

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

[Mac Deaver, the son of the late Roy C. Deaver, believes and teaches that Holy Spirit baptism is administered to everyone who undergoes the Great Commission water baptism. Therefore, he affirms that one who is undergoing water baptism for the remission of sins is at the same time also baptized in the Holy Spirit while under the waters of baptism. Hence, according to Mac, the believing, repentant person undergoes: (1) water baptism for, unto, in order to the remission of sins, and, (2) while experiencing water baptism the Holy Spirit baptizes one for, in order to, the regeneration/purification of the essence of the inward man (spirit, heart).

Mac alleges it is by means of Holy Spirit baptism that the essence of a person's heart (spirit, inward man) is created to be a fitting habitat for the direct personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Thus, according to Mac, the Holy Spirit directly and personally takes up residence in one's inward man when one rises from the watery grave of baptism, a new creature in Christ with one's spirit regenerated/purified by Holy Spirit baptism. Then, it is al-

leged, the Holy Spirit can directly work on the inward man of the Christian to impart direct divine wisdom and/or strength to the Christian's heart (inward man, spirit) when human wisdom and/or strength is insufficient to supply the proper wisdom and/or human strength needed to deal with certain problems, such as the temptation to sin. Clearly then, Mac's whole system begins, turns, stands on, and ends with his view of Holy Spirit baptism.

The following articles were written and published by Roy Deaver in his paper **Biblical Notes (BN)**. The first article came from the Vol. 7, June, 1973 issue of **BN** and the second article from the Vol. 7, January, 1974 issue. Both articles teach the truth of the Bible on Holy Spirit Baptism. I recommend them as good study sources on the subject. No matter what error brother Roy believed and taught on the direct work of the Holy Spirit on the inward man (spirit) of the Christian, I know of nothing in print from him wherein he repudiated the sentiments of the following articles.—**Editor**]



MATTHEW 3:11 AND NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

Roy C. Deaver

Matthew, John, and Jesus

Matthew, a Jew, writes in particular for Jews, and for the express purpose of setting forth the evidences that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah talked about by the Old Testament prophets. The special point at hand is: He is the Messiah as is seen in consideration of His relationship to John the Baptizer.

Approximately twenty-eight years are passed over between chapter 2 and chapter 3. John the Baptist came. He came preaching—preaching in the wilderness of Judaea.

His message was: **“Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** Matthew stresses that Isaiah the prophet had spoken about **“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”** Matthew declares that John the Baptist is the fulfillment of that prophecy. The line of thought is: (1) God, through Isaiah talked about a voice crying in the wilderness; (2) Matthew, by inspiration, declares that John the Baptist is the one Isaiah talked about; (3) therefore, it is important that consideration be given to what John had to say about Jesus.

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

CORRECTION

In the 2012 March/April issue I wrote in my editorial that Dub McClish delivered a lecture on the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders (R&R of elders) during the 1998 Bellview Lectureship, his manuscript appearing in the same lectureship book. *Brother McClish informed me that the year was 1997 and not 1998.* We trust this correction will help those who desire to get that particular Bellview lectureship book and/or the recordings.

Dub also reminded me that besides the men I listed in said editorial the following men were also speakers on the 1997 Bellview Lectureship. They are: Billy Bland, Garland Elkins, Jerry Martin, and B. J. Clarke. That covers all of the 1997 Memphis School of Preaching faculty, plus B. J. Clarke who later joined the MSOP faculty. In 1997 these brethren along with those I listed in the 2012 March/April *CFTF* did not believe, defend or condone the R&R doctrine. Brother McClish also pointed out that Curtis Cates and Jerry Martin spoke the same day he did, and he particularly remembered Curtis commending his lecture on the R&R error. —DPB

Editorial...

“DAY OF SILENCE” TO PROTEST BULLYING OF HOMOSEXUALS OBSERVED AT ABILENE “CHRISTIAN” UNIVERSITY

(<http://www.acuoptimist.com/2012/04/day-of-silence-spreads-anti-bullying-message> —Accessed 5/1/2012)

Maria Pulzetti, a student at the time, created the “Day of Silence.” It was first organized and held in 1996 by students at the University of Virginia (Riley, John (2008-04-24). “Day of Silence takes on a political tone.” Medill Reports). According to DayofSilence.org, it is observed at over 8,000 middle schools, high schools and colleges in the U.S.

On April 24, 2012 Samantha Sutherland posted to the online Abilene “Christian” University student newspaper, *The Optimist*, that ACU students conducted a “Day of Silence” for the express purpose of focusing attention on “anti-LGBTQ bullying” (LGBTQ—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning).

Sutherland stated that one student wore “black tape on his mouth with the words ‘No Hate—Day of Silence’ written on it in silver Sharpie.” The same student distributed cards explaining his actions.

The same ACU student said students are obligated to alter the environment that encompasses the LGBTQ campus community, Sutherland reported. The student commented, “There are a lot of different people here and we have to make sure to be nice to everybody. Even if something doesn’t affect you and your friends it can be really offensive to some-

one else,” Sutherland wrote.

A first year master of divinity student from Kingwood, TX, said many non-LGBTQ people involve themselves in the Day of Silence to show support for the LGBTQ community and also to stand up against bullying and oppressive violence in general, Sutherland reported.

Sutherland also noted that the same master of divinity student indicated there are places such as “school hallways” that are potential unsafe areas for LGBTQ teenagers. According to Sutherland, this m.div. student indicated that LGBTQ teenagers are uncertain of the response they will get from their fellow teens. If they make known their sexual preference, they may be met with ridicule or violence. The Kingwood student went on to say, “So it’s trying to bring awareness of the dangers and difficulties of being LGBTQ in a world that is not welcoming of it,” Sutherland wrote.

Although the Kingwood student said he had never suffered any bullying, he confessed that in being silent about his sexual orientation he “felt pain” and “loneliness,” Sutherland said. He expressed that he thought people should feel safe in schools and churches when discussing their sexual experiences, Sutherland stated.

Sutherland reported that the m. div. student opined that there are more ACU students “who are passionate about this issue who are not personally affected by it.” The same student also indicated that people should not feel that they are violating a prohibition when they discuss their sexual orientation or experiences, Sutherland wrote.



[Brother Roelf Ruffner, a regular writer for CTFE, is also a graduate of ACU. Roelf replied to the Samantha Sutherland article in the online ACU student newspaper, The Optimist. His reply was printed in the response section of the website immediately following the Sutherland article. He forwarded us his brief response and it appears immediately following these comments.—Editor]

Roelf Ruffner says:
April 28, 2012 at 1:47 pm

Perhaps someone, like the Bible major, should have put tape over their own mouth with the phrase ” 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.” That is what the homosexual activists are attempting to silence in the name of political correctness. It seems that ACU has forgotten that passage as well as Ephesians 5:11 or just explained them away.

No Christian is going to “bully” anyone. When and if a member of the Lord’s church should act contrary to the gospel in dealing with anyone, that church member is subject to the corrective discipline of the New Testament of Jesus Christ. But, “bullying homosexuals” is serving as a smoke screen to blind brethren’s eyes to the real problem regarding this issue. Sodomites are in sin. If they are members of the Lord’s church, they need to know that their sodomy is sinful and they need to repent while they have time to do so.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuals, *NKJ*), nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6: 9-11—*KJV*).

When ACU or any other educational institution operated by those who purport to be Christians know there are students, faculty, staff, etc., living in whatever sin it may be, they are obligated before God to remove them from the school. Attempt to convert them from the error of their way, but until they repent and are converted to the truth of the gospel, they certainly have no business being in ACU or any sister institution.

Students, etc., can keep things secret from the powers that be in ACU or anywhere else, or at least they can attempt to do so, but when their sins are known, they must not be allowed to be the “little leaven” that leavens the whole lump. Parents with any semblance of biblical morals and love of the truth of God’s Word left in them did not send their children to ACU, et al., to have their morals corrupted—for evil companionships continue to corrupt good morals (1 Cor. 5:6, 7; 15:33).



Printed on the front cover of the April 18, 2011 edition of *The New York Times* is an article by Erik Eckholm titled, “Even on Religious Campuses, Students Fight for Gay Identity.” Besides ACU, the article reported homosexual students at Baylor University (Baptist), Waco, TX; Belmont University (Baptist), Nashville, TN; Harding University, Searcy, AR, and North Central University, a Pentecostal Bible college in Minneapolis, MN.

A female homosexual student at the North Central University was expelled from NCU when she became more “assertive about her gay identity,” the article said. It was also reported that in 2005 a male homosexual student was “suspended” because he advertised a homosexual-support site and confessed “to intimate relations (but no sexual intercourse) with other men.”

Eckholm’s article appeared below the photograph of different young people who seemed to be enjoying themselves, one of them being ACU student Taylor Schmitt. He was originally a Bible major, but at the time the article was printed he was an English major. The 2011 article reported that Schmitt had a full scholarship. Although he changed his major to English, he kept his scholarship. And at the time said that he was taking extra classes in order to graduate earlier, Eckholm wrote.

The article reported that several ACU students are openly homosexual (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/19/>

(Continued on page 9)

(Deaver—Continued from page 1)

John was doing his preaching and his baptizing in Bethabarah (John 1:28) and people from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan kept on going out to him and were baptized of him. Those who (1) genuinely believed John's message, (2) repented of their sins, and (3) confessed their sins—were baptized by John. John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism. The phrase "**coming to his baptism**" evidently does not mean that these were coming to him for the purpose of being baptized. This thought would be indicated by John's statements to them: (1) ye offspring of vipers; (2) who warned you to flee the wrath to come? (3) bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance; (4) don't base your claims to divine favor upon the fact that you are literal descendants of Abraham. Further, we are specifically told that the Pharisees were not baptized by John (Luke 7:30).

