

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

ROWING AGAINST THE CURRENT

Darrell Debo

A good many years ago while growing up in Burnet County, Texas, I was privileged to experience a unique relationship that is almost totally lacking in modern-day society. I had the happy growth period from childhood into adulthood with my paternal grandfather, a pioneer in this area of the state—and, to me, above all a top-notch fisherman. He and a cousin of my grandmother built our cabin on Inks Lake out of hewn logs that were chinked in between with mortar just like the old-timers built their homes long ago. My grandfather and I spent many an enjoyable time on Inks Lake below Buchanan Dam catching catfish.

When the generators at Buchanan Dam were operating, the current was difficult to row against in our old wooden fishing boat, and our utmost effort was required to go upstream against the current. While pondering over some of those enjoyable days of yore recently, I thought how apropos this was to a comparison of the faithful Christian's present-day efforts to battle against the various currents of opposition to the Lord's church and the divine wisdom authored from the very portals of heaven itself. The man-made *isms* of modernity that confront the church are powerful in nature, and "rowing against the current" challenges the very best in God's people to exert every ounce of their force in opposing the errors perpetrated by unbelievers.

For more than half a century, society has largely rejected

and abandoned any objective truth and any Bible-based morality for an unblushing and shameful hedonism bent on its devotion to pleasure and the elevation of the flesh over the spirit. Sensualism took control as the "if it feels good, do it" norm became predominant in many, especially among the young. The appeal to the flesh was further encouraged by a degenerate media and entertainment industry prompting and promoting its corrupting influence. The church instructing the young about two hours a week is "rowing against the current" of filthy movies, rotten TV programs, and electronic devices available from decadent sources in attempting to elevate the spiritual above the fleshly.

Another area of battle that has been the source of developmental skepticism and eventual unbelief of divine truth may be found in the realm of education. The public school system has become largely the advocate of an advancing secularistic society that leads away the young from faith in a Creator and is also largely anti-Christian; the young from a Christian home find themselves "rowing against the current" in opposing the elements arrayed against them. Secularism and a consequent materialism developed therefrom are indeed powerful foes when attempting to instill the divine truths of inspiration into the minds of a generation abysmally ignorant of the Bible and spiritual truths. What a challenge it is for those who still love and know the truth to

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

Editorial...

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP

Too often misunderstood, unappreciated, taken for granted, lightly held, not practiced, wrongly extended, deliberately ignored, and generally abused by many of those who should be its staunch guardians and advocates, the Biblical doctrine of fellowship is a most important topic and one for all seasons. Please consider with me the reasons for such a conclusion as noted in the last sentence. For many years spiritual renegades, of whom Rubel Shelly and Max Lucado are prominent representatives, along with the higher education brethren and their devotees, have attacked the divine pattern that is the New Testament of Jesus Christ—an infallible blueprint for building and sustaining the Lord's church in every culture, society, language, and nation as long as the world lasts (Luke 8:11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:17; Jude 3; John 12:48; Gal. 1:6-9). In so doing, they have repudiated most of the component parts thereof. Thus, they have rejected the Biblical doctrine of fellowship.

As other faithful children of God have done before our time on earth, for almost half a century we have fought their malicious covert and overt actions in their devilish attempts to ravish the bride of Christ and make her over in their own image. Encouraged by such journals of apostasy as *The Christian Chronicle*, various large churches, the higher education brethren, "unity meetings," camps, lectureships, and sundry other special gatherings of the same sort of brethren, the New Testament teaching on the singular identifying marks of the church and its fellowship were blurred, blended, and finally dissolved in the minds of many. Early on, it first manifested itself in efforts to accomplish some kind of fellowship and unification with the Independent Christian Church denomination, but in recent years with about any church that nods its head toward heaven and whispers with a smile, "God loves you." It is, therefore, no surprise to us that these change agents have succeeded in leading a large segment of the church into apostasy. I say their accomplishment is no surprise to us because of what we learn from the totality of the Bible's teaching regarding the sacred and profane history of God's people. In contrast to the world and all other religions, those people who are faithful to God have always been in the minority.

The sad events previously noted, brought on by weak, insipid, and faithless brethren, are bad enough, but they do not tell the whole story. Some of the men who opposed the Shelly and Lucado rebels and their minions, who were known as those who would "fight the good fight of faith" no matter what it cost them, have turned out to be "sunshine patriots" and "fair weather friends" to the Lord, His cause, and those of us who refuse to hold men's persons and their

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LONE STAR BIBLE CAMP

July 20-25, 2014



ABOUT LONE STAR BIBLE CAMP

The Lone Star Bible Camp is located 4 miles north of Bellville, Texas and 12 miles south of Brenham, Texas on Hwy 36 N. The Lone Star Bible Camp uses the facilities of Woodmen of the World. This is a beautiful 66 acre campground with a 10 acre lake located in the rolling Texas hills. We emphasize Bible study, fellowship, edification and spiritual development. Bible classes and devotionals will be conducted everyday and the week will culminate in a group review of the material studied. The Lone Star Bible Camp is staffed by the Fish Hatchery Road Church of Christ, Huntsville, TX and the Spring Church of Christ, Spring, TX .

VARIOUS ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

The Lone Star Bible Camp offers opportunities for Bible classes, physical recreation, and guidance from a faithful and experienced camp staff. There is a dining hall and an up-to-date kitchen with an experienced kitchen staff. There are two large air conditioned dormitories and a covered pavilion housing a full court basketball and volleyball area. Also available are 3 fishing docks, paddle boats, and canoes. This shaded campground offers many nature trails for hiking. In keeping with biblical modesty, all involved in the camp have a dress code by which they must abide.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our study theme for the 2014 camp session is: Practical Christian Living from the book of James. All involved with The Lone Star Bible Camp invite and urge you to send your children, grandchildren, or other children to join us for a week of Bible study, fellowship, and fun. I have the privilege and responsibility of serving as the camp director and I extend my personal invitation to you to be a part of this Christian endeavor. It is The Lone Star Bible Camp staff's desire and prayer to assist parents, grandparents, and other child care providers in spiritually molding our children now and for the future.

Camp Director: *Bruce Stulting*

For applications visit: www.lonestarbiblecamp.com or phone: (936) 581-5164 or (936) 581-4346

Registration Deadline: June 15, 2014

(After this date there will be a \$5.00 fee and campers will be accepted based on availability)

(Editorial, Continued from page 2)

special projects in admiration above what the Lord's authoritative Word teaches. In reality, these brethren have deceived themselves into thinking they can remain acceptable to God so long as *most* of what they believe and practice is authorized by God's Word, but in matters they deem insignificant, they are not concerned in the least about whether such is authorized by Christ or not. The only brethren of whom they are going to speak ill, oppose, and repudiate are those who are best represented by your editor and any brethren who will not go along with them in their nefarious efforts to include people in the fellowship of the church whom God does not.

How they keep a clear conscience before God while attempting to determine the importance or unimportance of a doctrine or whether one's conduct is true to the Lord or not without going to the Bible to do so is beyond me, but they seemingly have no problem doing it—at least on certain topics. It is not surprising then that since about mid 2005 these same brethren have spoken little to nothing about the importance of having Bible authority for what they believe and practice and strongly opposing what is not authorized and explicitly forbidden.

Brethren are not faithful, loving, patient, kind, nor Biblically "balanced" when they follow a course that allows them to oppose mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God and/or women being used in positions wherein they exercise dominion over men while they ignore, for whatever reason, other sinful acts of the brethren or anyone else. These same brethren have no problem with churches dividing the first day of the week worship assembly, churches operating floats in Christmas parades, churches having "dialogs" with denominational preachers because, they say, the debates with them in the past have accomplished no good at all. Further, they continue to support preachers who have never repudiated their false doctrines on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders. Also, those brethren who continue to appear on lectureships and other brotherhood productions with various and sundry speakers who themselves have taught and/or are teaching error. And, these same preachers continue to extend fellowship to those who remain in fellowship with said teachers of error. In their attempts to do so they are repudiating the Biblical doctrine of fellowship. Moreover, such hypocritical action on their part makes a mockery of teaching, living, and defending sound doctrine as well as reproving, rebuking, and exposing false teaching and those who propagate it.

In 1994 Garland Elkins wrote the following salient truths:

Many false teachers seek to remain in the fellowship of the church by demanding that they not only be permitted to teach their error, but also that they be granted immunity from exposure. They "**wrest**" (2 Pet. 3:16) the passages in Matthew 18:15-17. Thus, "**by their smooth and fair speech they be-**

guile the hearts of the innocent" (Rom. 16:18, *ASV*).

The truth is that Matthew 18:15-17 applies to a matter between brethren having to do with a personal matter, and is not dealing with the public teaching of a false teacher. If Matthew 18:15-17 forbade the exposure of the public teaching of false doctrine, then, if a true gospel preacher heard such teaching and was offered the opportunity to arise and refute it, he could not do so! Any view of Matthew 18:15-17 that would permit a heretic to teach error publicly, but forbid a public answer immediately is absurd! *Such a view would grant immunity to false teachers!*

Brethren, let us ever, "**preach the word**" (2 Tim. 4:2), and be, "**set for the defense of the gospel**" (Phi. 1:16). Let us, when necessary, "publicly" expose false doctrine (Acts 18:28).

It is sad beyond description when anyone goes beyond the doctrine of Christ, but the deeper tragedy of such men is not only that they do not have God, but they also lead numerous others into destruction. Since this is the case, it is urgently important that Christians *must* resist error and steadfastly refuse to either fellowship, or in any way, encourage false teachers (Italics are Elkins—*Editor*). John wrote:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed. For he that bideth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

[Garland Elkins, "Changing Attitudes Toward Fellowship," 1994 Bellview Lectures, *Changes in the Church of Christ*, ed. Bobby Liddell (Pensacola, FL: Austin McGary & Company, 1994), pp. 161, 162].

