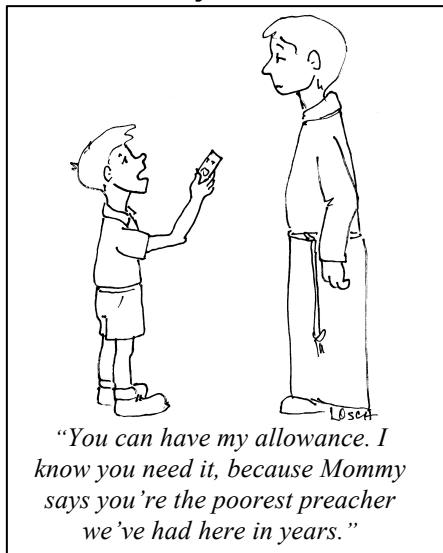
*Minimum wage? If you were to contract to work for a penny an hour with the stipulation that your wages would double every hour, you would be worth approximately \$1.1 billion (yes, with a b) at the end of your first 40-hour week.*

*Don't Forget*  
INTERFAITH  
MEN'S  
BREAKFAST  
JANUARY 3  
7:45 A.M.  
*Mark your Calendar*

LIVINGSTON FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



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