John continued:

And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

Thus, the testimony of John the Baptist with regard to the Lord: (1) He is mightier than I; (2) I am not worthy to bear His shoes; (3) I baptize you in water, but He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire; (4) His fan is in His hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

Symbolism in Parallel

The parallelism of verses 10 and 12 should be studied carefully. John, in stressing to his hearers the urgency of making proper response to God's will, uses two figures: the trees and the threshing-floor. Observe: (1) the trees and the threshing floor; (2) the axe and the fan; (3) at the root of the trees, and the fan is in his hand; (4) trees that bring forth good fruit, and chaff (6) trees that bring forth good fruit will be spared, and the wheat will be gathered into the garner; (7) trees that do not bring forth good fruit will be hewn down and cast into the fire, and the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire. What is the significance of this symbolism in parallel? (1) The trees and the threshing floor represent God's world. (2) The axe and the fan (winnowing shovel) represent the instruments of God's judgment. (3) The axe at the root of the trees and the fan in his hand represent the fact that the Lord is ready to begin his work. (4) Trees that bring forth good fruit and the wheat represent all persons who make proper response to God's will. (5) Trees that do not bring forth good

fruit and the chaff represent all persons who do not make proper response to God's will. (6) Trees that bring forth good fruit will be spared; the wheat will be gathered into the garner. Those who make proper response to God's will will be eternally blessed of God. (7) Trees that do not bring forth good fruit will be hewn down and cast into the fire; the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire. All who do not make proper response to God's will will be the victims of God's wrath—His punishment poured out.

The Argument

Some time ago, I was engaged in a home Bible study with a young couple. Suddenly it became apparent that they were upholding and defending the Pentecostal claim that Holy Spirit baptism can be and must be experienced in our day. We discussed this matter for several hours. Their main point of "proof" was Mt. 3:11—"**he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit ...**" It was argued that in this statement John the Baptist preached that the Lord would baptize with the Holy Spirit all persons who sought his favor. Since this is a pentecostal argument frequently made, it is important that careful consideration be given to it.

The Refutation

1. It should be noted first of all that John did not say the Lord would baptize all persons who would seek his favor. We must observe carefully the use of the word *you* in verse 11. John said, "**I indeed baptize you in water ... he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire.**" The pronoun *you* is involved in the statement about John's baptism in water, and the pronoun *you* is involved in the statement about the Lord's baptizing in the Holy Spirit. Did all those to whom John was preaching receive John's baptism? Did John actually baptize all those to whom he was speaking? Obviously, no one could justifiably contend that all these hearers were baptized by John. The Record states plainly that the Pharisees were not baptized by John (Luke 7:30). Did John baptize "**offspring of vipers**"? Did he baptize persons who had not demonstrated repentance? Did he baptize persons who were basing their claims to divine favor upon their physical ancestry? We conclude that when John said, "**I baptize you in water**" that he was using the indefinite *you* and that he was actually saying, "I baptize some of you" The *you* stands for "some of you"—it could not mean all of you.

But, the same word *you* which John uses with regard to himself and the baptizing which he was doing, he also uses with regard to the Lord and the baptizing (in the Holy Spirit) which he was to do. If the pronoun *you* with regard to John baptizing meant "some of you," then obviously, the pronoun *you* relating to the Lord and those who he would baptize in the Holy Spirit likewise means "some of you." *Some* of those to whom John spoke upon that occasion would be baptized in water (some already had been), and *some* to whom John spoke would be baptized by the Lord in the Holy Spirit.

2. Further, John's statement about the Lord and baptism in the Holy Spirit was prophetic in nature. It is certainly in order—and in fact, is necessary—for us to study this prophecy in the light of its fulfillment. The extent of Holy Spirit baptism in the fulfillment could not be longer than the extent contemplated in the prophecy.

In the New Testament we have two—and only two—recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism. These are related in Acts 2 and in Acts 10. In Acts 2 we have the record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Apostles. In Acts 10 we have the record of Holy Spirit baptism in connection with Cornelius and his household.

With regard to what happened in Acts 2, several things should be noted. After giving them the Great Commission, and shortly prior to his ascension, the Lord said to the Apostles: **“and behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high”** (Luke 29:49). Luke, who wrote Acts, picks up this point in Acts 1:4, 5—

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Acts 2:1-4 records the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. It should be observed that the Spirit's coming upon the Apostles is not—in Acts 2—called a “baptism.” We call this Holy Spirit baptism in the light of the Lord's promise in Acts 1:5. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was essential to apostolic qualifications and apostolic work. The Lord had promised these men miraculous power (Mt. 10:18, 19; John 16:7-13), and that this power would come to them with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We should be careful to note that the power was not the Holy Spirit. Rather, the power would come with the Holy Spirit. As evidences of their baptism in the Holy Spirit, (1) the Apostles were enabled to speak in languages which they had not learned through study (Acts 2:4,6); (2) they were enabled to make known by miraculous inspiration God's plan for men's salvation (Acts 2:39); (3) they were enabled to perform miracles—many wonders and signs (Acts 2:43).

With regard to what happened in Acts 10, several things should be noted. The Lord's **“promise of the Father”** was made by the Lord, to the Apostles, and to the Apostles only. This promise of the Lord was fulfilled when the Apostles—on Pentecost of Acts 2—received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But, Joel (2:28) had prophesied that God's spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. Joel's prophecy began to be fulfilled on Pentecost, but Joel's prophecy also reached out to encompass Acts 10 and the Gentiles. God instructed Peter to go and preach to Gentiles—to Cornelius and his household. As Peter began to speak (Acts 11:15) God poured out upon Cornelius and his household the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18; 15:8). When Peter saw that God

had given the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household he said, **“And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.”** What Peter here quotes (in Acts 11:16) is the Lord's statement recorded in Acts 1:5. If it is in the light of Acts 1:5 that we call what happened on Pentecost a “baptism” of the Holy Spirit, then, in the light of the same passage, it is obvious that what happened to Cornelius and his household was likewise a “baptism” of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 was: **“For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”** Certainly it is the case that Cornelius (and those of his household) did not receive apostolic powers. Holy Spirit baptism did not make him (or them) apostles. It must be kept in mind that there is a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit baptism and the power. Cornelius did not receive apostolic power.

In Acts 2—Holy Spirit baptism was for the purpose of proving to the Jews the fact that the Jews were now subject to the New Testament gospel—the gospel of the risen Lord. In Acts 10—Holy Spirit baptism was for the purpose of proving to both Jews and Gentiles that the Gentiles were likewise subject to the same gospel.

These are the only recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament. In Acts 11 Peter reviews **“by order”** what had happened at the conversion of Cornelius and his household. In verse 15 he says: **“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning.”** It should be noted that between Acts 2 and Acts 10 there had been many conversions. But, to find a case like that which happened in the conversion of Cornelius and his household Peter had to go all the way back to Pentecost. Obviously, there had been no Holy Spirit baptism between Pentecost and the conversion of Cornelius. It should be clear, therefore, that Holy Spirit baptism has no relationship whatsoever to forgiveness of sins.

Conclusion

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss Holy Spirit baptism. Rather, it is the purpose of this article to emphasize that John's statement about the Lord—**“he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit ...”** does not mean that Holy Spirit baptism is promised to any and to all who seek divine favor. John's statement was a prophecy. This prophecy must be studied in the light of its fulfillment. In all the New Testament there are only two cases of Holy Spirit baptism. The prophecy of John, therefore, related to these two cases and to no more than these two cases.

Perhaps it is in order to comment briefly on the phrase **“and in fire”** found in Mt. 3:11. It is assumed by many that this refers to Pentecost and to the apostles' baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is thought, somehow, that the **“in fire”** relates to Holy Spirit baptism. But, it should be remembered that there is no reference to literal “fire” on Pentecost. The

passage (Acts 2:3) says: **“And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire.”** In the beginning of this article we took the time to consider the context. In verses 10, 11, and 12 three times reference is made to “fire.” The tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire, verse 11. The chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire, verse 12. Now, between verses 10 and 12

we have reference to baptism in fire. It should be clear that in this context the baptism is not something good—not something to be desired. Rather, reference is made to the final and eternal punishment. McGarvey says, “It is clearly the wicked who are to be baptized in fire, and the fulfillment of the prediction will be realized when they are cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).
—Deceased



WATER BAPTISM—NOT HOLY SPIRIT—IS THE ONE BAPTISM

Roy C. Deaver

In this brief article we confidently affirm that the “one baptism” spoken of by Paul is water baptism—not Holy Spirit baptism.

In Ephesians 4:4-6, where Paul discusses the seven basic “ones” of New Testament Christianity, he plainly declares in verses 4 and 5 that **“There is...one baptism.”** In the New Testament we have reference to: (1) John’s baptism (Mat. 3), (2) the Lord’s baptism of suffering (Mark 10:38-39), (3) baptism in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), (4) baptism in the Holy Spirit (Mat. 3:11; Acts 1:5), (5) baptism in fire (Mat. 3:11), (6) Israel’s baptism **“unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea”** (1 Cor. 10:2), and (7) the doctrine of baptisms (Heb. 6:2). But, when Paul wrote the Ephesian letter in A.D. 62 he emphatically declared: **“There is...one baptism.”** Regardless of what there had been, and regardless of what there is going to be—in A.D. 62 Paul taught that there IS the ONE baptism.

The Baptism of the Great Commission

After the Lord had been raised from the dead, and after He had made various appearances to those who loved Him and when He loved so dearly, He met with His disciples—as he **“had appointed them”**—upon a mountain of Galilee, and there He gave to them (and by principle and application, to US) the Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20 records this commission as follows:

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (the consummation of the age)—*ASV*, 1901.

Mark records this commission as follows: **“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned”** (Mark 16:15-16, *ASV*—1901).

Thus, it is clear that in this Great Commission the Lord talked about a baptism—(1) which He Himself authorized;

(2) which is involved in making disciples; (3) which brings about one’s transition into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; (4) which relates to every creature in the whole world; (5) which is essential to one’s salvation; (6) which is preceded by and which is produced by one’s believing; and (7) which is to be preached and practiced till the end of time.

Let it be observed carefully that the baptism of the Great Commission (1) is authorized by the Lord; (2) is essential to one’s salvation; (3) is to be preached and practiced till the end of the world.

Holy Spirit Baptism and Salvation

The baptism of the Great Commission—to be preached and practiced till the end of the world—is essential to one’s salvation. Holy Spirit baptism is not (and never was) essential to one’s salvation.

The New Testament talks about the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. There are two—and only two—recorded instances of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2 we have the record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit connection with the apostles; in Acts 10 we have the record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in connection with Cornelius and his household.

