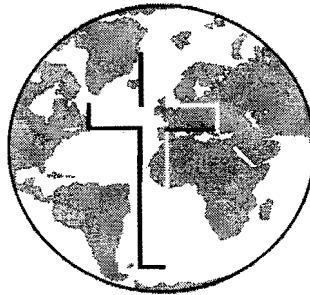


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HOW DID THEY DIE

The Master chose twelve disciples, three sets of brothers, Peter, and Andrew (sons of John), James and John (sons of Zebedee) and James and his brother Matthew (sons of Alphaeus), Phillip, Thomas, Bartholomew (Nathanael), Simon (the zealot), Judas (Thaddaeus) and Matthias. All but one were martyred for the sake of their Master, preaching his Gospel.

James, the son of Zebedee (James the Great) and the brother of John, has the distinction of being the first Apostolic martyr. His death came in AD 44, within 14 years after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, he was executed by the sword in Jerusalem at the hands of Herod's soldiers and while the Jerusalem church was shocked and in fear, their opponents were elated (Acts 12:1-2). James was the first of the Apostles to die, his brother John was the last. An ancient church in Spain claims to contain at least some of the remain of James' body.

Phillip, followed in AD 54. he was the first person called by Jesus to follow him. He came from Bethsiada and carried the Gospel of his Master to the Hierapolis in western Asia Minor (currently Turkey) and also to the Gauls (currently France). He died by crucifixion and stoning, arranged by the Jewish religious establishment and the Romans.

Matthew, the brother of James the Less, followed in AD 60. He was the one who had a dinner party after he was called by his Master, and the first writer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his passion was to reach the Israelites with the good news about their Messiah. Traditions say that he was beheaded in Ethiopia.

James the Less, the brother of Matthew, and the sons of Alphaeus, followed to die in AD 63. His Apostolic appointment was to Syria, where Damascus, and during the early persecution of Christians in Jerusalem was a popular escape destination. The Jews in Syria rejected his preaching by stoning him to death.

Peter, died in AD 69. He is Simon, brother of Andrew and sons of John, grew up in Capernaum on the north end of the Sea of Galilee, and raised along with his brother Andrew in a fishing family. He seemed headed for a career in the fishing business until Jesus came walking along the shore and invited him to follow him into a life of fishing for people. He accepted both the invitation and a new name given to him by Jesus, Peter (meaning the rock). He was Christ's constant companion for 3 years and died by crucifixion upside down, because he did not consider himself worthy to be crucified with his head upward like his Master.

Thomas, died in AD 70. For a disciple, he had a doubtful reputation, he took the Gospel all the way to India, he was tortured by the natives in Calamina, India, thrown into an oven and stuck through with spears. The location of his tomb can still be visited in Mylapore, India.

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Bartholomew, died also in the year AD 70. He was brought to Jesus by Phillip, his initial response to the news about Jesus was a mixture of skepticism and sarcasm, "can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). He is also known under the name of Nathaniel, his apostolic career was linked with that of the Apostle Judas (Thaddaeus) and both are credited with the spread of Christianity into Armenia, a land between the Black and Caspian Seas. He suffered flaying, a particularly gruesome form of abuse in which a person's skin is almost entirely removed by the use of whips. He was then crucified in agony (some accounts say head down) and allowed to die a martyr's death for Christ.

Andrew, died also in AD 70. He is the brother of Simon (Peter), his missionary travels took him as far North as Seythia (southern Russia) and Greece. He was threatened with death by crucifixion following the conversion of the wife of a high Roman official, a Governor named Aegaeas. He was arrested and tried and unwilling to recant his faith in Christ, he was tied to an "X" shaped cross to die a slow and painful death. This particular cross is still called St. Andrew's Cross. He was kept hanging on the cross for 3 days, still preaching the Gospel of Christ to the people who stood near him.

Judas (Thaddaeus), died in AD 70. Tradition states that he preached north and east of Jerusalem, even as far as India, and took Christianity with Bartholomew to Armenia. The first Christian nation, designating itself a nation for Christ in the fourth century. He was executed as a martyr with arrows, or a javelin.

Matthias was the alternative Apostle. He was chosen to fill the vacancy among the 12 chosen by Judas's betrayal and abrupt departure (Acts 1:23-26). It is almost certain that Matthias was one of the 70 evangelists the Lord sent out (Luke 10:1). He was a witness to the full scope of Jesus' ministry. He traveled in his mission north as far as the Black Sea, eventually he came back to Jerusalem where he was stoned to death in AD 70, as he would not deny Christ.

Simon, joined the followers of Jesus with a reputation as a zealot. He was connected with a loosely organized resistance against Rome. Simon's missionary travels have taken him south and west of Jerusalem, crossing to North Africa, and passing through Egypt, Libya and Mauritania, and then up through Spain and even in Island we know today as Britain, destinations all of which fell within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Later, Simon brought his missionary work north and east from Jerusalem with Jude, taking the Gospel as far as Persia. He was sawn in half in AD 74.

