

➔(continued from page 4)

**ERITREA.** "The Faith Mission Churches of Eritrea have been closed by the government since May of 2002. However, our national director, Solomon Tesfamichael, writes: 'We are being encouraged in the Lord. **New souls are being saved and new members are being added. Our people are in great need of food aid at the moment.** The harvest of last year was the poorest in twenty years. Please, try to lend a helping hand if you can.'  
—*Missionary Herald*

**ROMANIA.** "After much prayer, planning and donations, **FEA built its first orphanage in Talpos, Romania, this year.** Sally Sebo, a nurse, is FEA's missionary there at the orphanage, Maranatha House of Hope. God is using Sally in a wonderful way to give those children the gospel and show them Jesus." —*FEA World Update*

**RUSSIA.** "**Vyborg Christian Center [celebrated] ten years in Russia on March 18–21, 2003.** The story of VCC

is the story of a work that only God could do. From our beginning until today, millions of New Testaments, tens of thousands of Bibles and Christian books and tracts have been distributed. Hundreds of children have been reached through Child Evangelism Fellowship correspondence courses with more than 100 of these little ones telling us they have come to Christ. Thousands have been ministered to through bowls of hot soup, bread, and cups of tea. Clothing has been distributed to those facing the long cold winters of Russia. But best of all, the gospel has been given 'in His name' with every 'cup of water' that has been placed in outstretched hands."  
—*FEA World Update*

**ALASKA.** "**Pray for a moving of God in the villages of Alaska.** There are about 50 people in Dot Lake and most of them need Jesus. We have been going into Tetlin every week. There are 150 people there, most of them unsaved."  
—*Ropeholders* ■



*Dear Phil*

*GBS professor Dr. Philip Brown answers a young woman's question about "unconditional eternal security."*

Dear Phil,

I am working at Chick-Fil-A now, and I have made some friends there. I have been debating the issue of unconditional eternal security with one of them. He has been asking me some questions that are basically beyond my knowledge and insight. I have been doing a lot of research in the Bible; and I have gotten some books from my pastor, but I need some help. My friend is arguing for unconditional eternal security from Rom. 8:15 on the basis of Roman law. Here's an email he sent me:

*Here are some things that I thought you may want to know about Roman law: First of all, there was a law that Paul apparently made reference to when he said, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). In Paul's day, if someone adopted a child, then he could not unadopt that child for any reason. The Roman law said so, because if someone went through so much (p19)➔*

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►(p14) trouble to adopt the child, then he should keep the child no matter what. I think this is a great example of the Lord's love for us. He went through so much trouble (He lived on earth and died in our place) in order to adopt us (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15, etc.). Now today He could not (Heb. 6:18) and would not unadopt us.

Could you give me some ideas for a response? I really don't have the first inkling of what to say. This guy is 19 and reads a Greek Bible! So for me to argue with him is kind of dumb—or at least I feel dumb.

Thanks,  
JENNY

Dear Jenny,

I would encourage you not to be intimidated by the fact your friend says he reads Greek. If you're reading the New King James or the New American Standard Bible, 80-90% of everything the Greek says is right there in the English. In response to your friend's email:

1. I would ignore the argument for unconditional eternal security from Roman laws about adoption. While that may be the way Romans handled adoption, God is not bound by Roman rules. The Romans made them, not God.

2. Your friend is using the Roman culture to understand Paul's message to the Romans. This is good as long as he doesn't use Roman culture to draw conclusions that contradict other parts of Scripture—such as what the Bible says about the possibility of forfeiting salvation through unbelief or disobedience (e.g., John 15:2, 6; Rom. 11:19-23; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31). These passages make it clear that anyone who fails to abide in Christ and bear fruit (John 15), who does not continue in faith and obedience (Romans 11), or who persists in willful sin (Heb. 6 and 10) is cut off from Christ. That is, those who continue in willful sin will not enter Heaven.

3. I would encourage you not to spend time arguing about whether a person can forfeit his salvation. It will

be much more edifying to both of you to talk about what the Bible says regarding Christians and sin.

Here's my suggestion. Tomorrow read through the whole book of First John five times. Write down every reference that describes what a Christian is supposed to live like. Then write down every reference that talks about sin (not just the word "sin," but phrases that mean the same thing, like "walk in darkness.") When you're through, you should see very clearly that anybody who claims to be a Christian but lives like a sinner cannot be a Christian. In fact, John gets downright blunt and calls such a person a liar!

I'll try to get to the part of your friend's letter in which he used Roman culture to interpret Romans 7 next time.

Your friend,  
PHILIP BROWN ■

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