

# Church plans to burn books, smash idols

## CDs, porn also will be targeted

**By DARLENE WHITE NATALE**  
Eagle Focus Editor

PENN TWP — The 45-member Harvest Assembly of God on Brownsdale Road in Penn Township will burn books and smash idols after singing and worship on Sunday evening.

The Rev. George Bender plans to burn cult material, including Jehovah Witness' and Mormon literature, humanism philosophy books, Jean Dixon books, occult literature, supernatural books and Buddha statues.

Bender said he considers the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons cults because "of who they believe Jesus Christ is. The Jehovah Witnesses' say that Jesus was created by god." He said they defy his church's belief in the trinity.

"Mormons believe Jesus is a god among a pantheon of gods. Each god is assigned to a planet. This is why we are concerned. They pretend to be like us until you get into it," Bender explained.

As for the Harry Potter children's series, Bender said he sees it as a big problem and will burn it.

"The Bible says no sorcery. This (Harry Potter) is very much wrapped around sorcery. One book is even called the 'Sorcerer's Stone,'" Bender said.

Betsy Gibson, director of the Butler Public Library, disagrees with Bender. She said witches and wizards have always been a part of fairy tales.

"Little Harry Potter is a good boy fighting the forces of evil," said Gibson. "There are a lot of books in this library that I don't like or agree with, but I am not afraid of them. When people burn books, it's because of fear and hate. We need to respect other people's beliefs," Gibson said.

Bender stressed this event is a voluntary act. He thinks his 90 regular attendees will willingly bring things. He said they would not take other people's possessions to destroy.

"This is not a hate message," said Bender. "There are things that influence our lives that are not healthy mentally, physically and spiritually."

Bender's flier urges people to clean their houses, vehicles, lockers

## IF YOU'RE GOING

**WHAT:** Singing, worship and book burning

**WHEN:** 6:30 p.m. March 25

**WHERE:** Harvest Assembly of God, 160 Brownsdale Road, Penn Twp.

**FOR INFORMATION:** 724-586-9633

and other places.

Bender, pastor at the church for 15 years, said the genesis of the book burning came from a couple of youths. He said they have been studying the book of Revelations, which states there is just one god and deals with "idolatry." They requested the event.

According to the Harvest Assembly literature, "Things that need destroyed are: Statues, New Age books, videos, etc., Pornographic material, Cult religious material, Occult books and items." The assembly will have a fire as well as an area to smash and dispose of idols and things that won't burn.

Bender explained the pyre is a public way of saying the church will honor its god according to the second commandment. He said it would encourage people to search their hearts.

"I work a lot with the destruction this stuff brings in people's lives," Bender added.

Bender hopes to burn pornographic material, hard rock CD's like Marilyn Manson, AC/DC, Kiss and especially Madonna, who Bender said is probably more morally destructive than the others.

Gibson is concerned with this approach, saying that her mother grew up in Nazi Germany. "These things grow slowly, you go about your daily life and don't see it coming. She and her parents knew what was going on when they started burning books," said Gibson.

"I hope it does some awakening. I'm not looking to stir up trouble," said Bender.

The Rev. James Campbell, pastor of the Faith United Presbyterian Church in Butler, disagrees with the book burning.

"I think God can deal with a world where many different ideas are alive and well...Therefore, with Jesus Christ bringing God into us, we are able to discern what is good and not. We don't need to remove all that is not agreeable from the world," said Campbell.