We see no Biblical reason or any other reason to change from the sentiments so ably expressed by the brother Elkins of 1994 in the previous quote from him. But clearly brother Elkins has changed his views from what he taught in 1994 from what he teaches, or at least he practices, today. By the fruits of his conduct in recent years, he as well as other brethren who think as he does, obviously have changed their tune when they engage in fellowship. For example, brother Elkins has publicly declared that brother Dave Miller's doctrine on the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders is false, but he continues to extend fellowship to him and those who defend and fellowship the unrepentant Miller. Moreover, he and others of his stripe continue to support those brethren such as Barry Grider, the preacher of the Forest Hill church in Memphis, TN who draw their fellowship circle larger than what the authoritative Word of God draws it. And, how this circle has widened in the last ten years. Moreover, brother Elkins works under a director at the Memphis School of Preaching who disagrees with him regarding brother Dave Miller's doctrine on the "r and r of elders" being error. Director B. J. Clarke thinks said doctrine is an expedient. Since he believes it is an expedient, we ask brother Clarke to give us an example of the obligation we must discharge in order to be faithful that it expedites. And, like the proverbial scalded dog, the whole faculty of MSOP runs from and fears an

orderly public discussion of that topic as if it were the black plague. By MSOP's, et al., practice of "unity in diversity" regarding obligatory matters, we are moved to wonder if the Forest Hill elders have required the MSOP faculty to sign a document that in effect forbids them from publicly debating issues that arise in the church. Nevertheless, the simple but sufficient reason for not changing is this—the gospel truth found in brother Elkins' previously cited quote. It was the truth in 1994, the truth long before 1994, the truth now, and ever shall be the truth, whether he or anyone else with regularity and consistency continues to believe it, or teach it, or apply it in any and all circumstance and situations. Balance is found in doing *only* what God has authorized us to do, leaving undone what He has not authorized, and that which He has explicitly forbidden in the New Testament of His Bible.

When it comes to setting aside God's Law, Paul stated that **"God accepteth no man's person"** (Gal. 2:6b). Thus he does not set it aside for one's family, close friends, or benefactors. Therefore, when Peter saw what God wanted him to see on this subject he declared: **"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"** (Acts. 10:34, 35). Brother Elkins and all those who conduct themselves as he is doing in said matters also see it. But, their love for God, His Word, and the purity of doctrine taught and practiced by the church has weakened rather than strengthened as the years have gone by. Moreover, as time has passed, he and his friends' faith have also

weakened, revealing its weakness in their present failure to deal consistently and steadfastly with error and those in the church who propagate it.

Brother Elkins not only taught the truth on said matter in 1994, he also practiced the same, urging other brethren to do the same. Moreover, he wrote articles such as the one herein referenced, exposing brethren's weak faith when they did not conduct themselves accordingly. The criticisms he and others of his stripe presently fire at us are no different than the criticisms launched at him many years ago, and they were thrown at him in those days for the same reasons he and those who think and act as he does today launched them at us today. How the mighty have fallen!

In the light of the previously stated Biblical Truths we dare not lower God's standard regarding who is and how one comes into fellowship with God, as well as who is to be fellowshipped and not fellowshipped by faithful members of the Lord's church. To alter God's standard of fellowship is no different than changing God's plan of salvation—to do so is to extend fellowship to those who are not Christians. In the case of 2 John 9-11, to alter it in our practice is to include brethren in fellowship who are guilty of sins of which they will not repent. Sadly, those who sear their conscience and content themselves to do such things must prepare themselves to face God as those who are guilty of violating at least the truth on fellowship (Heb. 12:29).

—David P. Brown, Editor



BACKSLIDING

Bruce Stulting

As surprising as it may seem, many do not think that backsliding is a Biblical term. In Old Testament times, backsliding was a continual problem of God's people as shown in Jeremiah 8:5, which states, **"Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return."** To backslide is to turn away from God's truth and return to one's former wicked life.

There are many warnings in the Bible concerning the danger of backsliding. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:12: **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."** Even Paul himself was not immune to the danger of backsliding. In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul wrote, **"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."**

In guarding against backsliding, it is necessary to determine its cause. A little boy trying to explain why he fell out

of bed said, "I just went to sleep too close to where I got in." This simple illustration helps explain why some fall away from Christ after becoming a Christian. Upon entering the kingdom, it is necessary that one grow spiritually. It is sad that many refuse to grow, but remain close to where they entered the kingdom. We are exhorted in Hebrews 6:6 to **"go on unto perfection."** Likewise, we are admonished in 2 Peter 1:5-7 to add to our faith: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. By growing in these qualities, we will guarantee that we will not "go to sleep too close to where we got in." In fact, 2 Peter 1:10 states, **"if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."**

Many refuse to grow because they remain closely tied to things in the world. In the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of some who allow the **"care(s) of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, (to) choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful"** (Mat. 13:22). To avoid this, we must sever our ties to the world and turn our full attention to spiritual growth. By pressing on to perfection, we will not "slide back" into the ways of the world which we left when we became Christians.

—925 Fish Hatchery Road
Huntsville, TX 77320

MY THOUGHTS ON...

Johnny Oxendine

...THE LATEST MUSINGS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ERROR

Some time ago during our Sunday morning class in the San Mateo, CA congregation, I mentioned that there had been “disturbances in the force,” as more brethren are now engaging in a false doctrine, recently popularized by Mac Deaver, regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. Not only has this resurfaced through Deaver, but also is being spread like butter across the country at an alarming rate—from Freed Hardeman University to Merced, CA, and no telling where else. This is another issue we must address.

Jonathan Jones II had this to say at the Freed Hardeman lectures, “Once a person believes, repents and is baptized, the Holy Spirit is sent to indwell the Christian and he does his direct work of regenerating and renewing our dead hearts with spiritual desire to follow God’s ways.” More of the whole lesson can be found here: <http://jonathanjones2.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/How-Does-the-Holy-Spirit-Convict-Today-Speaking-Notes.pdf>, but one can easily see from just this one quote that he has seized upon this false teaching and determined to sow it into the young and impressionable minds of those unsuspecting kids at FHU. Worse, he was asked by the lectureship committee at FHU to address this!

Even closer to San Mateo, we recently revealed that the preacher for the Merced church of Christ, Nick Perez (a graduate of Sunset International Bible Institute, currently working on a second degree from that institution) presented a series of sermons (October 9-23, 2013) on the work of the Holy Spirit. They were titled, “Filled With God’s Spirit,” “Empowered By God’s Spirit,” and “Emboldened By God’s Spirit,” which leave no doubt as to the direction of his subject. Two thirds of the way through the last of these presentations, Perez tells of his going to visit the sisters of a member and in that conversation found out that she considered herself a medium (one who spoke with/to the dead). During this conversation, he was attempting to recall verses that he could use in his discussion, but said, “he had nothing,” or simply could not think of how to respond. (Now Perez is an articulate person, so I was surprised by this.)

It was at that juncture that Perez said he received “spontaneous illumination,” that helped him remember the book, chapter, and verses he needed for his response to this woman. He asked the question, “what is that when a word, fitly spoken, comes”? When one of his classmates told him that it was only his having remembered what he had studied. The response to that statement was (“that reduces the evangelistic process to a very humanistic approach”) one that must

have given his classmate pause. He goes on to say that God gives us that information. This is quite an obvious argument for “direct operation,” and is very unapologetic regarding an insistence of its reality.

The problem in this case is that throughout the three sermons there is no distinction made between the gifts the apostles received and others, and there is no contextual clarity for many of the verses quoted regarding the specific purpose of the Holy Spirit during the apostolic period. That he is still working with the Merced congregation is evidence of some compliance with that view. These sermons can be heard on the “Live from the Pulpit” page on their website.

What this means is that the warnings we uttered a few years ago are unfortunately coming true. This era of error is one that demands we be armed with the truth, well armed at that. ❧

...THE “JIMMY CRACK-CORN” (I DON’T CARE) ATTITUDE TOWARD FELLOWSHIP

The heading above refers to an old blackface minstrel song where a slave is pretending to sorrow over the death of his master, but in actuality may have contributed to his death. Aside from the many variants of the song and interpretations, here it represents an attitude whereby brethren would lament certain conditions in the church, but their very actions are the cause!

From time to time we mentioned several situations that shamefully reflect this dichotomy within the brotherhood, as is evidenced by men speaking on the Tahoe Family Encampment program with an undeniable evolutionist (John Clayton). Not only is Clayton speaking, but this program also continues to include Truitt Adair of the Sunset International Bible Institute, whose false doctrines are well known and documented. “Jimmy Crack Corn” (I Don’t Care) is now the newly given motto for brethren who could not care less who speaks on a program or what they have taught or still teach. That Freed-Hardeman University (FHU), Harding University, et al., along with Bear Valley Institute of Biblical Studies, and kindred institutions, etc., are all participating says it all. What is most disappointing (but not surprising) is the attitude of those who support those institutions. They attempt to “pretend” that nothing is wrong.

Over the years, FHU has been building a larger presence at Tahoe. No doubt one reason for this greater presence is to increase recruiting from congregations in the area that have been supporting Dave Miller, Phil Sanders, Brad Harrub and the like. It may be that their rubbing elbows with Sunset is no accident, seeing that Jonathan Jones II spread a Sunset-

like message on the Holy Spirit at the 2014 FHU lectureship. Bear Valley's participation (as a vendor) was somewhat of a surprise since Weyland Deaver's blog removed Bear Valley Church of Christ's preacher, Neal Pollard's page. They said that its removal was an oversight. This is supposed to supply balm to those who may not have known that Pollard actually went to the Sherman Drive Church of Christ, Denton Texas where Weyland Deaver is the preacher to conduct a gospel meeting. "Jimmy Crack Corn"...

I dare say that some of those participating might even think that the country is in dire straits on topics ranging from the economy, immigration, election politics, and the vast array of moral issues. Yet, they are seemingly blind to what is happening to the church when they cavort with an evolutionist and unphold institutional support for false teachers and doctrines. Surely they will say they are not in fellowship with him, but "Jimmy Crack Corn" is MY response to such tomfoolery. They are all walking, talking, looking like ducks!

The church for which the Lord died is to teach, stand for, and defend the truth. When we have determined that such no longer matters to us (within the brotherhood), we become the salt that has lost its usefulness. It is also counterproductive to pretend that these circumstances are not occurring all over the country. Numerous congregations (knowingly or not) are being drawn into dangerous territory by these "encampments." There they are being introduced to men whose doctrinal error may not immediately be apparent, but will ultimately affect their fellowship with God. We can only do our best to warn them of this sad conduct. ❧

...WHY PHIL SANDERS IS DANGEROUS EVEN THOUGH HE MAY BE A NICE PERSON

For years we have mentioned Phil Sanders as the type of brother who would come to exemplify the mass movement from the church of the New Testament to a new hybrid conglomerate that seems to be familiar, but is entirely different from what Jesus, Paul, and Peter describe. We are now mentioning Sanders as he has made his yearly pilgrimage to the Merced church of Christ this past week, and is returning to the Bay Area at Oceanview from April 27-30.

