

**"I Get A Kick Out Of You"**  
**This Week At Judson Sunday School**  
**(2/5/10)**

In honor of this weekend's Super Bowl, I thought I would add my athletic support, or something like that. (Kudos to those who got the pun!)

Every issue of *Sports Illustrated* magazine features something called "Sign of the Apocalypse," some absurd little tidbit about how the world is going to hell in a handbasket, like this one from December 2008: "The Yankees asked the city of New York for \$370 million in bonds for their new stadium the same week they signed CC Sabathia to a \$161 million contract." Or this one from 2004: "Shawn King, a former NFL defensive lineman, says he failed a league drug test because the woman whose urine he had used to help hide his marijuana use turned out to be pregnant." You get the idea.

Why should sports have all the fun? No one does absurdity better than religion. In fact, perhaps the most difficult part of bringing the "Sign of the Apocalypse" to "This Week At Judson Sunday School" is having to choose just one sign. Should we go with the news story from a couple of weeks ago about how gun manufacturer, Trijicon (which sounds like one of those made up company names in a John Cusack movie, perhaps with Americans invading the country of "Bazookistan"), was engraving Bible references on the scopes of their rifles: JN 8:12 ("I am the light of the world.")? Apparently, EX 20:13 ("Thou shalt not kill.") didn't coincide with the profit margin.

Or how about yesterday's front page article in the *Times* about "Buckfast Tonic Wine," a Scottish elixir, high, and I mean *high*, in both alcohol *and* caffeine, made by the monks of Buckfast Abbey, and apparently the drink of choice for young Scottish criminal offenders. One institution survey found 43% of the incarcerated drank the hooch before committing their offenses. A spokesman for the distributor said Buckfast was being unfairly singled out and then added: "It's always wise to remember that Jesus turned water into wine." Yes, that's true. Jesus was also the first to heal people after the disciples went on a drunken rampage, but that doesn't make it right.

But the winner of the inaugural "This Week At Judson Sunday School Sign of the Apocalypse" comes from an article in Tuesday's *Times*: "Flock Is Now a Fight Team in Some Ministries," about the marriage of martial arts and evangelical

Christianity, featuring Xtreme Ministries, "a small church near Nashville that doubles as a mixed martial arts academy." (If only I were making this stuff up.) The school's motto is "Where Feet, Fist, and Faith Collide." Second place: "Kicking the Gospel in the Groin!" (Okay, so I made that part up.) Apparently, this is a growing ministry among the evangelical movement, the church having become "too feminized, promoting kindness and compassion at the expense of strength and responsibility." "We grew up in a church that had pastel pews," said Tom Skiles, 37, the pastor of Spirit of St. Louis Church in Arnold, MO. The men fell asleep." According to the article, "The goal is to inject some machismo into their ministries - and into the image of Jesus - in the hope of making Christianity more appealing." "Compassion and love - we agree with all that stuff, too," said Brandon Beals, 37, the lead pastor at Canyon Creek Church outside of Seattle. "But what led me to Christ was that Jesus was a fighter." (Apparently, the median age for losing one's common sense among evangelical males is 37.) The movement's scripture verse of choice? Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith." They wanted to go with "Beat the Holy Sh-- Out of Em," but could not find it anywhere in the Bible. But they know it's in there somewhere.

If only we could get the folks at Trijicon to take aim at the folks at Xtreme Ministries, everybody could do God's work.

Now aren't you glad you go to Judson? We're so tough, we don't even have pews!

Kickboxing lessons begin this Sunday!

See you wusses in church.

Andy

Groin Shot Poobah