

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THAT "OLE PINKO" WALTER CRONKITE

Jerry Murrell

Those of you who have watched more than a few episodes of the old TV program "All in the Family" have no doubt heard **Archie Bunker** refer to Walter Cronkite as "that 'ole pinko' Cronkite." For younger readers the term "pinko" was used to refer to one who leaned toward the communist side in the Cold War. This was because the communists were referred to as the "reds." You can still hear this term used by many conservatives who refer to the so-called People's Republic of China as "Red China" as opposed to Taiwan. Archie, like many Americans, felt that Walter Cronkite was leaning toward the communist side in the Cold War. The examination of the evidence for this is well beyond the scope of this article. However, it is, in part, a political rather than a moral question. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear that Walter may be a little "pink" in more ways than one.

WALTER CRONKITE AND HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGES

One of the hottest issues facing our country now is so-called "homosexual marriage." In places all over this country, some men are "marrying men" and some women are "marrying women." This is both against nature, common sense and the Bible. It is enough of a problem that **President George W. Bush** has endorsed the idea of a constitutional amendment to define marriage as being exclusively the union of a man and a woman. As homosexual activists are pushing this moral

issue onto center stage, various people have come down on one side or the other. Walter Cronkite now has "come out of the closet" with his views on this issue.

In a visit to San Francisco, Cronkite spoke forcefully on this issue of homosexual marriages. **Steven Winn**, an "arts and culture critic" for the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote an article concerning Cronkite's visit. He wrote:

Just before railing against the Christian right's objection to gay marriage ("That's about as obnoxious a thing as has ever happened.") How is it obnoxious to object to "gay marriage?"

The word obnoxious is a Latin compound word from *ob*: "to" and *noxious*: "injure." Surely Cronkite has missed the murder of so many by the late characters **Poll Pot** of Cambodia and "**Uncle**" **Joe Stalin** of the former USSR if the moral objections raised by people against "homosexual marriage" is the MOST obnoxious thing he has ever seen.

The word obnoxious can be defined as describing something harmful to the mind or morals. If anything is obnoxious, it is homosexual activists trying to shove homosexual marriage down the throat of honest, hardworking, and biblically moral Americans. Why are those that want to destroy the moral fiber of America portrayed as heroes by media elites like Cronkite, while those who want to stand for that which is right are portrayed as evil? Someone had something to say about those who call "**evil good and good evil**"

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
jbrow@charter.net

Michael Light, Assistant Editor
mclight@bwoodtx.com

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH is published monthly. P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357 Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

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

Editorial...

"YE HAVE NOT RESISTED UNTO BLOOD STRIVING AGAINST SIN" (HEBREWS 12:4)

Many lament the amount and diversity of false doctrines in and out of the church that exist and continue to appear at a rapid pace in our day. And, they want to know why this is the case? There are several reasons that people develop false doctrines. Let us first of all list a few reasons for such as that relate to the church. Next let us note some of the reasons for the fundamental changes in our society in the United States.

THE CHURCH

In the church some of the reasons for the appearance (and some of them are products of others in the list) of false doctrines on a level and in a number that is greater than in the past 175 years are:

- (1) Many do not have honest and good hearts when they study the Bible (Luke 8:15).
- (2) People are ignorant of the Bible (Hosea 4:6).
- (3) They do not rightly divide it (II Timothy 2:15).
- (4) They do not respect its authority (Colossians 3:17; John 12:48; II Timothy 3:16, 17).
- (5) Lethargy, procrastination and indifference to spiritual matters in general on the part of many.
- (6) Loss of zeal and the courage of one's convictions or simply no convictions.
- (7) In general the growth of worldliness in the church (I John 2:15-17).
- (8) Due to the acceptance of the preceding 7 points many members have turned to and accepted sectarian denominationalism as Christianity.
- (9) For the same reason as noted in point 6 many members have a false concept of sin, who is lost and who is not, love, grace, law, knowledge, faith, repentance, obedience, baptism, the church, judging, marriage, divorce and remarriage and other errors on like fundamental matters.

THE WORLD

In the world and especially in the United States some of the fundamental moral changes can be attributed to the following reasons. Of course these reasons many times have served as the foundation for the errors appearing in the church of our Lord.

- (1) The growth of atheism and agnosticism.
- (2) The repudiation of the Bible as the word of

God and its loss of influence in the nation.

(3) The denominational system and the growth of pagan religions in America.

(4) The influence of organic evolution and its implication that man is nothing but an improved ape.

(5) The denial of objective reality and, therefore, the denial of objective truth (Post modernism).

(6) Because of point number 5 the consequent growth of relativism and subjectivism.

(7) The advancement of Humanism and with it the growth of materialism, secularism, pluralism and such like.

THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE

These changes should come as no surprise to us. And, they do not to the historian and to those who are biblically knowledgeable. Indeed, over the past 175 years or so members of the Lord's church in the United States have known a peaceful existence that our brethren of the first century rarely knew, if ever they knew it. *Our situation has been the exception not the rule.*

Throughout history the inclination of man has been to move away from God and the things of God. This was characteristic of Gentile and Jew alike (Romans 1:18-32; 3:9, 23; Acts 7:51-53). And, the previously enumerated reasons singly or combined along with others serve to cause men to develop doctrines the design of which are an attempt to justify their unscriptural and ungodly conduct (I Timothy 4:1-3). Indeed, regarding the second coming of the Lord, he asked: "... **when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth**" (Luke 18:8)? Although the Lord has promised that his word will always be available to men (Matthew 24:35), our Lord poses a question that sets out the possibility that men will not be living as the Bible teaches at his second coming (Romans. 10:17; II Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1, 6). Are we prepared for the continued growth of error and the further development of an environment that is not only ambivalent to God, Christ, the Bible and Christianity in general, but is openly antagonistic, militant and aggressive toward Christians?