With regard to what happened in Acts 2 may we note: (1) The Lord had promised the baptism of the Spirit to the apostles (Mat. 3:11; John 20:22; Acts 1:5); (2) The Lord kept His promise, (Acts 2:1-4); (3) It should be observed that the Spirit’s coming upon the apostles in Acts 2 is not—in Acts 2—called a “baptism.” We call this Holy Spirit baptism in the light of the Lord’s promise in Acts 1:5—**“...but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence”**; (4) The baptism of the Spirit was essential to apostolic qualifications and apostolic work. The Lord promised these men miraculous power (Mat. 10:18-19; John 16:7-13), and that this power would come to them with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We should be careful to note that the power was not the Holy Spirit. Rather, the power would come with the Holy Spirit. (5) As evidences of their baptism in the Holy Spirit,

the apostles were enabled to speak in languages which they had not learned through study, to make known by miraculous inspiration God's plan for men's salvation, and to perform miracles—many wonders and signs.

With regard to what happened in Acts 10, may we also note certain things. (1) God miraculously instructed Peter to go and preach to Gentiles—to Cornelius and his household. (2) God poured out upon Cornelius and his household the Holy Spirit. (3) When Peter saw that God had given the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household he said, **“And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.”** What Peter here quotes (in Acts 11:16) is the Lord's statement recorded in Acts 1:5. If it is in the light of Acts 1:5 that we call what happened on Pentecost a “baptism of the Holy Spirit” then, in the light of the same passage, it is obvious that what happened to Cornelius and his household was a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 was: **“For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”** (4) Cornelius did not receive apostolic powers. Holy Spirit baptism did not make him an apostle. It must be kept in mind that there is a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit baptism and the power. Cornelius did not receive apostolic power.

Holy Spirit baptism, in Acts 2, had nothing to do with salvation from sin. The Holy Spirit, in baptismal measure, and as had been promised them, came upon the apostles. These men—the Lord's apostles—had been selected by the Lord from among those prepared by John the baptizer. It was John's mission to prepare a people for the Lord (Luke 1:17). Specifically, one of the apostles was a man named Andrew. In John 1 Andrew is identified as being a disciple of John the baptizer (verses 35 and 40). Andrew, a disciple of John, had been baptized by John, and it must be kept in mind that John's baptism was **“for”** (in order to) remission of sins (Mark 1:4). Andrew, therefore, was one who had been baptized by John for the remission of sins. We recognize that without the shedding of the Lord's blood there could be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). Therefore, when Andrew was baptized by John, for the remission of sins, at the time of his baptism he received remission only potentially, and actually when the Lord shed His blood, and the atonement was completed. Now, consider that Andrew, an apostle, is present on Pentecost of Acts 2. He is one who receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He had been baptized by John for the remission of sins, and had already received remission of his sins. Obviously, therefore, the Holy Spirit baptism which Andrew received was not for the purpose of remitting his sins!

We conclude, therefore, that Holy Spirit baptism (in Acts 2) didn't have anything to do with the remission of sins. And, we reason that what was true with regard to Andrew was likewise true with regard to the other apostles and all other persons who had been properly prepared by John.

Further, Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 had nothing to do with salvation from sins. To discuss this thought properly would require more space than is allotted at the present time. Suffice it to say that after the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household, Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (verse 48). Verse 47 makes it abundantly clear that baptism **“in the name of the Lord”** is baptism in water, and it is this baptism in water which is **“unto the remission of sins”** (Acts 2:38—*ASV*, 1901) .

We have shown that in relationship to the only two recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament, Holy Spirit baptism had nothing to do with remission of sins. If the baptism of the Great Commission—to be preached and practiced till the end of the world—is essential to one's salvation, and if Holy Spirit baptism is not essential to one's salvation, then it is clear that the baptism of the Great Commission is not Holy Spirit baptism.

Water Baptism

The baptism of the Great Commission is the baptism authorized by the Christ. It is to be preached and practiced in His name. In view of all that had taken place in connection with the conversion of Cornelius and his household Peter said: **“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?”** (Acts 10:47). The next verse says: **“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”** Obviously, therefore, baptism **“in the name of Jesus Christ”** is baptism in water. But, baptism in the name of Christ is the baptism of the Great Commission. Therefore, the baptism of the Great Commission is baptism in water.

Acts 8; verses 26-40 records the conversion of the Nobleman of Ethiopia. Philip **“preached unto him Jesus”** (verse 35).

And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? and he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

Obviously, therefore, the baptism which is involved in preaching **“Jesus”** is baptism in water. According to verse 37 (in the King James rendering) Philip inquired of the eunuch about his faith, and the eunuch confessed his faith in Christ. Therefore, the baptism which is related to **“faith”** is water baptism.

From Beginning to End

Acts, chapter 2, is a tremendously important chapter in the story of redemption. It records the establishment of the Lord's church/kingdom upon the earth. Upon this memorable day was preached the first (recorded—**Editor**) gospel

sermon under the Great Commission. Upon this occasion Christ was preached and remission of sins was offered in His name. Peter commanded:

Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” “They that gladly received his word were baptized” (verse 41).

This, the beginning of the preaching of and the practicing of the baptism authorized by the Lord when He gave the Great Commission. It is baptism in water, for the remission of sins. It is to be preached till the end of the world.

Let it be emphasized that it is baptism in water that is to be preached and practiced till the end of time—not Holy

Spirit baptism. If the baptism of the Great Commission is baptism in water, and if water baptism is to be preached and practiced till the end of time and if there is ONE baptism—then it is abundantly clear that there is no such thing today as Holy Spirit baptism.

Summary

If it is the case that there is ONE baptism, and if it is the case that the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism, and if it is the case that the baptism of the Great Commission is for all time—from Pentecost of Acts 2 to the end of time—then (1) it is the case that the one baptism (of Eph. 4:5) is WATER baptism, and (2) it is the case that there is now no such thing as Holy Spirit baptism. —**Deceased**



DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.

Dishonorable – Hebrews 13:3

On March 23, 2012, the *Columbia Daily Herald* (Columbia, TN) had an article titled “Move-in before marriage no longer predicts divorce.” Based on a recent government study, researchers have concluded that it may be beneficial for couples to live together before marriage. The study found that contrary to past studies living together does not necessarily ensure divorce after marriage.

Considering the statistical fact that half of first marriages break up within 20 years, the writer asks the question, “Would we be better off living together first?” My answer to this erroneous assumption is “No!” Does it make it right for a couple to live together outside of marriage just because some questionable “research” says so? For the believer in the infallible Bible, the answer is an absolute “No!” Our standard is the Bible, theirs is fallible human wisdom—**“philosophy and vain deceit”** (Col. 2:8).

But for many people, living together before marriage has become the norm (60% according to the study). They are seeking to legitimize **“fornication,”** a **“work of the flesh”** and so a sin (Gal. 5:19-21).

False Shepherd

The spiritual head of the 150 million member Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill I (Vladimir Gundyayev), has acknowledged owning and occasionally wearing a \$30,000 gold Breguet (French) wrist watch. This extravagance was noticed by bloggers in a four year old photograph on the internet. The watch had been airbrushed out of the photo but the watch’s reflection on a table top was visible as Kirill was seated signing a document.

Jesus Christ, the lowly Son of God, died on the cross owning only humble homespun garments, no jewelry, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. The princes of false teaching of the 21st Century vie for the finery of this world, revealing a covetous heart (John 10:10; 2 The. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:3). Kirill began his church position as a monk. (April 5, 2012; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17622820>).

Equality?

For over a generation now, America has been a social engineering experiment in progress in regards to radical feminism. In the 1970s and 1980s, the anti-family forces tried to force the ungodly Equal Rights Amendment on us. I remember that one of the arguments against the ERA was that it would put female soldiers in combat which would cause a breakdown in unit cohesion. They lost that battle but are they winning the war? Radical feminism has become ingrained in our society. For example, over the last six years, the U.S. military has increasingly given female soldiers, sailors, and airmen greater roles in combat situations, yet at what a price? A recent report by the U.S. Army shows that violent sex crimes have doubled in the military since 2006. But has this caused the social engineering to cease? No way! The Army plans to continue its goal of sexual equality, even though it goes against the God-ordained order of things (1 Tim. 2:12-15; April 7, 2012; http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/apr/1/armys-chilling-trend-puts-women-risk/?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS).

“a” is for Apostate

Does the editor of a popular congregational directory now depend on some vague, subjective “a capella” heritage to designate who are congregations of the Lord’s body

instead of the Bible? In the 2009 edition of “Churches of Christ of the United States,” the editor scripturally left out some of the urban, liberal congregations which now use the mechanical instruments of music in their vain worship. Now they have reversed that prohibition based on a “heritage” in the so called “Restoration Movement”: Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, and Churches of Christ. By that subjective standard, how about the congregations of “instrumental” Churches of Christ in the West and the Midwest, will they be included? They have never considered themselves “a capella” yet they are part of that increasingly apostate “Restoration Movement”? I suppose now the editor will put a small “a” by the name of the congregations, like “The Hills” (formerly the Richland Hills, Texas Church of Christ), to show their designation as apostate. How hypocritical (April 9, 2012; http://www.christianchronicle.org/article2159587~Churches_with_instrumental_services_return_to_directory/)!

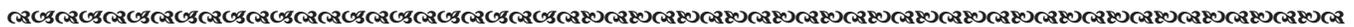
Jefferson’s Bible

“Jefferson’s Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth” is the name of an exhibit at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. In the later years of his life, Thomas Jefferson, the third Presi-

dent of the United States and considered one of the Founding Fathers, attempted to edit the New Testament. He cut and pasted verses from the Gospel accounts to reflect what he felt were the “real” sayings of Jesus. He placed this patchwork in a book form which has been reprinted several times. “Scholars” have hailed this as an attempt to apply the principles of the 18th Century Enlightenment, the “Age of Reason,” to the Bible.

For centuries men have tried to depart from the simple teachings of Jesus in the New Testament for their own corrupt reasons. Sinners often try to “cut and paste” (symbolically) their Bibles trying to find that “loophole” for their sinful lives. Some so-called “scholars” do this in their quest for the “historical Jesus” which actually is a treasure hunt to find an excuse for their unbelief (2 Pet. 3:16; 1 Tim. 1:7; 2 Tim. 3:7). The truth be known, Jefferson was not an example of moral virtue. For example, he is known to have fathered several children by his slave and concubine, Sally Hemings (April 14, 2012; <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/smithsonian-touts-jefferson-s-genius-editing-gospels-and-removing-resurrection>).