A sermon I preached not long ago from Hosea 4:17 is most appropriate: **"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."** These brethren have had enough time to determine these things to be true or false, and there really is no need to continue efforts to correct them—we can only warn those who will listen. I am also certain that Phil Sanders is a "nice person," which is why what he has said makes him that much more dangerous for those who do not know what he said.

I am going to include some quotes from Sanders to let you see for yourself. The first part is from an interview he did for *The Christian Chronicle*, the latter was part of an e-mail exchange we had in 2008:

Phil Sanders: I can only speak for myself here. I believe baptized believers in the Independent Christian Church are my brethren, since everyone who is scripturally born of water and the Spirit is a child of God...One sister in the Christian Church I taught about musical instruments had never heard the reasons why we don't use them. Once she learned the reasons, she gladly embraced the truth. We didn't re-baptize her. We embraced her on her repentance.

The response below was sent to me as part of an e-mail discussion Phil and I had in 2008:

They are today brethren in error but brethren nonetheless. Some of the independent Christian churches teach the same gospel plan of salvation that you and I teach. They ask people to come to Christ out of love in response to hearing the gospel, to repent, to confess Christ, and to be immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. When people hear and respond to that imperishable word, the Lord himself adds them to his church. They may go astray, but the Lord adds them to his church...I regard people in the Christian church as brethren in error. If you wish to regard them otherwise, that is up to you.

The Independent Christian Church is a conservative denomination, as far as that goes [*and whatever that means—Editor*], but they are not our brethren—not even in error. They use mechanical instruments for music, often employ choirs and children's church (during the adult worship hour), and a number of them now have women ministers and elders. Can we really think that they preach and teach the same gospel found in the New Testament? NO! What we can say is what has already been said so accurately and succinctly: **"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."** ❧

— Church of Christ, San Mateo
P.O. Box 5026
San Mateo, CA 94402

FREE CD AVAILABLE

Contending for the Faith is making available a CD-ROM free of charge. **Why is this CD important? ANSWER:** It contains an abundance of evidentiary information pertaining to Dave Miller's doctrine and practice concerning the re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders, MDR, and other relevant and important materials and documents directly or indirectly relating to the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Apologetics Press, Gospel Broadcasting Network, MSOP, and more.

To receive your free CD or make a financial contribution toward this important CD's distribution you can reach us at **Contending for the Faith, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383-2357**, or request the CD by emailing us at dpbcftf@gmail.com.

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impart these precious gems of truth to minds steeped in the man-made philosophies and *isms* of the present age. It will require the strength and mighty power of our Lord as He works through us to “row against the current” in defeating these forces of evil.

The presence of man-made religions in the world also finds Christians and the Lord’s church battling the denominations with their human errors and strivings against the truth. These sectarian bodies attract the attention of those at least who are semi-religious by every worldly enticement possible with very little Bible teaching and predominate with “ear-tickling” and entertainment. “Feed the belly, and starve the soul” seems the emphasis of many modern religionists, while the sectarian confusion of today presents a detestable spectacle of conflict to an unbelieving world, and the Lord’s church must face this conglomerate by “rowing against the current” of popularity and entertainment.

The tragedy of modern conflict within the body of Christ is seen in the fact that the love of the truth has waxed cold,

and some had rather flow peacefully with the currents of compromise than row against the errors invading the church. Change agents, many of whom have drunk deeply at the fountains of the sectarian seminaries, have infiltrated the institutions of higher learning, been employed there, and corrupted what is taught in the religion departments. Professors wouldn’t dare try to defend the truth, and many times would rather facetiously spout criticisms against the pioneers who did and who brought the truth to us as we have always known it. They wouldn’t defend the old-time gospel if they could, and couldn’t if they would! Attempt to “row against the current” contrary to the powerful influence of these liberal elements! It will take the very best of faithful soldiers of the cross to win this battle.

“Rowing against the current” isn’t an easy task. I learned this principle more than sixty years ago. It is no easy job in confronting the enemies of the church of Christ, whether they be from without or within. God’s people must not get weary in well-doing for we shall reap if we faint not.

—P.O. Box 66
Burnet, TX 78611



CHRISTIANITY AND OBEDIENCE

Brock Hartwigen

Contrary to what some teach, obedience is as important a part of Christianity as belief. The New Testament teaches the necessity of obedience. Christians are commanded to be obedient to God (Acts 5:29; 5:32), to be obedient to God’s word (2 The. 3:14; 1 Pet. 3:1), to be obedient to Jesus (Heb. 5:9), to be obedient to the Gospel (2 The. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17), to be obedient to truth (Rom. 2:8; Gal. 3:1; 5:7), and to be obedient to righteousness (Rom. 6:16).

These, of course, are all one and the same. To be obedient to God is to be obedient to Jesus. To be obedient to God’s word is to be obedient to God and Jesus. Since God’s Word is the Gospel, is truth, and is the standard for righteousness, then to be obedient to these three is the same as being obedient to God and Jesus.

There is a very interesting Greek word that appears in three forms in the New Testament—*apeitheia*, *apitheo*, and *apeithes*. They all mean disobedience or willful unbelief. In other words, Biblically disobedience and willful unbelief are one and the same. To not obey God or God’s word or Jesus or the Gospel or the truth or righteousness is willfully unbelief. To know that the Bible teaches the necessity of repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19) and to teach that a person does not have to repent is to teach willful unbelief. To know that the Bible teaches the necessity of confession (Mat. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10) and to teach that a person does

not have to confess is to teach willful unbelief. To know that the Bible teaches the necessity of baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21) and to teach that a person does not have to be baptized is to teach willful unbelief.

When someone teaches that a person can be saved by faith only and that they do not have to repent and/or confess and/or be baptized, they are in fact teaching salvation by willful unbelief, not by faith. There is no salvation without obedience because without obedience there is no faith. It is just willful unbelief. As the Hebrew write tells us, Jesus is the “**author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him**” (Heb. 5:9).

—189 Brookside Dr.
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I SHALL NOT PASS THIS WAY AGAIN

Through this toilsome world, alas!
Once and only once I pass;
If a kindness I may show,
If a good deed I may do
To a suffering fellow man,
Let me do it while I can.
No delay, for it is plain
I shall not pass this way again.

—Unknown

THE OLD PATHS PULPIT

Sermon Outline

Danny Douglas



REASONS NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED

I. Because God is Greater Than Man—

A. God seeks to encourage us by His word (Jos. 1:5-9; Heb. 12:12-14).

B. If we let man discourage us in a good work, then we are listening to man rather than God (1 John 5:9-10).

II. Because We Shall Reap in Due Season, if We Do Not Faint—

A. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small” (Pro. 24:10).

B. **FAINT**—*enkakeo* or *ekkakeo* NT:1573, “to lack courage, lose heart, be fainthearted” (*en*, “in,” *kakos*, “base”), is said of prayer, Luke 18:1; of gospel ministry, 2 Cor 4:1,16; of the effect of tribulation, Eph 3:13; as to well doing, 2 The. 3:13, “be not weary” (KJV marg., “fain not”). Some mss. have this word in Gal 6:9 (No. 1). [*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words.*]

C. We must plow in hope (1 Cor. 9:10), and thus be motivated to greater effort!

III. Because God is for us & desires our success—

A. “...If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31b).

B. God desires for us to conquer and win, not to fail!

C. God never did want to see a Christian or congregation fail! (1 Tim. 2:4; Heb. 12:1-2).

D. The devil is the one who desires our failure (Neh. 4:1-4, 6; 1 Cor. 3:9; 15:58; 2 Cor. 6:1; John 9:4).

IV. God has Set Certain Blessings in Place to Help Us—

A. His Word to give us comfort, strength and guidance (Acts 20:32; Psa. 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Rom. 15:4; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

B. Prayer (Neh. 4:4; Phi. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 3:12; 5:7; Jam. 5:16-18).

C. One another in Christ to exhort and encourage (1 The. 5:11, 14; Heb. 3:13).

D. Worship in order to praise God and be strengthened (Heb. 10:25; 13:15; John 4:24).

E. Christ and His strength in His providential care (Heb.

13:5-6, 8; Phi. 4:13; Mat. 6:33).

V. God has Set Before Us a Great Reward If We Press on unto the End—

A. Phi. 3:12-14; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10; chapters 21-22).

B. Great Reward in Heaven (Mat. 5:10-12; Rom. 8:18; John 14:1-6).

VI. God has Given Us Examples of others who Made it to the End—

A. Hebrews chapter 11 and Many others.

B. The apostle Paul (2 Cor. 11:23-28; 12:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:16-18).

C. Jesus Christ (John 15:19-21; 13:15; 2 Pet. 2:21).

D. If we fail, we cannot blame God or other people. He has provided what we need! (2 Tim. 3:15-17; Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3-4).

VII. Why Not Come to Christ?

A. *Hear & Believe* the gospel of Christ—the word of God (Rom. 10:17; 1:16); *Repent* (Acts 2:38; 26:20); *Confess Jesus Christ* as the Son of God (Acts 8:37); and *Be Baptized* in His Name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mat. 28:19-20; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4).

B. If you have turned from Christ, by *Repentance, Confession of sins and Prayer*, you may be restored (Acts 8:22-24; 1 John 1:9; Jam. 5:16).

C. Then—*Be Faithful to the End* (2 Tim. 4:6-8; John 14:15; 1 John 1:7; 2:3).

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ALWAYS FINISH

If a task is once begun
Never leave it till it’s done.
Be the labor great or small,
Do it well or not at all.

—Unknown

DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.

ENTERTAINING ABOMINATION

“Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:12,13).

Sunday night, January 26th, the Grammy Award’s ceremony was televised. As is my custom, I did not view it. These merchants of hedonism and lewdness rake in billions of dollars a year. They take advantage of their Constitutional right to free speech to contribute to the moral downfall of much of our country. This ceremony is usually but a reflection of the depraved minds of these “artists” and “entertainers.”

