

## **The Word is not getting out!**

by Roelf L. Ruffner

As in any of the ages of man, including our own, the word of God is hindered by many things. It may be pride and prejudice. In our modern age man-made religious tradition and Biblical ignorance are both barriers to the liberty of the Gospel (John 8:32).

In the Sunday, July 23, 2006, edition of the Odessa American there were two articles in the religious section under the title: "Holy Water: Whether done in infancy or later in life, baptism is a treasured rite". One article highlighted a denomination for baptizing (immersing) someone AFTER they claimed salvation, based on the false doctrine of "faith-only" salvation. The other article told of a Roman Catholic Church immersing (strangely enough) an unwilling two month old infant with great ceremony reminiscent of the Old Testament. In both articles ceremony won out over substance and the word of God was neglected. "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

For example, the first church insisted that baptism was a "command of Christ" and a "commitment" BUT the individual being immersed was portrayed as already "saved". This is schizophrenic religious thinking! What command of Christ can we delay or ignore and still be considered saved? One cannot consider themselves "saved" by Jesus yet disobedient in what one must do to be "saved". "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Luke 6:46).

The Roman Catholic Church's baptism was steeped in ritual but just as unscriptural. Outside of the immersion in water **nothing** was Biblical about this rite. First of all the infant, being in a sinless state in God's sight (Matthew 19:14), didn't need baptism. Secondly, one must understand or believe in Jesus Christ in order to be immersed (Acts 8:36-37). An infant is incapable of understanding.

Both these articles point to the tragedy of our age: the word of God is not being proclaimed. The answer to this tragedy is for the church of Christ to sow more seed (Luke 8:11). Every New Testament Christian can do this by showing others what God says about baptism:

1. Baptism is a command of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16).
2. Baptism is necessary for remission (forgiveness) of sins (Acts 2:38).
3. Baptism is necessary for salvation (I Peter 3:21).
4. Baptism is immersion or burial in water, not sprinkling or pouring (Colossians 2:12).
5. Baptism puts one "in" Christ or into a covenant relationship (Galatians 3:26,27).

Do we love our neighbor-friend-relative-employer enough to show them the Truth about baptism? Jesus is depending upon each of us to spread the Gospel. "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4).