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(Editorial— Continued from page 3)

[us/19gays.html?_r=1](http://19gays.html?_r=1)). The *Abilene-Reporter News* also reported on the same ACU student (<http://www.reporternews.com/news/2011/apr/20/gay-student-finds-support-following-ny-times/>).

As we previously wrote in the last issue of *CFTF* and in this article too, there ought not be any Sodomites in any of the schools operated by members of the church of Christ. Please read what the *Abilene-Reporter News* reported that Dr. Jean-Noel Thompson, vice president and dean for student life at ACU, had to say about ACU’s position on homosexuality. Liberals (those who by their false doctrines loose people from what God in His rightly divided word has bound on them) will compromise on anything when they think it is in their best interest in secular matters to do so.

Remember Barry Grider’s fellowship circles he slurped up out of that old warmed over and soured denominational soup? The Sodomites will draw their circles large enough to take in Barry. They will do so while all the time making the same “argument” he does. Barry never repented of printing that article. Thus, it must continue to represent his views on fellowship.

It has always been the case that the liberal mind must attempt to show how broad and tolerant it is when contrasted with those who bind only where God in His Word has bound. Thus, for the liberal, the deeper he goes in digressing from the truth, the larger he must draw his fellowship circle in demonstrating how loving, kind, and broad minded he is

toward all those he deems to be “so narrow they can see through a key hole with both eyes at the same time.”



Obama’s Promotion of Sodomites

President Obama’s re-election website has posted a timeline (it is rainbow-colored) listing 40 specific accomplishments of his administration for furtherance of Sodomy. Clearly this perverted president is proud of what he has done in promoting this immoral conduct. One he will want to add to his accomplishments is giving his endorsement to sodomite marriages.

On April 20, 2012, Obama’s re-election Twitter account sent out a Tweet with a link to the website. Accompanying it was the following message: “What three years of progress for the LGBT community looks like” (LGBT—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender).

Remember, some Sodomites do not think Obama has supported them in their efforts in as public a manner as he could have and were upset with him because he did not sign an anti-discrimination executive order in April of 2012.

On the campaign website the following statement is found:

Together, we’ve fought for equal rights for LGBT Americans—and the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is just one example of the progress we’ve achieved since President Obama took office. Take a look at the timeline below, then share it with your friends.

Please note the following text from the timeline, which can be accessed online at <https://my.barackobama.com/page/share/progress-for-lgbt-americans>:

2009

June 17—“Ordered the federal government to extend key benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.”

June 29—“Hosted the first-ever White House LGBT Pride reception.”

Aug. 12—“Awarded the highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom, to Billie Jean King and Harvey Milk.”

Oct. 21—“Created a National Resource Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders.”

Oct. 28—“Signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law.”

2010

Jan. 1—“Banned discrimination in federal workplaces based on gender identity.”

Jan. 4—“Lifted the ban that prohibited people with HIV/AIDS from entering the United States.”

March 23—“Enacted the Affordable Care Act, reforming health care in America by lowering costs, expanding choice, and improving health care quality.”

April 15—“Ensured hospital visitation and medical decision-making rights for gay and lesbian patients.”

June 9—“Allowed transgender Americans to receive true gender passports without surgery.”

June 22—“Clarified the Family and Medical Leave Act to ensure family leave for LGBT employees.”

June 22—“Released America’s first comprehensive plan to prevent and end homelessness, which includes homeless LGBT youth.”

Oct. 1—“Awarded a grant to the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center to work with LGBT foster youth.”

Oct. 21—“Recorded ‘It Gets Better’ video to support LGBT youth experiencing bullying.”

Dec. 21—“Led a United Nations measure to restore ‘sexual orientation’ to the definition of human rights.”

Dec. 22—“Signed the repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.’”

2011

Feb. 23—“Declared the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional and announced the administration will no longer defend it in court.”

March 10—“Hosted first-ever White House Conference on Bullying Prevention in America’s schools.”

March 31—“Completed an Institute of Medicine study on LGBT health, the first of its kind.”

May 27—“Issued guidance to foster safer working environments for transgender federal employees.”

July 19—“Endorsed the Respect for Marriage Act, a legislative effort to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act.”

Aug. 18—“Clarified the meaning of ‘family’ to include LGBT relationships, helping to protect bi-national families threatened by deportation.”

Aug. 19—“Supported lesbian widow Edith Windsor in her suit against DOMA.”

Sept. 15—“Ended the Social Security Administration’s gender ‘no-match’ letters.”

Sept. 20—“Implemented the repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.’”

Sept. 30—“Permitted military chaplains to officiate same-sex marriages where legal.”

Oct. 1—“Addressed the annual Human Rights Campaign dinner for the second time.”

Oct. 13—“Alison Nathan becomes second openly gay appointee to be confirmed to the federal bench under President Obama’s nomination.”

Oct. 20—“Awarded Citizens’ Medal to Janice Langbehn, lesbian mother whose story paved the way for hospital visitation rights for same-sex couples.”

Oct. 31—“Included specific data on health needs of lesbian and bisexual women in the Health Resources and Services Administration’s ‘Women’s Health USA 2011’ federal report.”

Nov. 1—“In his presidential proclamation of National Adoption Month, President Obama called for equal treatment for same-sex adoptive parents.”

Dec. 1—“On World AIDS Day, recommitted the U.S. to creating an AIDS-free generation.”

Dec. 6—“Created first-ever U.S. government strategy dedicated to combating human rights abuses against LGBT persons abroad.”

2012

Jan. 28—“Announced HUD’s new rule protecting against housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.”

Feb. 2—“Announced White House LGBT Conference Series to address issues affecting LGBT Americans, including health, housing, and safety.”

Feb. 7—“Promoted equal access to quality health care by enabling searches for health plans with same-sex partner benefits on Healthcare.gov.”

Feb. 13—“Proposed a 2013 federal budget for an economy built to last, including providing security for the LGBT community.”

March (no specific date given)—“Ensured transgender veterans receive respectful care according to their true gender through the Veterans Health Administration.”

March 15—“Michael Fitzgerald, fourth openly gay nominee under President Obama, is confirmed to the federal bench in California.”

March 16—“Came out against North Carolina’s Amendment 1, which would prohibit same-sex marriage in the state.”

—David P. Brown, Editor



AN EXPOSÉ OF OLAN HICKS’ *In Search of Peace, Unity, And Truth**

Danny Douglas

Every sound thinking person will readily recognize the fact that Biblical unity and the peace resulting therefrom may be found and enjoyed by all, but only by those persons who seek after, come to the knowledge of, believe in, comply with, and abide by the truth in all matters of faith and practice (Rev. 2:10; Col. 3:17). The Scriptures plainly declare that this is the will of God, **“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”** (1 Tim. 2:4). Coming to the truth and abiding in it is absolutely essential in order for man to be saved, and to enjoy the unity and peace which God offers to man through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (John 8:31, 32; 14:6; 17:17; 1 Cor. 15:58).

A book written by Olan Hicks, titled, *In Search of Peace, Unity, and Truth*, purports to show the way to peace, unity, and truth, but, by leading man away from the truth, it would close the door to peace and unity with God and His faithful children. In fact, following its teaching will encourage compromise with error and engender a rejection of Biblical principles of interpretation. This way of thinking will always lead to apostasy. Paul warned that **“in the latter times some shall depart from the faith”** (1 Tim. 4:1). Moreover, in his last epistle to Timothy, he gives the reason why many will depart from the faith:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

A departure from the truth will always lead man into apostasy! At this particular time in the Lord’s church, many are departing from the truth, especially in the area of unity and fellowship.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT OLAN HICKS’ MATERIAL

There are some obvious comments that may be readily made about Hicks’ book before getting into various quotations from him. For one thing, he is very dissatisfied with churches of Christ, especially those who are striving to hold fast to sound doctrine. No doubt, brethren who truly love souls and the truth of God are concerned with the tremendous amount of discord that abounds in the church today. However, compromising Biblical principles and turning a blind eye to fatal error has never been a solution to division. In fact, those with a mind-set to disregard Biblical lines of fellowship and Scriptural implications, as Hicks does, have been the cause of untold discord in the brotherhood and have fomented rebellion to the authority of the Scriptures. Some things Hicks considers to be sinful are nothing more or less than brethren taking a scriptural

stand for the truth and against heresies which, in the very nature of things, have come, are here, and will come: **“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you”** (1 Cor. 11:19). Those who stand against heresy and for the truth are approved of God, as long as they maintain a Christian attitude in so doing.

Ignorance of the truth and the acceptance of false doctrine has been a constant source of division throughout the church. The inspired mandate for all those who espouse false doctrine is that they ought to be marked and avoided:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:17-18).

However, according to some, to obey the apostle Paul’s directions in the previous verses would not be the way to unity and peace.

But, Paul’s words are true and constitute part of the last will and testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The hearts of the **“simple”** (**“innocent”**—*ASV*, 1901) are often deceived by men who strongly advocate their agenda under the banner of peace, unity, and truth, while they all the time twist and distort Scriptural principles. *Hicks does this by denying that God authorizes by implication and by renouncing God’s law of exclusion.* He considers men who hold to these principles of ascertaining Bible authority to be the source of division and discord.

Moreover, he contradicts himself by attempting to align himself with the restoration movement of the 1800s while all the time disputing the usage of great Old Testament historical accounts, such as, Noah and the ark, Nadab and Abihu, and Uzzah who died because he touched the ark of the covenant. In actuality, these Old Testament accounts prove the case for observing such principles as God’s Law of Exclusion and exact obedience to God’s commands. Those familiar with restoration history are well aware that pioneer gospel preachers boldly and unashamedly used such powerful illustrations in teaching the authority of God over man.

Indeed, Hicks is a good specimen of *change agent* thinking which, back in the 1980s, began once again to popularize the idea that man can do anything in religion that God does not explicitly (in just so many words) forbid him to do. Such

reasoning would have permitted Noah's use of oak or cedar instead of gopher wood in building the ark, because God did not explicitly say: "Thou shalt not use any other wood but gopher wood."