But that night took the prize! Thirty four couples, including sexual deviants (male and female homosexuals) took part in a sham wedding ceremony led by singer Queen Latifah. The couples said their vows and lips locked in hedonistic bliss. Singer Madonna serenaded everyone with a homosexual rights song. Many were gloating about “marriage equality” or same-sex marriage.

We know that ALL sin is repugnant to God (cf. Hab. 1:13). But homosexuality is especially heinous **“because he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body”** (continuous action-1 Cor. 6:18). Why? Because God made our bodies. Homosexuals are **“abusers of themselves with mankind”** (1 Cor. 6:9). It is unnatural or against what God has ordained for human sexuality—monogamous, heterosexual marriage (Rom.1:26; Mat. 19:4-6).

As Christians, we should complain to the Academy and pray for them. But the main responsibility goes to purveyors of this filth. **“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but consent with them that practice them”** (Rom. 1:32—*ASV*, 1901). [2F%2Fwww.nydailynews.com%2Fentertainment%2Fmusic-arts%2Fmass-wedding-performed-grammys-macklemore-ryan-lewis-perform-love-article-1.1592257%23ixzz2s4qS0P9C&ie=utf-8 & o e = u t f - 8 & a q = t & r l s = o r g . mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=fflb as of February 1, 2014]

WHY HELP SATAN?

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

Spurred on by rich men’s lobbying and an increasingly inebriated, godless, irresponsible society, the U.S. is being

pushed down the path of the legalization of drugs, the first being marijuana. But as Christians, aren’t we supposed to support “freedom?” No, not if it is a license to sin and self-destruction. Here are a few reasons why I am opposed to the legalization of *cannabis sativa*:

1. It is against God’s will that we pollute our bodies, **“the temple of the Holy Spirit,”** with harmful substances like hallucinogens, ethyl alcohol, and tobacco. As the Scriptures tells us, **“ye are not your own.”** Our bodies are on loan from God.

2. Unlike tobacco, another addictive plant, marijuana intoxicates and slows down the reaction time of the senses. Already in localities which have legalized pot, they have seen a marked increase in traffic accidents due to its adverse effects upon drivers. As Christians, we should “love our neighbor” ,not cause our neighbor’s harm, however unintentionally.

3. Why open a Pandora’s Box of suffering and addiction upon our land? Experts say marijuana is a “gateway drug” to narcotics like heroin, cocaine and meth. We have all seen the tragic effects of the sale of alcohol on our land. Why help Satan? [http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/news/20140204/fatal-car-crashes-involving-pot-use-have-tripled-in-us-study-finds as of February 19, 2014]

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36).

What Quacks Like A Duck Isn’t Necessarily A Duck

Recently I pried out \$6 from my wallet and attended a matinee for the movie, “God’s Not Dead.” I had read good things about this movie in reviews. It is basically about a college student who has a series of debates in a philosophy class with an atheist professor over the existence of God.

I must admit that the movie was well acted and offered a fair portrayal of what happens in quite a few college classes. The student gave an adequate defense of the existence of God. He left a few things out, but it was only a movie.

Yet the movie centered also around the lives of people who were undergoing traumas in their lives, such as a young Muslim girl thrown out of her home for believing in Christ. The arrogant atheist professor even had a “Christian” girlfriend who left him.

A problem with this movie was its emphasis on Baptist theology or “faith only” salvation. For example, toward the end of the movie the atheist professor is hit by a car and lies dying in the street. “Pastor Dave” happens by and leads him into some sort of death bed confession of faith in God. He gave the dying man the false assurance that he would be with

God after he died. There was no mention of repentance, confession of Christ, or baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30). He did not even get the man to say the so-called “Sinner’s Prayer!” (Not found in the New Testament.)

What disappointed me the most was the cameo appearances of Willie and Korie Robertson of *Duck Dynasty* fame and members of the White’s Ferry Church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana. In their first appearance, Willie appeared in his long hair (cf. 1 Cor. 11:14) and Korie was dressed immodestly (cf. 1Tim.2:9, 10). They were confronted by an atheist reporter and gave a defense of their belief in God. Later towards the end of the movie Willie appeared on a large screen at a so-called “Christian” pop rock concert and encouraged everyone to text their friends the message “God is Alive!” on their cell phones to support the student who debated the atheist college professor.

In their desire to have fame and fortune, the Robertson family have appeared at many religious gatherings and denominational television programs, including most of “our” brotherhood colleges. They have no problem fellowshiping religious error (2 John 9-11). This is why it is not surprising to find them in a movie that trumps not only belief in God but also the false doctrine of faith only salvation. If I had the opportunity to ask this erring brother and sister some questions, I would begin by asking, “Do you agree with the Bible that baptism for the remission of sins is necessary for salvation? If you do, why did you appear in this movie? Do you believe ‘Professor Raddison’ was presented as being saved without obeying God’s Plan of Salvation?” I think their answers or lack of them would be interesting to say the least.

JUSTICE WEEK AT ABILENE CHRISTIAN(?) UNIVERSITY.

March 24-28 was so-called Justice Week on ACU’s campus. According to ACU’s web site,

Prominent guest speakers, groups and events will raise awareness about issues of social justice throughout the week. This annual event is put on by the Students’ Association with several other ACU organizations: International Justice Mission, Wishing Well, ACU Locavores, ACU Fair Trade and the Red Thread Movement.

The following persons (and the organizations they represent) were the speakers for the event.

Jarrold Brown, Mission Lazarus - Monday, March 24

Mission Lazarus is a holistic ministry that focuses on basic primary education, skill development, health education and treatment, agricultural development, and preaching and teaching the Word of God. They are currently exhibiting group efforts in Honduras and Haiti. Brown will speak in chapel on Monday, as well as in Moody Coliseum for an 8 p.m. forum.

Michael Dean, Blood:Water Mission - Tuesday, March 25

Michael Dean is the manager of volunteer engagement at Blood:Water Mission. Blood:Water Mission is an equipping agency that partners with African grassroots organizations to address the HIV/AIDS and water crisis. They identify African

organizations dedicated to these efforts and work alongside their vision for change. Through technical, financial and organizational support, they expand the reach and effectiveness of African civil society organizations and the communities they serve. Since its launch in 2004, Blood:Water has raised over \$22 million through the creative efforts of tens of thousands of individuals seeking to make a difference. Dean will speak in chapel on Tuesday as well as in Moody for an 8 p.m. forum.

Bobbie and Dennis Mark, Redeemed Ministries - Wednesday, March 26

Bobbie and Dennis Mark are the directors of Redeemed Ministries, a faith-based nonprofit focused on meeting the needs of human trafficking victims in the greater Houston area. The mission of Redeemed is to bring Christ’s loving redemption and liberation to domestic women in Houston, who have been trapped and exploited by the commercial sex industry. Their core competencies include outreach, advocacy and aftercare. Bobbie and Dennis will speak in chapel on Wednesday, followed by an interest luncheon downstairs in Campus Center in The Den (previously the bowling alley). They will also speak at a forum in Cullen Auditorium at 3 p.m. that afternoon.

Shaun Groves, Compassion International - Thursday, March 27

Shaun Groves is a talented singer and speaker who uses his gifts to raise international awareness for abolishing poverty. Representing Compassion International, Groves will open our eyes to the injustice of hunger. Through his travels, Groves has seen injustice firsthand and has seen the transformative power of service in Jesus’ name. Groves will lead Immersed chapel in Moody as well as an 8 p.m. forum in Moody.

Hunger Strike and Service Opportunity - Friday, March 28

One meal, one day. We are asking students to give up one meal and donate the money they would have spent to hunger relief work through Compassion International. Join us during the lunch hour in a service opportunity with a local food pantry. Global service starts local! T-shirts for this effort will be sold throughout the week in the McGlothlin Campus Center.

[This assembly of fermented ignorance did nothing but promote the social gospel. Moreover, seeing that these people and their organizations represent themselves, among other things, as teaching the Word of God, why is it that we do not find the church mentioned. It is not to be found in the advertisement. However, in view of the looseness of this bunch, a faithful congregation of God’s people would not touch the mess with thousand mile long pole. This whole outfit smacks loudly of denominational claptrap. But that is what ACU has been working toward for a long time and they arrived at their goal some time ago. Here is the fruit and nuts of the whole liberal cornucopia. Why drink of warmed over denominational soup when one can be a member of those who originated such junk in the first place, such as the Methodist Church, Christian Church, or their like?—Editor]

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Abraham to Sinai—A Chosen People (Part Two)

John D. Rose

The apostle Paul spoke of Abraham's endurance:

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:20).

Another great trial of Abram, now called Abraham (Gen. 17:5), was the command by God to offer his son Isaac—his only son of promise—as a burnt offering before the Lord. Within this account one can see two points pertinent to God's scheme of redemption—to the making and molding of a people to bring the Christ into the world that men may be saved through Him.

The first point is the sacrifice. Isaac was Abraham's only seed of promise, for God had said, **"...for in Isaac shall thy seed be called"** (Gen. 21:12). Isaac was the second link or step in the fulfillment of God's promise to and through Abraham:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:2-3).

By the agency of Isaac would all the earth be blessed, **"...for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."** However, the primary aspect of the Abrahamic promise was to bring the Christ into the world. In the wisdom of God, which is not the wisdom of men (cf. 1 Cor. 1:21), the Christ would come into the world by way of miraculous conception and a physical birth, necessitating a physical lineage on behalf of Mary the virgin mother of Jesus and the His legal earthly father Joseph, and this through the descendancy of Judah the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. As Isaac was Abraham's only son of promise, the only son through whom the promises would be fulfilled, his life was precious and necessary and Isaac, as yet, had no son. Yea, Isaac must live and live to have a son or sons to further the purpose of God to bring the Christ into the world (Gen. 17:19). For this reason, it is said of Abraham concerning his willingness to offer Isaac, **"Accounting that God was able to raise him [Isaac] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure"** (Heb. 11:19; bracketed insert JDR). Abraham had been promised by God that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. In the process of time, he came to know and understand that through Isaac would God proceed in fulfilling His promises. Abraham knew that Isaac must live and beget children, for through him the descendancy of Abraham would come to be as the number of

the stars of the heavens: for God said, **"...Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be"** (Gen. 15:5), and God's covenant would be established with Isaac and his seed after him. **"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him"** (Gen. 17:19).