The last of the Apostles to die was **John**, the brother of James the Great and the fourth writer of the Gospel. Tradition holds that on one occasion, he was scheduled for boiling in oil. He escaped by divine intervention. His exile to the Island of Patmos, could have easily been a death sentence when Emperor Domitian, who had exiled him to Patmos, had died, John was brought back to Ephesus, where he was confined for two years. It is written that he was compelled to drink poison, but was unharmed, and died quietly in peace in the city of Ephesus in AD 98.

One of course cannot forget four other great church martyrs, **Stephen**, the first martyr in Christianity, who died in AD 34 by stoning, **Mark**, the nephew of Baranabas and the second writer of the Gospel, who died in Egypt in AD 64, tied with ropes and dragged through the cobblestone streets of Alexandria until his body was ripped apart, **Paul**, who died in Rome in AD 69, where he was beheaded, and **Luke**, the only non-Jewish (Syrian) writer of the Gospel, who was hanged from an olive tree in Greece in AD 93.

For those who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, his suffering, crucifixion, death, rise from the grave on the third day, and his ascension, ask yourself, did 11 of his 12 disciples believe in a lie and gave their lives freely for the sake of their Master. Do you think they conspired all together to witness for their Master and to die for his sake in vain.

To the ignorant who do not believe in the crucifixion death, rise and ascension of Jesus Christ, I pray that the Lord will open their eyes that do not see, and their ears that do not hear.

Wishing all of you a blessed and happy 2010 Resurrection.

Amid Habib, M.D., F.A.A.P., F.A.C.E.

Your Brothers and Sisters in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, Egypt and the West Bank, are not only enduring persecution but also a very hard and harsh economical time. This Easter season, I am asking you to help us in helping them by sending your generous tax deductible donations and may the Lord Bless you always.

VERY IMPORTANT

If your address has changed, if you would like us to correct the spelling of your name, if you would like us to mail our free newsletter to any of your relatives or friends, if you are receiving more than one of this newsletter at the same address, or you want us to remove your name from our mailing list. Please call us, write us, or send your note by fax. We thank you and ask the Lord to bless you always.

I am indebted to
Janet Williamson for the
preparation and
editing of this newsletter

THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD By Dolores Devine UPIC Advisory Board Member

When I first heard about the UPIC ministry to Christians in eight Arabic speaking nations, my initial reaction time was: "What has *that* got to do with *me*?" Only after three years of repeated invitations, did I attend their annual banquet. Since I love Middle-Eastern food, that part was great! But it was difficult to envision a role for myself among Christian Arabs, since I do not speak the language. Besides, so many other worthy causes needed help.

I was already ministering in English/Spanish as a prophetic psalmist, writer/composer, teacher and intercessor for the sick. My plate was full. Yet the Holy Spirit, who is in charge of our time, talent and treasure, prompted me to "watch and pray." So I began to pay closer attention to foreign news coverage in the Middle East. Like many, I was tired of hearing about the endless violence in that war torn part of the world, yet felt great empathy for the innocent civilians.

To my horror, I saw Christian clergy and laity suffering atrocities based solely on their religious faith. They are losing their lives, limbs, family members, homes, churches, schools, jobs and are even being forced out of their homelands—impoverished *only* because they follow Jesus; persecuted "for his Name's sake." We do not hear these truths spoken about on local news or from our church pulpits.

Suddenly, distant Christian Arabs were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with every other Christian, members of the household of God. —Now, in Christ Jesus, those who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ." For He, who is Love, "has made both one" in Himself. Eph 2:19; 13-14

One *United People in Christ*. Being made one by Christ's blood, bearing one name as "Christian" (in Christ I am), makes us one family, with "one body, one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of *all*." Eph 4:4-6

My Anglo-Saxon identity, by baptism and being "born again" of the Spirit, was transformed as I entered into a new and eternal blood covenant in Christ Jesus, which, with my Christian Arab brothers and sisters, and all Christians, can never be broken. It supersedes material law—any ethnic, linguistic, geographical or political difference.

The Word of God dictates: "Deal bread to the hungry, help the poor, cover the naked and do not hide yourself from the needs of your own kinsfolk." Isa 58:7

Beloved reader, "Let us not grow weary in well doing...As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, *especially* those who are of the household of faith." Gal 6:0-10

As *United People in Christ*, we are all of the Household of God.

Spread the word about UPIC. Invite friends and relatives to our events. Remember, it took three years of invitations for me to respond. Give generously of your time, talent and treasure. Every deed, each donation, large or small in Jesus' Name, will reap an eternal reward. Thank you and God bless you, one and all!

E-Mail: DoloresDevine@gmail.com

Thank you!

I am deeply grateful for all of our friends who helped support our cause last year.

The 2009 UPIC Picnic generated \$2,515.00 and the October Dinner generated \$3,067.41.

Your donations for 2009 totaled \$24,915.00 and we distributed \$28,600.00 to help our needy brothers and sisters in Christ in the Middle East.

If you need a copy of our financial statement for the year ending December 31, 2009, please stop by our office to pick one up or call us to mail or fax one to you.

Amid Habib, M.D., F.A.A.P., F.A.C.E.

Amid Habib, M.D., F.A.A.P., F.A.C.E.