According to Hicks, Biblical implications are not authoritative but are permissible for our own personal scruples. He maintains that they are not bound as part of the all-authoritative doctrine of Christ. Hence, we may conscientiously oppose mechanical instrumental music in our own worship, but we may not bind that idea on another person, since, according to Hicks, we cannot be 100% sure that the New Testament implies non-usage of the mechanical instrument. The fact that the New Testament commands singing, but no references are made to the use of mechanical instruments in the worship of God means nothing, if he is correct, which he is not! Such teaching is reminiscent of those whom Paul described as: **"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"** (2 Tim. 3:7). If his book is correct, it must be a healthy thing to wander about constantly in a maze of confusion, not even sure if the whole truth can really be known. But, Jesus taught that we can **"know the truth"** (John 8:32).

PEACE, UNITY, AND TRUTH ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

The kind of peace which Christ gives to man is peace with God. The result of obedience to the truth is peace and unity with God and Christ, that produces peace and unity among and between all faithful followers of Christ. Jesus Christ, Who is our peace, came to bring reconciliation between Jew and Gentile, and between both of them and God. However, this reconciliation is enjoyed *only* by those who are obedient to Christ through the gospel. Therefore, in Christ, both are made **"one new man, so making peace."** Paul so writes in addressing the church at Ephesus:

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph. 2:14-18).

However, according to the doctrines of men, peace may be found another way. Olan Hicks claims to offer a way to unity and peace through the truth. However, it is only a claim because he endeavors to place certain matters of faith into the category of options or opinion. He goes to great lengths in his attempts to prove that issues such as mechanical instrumental music in worship are only matters of judgment, and those who condemn the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship are wrongfully judging the mechanical instrumentalists, based on his erroneous interpretation of Romans 14.

As noted earlier, he seeks to get around religious error and

promote unity with those in error by blatantly claiming that God does not authorize implicitly. Remember, according to Hicks, an explicit statement from God is necessary for something to be authorized. He declares that in matters of implication man has liberty to his own interpretation. According to this idea, Noah would have been at liberty to use oak or cedar instead of gopher wood because God did not explicitly say: "Thou shalt not use any other kind of wood but gopher wood." Furthermore, where in the Bible is the direct statement that declares that an explicit statement from God is necessary for something to be authorized?

In connection with this, he also denies God's law of exclusion. God did say: **"Make thee an ark of gopher wood"** (Gen. 6:14). But, if the Hicks' philosophy is true, this did not exclude all other kinds of wood. The specified wood limits the material of the ark to gopher wood. Thus, with no other wood authorized, Noah was limited to the wood specifically authorized—gopher wood. All wood but the God authorized gopher wood is excluded.

Indeed, the kind of peace and unity which is advanced by such teachings is reminiscent of the kind of peace and unity among the people at Babel before God confounded their language. They were working together for a common goal, but they were acting in rebellion to God with Whom they had no unity and peace (Gen. 11:1-9). Hicks would have the Lord's people working together with the Christian Church for common goals, but this would not produce unity with God nor peace with Him. Those who are weary with division cannot find the Biblical answer by overlooking Bible truth pertaining to the same. In fact, those who seek for a kind of unity and peace apart from the truth of God's word will find themselves on the left hand of God in the Judgment. Jesus said: **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"** (Mat. 7:21). Unity and peace with all brethren and religious bodies is not worth forfeiting the truth in order to have it and, thus, the salvation of the soul.

The foundation of all true unity and peace is found in being right with God and His only begotten Son. This is the principle of salvation. Man can only be saved by coming to the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). Then, man must continue in the truth in order to be a true follower of Christ and to remain in a saved condition and, therefore, remain free **"in Christ"** (Gal. 5:1): **"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:31-32). The Lord taught that by loving Him and keeping His commandments, man would have the Father and the Son with Him:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make

our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me (John 14:21, 23-24).

Hence, only those who love and obey Christ are walking in the light with God. We are permitted to have no fellowship with anyone or anything that is in darkness: **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”** (Eph. 5:11). Only those who are in the light with God have unity and peace with Him:

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

Olan Hicks makes a comment which gives a clear insight into his thinking:

There is a false notion commonly held in religious circles, that to be wrong doctrinally is to be outside of Christ and lost. The notion seems to revolve around a misuse of 2 John 9, taken out of context and misunderstood, along with other passages where loyalty to the teaching of Christ is required (29).

But, the thing Hicks says is “a false notion” is the thing John declares to be necessary—abiding in the doctrine of Christ: **“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”** (2 John 9). Therefore, according to apostolic teaching, only those who abide faithfully in the teaching of Christ have a right relationship with God and Christ.

FURTHER INSIGHT INTO THE THINKING OF OLAN HICKS

Hicks is correct in saying: “Whatever is stated in God’s word is absolute truth, regardless of the evaluation man may put upon it” (7). It is strange indeed that he emphasizes more than once in his book our need to accept God’s Word and the truth, while at the same time implying that brethren who are convinced that they have the truth and that other religious bodies are in error have an attitude problem. Obviously, he does not understand or appreciate the exclusive nature of truth, and that to follow the truth of God is to deny the doctrines of men. In other words, holding to the truth will place one into direct conflict with error. Moreover, he does not think he has an attitude problem when he thinks he has found something wrong with us, reproves us for it, and seeks to correct us.

He further states: “Obviously we will all have to be able to rethink some things and let the Bible have the final say to a greater degree” (7). What is the nature of this rethinking? A statement that he makes in reference to the Restoration movement is telling indeed: “But as the 19th century drew toward a close, deterioration was already evident in this movement.... Intolerance and judgmentalism began to surface” (18). It is noteworthy that what Hicks bemoans as the 1800s drew to a

close is not the great division that had occurred because of the introduction and acceptance of mechanical instrumental music in worship, the American Missionary Society, and other denominational innovations but what he perceives as an intolerant and judgmental attitude. He implies that those who were in opposition to these human innovations had an intolerant and judgmental attitude. Obviously he puts the blame on men who were determined to preserve the purity of the faith rather than those who were so daring as to transgress the doctrine of Christ by corrupting the worship and work of the Lord’s church. If Hicks had been around when the Judaizers were infiltrating the churches of Galatia, evidently he would have bewailed the fact that Paul opposed them, rather than unifying with them. Paul, in describing the Judaizers as **“false brethren,”** wrote:

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (Gal. 2:4-5).

In like manner, if faithful preachers in the 19th and early 20th centuries had not taken such a stand against digression, the truth of the gospel would not have continued with many of the congregations that remained true to the Lord.

In chapter four of his book, Hicks goes to great lengths to convince the reader that it is erroneous to declare that we are the “only Christians,” rather than saying that we are “Christians only” (25-27). For example, he cites a statement by the late Reuel Lemmons in the March, 1984, issue of ACTION, in which Lemmons blasts brethren for claiming to be the only Christians and for claiming to have found ultimate truth:

In recent years we have seen considerable evidence of the emergence of the ultimate in sectarian foolishness—the self assumed claim that we are the only Christians. This “We have arrived at ultimate truth, and if others want it they can come to us and get it,” is as far from Bible truth and Biblical teaching as any doctrine of papal infallibility ever was (27).

Of course, we must have the humility to recognize our need for growth and to give the glory to the Lord and not ourselves, as Peter stated: **“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever”** (2 Pet. 3:18). Is it arrogance for those who have come to the truth to recognize this fact? If so, then God wills us to be arrogant because it is His will that we come to the truth and know it (1 Tim. 2:4; John 8:31-32)! John even declares that we can know that we know God: **“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments”** (1 John 2:3).

Is one sectarian because he recognizes and values the exclusive nature of the body of Christ? No! The Son of God Himself taught that the church for which He died belonged to Him, and that it would be singular in nature (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; 5:23-25; 1 Cor. 12:13). He said: **“...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”** (Mat. 16:18). But, from Hicks and Lemmons one

would gather that having these Scriptural convictions would make him arrogant, sectarian, and unwilling to teach lost souls.

Hicks even goes so far as to imply that brethren today who hold to such convictions are to be distinguished from well-known restoration leaders:

If the Campbells, B. W. Stone, Walter Scott, and other pioneers of the restoration movement were alive today and said exactly what they did back then, they would be quickly branded as rank “heretics” by those who claim to be heirs of that movement (25).

Hicks emphasizes that restoration leaders were fond of saying, “We are Christians only.” Are not all faithful members in churches of Christ seeking to be “Christians only”? Indeed, this is what true disciples really are, simply Christians, as recorded by the inspired historian, Luke: “...**And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch**” (Acts 11:26b).

The specific thing the pioneers were striving for is the very thing that we are pleading for today, not to be: “Methodist Christians,” “Presbyterian Christians,” “Baptist Christians,” and the like, but simply to be members of the one blood-bought body of Christ! This plea excludes all sectarian bodies! Paul declares the Headship of Christ over one body and only one body—His Church: “**And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence**” (Col. 1:18). If the Lord adds all the saved to his church (and He does, Acts 2:47), how can any faithful child of God be in any other religious institution?

OLAN HICKS’ VIEW OF SECOND JOHN 9

Hicks thinks and teaches that connecting the doctrine of Christ to one’s relationship to Christ is a “false notion.” He states:

There is a false notion commonly held in religious circles, that to be wrong doctrinally is to be outside of Christ and lost. Naturally they are not very receptive to that possibility. The notion seems to revolve around a misuse of 2 John 9, taken out of context and misunderstood, along with other passages where loyalty to the teaching of Christ is required (29).

The key here is to understand that Hicks does not consider loyalty to the doctrine of Christ to be essential. Indeed, a Christian, living a godly life and striving to be faithful, may be honestly mistaken on a doctrinal point that is obligatory in nature and need to have “**expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.**” Such an individual, upon recognizing his error, will most certainly correct it. However, this is a far cry from saying that one does not need to be loyal to the doctrine of Christ in order to be in Christ and a faithful child of God.

How ironic it is that the very thing which Hicks and others of his ilk deny is the precise thing that John declares to be essential! The apostle states: “**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**” (2 John 9). Obviously, John is teaching

the essentiality of abiding in the doctrine (teaching) of Christ in order to have the Father and the Son.

Moreover, to deny that the doctrine of Christ is the entire New Testament is to deny that the entire New Testament belongs to Christ! This is the very testament (covenant) which was brought forth by His blood and which belongs to Him. It is “**the everlasting covenant**” (Mat. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Heb. 13:20). There will never be another one to supersede it! To deny that any part of the New Testament is the doctrine of Christ is to deny all of it. To deny the effect of Christ’s shed blood is to deny Christ’s redemptive work. Therefore, a failure to embrace the entire New Testament and its essentiality for a person’s salvation is to deny Christ and His redemptive work. Let those who would so do be warned by the words of Jesus:

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.... He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (Luke 9:26; John 12:48).