This now brings one to point two: the faith of Abraham. Abraham's actions in this trial were exemplary. First, it should be recognized that Abraham knew that Isaac was his only son of promise. Equally understood was the meaning of a burnt sacrifice. Since God had promised that His blessings would be upon Isaac and his seed after him, and God's unconditional promises cannot and will not be altered, the only outcome left, consistent with the standing command of God to sacrifice Isaac, was that God would raise Isaac from the dead, thus Abraham was, **"Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure"** (Heb. 11:19). Abraham was equal to the task at hand for the text says, **"And Abraham rose up early in the morning..."** (Gen. 22:3). Abraham trusted in the Lord, believing that God would not fail—and he conducted his life accordingly. On the third day (verse 4) Abraham, Isaac, and their servants arrived at the mountain of God's choosing. One should be cognizant of the strain of three days' apprehension. Abraham could not simply muster a boisterous faithfulness, lively but short lived. He was required to endure with patience the race set before him (cf. Heb. 12:1). His faith had to be strong and deep seated—he had to have godly courage (cf. Jos. 1:9). Therefore, James wrote, **"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God"** (Jam. 2:23). It was Abraham's faithfulness that occasioned this passage from Paul's letter to the brethren in Rome:

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:11-13).

The lesson of faith—an enduring courageous faith—is one of the greatest means by which God was making and

molding a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. Abraham was to be the father of many nations (Gen. 17:5). But more importantly, he was to be a father of the faithful, both of Israel and the Israel of God, the church (Gal. 6:16).

The Blessings

God richly blessed Abraham. Yea, He blessed him with great wealth for it is written of Abraham that he was, “... **very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold**” (Gen. 13:2) and, “...**the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things**” (Gen. 24:1). Furthermore, Abraham was a mighty prince in Canaan, his land of sojourn, “ **...my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us...**” (Gen. 23:6). Though Abraham had great earthly wealth, his true riches were those that he laid up in Heaven by being rich toward God through faith. The Lord Jesus said:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Mat. 6:19-21).

Where was Abraham’s heart? God’s own words tell of Abraham’s heart.

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Gen. 18:19).

Abraham’s heart sought God, for without such seeking and finding he would not have shown his children the way of righteousness in word and in deed. Without such seeking and finding, Abraham would not have become the father of the righteous. Without such seeking and finding, he would not have been the friend of God, as He himself has said, “**But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend**” (Isa. 41:8). The greatest blessings of God unto Abraham were the opportunities to walk and to grow in the way of truth through the trials laid before him by God that Abraham might have Heaven after a while.

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PRAYING TO JESUS (Part One)

Don Tarbet

Jesus taught that we are to abide by His “**sayings**” in the gospel age (Mat. 7:24-28). His sayings include the manner of prayer, which is to be directed to the “Father” in heaven (Mat. 6:9). This is confirmed by apostolic declaration, that in doing all things by His authority (Col. 3:17), we are to give thanks “**unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Eph. 5:20). It was Jesus who compels us to pray in His “**name**” (John 14:13, 14). In fact, Jesus said in the day He goes back to the Father, we are not to ask Him anything, but to “**ask the Father in my name**” (John 16:23). We have long observed that denominations most often address their prayers to “Jesus,” and close them with something like, “we pray in thy name,” or, “in the name of Jesus.” Imagine, praying to Jesus in the name of Jesus. The so-called “sinners’ prayer” in the Baptist Church usually includes the address and closing in this manner. Now, we are hearing more and more about it being scriptural and right for us to pray to Jesus, as well as to the Father. This has been a hot topic in Freed-Hardeman University lectureships in recent years.

We have observed that the basic “arguments” from the scripture, most always involve taking events that dealt with the miraculous, or “vision” episodes of the New Testament

to “justify” such.

The first and foremost “proof-text” is always Acts 7, where, following Stephen’s sermon and stoning, heaven is opened and Stephen sees Jesus standing at God’s right hand, and Stephen addresses Jesus. Stephen makes two statements to the Lord; (1) Receive my spirit, and (2) Lay not this sin to their charge (Acts 7:59, 60). We might observe a few things before applying this to our prayers today. We first should note that Stephen was “**full of the Holy Ghost**” (vs. 55). We next note that Stephen “recognized” Jesus, suggesting he possibly knew Jesus from the events of Acts 1. We also note that Jesus was “standing,” and not seated at God’s right hand in His role of authority. We also note that there is no reference to “Jesus’ name” whatsoever, as we are careful to do in our prayers today. If one were to preach an inspired sermon, being full of the Holy Ghost, and sees heaven opened, and Jesus standing at God’s right hand today, he might well be justified in saying something to Jesus, but it would not be classified as a “prayer.”

The second “proof-text” offered by some today is that of the eleven apostles asking the Lord, as they “prayed,” to let it be known who was chosen by Him to take the place of Judas.

True, it was a prayer, but was it to Jesus? In Acts 4:26-30, the “Lord” there clearly refers to the Father, and not Jesus, for it is to the Lord and “his Christ,” who was the Father of the “holy child Jesus.” So, the “Lord” could have been the Father in Acts 1. At any rate, we are in the midst of a miraculous situation, and it was before the gospel age, in which (“**in that day**”) prayer was not to be to Jesus, but to the Father (John 16:23). At any rate, this “prayer” was before the gospel age even began, so how is it an example for us in the gospel age?

The third “proof-text” to be examined is that of 2 Cor. 12:1-9, where it said that Paul besought the “Lord” three times that his thorn might be removed. Just because the word *Christ* is mentioned twice in the text is not proof that the petition was to Jesus. Paul speaks of the Lord’s “grace,” which is usually associated with God (Tit. 2:11), but sometimes is associated with both God and Jesus in the same verse (2 Cor. 1:2). But, whether it refers to God or Jesus is not that significant. Bear in mind that Paul, when on the road to Damascus, was already acquainted with Jesus, as they had a “conversation” together (Acts 9:1-6). At this time, Paul speaks of “**visions and revelations,**” and his having been caught into heaven, and “**heard**” unspeakable words which he was not permitted to utter (2 Cor. 12:1-4). We are not told just when the thorn was given to Paul, but Paul considered it a messenger from Satan. Just how he “**besought**” the Lord is not stated, but he does get a verbal response from the Lord, explaining that His “grace” was sufficient for him. Would this time of “**visions and revelations**” be the time Paul received the revelation of the gospel? (Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3) If so, the Lord could well be Jesus at this point. However, bear in mind that this was a miraculous situation, as they could well be conversant together, as they had been in Acts 9. At any rate, it was a direct interchange between the Lord and a special, inspired servant, and it was not a normal “prayer situation.” For the third time now, we are dealing with events in a miraculous context. Can we honestly say that those who argue that the Lord speaks to them directly from heaven really have an example in the experience of Paul?? The honest student of scripture should recognize the problem one would face if such is true.

The fourth “proof-text” offered by proponents of “praying to Jesus” is that of Rev. 22:20, where Jesus had just stated to John, “**Surely I come quickly,**” and John responded, “**Even so, come Lord Jesus.**” Again, we are in a context of miraculous inspiration, and the Revelation message is given to John to write. He was “*in the Spirit,*” just as Stephen was “**full of the Holy Spirit**” in Acts 7. Just because John spoke to the Lord does not make it an “example prayer” for Christians today, unless we are in a literal conversation with the Lord, while receiving a divine revelation. It would not have been appropriate for John to have begun or ended this statement with a reference to it being a “prayer, in the name of Jesus,” but it was a special conversation. Also, just because

John did something does not mean it is an approved example for us to attempt or follow. What about John’s two attempts to worship angels who brought a message to him?

If we look to miraculous situations for justifying something special for our time, we might well conclude that “baptism in the Holy Spirit” could apply today, for such did occur in Acts 2 and Acts 10. We might also claim that angels can speak to us today, as they spoke to Cornelius and Peter in Acts 10 and 11. Since Saul talked with the Lord, maybe the Lord speaks to some day!! We really “open a can or worms” when we take the truth of God out of context and make unjustifiable applications from it. So, as the old saying goes, “what proves too much proves nothing.” **More to follow.**

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THE QUITTER

It ain’t the failures he may meet
That keeps a man from winnin’,
It’s the discouragement complete
That blocks a new beginnin’;
You want to quit your habits bad,
And, when the shadows flittin’
Make life seem worthless an’ sad,
You want to quit your quittin’!

You want to quit a-layin’ down
An’ sayn’ hope is over,
Because the fields are bare an’ brown
Where once we lived in clover,
When jolted from the water cart
It’s painful to be hittin’
The earth; but make another start.
Cheer up, an’ quit your quittin’!

Although the game seems rather stiff
Don’t be a doleful doubter;
There’s always one more innin’ if
You’re not a down-and-outer.
But fortune’s pretty sure to flee
From folks content with sittin’
Around an’ sayin’ life’s N. G.
You’ve got to quit your quittin’.

—Unknown

Harold Cozad

(1924 – 2013)

Brother Harold Cozad, 89, died Friday, November 22, 2013. Harold was born on May 17, 1924 in Pulaski, Iowa. Harold moved to Pensacola, FL from Denver, CO in the year 1968. He was a member of Bellview Church of Christ for 40 years and served the church as one of her elders from October, 1971 until November, 1986. He was retired from U.S. Navy and served in WWII. He was predeceased by his loving wife of 47 years, Alberta Cozad. He is survived by sons Mark Cozad of Alberta, AL and Tim Cozad of Pensacola, FL; daughter, Brenda Nutt of Byron, GA along with an extended family. *Contending for the Faith* extends its sympathy to the family and to the Bellview congregation in brother Cozad's passing.

Brother Cozad was his own man. He was not one to follow the multitude to do evil or to follow the crowd to do anything right or wrong only because the majority was headed in a certain direction. In matters moral and religious, he was one who determined what direction to go on the basis of what the New Testament authorized him to do (Col. 3:17). He was a man of few words and minced none of the few he chose to use—his “yea” was “yea” and his “nay” was “nay.” He demonstrated his love for the truth in living it out in his daily conduct and by standing for it when it was not the popular thing to do, no matter the cost to him. Also, in times past he provided financial support for men in order for them to attend preacher training schools. It was a privilege to see the example he set in standing for the right and opposing the wrong.