OLAN HICKS AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

One must keep in mind that Hicks says his goal is to promote peace and unity with those who differ on doctrinal points. To be more specific, as earlier stated he would have churches of Christ in unity with the Christian Church and with those who claim to be mechanical instrumental “churches of Christ.” In order to do this, a way must be found to make these doctrinal differences acceptable to members of the churches of Christ and to claim that we are all following the truth of God, in spite of these differences. It all boils down to this: *Hicks and his fellow change agents must find a way to declare that deviations from the truth are acceptable to God.*

How shall it be done? Simply put, a way must be found to relegate matters of obligation into the realm of optional matters or human judgment. It boils down to having freedom of choice in matters of obligation (loosing where God’s Word does not loose), and liberty in areas where there is no liberty (loosing men from what God in his Word has bound on them). An example of his efforts along this line is a gross misapplication of Romans. One example is how he deals with the following statement: “**to his own master he standeth or falleth**” (Rom. 14:4). Hicks states: “Man does not have the infallibility to qualify as judge of all the earth” (42). This is true, but simply drawing conclusions from the Scripture and contending for the truth they teach as binding does not constitute unlawful judging as Hicks avers.

In Romans 14 Paul rebukes those who would bind matters of liberty (optional matters, matters of judgment, or matters of indifference) on their brethren as matters of obligation, and rightly so. The failure to observe these hermeneutical principles has led to many problems in the church, even until the present day. However, Paul in Roman 14 is dealing in matters

of indifference, such as the eating of meat. But Hicks places baptism for remission of sins and music in the worship of the church into the same category.

In order to relegate matters of the faith to matters of opinion or option, Hicks realizes that he must successfully refute important principles of Biblical interpretation such as: Scriptural authorization by implication, from which inferences are drawn, and God's law of exclusion. Thus, he goes to great lengths to show it is incorrect to apply certain principles in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. He even goes so far as to say that the use of these concepts leads to human error. Hicks wrote:

These are some of the reasons why the concept of binding inferences and deductions, in whatever system it is applied, leads ultimately to the setting up of some kind of human authority system, a diminishing of the exclusive authority of scripture, and much strife and division among believers (43).

Thus, he declares, as change agents do, that the Bible must explicitly state a matter before it can be considered binding:

It is to be expected that a conscientious person will be very committed to what he believes the Bible to teach, if he really believes that the Bible teaches it. But if the Bible does not expressly state it, then it has to be drawn as a deduction, an inference, or a conclusion. Does this place it in the realm of human judgment? Is it absolutely certain to be correct? (33).

He also claims:

This pinpoints the most distinct difference between the thinking of early restoration leaders and the thinking of many leaders of more recent times. It is in the matter of the proper place of conclusions, deductions, and inferences (35).

We could not agree more with a quotation which he cites from Rice Haggard, published in 1804: "One thing I know, that wherever non-essentials are made terms of communion, it will never fail to have a tendency to disunite and scatter the church of Christ" (41). However, we must disagree with Hicks' application of this statement in that he considers certain matters, such as how we worship God, to be "non-essentials"!

Are his claims concerning restoration preachers valid? The well-known motto, "We speak where the Scriptures speak, and we are silent where the Scriptures are silent," is solid evidence that the early restorers did indeed observe the principles of interpretation which Hicks bemoans, namely: implications, inferences, deductions, and inclusions. Indeed, respecting the silence of the Scriptures necessarily involves a recognition of God's law of exclusion and authorization by implication. This explains why the faithful pioneers did not argue for the allowance of mechanical instrumental music in worship and other practices of which the Bible is silent. An explicit statement was not required for them to consider a matter unscriptural.

To prove the point that God "speaks" from silence and the silence of His word must be respected, the inspired writers used logical arguments based on the silence of the Scriptures. For example, in his argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over the Levitical priesthood, the inspired writer of

Hebrews argues that the silence of the Mosaic law in regard to the tribe of Judah, in connection with the Levitical priesthood, means that one from Judah, from which Jesus Christ came, would have no authority to be a priest while the Law of Moses was God's law for the Jews. He states: "**For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood**" (Heb. 7:14). This inspired argument from the silence of the Word of God helps to further show that the priesthood of Christ, under the New Covenant, is completely distinctive from the Levitical priesthood existing in the Mosaic dispensation (Heb. 7:11-17). The grand conclusion is that: Jesus was made a "**surety of a better testament,**" and that Christ, Who "**continueth ever,**" unlike the Levitical priests, "**hath an unchangeable priesthood**" (Heb. 7:22-24). What good news it is that Christ is "**able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them**" (Heb. 7:25). We should be thankful and glad that the New Testament is not silent concerning the priesthood of Christ!

Moreover, the restorers had to have a "thus saith the Lord" before a matter could be declared Biblical. In an article titled, "Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Restoration Movement," Paul Southern aptly states:

Appeal to the authority of the Scriptures was the primary issue of the day. Every undertaking was examined in the light of "thus saith the Lord." Leaders in the restoration movement were determined to "speak where the Scriptures speak, and To keep silent where the Scriptures are silent.... In his *Declaration and Address*, Thomas Campbell sounded a clarion note which henceforth became the guiding principle in Biblical Exegesis.... With these principles of Biblical interpretation as their guide, pioneers of the faith settled everything with a "thus saith the Lord." For each item of faith and practice there had to be in the Scriptures direct command, a clear example, or a necessary inference (more precisely stated—a direct statement, approved example, and implication, **Editor**). Exegetical canons which did not measure up to these scriptural principles were rejected as the vagaries of men. The plea was not for human rules of interpretation, but for a return to the true method of exegesis indicated by the nature of the Scriptures themselves. Along these lines they pleaded with the religious world to return to the "ancient order" of things (9-11).

Nevertheless, Hicks claims that we are unfair and inconsistent to deny authority for the mechanical instrument of music in worship on the basis that man is no longer under Mosaic Law, but then using examples from the Old Testament to illustrate Biblical principles, in order to argue for God's exclusion of the mechanical instrument of music in Worship for today. He says:

The pattern generally followed is this: We first insist that the Old Testament is totally disqualified as a witness in the case because "that is not our law under Christ." Then in the very next breath our first three or four arguments employ Old Testament Scripture. (a) Noah and the "gopher wood" argument. (b) Nadab and Abihu and the "strange fire," (c) Uzzah's punishment for an unauthorized touching of the ark. With these we seek to establish

a “law of exclusion” for the New Testament (57).

According to his reasoning, the apostle Paul would also be unfair and inconsistent in that he contended that man is not bound under Mosaic Law today (Gal. 5:1-6; Rom. 7:1-4; Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14-17), but still he encouraged the use of the Old Testament for our learning. For example, in dealing with the Judaizers, he argued against the binding of the Mosaic law of circumcision (Gal. 5:1-6), and at the same time he used the Old Testament to illustrate principles of authority and obedience to God, as he plainly declared that **“whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning”** (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-11).

Hicks further uses a feeble argument to assert that brethren who argue against the mechanical instrument of music in the worship of God based on a “law of exclusion” are themselves in violation of that law in other areas.

Actually, even if we could establish a “law of exclusion” as precise as these arguments suggest, it is doubtful that we could apply it consistently. If God really is as meticulous as we picture him in these illustrations then we will need to reconsider our adding of harmony parts, without express approval in any part of the Bible, our use of written notes to aid the singing, or any musical improvement that is of modern origin. Some of our accepted practices in other areas also might be suspect, such as using more than one cup for serving communion, dividing into classes for Bible study, and even the owning of church buildings (58).

It is interesting to observe on this point that Olan Hicks has written a book teaching what he erroneously thinks is the way to unity, peace, and truth. However, he does not even understand the difference between essentials (obligatory matters) and matters of expediency (matter of option). Without a clear understanding of the distinction between essential and expedient things, a proper application could not be made regarding the famous restoration principle: “In Essentials, Unity; In Opinions, Liberty; In all things, Charity,” that he earlier quoted in his book (36).

Here, he implies that the use of notes and hymnals, which in no way alters the Scriptural command to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), is in the same category as mechanical instrumental music in worship, which would indeed alter God’s command to sing. Moreover, the kind of container in which the fruit of the vine is placed no more changes the manner in which we are to observe the Lord’s supper than the kind of collection container alters the command to give upon the first day of the week.

THE CULTURAL ARGUMENT

The disregard which Olan Hicks has for the silence of the Scriptures becomes evermore apparent. In reference to mechanical instrumental music in worship, he contends:

But it is not reasonable to suppose that here is a practice that stands as THE GREAT THREAT to the souls of God’s people, but the word of God makes absolutely NO mention of that fact! It is a practice so common in human culture the world around

that it is considered an ART. To most people the most natural thing in the world would be to play instruments when you sing, unless told not to. It is a practice that has never been called in question in either testament and is thought of as honorable in all cultures (62).

Must man have a “Thou shalt not” in order to omit an act from worship. Is eating not a natural thing? What about eating pancakes? The Bible does not say explicitly: “Do not eat any thing but unleavened bread in the Lord’s supper.” Then why not eat pancakes instead, and even add some maple syrup to them? The reason is this, in His institution about the Lord’s supper, Jesus used only unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. We learn this by implication, since there was to be no leaven present during the Passover, and Jesus instituted the Lord’s supper directly following the eating of the Passover feast with His disciples (Luke 22:15-20). Of course, according to Hicks’ reasoning, to bind unleavened bread upon the Lord’s supper would be creating a doctrine of man, and we might as well go ahead and eat pancakes on the Lord’s table. Who says that nothing may be bound by implication? After all, “unleavened bread” is nowhere mentioned in this context. However, by implication, which Hicks bemoans, we learn that unleavened bread is exactly what Jesus used in the institution of the Lord’s supper. We learn this by considering other Scriptures pertaining to the Passover feast, which feast directly preceded the Lord’s supper the night our Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:15-20; Exo. 12:1-17). It is our confidence in the fact that Jesus never transgressed even one law of God, as our perfect sinless example, that unleavened bread is to be bound today as the kind of bread used in the Lord’s supper (1 John 3:4-5; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:21-22; 2 Cor. 5:21). Hence, contrary to Hicks’ contention, demanding the use of only unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine in the Lord’s supper is not a doctrine of men but the will of God!