Brother Tim Cozad, faithful gospel preacher, lived with his father in his declining years and took care of his needs as his health failed. May God bless brother Tim in caring for his father and may he always remain faithful to the Lord in all things.



B. J. (Bill) Gallaher

(1926—2014)

Billie Jim “BJ” Gallaher, passed from this life on March 24, 2014, at the age of 87, after a long and faithful service to the Lord. We at *Contending for the Faith* express our deepest sympathy to the Gallaher family in their loss. Also, we know that the Bellview Church of Christ will not only miss brother Gallaher's presence, but also miss his knowledge of God's Word and his wisdom.

For all the years we knew him, we counted him a friend to *CFTF's* work of “afflicting the comfortable and comforting the afflicted.” He was greatly concerned about the apostasy that continues to destroy members of the Lord's church, especially the apostasy of those brethren who for so long seemingly were set for the defense of the gospel, but due to human popularity and/or the love of money turned against the Lord in order to remain in their “chief seats” on some podium somewhere, or for a mess of Esau's potage, or to keep their “filthy lucre” coming into their coffers, while all the time holding men's persons in great admiration. We are glad to know that he was not that kind of church member.

Bill Gallaher and his wife, Iris, moved to Pensacola, Florida, and began to attend the Bellview Church of Christ in 1955. In December 1965, brother Gallaher was one of the first two men to be appointed to the eldership of the Bellview Church of Christ. Brother Gallaher served in that capacity from 1965 until 1973 when he resigned. Five years later he was reappointed and served continuously from 1978 until December 2006, when due to his failing health he resigned.

Brother Gallaher taught the “Christian Doctrine” class for many decades. New members to the Bellview congregation and those who were babes in Christ sat in his classroom learning the basics of Bible knowledge. When he was declared legally blind he continued to teach his class. A student would read from the class material and the Bible verses and brother Gallaher would explain the material and answer questions.

Brother Gallaher was one who knew the Bible. In this day when so many professed elders have little to no Bible knowledge, brother Gallaher was one who knew God's Word and could effectively wield it to teach and stop the mouths of the false teachers. He took seriously Paul's admonition:

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake (Titus 1:9-11).

We are thankful for bother Bill Gallaher's reputation of not being ashamed of the gospel. To the contrary he was ready unto every good work, an exhorter, and a “mouth stopper.” May his tribe increase.

—David P. Brown, Editor

SMALL THINGS THAT CAN BECOME GREAT

Lavonne McClish

Women are often given to feeling that we are inferior, that we are not important, that since we cannot lead in worship or work of the church, we are insignificant. Long ago Zechariah cautioned us not to despise **“the day of small things”** (Zec. 4:10). If a cup of cold water is all we have to give, and we give it with love, we will not lose our reward (Mat. 10:42). Jesus said that he who would be great should be the servant of all (Mark 9:35; 10:44). When we measure ourselves by the standards of Jesus rather than those of the world, women have the opportunity to be the “greatest” people in the church.

But so often we seek the great things in the wrong sense, as Naaman did (2 Kin. 5:11–13). We want everyone’s attention to be focused on us, as Naaman wanted Elisha to come out and heal him dramatically. Likely the Shunammite woman did not think of providing a comfortably furnished room for Elisha as a great thing (4:8–13), but Elisha did. We also have to keep our eyes and ears open to the needs of others, and not wait for the opportunity to knock. We need to go out and find the opportunities for ourselves. There are many such opportunities just waiting for us to claim them

When what was then our home congregation conducted the Annual Denton Lectures, some of the work (both physical—because of strength; and spiritual—because of Scriptural restrictions), of course, can be done by men only. However, so much of it was done by women working behind the scenes (nursery, first aid, refreshments, information table, secretarial work, envelope stuffing, and keeping people in our homes). There could be no lectureship without the hard work and long hours of dedicated service of the women, from teenagers to those who are older.

WRITING LETTERS

I did not like my principal when I was in high school, even though he was a Christian and led singing in the worship of the church. I was afraid of him, in fact. I sometimes resented his strictness and felt he was too stern, hard, and unapproachable. This principal was not a “pal”! But as my children got to the high school age, I began to realize just what this man had done for my peers and me, none of which we appreciated. In his school we had Bible reading, prayer, flag raising (with “To the Colors” played by trumpeters in lieu of buglers), and the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. There were no dances as long as he was in charge. There was no immodest dress—girls even had to wear jackets over their sundresses, and were not allowed to wear jeans to school. He and he alone set the dress code. He expected the cooperation and backing of our parents and, except in rare instances, he got it. Disobedience or disrespect of any kind meant a trip to his office, and if the infraction was serious, it would result in a paddling. He had been a coach and was a large, strong man. Even the big boys

feared him, and preferred to stay away from the business end of his paddle.

One day, when all three of our children were in their teen years, I decided to write to him. “Coach” was not getting any younger. I felt, however belatedly, that I should express my appreciation to him. Little did I dream of the effect my letter would have on him. You see, he had never before received such commendation, praise, and expression of gratitude from any of his former students. I had not thought of my letter as a “great thing”; it was simply giving him his due, which was long overdue.

In that same school was a very young, sweet, fresh-out-of-college, newly wed home economics teacher. We were never certain what happened, but the end result was that she resigned after three or four years. All her students loved her and grieved just as I did at her leaving, but my letter of appreciation was the only one she got. (I did tell her that all the other girls felt the same way.) She died of cancer about ten years later.

Several years after we had attended Freed-Hardeman College, my husband decided to write a letter to the school’s president, expressing appreciation for his soundness in the faith and for his impact on my husband’s life. He indicated in his letter that this brother had likely received many such letters from former students. However, this good man wrote back that such was not the case. He died suddenly only a few weeks later. We should never think that expressing gratitude is insignificant or that others have already beaten us to it, leaving us with nothing else to say.

USING AND HELPING OLDER PEOPLE

A few years ago, we visited a congregation in another state, where my husband was speaking on a lectureship. Living and worshipping there was a couple that I knew from my childhood, from hearing him preach in Gospel meetings where my father was the preacher. (They remembered me, though I was only a child, and expressed a great love and respect for my parents.) Both were approaching ninety years of age, but they were still remarkably active, and still in possession of their considerable mental powers and spiritual strength, coupled with a wealth of knowledge, both Biblical and secular. Their local congregation needed the wisdom this wonderful couple possessed. However, she confided to me that the church leaders had virtually “put them on the shelf,” thus nullifying their effectiveness. What a terrible waste! Even though they were old and not in perfect health, they could still have given so much. We must find ways to show respect for our older people and to make use of their experience and knowledge. It is so easy just to brush them aside as tiresome, telling the “same old stories” over and over and talking about the “good old

days.” We need to pay attention to them and learn from them.

Often, as people age, their eyesight begins to grow dim or to fade altogether. Among the many pleasures they are denied is that of reading. We can find an encouraging booklet or tract and record it onto a cassette tape for them. Make an enlarged copy (with permission) of a tract or book (such as Thomas Warren’s *Our Loving God—A Sun and Shield*), for one who still has some vision remaining. Send cards with a note and signature written in large, bold letters with a Sharpie marker.

Sometimes people (regardless of age) just need a listening ear and a broad shoulder. We should try to understand what they are saying and why. If they seem to be whining or complaining, remember that, given their set of experiences, pains, and griefs, we too might whine and complain. Encourage them to talk about their lives. We might be surprised at the interesting, informative, and even entertaining knowledge we could gain from those old stories told by older people. A few months ago I received a poem via e-mail, which said in summary: “Look at me! I may be old, gray, stooped, decrepit, and wrinkled on the outside, but I am still the same person on the inside. Get to know me. Don’t judge me only by what you can see. Give me a chance!”

MISCELLANEOUS

Women who no longer have children at home may be able to give more time than they could before. There are so many ways to banish that “empty nest syndrome,” but none better than looking and listening for the needs of others. One need of young mothers, especially, is encouragement. Sometimes caring for babies or small children can be very wearing, discouraging, and trying. Instead of criticizing, we can try to remember what it was like when our own children were young. If we offer suggestions, they are much more likely to be received if they are offered in a spirit of encouragement and love than if they are perceived as criticisms.

Many of us who are older can still drive, but many cannot; they are stuck at home unless someone offers to take them somewhere. They may not like to ask, but we can call them and offer a ride, or we can offer to shop for them. If it is difficult to find the time for a visit, how about a phone call? Just a little time spent in chatting and listening can brighten another’s day.

Those who cannot cook might buy. For many of us who are still very busy, it is difficult to work cooking—even for our own families—into our schedules. Yet there are sick or shut-in people who need help. At such times we can be thankful for the fast-food places and “delis.”

Sometimes a need arises for which no ordinary gift or remembrance will suffice except one that requires time, love, and effort. For this reason one lady has for several years made old-fashioned, cooked fudge every holiday season, for special people in her life (past and present) who badly needed love and attention. That homemade fudge told these people that they were highly thought of. It also took them back to an earlier, happier, simpler time when people—especially

mothers—often did such things. It was comforting. There are many other ways to show love to those who badly need it.

In one of the congregations with which we worked several years ago was a couple who, every now and then (and for no special occasion), would send us a beautiful card to let us know they were thinking of us. They will never know how much their thoughts and encouragement meant to us. Many of us fail to realize how difficult are special days such as birthdays, anniversaries, and death dates for those who have suffered a great loss, especially of a spouse or a child. A “thinking of you” card, a hand-written note, or a phone call are certainly appropriate. If possible, we could take such people out to eat, or take food to their houses and eat with them. These are small things, but they would mean so much to those who are depressed, sad, and alone with their memories. Some people would like to talk about their lost loved ones, and we should encourage them to do so rather than feeling uncomfortable listening. Give them opportunities to bring up memories, especially happy ones, and offer memories of your own where you can.

CONCLUSION

May we so live that Jesus’ commendation of Mary could be said of us: “**She hath done what she could**” (Mark 14:8). May we merit the love the widows expressed for Dorcas (Acts 9:36–39). We may not be able to do great things, but we can do many small things, with results that would likely amaze us. I doubt that Mary realized that her “insignificant” good deed would be told, as a memorial to her, far and wide down through the years to our time.