In regard to Hicks’ “natural thing to do” defense of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God, it could be said that it is “natural” when an object begins to fall to the floor, such as a table lamp, to reach out and catch it so that it will not fall. However, when Uzzah did that, God smote him with death for his error. **“Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it.”** Although the reaction of Uzzah seemed like a natural one, still **“the anger of the Lord”** was kindled against him, and **“God smote him there for his error”** (2 Sam. 6:6-7). The reason for this is that God had authorized the ark of God to be borne upon the shoulders using staves, and that it not be touched (Num. 7:9; 4:15; Exo. 25:13-16). So much for the “natural thing to do” argument! In the matter of obedience to God, we are to do what the Word of God authorizes, not what seems natural or culturally acceptable. **“We ought to obey God rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). What seems natural and culturally acceptable evidently has more influence on Olan Hicks than the fact that God gives no authority in the New Testament whatsoever for mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship.

MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND FELLOWSHIP

The bias of Olan Hicks stands out in his chapter on mechanical instrumental music and fellowship. Bias is an attitude that is always unwilling to thoroughly study a matter in order to reach the proper conclusion. He says: “Will those who divide over this issue have to answer to God for drawing a line of fellowship where God has not made one?” He assumes that mechanical instrumental music in worship is not a fellowship issue, and moreover is unwilling to set forth an argument to defend it. He states: “Our question is not the rightness or wrongness of instrumental music in worship” (51). Hicks either does not grasp or he does not respect the fact that standing for the truth is worth dividing over. We cannot afford to have unity with those who reject the truth, because we cannot do so and have unity with God. It was in this vein that Jesus, the Prince of peace, spoke when He declared: **“I came not to send peace, but a sword”** (Mat. 10:34b).

Another assumption which Hicks makes is that those who use mechanical instrumental music in worship are true believers; he implies that unity between mechanical instrumentalists and those who sing only may be obtained by simply setting aside this one separating difference. He states: “It is rather the question of whether or not fellowship can be maintained between believers who are not able to reach agreement on it, without violating the conscience of either or sacrificing any Bible principle” (51). While conscience must not be violated, the conscience of man is not the final authority for what is to be done in worship. The Word of Christ is that authority, and indeed, we are to do all by that authority, that is, in His name: **“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”** (Col. 3:17; Also see John 12:48).

In making a statement regarding brotherhood publications, Hicks implies that churches of Christ may be either instrumental or non-instrumental: “Several of these publications were financed by congregations and were mailed free to virtually all churches of Christ (non-instrument) and to preachers and elders throughout this nation and even overseas” (37). He also states: “Let the non-instrumentalist be tolerant and patient with instrumental brethren, while not compromising his convictions” (65). He does not realize that we cannot be sound in the faith and be tolerant of unauthorized innovations, any more than those at Pergamos could be pleasing to the Lord and at the same time be tolerant toward those who held to the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (cf. Rev. 2:14-16, 20-23). In fact, the Lord commanded them to repent of this tolerance (cf. Rev. 2:12-16)!

Here it is noteworthy that there are others in the brotherhood today, considered sound by many, who would agree with Hicks’ assumption that mechanical instrumentalists are our brethren. For example, Phil Sanders, speaker on the TV program *In Search of the Lord’s Way* and *Spiritual Sword* staff writer, considers those in the Christian Church denomination

as members of the Lord’s church, although erring (Tryggestad).

BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

The Greek word *aphesis* occurs seventeen times in the New Testament. It carries with it the idea of deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, and remission (Strong). It is translated “remission of sins” seven times in the *King James Version* and no less than eight times in the *American Standard Version*, 1901 (one additional time it is translated “remission of your sins” in the *ASV*). These instances include: twice in connection with John’s baptism (cf. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), one time in reference to the purpose of the shedding of Christ’s blood, in His institution of the Lord’s supper (Mat. 26:28), once in connection with the great commission (Luke 24:47), once in reference to baptism under the New Covenant (Acts 2:38), and five times in regard to blessings available through Jesus Christ (Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Rom. 3:25). Paul used *aphesis* twice in reference to the “forgiveness of sins” in Christ and through His blood (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), and, again, Jesus used it in reference to the “remission of sins” by His blood. This is proof that there is indeed a connection between *aphesis* in the purpose of baptism (Acts 2:38).

The topic of “remission of sins” was a prominent theme in John’s preaching. Jesus also taught concerning the “remission of sins.” Peter preached it on Pentecost to the Jews, as the purpose of baptism, and later to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, shortly before their baptism into Christ. Paul preached the “remission of sins” on his missionary journeys, as recorded by Luke, and later wrote of it. Hence, the topic of remission of sins and how to obtain it should not be one that is foreign to the sincere student of the New Testament.

Furthermore, the Greek word *apolouo* is found twice in the New Testament, and it refers to having one’s sins washed away fully, or remitted (Strong). Once it expressly occurs in the command to be baptized and the resultant blessing: **“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16). The other time, it has reference to the blessing received by those who had been baptized: **“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”** (1 Cor. 6:11; cf. 12:13). Not only this, but a related Greek term, *louo*, translated “washed,” occurs in reference to baptism: **“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water”** (Heb. 10:22). Moreover, it occurs in another passage, indicating that the blood of Jesus Christ is the cleansing agent when sinful man has his sins washed away or remitted, in the act of baptism: **“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”** (Rev. 1:5b; cf. Acts 22:16; Mat. 26:28; Acts 2:38).

With all the New Testament teaching on baptism for the remission of sins, Olan Hicks maintains that baptism for the remission of sins should not be a matter of fellowship. He

seems particularly grieved at the practice of “reimmersion” on the grounds that one had not originally been baptized for the express purpose of “remission of sins” (74-75). He concludes, based on Alexander Campbell’s writings in the *Millenial Harbinger*, that

Campbell saw something which his critics did not grasp, namely that there is a difference between saying that baptism is appointed to be for the remission of sins, and saying that baptism is essential to the remission of sins and in NO CASE could remission be granted without it (76).

Let us consider the issue in question. According to this argument one may be baptized to obey God but does not necessarily need to understand that it is for the “remission of sins” in so doing. Is forgiveness and remission of sins not attached to the act of New Testament baptism? Indeed, it is (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Jesus declared: **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; be he that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:16). If one obeys great commission baptism, as ordained by our Lord, but does not understand that it is for the purpose of forgiveness or remission of sins, then from what does he consider himself to be saved?

Moreover, the “certain disciples” whom Paul found in Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, had been baptized earlier with John’s baptism (after it had gone out of effect) and no doubt, they had done it to obey God. Yet Paul, an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ, saw it necessary for them to be baptized again, and this time they were **“baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”** (Acts 19:1-5). If the argumentation of Hicks and others be true, then why was their first baptism not valid?

An example of another commandment, the purpose of which is inseparably connected with the act itself, is the partaking of the Lord’s supper. As in the case of baptism, the act within itself is attached to its purpose, and without that purpose, the act is carried out in an unworthy manner. Even if those who partake of it do so to please God without the express purpose of remembering Christ in the sacrifice of His body and blood, the act is meaningless (1 Cor. 11:23-27).

In fact, the challenge to Hicks and others is to *prove that baptism is the only command to which knowing the purpose for it is non-essential*, as they say. Many examples could be given in which conscientiously fulfilling the purpose of the commandment is essential to its obedience. For example, our singing is to be **“to the Lord”** and in **“psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,”** speak one to another, **“teaching and admonishing one another”** (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Prayer is to be unto God, to thank and glorify Him, and to make our requests known: **“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (Phi. 4:6; cf. Mat. 6:9-13). Good works are to be done to **“glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Mat. 5:16). Many other examples could be given.

Furthermore, in denying the essentiality of baptism for “the remission of sins,” Hicks states:

God’s word has clearly told us that it is “for the remission of sins.” This we must say to remain Biblical. But the word essential was probably a bad choice of expression in which to state this Bible fact. Debaters in generations following Campbell’s time frequently affirmed in public disputation the proposition that Water baptism is essential to salvation. This tended to elevate the act of baptism above other aspects of discipleship such as faith, repentance, living a new life, and so forth, and created the impression in the minds of a great many that this movement believes in “water salvation” (80).

If what he says here is true, then baptism is for the remission of sins, but at the same time, baptism not essential to salvation. Therefore, one can be saved without remission of sins. If this is not what he is saying, then words mean nothing. Moreover, if that for which Jesus shed His precious blood, namely, **“the remission of sins”** (Mat. 26:28), is non-essential, then evidently the sacrifice of Christ is non-essential! Such absurdity is the conclusion of such fallacious teaching and reasoning, which seeks to circumvent God’s plan for unity and peace.

Furthermore, it is a false conclusion to say that demanding baptism **“for the remission of sins”** as essential to salvation, which the apostles did (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21), elevates it above the other commands of God. If this be the case, then nothing could be declared as essential to salvation without elevating it above other things. This is absurd in the very nature of the case. The apostles also preached the essentiality of hearing the Word of God, believing on Christ, repentance, and the confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10, 17; Acts 18:8; 2:38; 26:20; 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10).

THE LUNENBURG LETTER

Hicks relies heavily on statements from Alexander Campbell in the *Millenial Harbinger*, one of which is a response to a letter from Lunenburg, Virginia, in which a lady asked: “Does the name of Christ or Christian belong to any but those who believe the gospel, repent, and are buried by baptism into the death of Christ?” Among other things, Campbell said in reply:

I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well grounded hope of heaven (76-77).

Other startling and false statements by Campbell in response to the Lunenburg letter include:

But who is a Christian? I answer, everyone that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all Things according to his measure of knowledge of his will. A perfect man in Christ, or a perfect Christian, is one thing; and “a babe in Christ,” a stripling in The faith, or an imperfect Christian, is another. The New Testament recognizes both the perfect man and the imperfect man in Christ (Paden 13-18).

With all this being said, other statements made by Camp-

bell contradict what he wrote in response to the Lunenburg letter. For example, in volume I of the *Millennial Harbinger* came forth the following statements from Campbell's pen:

It is best to fix the minds of the biblical students upon a very important fact; viz., that immersion is the converting act; or, that no person is disciplined to Christ until he is immersed.... To be saved is to be pardoned, to be brought under the sceptre of Jesus. Hence all who believed and were baptized were said to be saved, because Christ had declared they should be saved.... The Bible says, "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved." How few believe it! The Bible says, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." How few believe it! The Bible says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved".... A gospel with out remission of sins is a misnomer; and no person, in those unregenerate days, could preach remission without naming water! I am for principles of action. Therefore I proclaim faith, reformation, immersion, adoption, and eternal life (Paden 13-18).