—Deceased

THIS, TOO, SHALL PASS AWAY

When some great sorrow, like a mighty river,
Flows through your life with peace-destroying power,
And dearest things are swept from sight forever,
Say to your heart each trying hour:
“This, too, shall pass away.”

When ceaseless toil has hushed your song of gladness,
And you have grown almost too tired to pray,
Let this truth banish from your heart its sadness,
And ease the burdens of each trying day:
“This, too, shall pass away.”

When fortune smiles, and, full of mirth and pleasure,
The days are flitting by without a care,
Lest you should rest with only earthly treasure,
Let these few words their fullest import bear:
“This, too, shall pass away.”

When earnest labor brings you fame and glory,
And all earth’s noblest ones upon you smile,
Remember that life’s longest, grandest story
Fills but a moment in earth’s little while:
“This, too, shall pass away.”

—Lanta Wilson Smith

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO “FIRST PRINCIPLES”?

Dub McClish

Introduction

To speak of “first principles” in any field of endeavor is to speak of things basic, elementary, fundamental, and rudimentary. The Hebrews writer referred to **“the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God”** (Heb. 5:12). While in the context he shamed the brethren for not progressing beyond them, he certainly never advised forgetting them. Brethren have generally recognized the “first principles” to be such things as (1) inspiration of Scripture, (2) the virgin birth, Deity, and resurrection of Jesus, (3) the miraculous phenomena recorded in Scripture, (4) the plan of salvation, (5) the establishment and identifying marks of the church, (6) and Bible authority.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago [*Longer ago than that at this publication, Editor*] the cry went up from some in the church that there was too much preaching on first principles. There may have been an element of truth in the criticism (which, incidentally, just about paralleled the rise of an outcry against “negative” preaching). In responding to the criticism some quit preaching on the rudimentary truths almost altogether. The proverbial pendulum made its swing.

Disdain for “the basics” is seen in what is (and is not) regularly preached from pulpits, taught in Bible classes, and proclaimed in Gospel meetings and lectureships. Gospel meetings have been discontinued in many congregations in favor of “seminars,” some of which are centered more on social than Biblical themes.

Some brethren no longer merely neglect the first principles. They have declared their intent to avoid preaching on them because they hold them in contempt. I heard one preacher apologize publicly for ever having preached on the identifying marks of the church and promised to never do so again. I once heard a sermon tape in which the preacher ridiculed those who preach the Gospel plan of salvation as “five-steppers.” He charged that if the nineteenth century preacher, Walter Scott, had possessed only four fingers the “five-steppers” would only be “four-steppers” (implying that Scott invented the plan)!

The sermon standard of many preachers seems to be, “What can I say in fifteen or twenty minutes that will massage the egos of and entertain and please all who hear?”

Not infrequently rank and file brethren in various parts of the nation tell me that they know preachers who have not for months even mentioned the plan of salvation at the conclusion of their sermons, much less devoted any sermons to it.

Some preachers have quit offering an invitation of any kind at the close of their sermons. Of course, if they’re not

going to tell people how to come to Christ, they may as well not invite them. Almost thirty years ago a “worship committee” where I preached pressured me to cease offering an invitation at the close of my sermons. I responded that as long as I was preaching there I would offer the invitation. (I only lasted seven months, but I offered the invitation every time I preached!)

Of course, we need to emphasize more than just the first principles, but we dare not neglect them. Why is this so?

Because They Are Fundamental

In the very nature of the case, any group that forgets the fundamental principles and practices upon which it was founded and upon which it rests will fail. This is no less true in religion than in sports, education, business, and other disciplines.

A congregation cannot remain committed to the Truth on baptism, worship, church organization, the nature of the kingdom, or any other subject if it does not hear them regularly emphasized. Such themes regularly characterized the subject matter of Gospel preachers, especially in Gospel meetings, until a generation ago. They still characterize the Gospel meeting preaching of some of us. Several years ago I observed a serious neglect of the pivotal hermeneutical principle of the significance of the silence of Scripture. Subsequently I have made it my practice to preach on this subject in every Gospel meeting in which I was allowed to choose my subjects. More than once after this I have been told such things as “I have not heard a sermon on that subject in thirty years,” or “I have never heard a complete sermon on that subject.” It is alarming to hear such statements concerning so fundamental a subject.

We must renew our emphasis on primary principles of Truth and continue to emphasize them simply because they are fundamental and primary!

Because Men Forget

The Bible repeats certain major themes time after time. Jesus taught the apostles and others some of the same Truths repeatedly. The Lord sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles upon His return to Heaven in part, as He told them, to **“bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you”** (John 14:26). Paul repeated instructions and reminded brethren of various things on several occasions (Acts 20:31, 35; Gal. 5:21; 1 The. 3:4; 2 The. 2:5; et al.). Peter wrote of the proclivity of the human mind to forget. Those to whom he wrote had certainly been taught the primary principles of the faith, but he stated his purpose to keep reminding them as long as he lived (2 Pet. 1:12-15).

Even spiritually mature saints can forget if their memo-

ries are not periodically refreshed. The three great laws of learning are still repetition, repetition, repetition. So I repeat: *We must continue to stress first principles because men tend to forget. [Italics mine, Editor]*

Because of the Children

It is generally conceded that the public education system has tragically failed our nation's children for several decades. While there may be many causes involved, it can hardly be gainsaid that the failure is due in large part to dilution (if not abandonment) of some of the most basic subjects. Add to this the replacement of tried and true teaching methods in favor of experimental ones and the results are predictable. Many of the youngsters to whom the schools have awarded diplomas the last several years have severe difficulty reading, writing, spelling, and doing simple math (without a calculator), and who have hardly a clue concerning the history of our nation or of the world. Such are the sad fruits of neglecting and abandoning the first principles in education.

Moses commanded Israel in the wilderness that each generation of parents must emphatically and constantly teach its children the fundamental lessons concerning obedience to Jehovah lest they forget Him (Deu. 6:1-25). The beginning of their failure in this duty signaled their end. Apostasy, followed by numerous oppressions, finally led to their national destruction and captivity.

A large percentage of the last two or three generations in

the church have now grown up not learning the most fundamental tenets of the faith. Many of these were not brought up hearing Bible preaching, either because little of it was being preached, or, if it was, they may have been in a "Children's Bible Hour" playing games and watching puppet shows at the time. Even worse are the many "Christian" homes in which parents are too secular, carnal, and careless to teach their children the Bible and refuse to attend the assemblies and bring their children more than an hour or two per week.

Do these things give us any hints concerning the source of many of the "progressive," loose, and liberal trends in the congregations? Some of these fundamental-deprived folk who are clueless concerning the distinctiveness of the Truth of the Gospel have decided to stay in the church and make it over as they want it to be. Is it any wonder that we face an epidemic of apostasy and digression in the kingdom? Christian parents who love their children will teach them the fundamental Truths of the Gospel at home. Also, they will insist on preaching that includes the great first principles. If they do not have that kind of preaching where they are, they will find a congregation that does.

Without consistent book, chapter, and verse preaching of "the first principles of the oracles of God" the church will not long remain the church.

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LET THE CHURCH BE THE CHURCH

George W. DeHoff

The business of the church is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It exists for this purpose. Without the gospel men are lost. The gospel is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15, 16; Gal. 1:6-8; 2 The. 1:6-10). There is nothing else that the church does but that it is secondary to preaching the gospel. Moreover, there is nothing else done by the church but that some other organization is doing the same thing—and sometimes doing it better! If the church is not going to conduct a militant campaign of preaching the gospel, it had as well go out of existence, and that is what it will do unless it preaches the gospel!

It is NOT the business of the church to operate secular colleges or universities, soup kitchens, relief stations, youth centers, entertainment bureaus, ball teams, and such like! The church MUST preach the gospel and "**visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,**" each church member keeping himself "**unspotted from the world**" (Jam. 1:27). If the church goes into the entertainment business in an attempt to reach people (reach them with what?), men of the world will

say, "That is real Christianity." If the church opens a soup kitchen, worldly people (who believe that men are saved out of the church as well as in it and who do not know what it is all about anyway) will say, "That is real Christianity."

But if the church preaches the gospel, men of the world will be displeased—that is the purpose of gospel preaching: to cause them to become displeased with their condition and to become Christians.

Every inch of the ground that we now occupy has been gained by gospel preaching, by a campaign of teaching FACTS TO BE BELIEVED, COMMANDS TO BE OBEYED, and PROMISES TO BE ENJOYED (1 Cor. 15:1-4)!

Every Christian should teach, preach, dispute, confute, refute, rebuke, exhort, and whatever else is necessary to get men to see the TRUTH and to know the difference between TRUTH and ERROR! This is the work of the church (John 8:31, 32; 17:17; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Jude 3).

—Deceased

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Many of these are brief articles of 1 to 3 pages in length that have appeared (and are still appearing) in church bulletins throughout the land. Many of these shorter articles were also written for newspaper publication, and not a few of them are uploaded in their original publication format. Scores of these treatises are in the range of 4 to 12 pages, most of which were originally published in various religious periodicals. We wrote most of the long manuscripts (ranging in length from 13 to 59 pp.) on assignment from directors of various lecture programs, and they have been published in approximately two hundred books produced by said programs.

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Dub McClish, Gospel preacher



Dub McClish



Lavone McClish



Andy McClish



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*The brief articles available on this site were for the most part originally written over the years for church bulletins or newspaper articles. They are on a wide variety of Biblical topics, moral issues, and doctrinal subjects. They continue to be **reprinted** in numerous church bulletins throughout our nation.*

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These articles, considerably longer than the brief essays described above, were, for the most part, written for and have been published in various religious periodicals over the years.

Our Long Manuscripts...

We wrote the extended manuscripts you will find here by assignment to serve as chapters in scores of religious books. These manuscripts were thoroughly researched and are fully documented.

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I remember how I really loved to listen to my favorite professors—Terry Hightower, Jackie Stearsman, William Woodson, Dowell Flatt, Earl West, Jack Lewis, and many lectureship speakers—and how they talked about the old preachers, and the issues that sparked the Restoration Movement in America. I also remember how painful it was to dig out these jewels of history; how you had to go to a College library and find the bound volumes of each journal. Few indexes were available so if you wanted to be comprehensive in your search, you just had to go page by page. Even though it was time consuming, I enjoyed all those hours. I tracked controversial issues through the decades going page by page.

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As I started this project (*The Firm Foundation Preservation Project*), I had to learn the computer skills, acquire the right software, and scanners, and then I had to track down all the issues. I travelled thousands of miles, talked to the helpful and not so helpful, and managed to gather up thousands of loose issues. You would think that one complete copy would be enough, but no. Many times I would find a missing page or issue in a “complete” set and have to go looking again. I even had to use microfilm for 1886-1929 because those who had these issues were not willing to let me scan them. It was an amazing journey but worth it. You would think that brotherhood librarians would be the best source for information and assistance. Some were extremely helpful... others were indifferent... and still others were downright mean. Go figure that out.

Order online from **AMAZON.COM** (type in the search line “Firm Foundation Preservation Project”), or write me (**704 Red Oak Drive, Orange, TX 77632**), or phone **409-670-1675**.

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Also, you can order the *Millennial Harbinger*, *Christian Baptist*, *Lard's Quarterly*, and others. ***All are unrestricted pdf files.*** The other titles are \$1.00 per year as well. Special thanks to John Prophet and the *Firm Foundation* for granting me permission to do this worthy project.

2014 SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST CFTF LECTURESHIP

WHAT MUST A CHRISTIAN DO TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO CHRIST

The lectureship was presented from Wednesday, February 19—Sunday, February 23 in the facilities of the Spring Church of Christ. The congregation is superintended by elders: Kenneth D. Cohn and Buddy Roth. David P. Brown is the evangelist working full time with the church. He is also the director of the annual lectureship and editor of the book.

Secretary: Sonya West ♦ E-mail: sonyacwest@gmail.com ♦ Office Phone: (281) 353-2707

SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST ~ PO BOX 39 (Mailing address) ~ 1327 SPRING CYPRESS ROAD, SPRING, TX 77383

Know The Difference In The Lord's Church And The Religions Of Men—Dub McClish
Walk Circumspectly And Lay Hands Suddenly On No Man—Charles Pogue
Be Steadfast In Daily Bible Study, Learning What Is Involved In Ascertaining Bible Authority—Terry Hightower
Be Ready To Forgive A Brother Or Sister Who Repents Of Sin—Lee Moses
Continue To Yield Your Body A Living Sacrifice To God—John West
Strengthen Your Hope Of Heaven—Daniel Denham
Grow In Love For The Brethren—Lester Kamp
Be Obedient To Faithful Elders—Michael Hatcher
Contend For The Faith —Gary Summers
Love God With All You Are And Have—Bruce Stulting
Love Your Neighbor As Yourself—Geoff Litke
Do Not Be A Respector Of, Or Partial, To Persons As You Live, Teach, And Defend The Gospel—John Rose
Be Determined To Fellowship Only Those Who Are In Fellowship With God—Charles Pogue
Watch Ye, Stand Fast In The Faith, Quit You Like Men, Be Strong—Michael Hatcher
Be Faithful In Attendance To All Assemblies Of The Church—Johnny Oxendine
Do Not Follow A Multitude To Do Evil—John Rose
Keep A Good And Honest Heart—Wayne Blake
Have No Fellowship With The Unfruitful Works Of Darkness, But Rather Reprove Them—Danny Douglas
Rejoice When You Are Persecuted For Living The Christian Life—Sonya West
The Husband And Father's Responsibility In Keeping His Family Faithful—Lee Moses
The Wife And Mother's Responsibility In Keeping Her Family Faithful—Lamar Schrei
Keep A Humble And Teachable Mind That Is Ready To Repent Of Any Sin—Johnny Oxendine
Do Not Be A Partaker Of The Works Of The Flesh, But Be Filled With The Fruit Of The Spirit—Gary Summers
Teach The Alien Sinner, Restore The Erring Church Member, And Be Ready Unto Every Good Work—Lynn Parker
Pray Without Ceasing—Bruce Stulting
Withdraw Fellowship From Disorderly Church Members, Including Family Members—Danny Douglas
Teach Godliness By Example And Doctrine, Expose And Refute Error, Hold Fast What Is Good—Terry Hightower
Always Worship God In Spirit And In Truth—Daniel Denham
Keep Informed About Church History, Current Events, And World Events Impacting The Church—Dub McClish



Videos of the lectures are archived at the following web address: www.churchesofchrist.com.

LECTURESHIP BOOK: The book is \$22.00 per book plus \$4.00 S&H. Bookstores and dealers ordering five or more books get a 40% discount.

CD OF LECTURESHIPS: A CD of ALL the Spring Church of Christ lectureship books from 1994–2014 is available. This is in PDF format and is searchable. The price is \$50.00 per CD. If you have purchased a CD previously, you can upgrade for \$5.00 to the current CD (1994-2014). We ask that you return your old CD when you purchase the new one.

AUDIO AND VIDEO: Audio and video recordings of the entire lectureship are available in CD (MP3), DVD, and Blu-ray formats. The cost is: CD set—\$15.00 plus S&H; DVD (standard definition) set—\$30.00 plus S&H; Blu-ray (high definition) set—\$40.00 plus S&H. *Texas residents must add 7.25 percent tax.*

ORDERING: To order the lectureship book, the CD of the lectureship books, or audio/video recordings contact *Contending For The Faith*, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383-2357, or (281)350-5516, or dpbcftf@gmail.com.

39th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 6 – 10, 2014

(Friday – Tuesday)

Understanding The Will Of The Lord

| Friday, June 6 | | Monday, June 9 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| 7:00 pm | Theme of the Bible | Wayne Blake | 9:00 am | Period of Conquest | Ken Chumbley | |
| 7:45 pm | God's Scheme of Redemption | Charles Pogue | 10:00 am | Period of Judges | John West | |
| Saturday, June 7 | | 11:00 am | Period of the United Kingdom | Paul Vaughn | | |
| 9:00 am | Dispensations of Time | Dub McClish | <i>Lunch Break</i> | | | |
| 10:00 am | Patriarchal Dispensation | Michael Hatcher | 1:00 pm | Period of the Divided Kingdom | David P. Brown | |
| 11:00 am | Mosaic Dispensation | Dub Mowery | 2:00 pm | Period of Judah Alone | Wayne Blake | |
| <i>Lunch Break</i> | | 1:00 pm | Open Forum: | <i>Dinner Break</i> | | |
| 1:00 pm | Christian Dispensation | Charles Pogue | 7:00 pm | Worship | Michael Hatcher | |
| 2:00 pm | Ante-Diluvian Period | Roelf L. Ruffner | 8:00 pm | The Church in the Eternal Purpose of God | Gene Hill | |
| 3:00 pm | Open Forum | | | | | |
| <i>Dinner Break</i> | | Tuesday, June 10 | | | | |
| 7:00 pm | Post-Diluvian Period | Harrell Davidson | 9:00 am | Period of Exile | Doug Post | |
| 8:00 pm | Arrangement of the Bible | Jerry Brewer | 10:00 am | Period of Restoration | Jerry Brewer | |
| Sunday, June 9 | | 11:00 am | Inter-Testament Period | Dub McClish | | |
| 9:00 am | Patriarchal Period | Roelf L. Ruffner | <i>Lunch Break</i> | | | |
| 10:00 am | New Testament Worship | Ken Chumbley | 1:00 pm | Period of the Life of Christ | David P. Brown | |
| <i>Lunch and Dinner Break</i> | | 2:00 pm | Period of the Church | Gene Hill | | |
| 5:00 pm | Period of Bondage | Dub Mowery | 3:00 pm | Open Forum: | <i>Dinner Break</i> | |
| 6:00 pm | Period of Wilderness Wanderings | Harrell Davidson | 7:00 pm | Second Coming and Judgment | John West | |
| 7:00 pm | How We Got the Bible | Doug Post | 8:00 pm | The Whole of Man | Paul Vaughn | |

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—single bed and \$69.99—double beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. **Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.** If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *Understanding The Will Of The Lord*, will be available for purchase. The price has not yet been determined. The book will contain 28 chapters and will be a soft-cover

book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2014) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.50. The CD will also include the Defender (1970, 1972-2013), Beacon (1972, 1974-2013), and other material.

View Lectures Live on the Internet

If you cannot attend the lectureship in person, please view them live on the Internet:

www.bellviewcoc.com

Open Forum Questions
If you have a question send it to:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Directory of Churches...

-Alabama-

Holly Pond—Church of Christ, 10221 Hwy 278, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 507-1776, (256) 507-1778.

-Colorado-

Denver—Piedmont Church of Christ, 1602 S. Parker Rd. Ste. 109, Denver, CO 80231, Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. www.piedmontcoc.net, Lester Kamp, evangelist. (720) 535-5807.

-England-

Cambridgeshire—Cambridge City Church of Christ, meeting at The Manor Community College, Arbury Rd., Cambridge, CB4 2JF. Sun., Bible Study--10:30 a.m., Worship-- 11:30 a.m.; Tue. Bible Study--7:30 p.m. www.CambridgeCityCoC.org.uk. Keith Sisman, Gospel Preacher. Contacts: Keith Sisman [By phone inside USA (281) 475-8247; Inside the U.K.: Cambridge (England): 01223-911243]; Alternative Cambridge contacts: Joan Moulton - 01223-210101; Postal/ mailing Address - PO BOX 1, Ramsey Huntingdon, PE26 2YZ United Kingdom

-Florida-

Ocoee—Ocoee Church of Christ, 2 East Magnolia Street, Ocoee, FL 34761. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:00 p.m. David Hartbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauffley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Michael Hatcher, evangelist, (850) 455-7595.

-Montana-

Helena—Mountain View Church of Christ, 1400 Joslyn Street, Helena, Mt. 59601, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Daniel Coe, evangelist (406) 475-4686 or Matt Bidmead (406) 461-9199.

-Oklahoma-

Porum—Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, evangelist, e-mail: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (8-3) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803)279-8663

Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 387-1429; dubmcclish@gmail.com.

Evant—Evant Church of Christ, 310 West Brooks Drive, Evant, TX 76525. Office: (254) 471-5705; Jess Whitlock, evangelist (254) 471-5717.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring *Contending for the Faith* Lectures, and the internet school, Truth Bible Institute. www.churchesofchrist.com.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9 a. m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Lynn Parker, evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

Richwood—1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.