It is clear from many statements made by Campbell, that he did not deny the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins and to enter into the kingdom of God. His word indicates, though, that he thought that God might make exceptions in the matter, as Glenn Paden expressed:

He feels that many who obey as far as they are instructed may be admitted into the kingdom of future glory. He would also say that there is a chance that one may mistake the import and design of baptism. He seems to feel that if a person does this honestly, there is a chance he may receive eternal life (13-18).

With all due respect to brother Campbell for the good that he did, his word and views are not the standard that we are to follow. Our standard is the New Testament of Christ. **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God...the word of the Lord endureth for ever"** (2 Tim. 3:16; Jam. 1:25; 1 Pet. 1:25). It is by the Word of God that we shall be judged (Ecc. 12:13-14; John 12:48; Rom. 2:16).

Olan Hicks has not presented one Scripture that proves the non-essentiality of baptism, regardless of Campbell's opinion on what he considers exceptional cases. The foundation of the Lord's church is Jesus Christ, and its beginning dates back to Acts 2. Although we appreciate the efforts of the nineteenth century pioneers to restore New Testament Christianity, our origin goes back to Acts 2 and is based on the inspired preaching of the apostles. We stand on the Word of God, which declares that baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is for **"the remission of sins"** (Acts 2:38). If we follow the apostles' statement to the Jewish leaders, we will truly be in the New Testament church in the modern era: **"We ought to obey God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29).

CONCLUSION

In the land of Shinar, men sought to circumvent God's plan by uniting, not based on His will, but according to their own plan. They planned to build a city and a tower, **"whose top may reach unto heaven."** They were not concerned about

doing God's will but making a name. Consequently, God put a stop to their efforts, and it was called Babel, because **"the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth"** (Gen. 11:1-9).

In like manner, Olan Hicks and others of his ilk seek unity, but not according to the will of God. Books such as his are an effort, like the one at Babel, to circumvent God's plan. God has laid down the only way to unity and peace, and that is by the truth of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. The Lord plainly said: **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"** (John 14:6).

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"THE SO-CALLED TOLERANT ARE OFTEN VERY INTOLERANT. THE SO-CALLED BROADMINDED ARE OFTEN VERY NARROW MINDED; ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ALWAYS TALK ABOUT HOW TOLERANT AND BROAD MINDED THEY ARE."

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

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"IF WE KEEP TREATING OUR MOST IMPORTANT VALUES AS MEANINGLESS RELICS, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THEY'LL BECOME."

—MICHAEL JOSEPHSON

Is It Time for Another Address and Declaration?

Darrell Debo

For about eighty years a prosperous and happy religious people dwelt with one heart and one soul in that which pertained to the kingdom of God. What was taught, proclaimed, and practiced with scarcely an exception was based on the premise that **“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11).** The **“oracles of God”** were appreciated and believed as the veritable Word of the living God almost without exception, and the slogan **“Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent we are silent”** became the watchword. There was a united brotherhood which agreed that nothing should be taught, received, or practiced religiously for which could not be produced a **“Thus saith the Lord.”** Many in sectarian bodies saw the beauty and consistency, along with the wonderful strength and harmony, in this plea by the disciples in endeavoring to restore the primitive or apostolic Christianity in spirit as well as practice, and came out of denominationalism into that great and godly effort.

With the passing of time, there arose among the brethren some who were not content to abide in the pristine doctrines of the New Testament and began to speak where the Bible was silent. They began to give uncertain sounds regarding the gospel system and the ancient order of things, determining in their human wisdom that a **“Thus saith the Lord”** was no longer essential in maintaining gospel truth. The coming of the organization of the missionary society in 1849 manifested the first outcropping of the new attitude toward the Scriptures, and the coming of the War Between the States 1861-65 delayed somewhat the introduction of other unscriptural attitudes and practices.

Initially, the brethren had discarded all man-made laws, rules, disciplines, and confessions of faith as means of governing the Lord’s church, and rather acknowledged the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures as the only true, sure, and divine way to govern the church of Christ in its members and congregationally. The missionary society negated this principle by claiming that the work of the Lord’s body could be accomplished by an organization larger than the local congregation, and that to be based on a monetary membership — all without scriptural authority.

Forty years later saw other unscriptural practices being introduced into and practiced by some of the congregations. Faithful brethren, who were clinging to the authority of the Scriptures as the only sure way of acceptance by God, began to cry out against the various innovations and false doctrines creeping into the body of Christ. An expression of this opposition finally came to fruition on August 17, 1889, at Sand Creek in Shelby County, Illinois, when a huge mass of brethren assembled, representing a number of congregations in

the area. Following an address of some one hour and forty minutes by brother Daniel Sommer, elder P. P. Warren stood and addressed the audience. Part of his dissertation included the following words:

...we [have] prospered and became, as our brother who preceded me has shown you, a great and a mighty people. For a continuation of this order of things we hoped and labored and prayed. But there have arisen many among us who have shown themselves to be unsatisfied with what is written. They have introduced things which our King has never authorized, and as a result have made us a divided and an unhappy people. We pled and entreated that we might have the peace of the gospel, but they would not hear our entreaties. Therefore, after much earnest thought on the part of loyal brethren it was decided that something should be said and done which would relieve those who intended to be loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ from responsibility for the misdemeanors, of those who are not satisfied with what is written in the word of God. . . . As a result a goodly number of Churches sent prominent brethren and we met yesterday, August 17th, in the Sand Creek house of worship and decided upon the following document which I will read.

And now, please allow us to call attention to some painful facts and considerations. There are among us those who do teach and practice things not taught or found in the New Testament, which have been received by many well-meaning disciples, but rejected by those more thoughtful, and in most instances better informed in the Scriptures, and who have repeatedly protested against this false teaching and those corrupt practices among the disciples.

The following items against which the brethren at that time had complained and protested were enumerated:

1. Unlawful methods resorted to in order to raise or get money for religious purposes (holding festivals of various kinds in the house of the Lord or elsewhere demanding each participant shall pay a certain sum as an admittance fee)
2. The use of instrumental music in the worship, the select choir, to the virtual, if not the real, abandonment of congregational singing
3. The manmade society for missionary work
4. The one man, imported preacher-pastor to feed and watch over the flock.

These, with many other objectionable and unauthorized things, are now taught and practiced in many of the congregations, and that to the great grief and mortification of some of the members of said congregations. . . . And now, brethren, you who teach such things, and those who practice the same, must certainly know that they are not only not in harmony with the gospel but are in opposition thereto. You will admit that it is safe, and only safe, to teach and practice what the

divine record enjoins upon the disciples. To this none can reasonably object. This is exactly what we want and for which we contend.

It is, therefore, with the view, if possible, of counteracting the usages and practices that have crept into the churches that this effort on the part of the congregations hereafter named is made. And now, . . . we state that we are impelled from a sense of duty to say that all such as are guilty of teaching or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, after having had sufficient time for meditation and reflection, if they will not turn away from such abominations, that we can not and will not regard them as brethren.

The apostasy, as you may discern, had long since already begun among the churches of that day and age, seventeen years before the formal division was recognized in the religious census of 1906. The “progressives,” as they called themselves, were known largely as Christian churches and were known in the census as Disciples of Christ, while for the most part those who stayed with the original grounds of the restoration principle were denoted as churches of Christ.

Now, here 122 years after the Sand Creek Address and Declaration and the great massive assembly of the saints in Shelby County, Illinois, the above named complaints, along with others we could enumerate, sound like the same old departures from divine truth. Former faithful brethren now raise funds for the church by various schemes and methods; are now denoting the use of mechanical instruments of music as a matter of choice and opinion rather than a matter of faith; using choirs, solos, quartets, etc. for the entertainment of the congregation; have elevated the role of women in the worship to exercising authority over men; and have a “pastor” or the “preaching minister” along with every other kind of “minister” that can be delegated or thought of—all without divine authority. I am awaiting the time when someone installs a “minister” to the bachelors and old maids! Since I am a bachelor, I just might “jine up” with that bunch so I would have someone to minister to me!

When I left the Christian Church in the 1950s, the Lord’s church was largely united. We were preaching the same gospel that was preached in the beginning, we read the same Bible and spoke in biblical language, we knew what we were getting into when we entered a meetinghouse with the name “Church of Christ” on it, and we enjoyed that sweet fellowship that accrues to the faithful in Christ—and the church grew. Now, for some time I have heard the same religious tripe coming from some of our former brethren that I heard in the digressive group more than 60 years ago, completely discounting and rejecting the authority of the plenary inspired and inerrant Word of God. Some even make light of those who would cling to the blessed inspired gospel and claim that we no longer need divine authority for what we believe and practice in religion. They thus have trod underfoot the blood of the covenant and make void the commandments of God by their self-elevated man-made wisdom and traditions.

Many of us today have already broken fellowship with these false brethren and their erroneous doctrines and their man-made theories, which they spout. Fellowship is a precious commodity established by walking in the light of God’s truth (1 John 1:7; Acts 2:42); but when there are those among us who no longer have any regard nor love for that truth, we no longer can walk together nor can they be counted as faithful brethren.

The liberal element in the political realm is striving with vigor to trash our revered Constitution of the United States, and the liberals in the religious field now are with an ungodly and irreverent attitude toward the Word of God determined to do the same with the Constitution of the Lord’s church. When individual brethren and entire congregations do so, those brethren who are faithful and loyal to King Jesus and His divine revelation have no other course to pursue but to break the ties of fellowship that once bound us together. Perhaps it is time, then, for another Address and Declaration to be declared among us so that our Father in heaven, the lovers of truth, and all the world may know where we stand. The spineless brethren, who have no more regard for God’s Word than they would a comic book, who strive to ride the fence with the wicked, can fellowship their sectarian friends and go out from us; for if they were of us, no doubt they would have continued with us. Are there those among us now who are ashamed to take a stand and are ashamed of the gospel of Christ? If so, they can go on their merry way, which if continued in their determined course will only result in the road to perdition. As for me and my house, we shall stand; and having done all, stand without being ashamed of the truth divinely revealed from the very portals of heaven.

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