We end this editorial with the recommendation to read and ponder the words of the Hebrews writer in Hebrews 12:1ff. They may mean far more to God's elect in the United States in the years to come than they have in times past; for persecution tends to come at us from directions and in ways that we least expect it.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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THE PROM AND CHRISTIANITY

There are many behaviors that are condemned in God's word. Our world is good at dressing sin up in nice attire so as to take our eye off of what it truly is. The prom (modern dancing) is one such sin. The Bible clearly draws lines concerning appropriate male and female interaction. Sexuality is regulated and confined to a God-ordained marriage situation (Hebrews 13:4). The modern dance is "*lasciviousness*" and "*reveling*" and therefore condemned in the word of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

PROBLEMS WITH THE MODERN DANCE AND ITS MUSIC

Modern dancing is also condemned due to its lust causing and sexually charged result. It is physically impossible for teenage boys and girls to wrap their bodies around each other and sway to music (sometimes for hours) and not become sexually aroused. The mind automatically turns to the fleshly desires during these types of situations. Jesus condemns lust of the heart in Matthew 5:27, 28.

The Prom (and modern dancing) is set to music, much if not most of which is sensual and vile. The lyrics of many of the songs played at these events are scandalous. We are not to feed our minds filth (Psalm 1). This environment cannot have any positive spiritual effect on our young people.

BANNED PROMS AND PROM DRESS

Why have (and some still do) schools banned proms? One of the great stories I have heard about one of our elders (now deceased) was the fact that while he was on the school board, the Bangs schools did not have dances, including the Prom. This was due to his concern for what was best for our young people. Is it not strange that godly men and women recognize this and worldly hedonists push for more dances and lewdness in our schools?

The dress of many at the prom is another reason not to attend. Many of the outfits are immodest. While those in the world grow callous to any standard of decent dress, Christians must realize they serve a Holy God, Who expects his followers to be holy as well.

THE SADDEST POINT

Perhaps the saddest point to be made is the fact that (even in the church) most parents buckle on this

issue. Some parents do what is right on this subject and do not allow their kids to go. And some mature young people know they should not go, and do not. Both of these groups should be commended and supported. But sometimes (even in the church) they are made fun of. It is disheartening indeed when their Christian peers go anyway. The result is that the parents who do what is right, have their position greatly weakened by other parents making light of it and not supporting the godly parents.

EXCUSES AND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROM ADDRESSED

(1) From Parents we hear – "Well, I went and it wasn't that bad." *First*, this statement is debatable at best. *Second*, things have changed a great deal in the last twenty or thirty years. The songs and dances have changed. The dress has changed. *Third*, two wrongs don't make a right.

(2) From Parents – Though not said, they seem to want their children to be popular, whatever the cost. I have two daughters, if they have to go get groped to be popular, they can just not be popular. How in the world can two or three hours on one night "truly" make or break their four years in high school? Some parents are so lame.

(3) From the Parents – It seems apparent that many (especially mothers) are trying to live vicariously through their children. Perhaps they were not that popular in school. Perhaps they were and long for their former "glory." Whatever the case, this too is extremely sad.

(4) From the Parent – "Well, they have chaperones at the dance." Friends, there is no way to chaperone the mind.

(5) From the Kids we hear – "It's not about the sexes." Really? Try having separate proms, one for the boys and one for the girls. I doubt much dancing would occur.

(6) From the Kids – "I'll just go and not dance." This too will not stand. Where in the Bible are we encouraged to draw near to sin? **B. J. Clarke** tells the following story that seems to make this point well. A daughter was trying to get her dad to let her go to the prom and not dance. After discussing it with her she still could "see no wrong with it." So he told her

to put on her prom dress and get in the car. She did and he took her for a ride. They ended up at an old coal mine. He told his daughter to get out of the car and to go into the mine. He told her not to touch the walls or sit on the dirty chairs. She was to just go inside and walk around and view the mine for about fifteen minutes. She vehemently declined. When he asked her why she wouldn't go in she said, "Even if I don't touch the walls and sit on the chairs just being in the mine is going to soil my dress." His point was made. Simply going into these environments will soil our souls. A Christian should have nothing to do with these types of events.

Brethren, I know this is a touchy issue, but we cannot waiver on the biblical position concerning it. At the prom morals are relaxed. Young people are put into a situation that cannot help but be detrimental to their spiritual well-being. We as parents must remind ourselves that we are the parents and we need to stay firm on this issue. We should train our children all of their lives to live for God and this issue should be discussed and settled long before the teenage years become a reality.

—Michael Light, Assistant Editor

That "Ole Pinko"

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(Isaiah 5:20).

SICK HUMOR

However, Cronkite did not stop there. He was asked the secrets to his long marriage to his wife **Betsy**. He replied that "I do think one of the factors was we were of different sexes." You might think at least he is one person who desires to live a good moral life himself, but does not believe we should "legislate morality." However, you must remember that he was in San Francisco when he made the statement. His statement about one of the secrets of his long marriage to his wife was not a statement of personal conviction, but a joke.

Winn followed the previous quote from Cronkite by saying of him, "He looked delighted as the laughter bellowed around the room." Cronkite then said, "That doesn't mean I wouldn't have been happy to be married to several friends I had of the same sex, it just never came up in our particular relations." Did Cronkite did realize what he was saying? If the previous statement from him is true, then his heterosexuality is a matter of personal choice. And certainly that is the case, but Walter's adoring audience would not hold this position, nor do I believe Cronkite would intend to take that position. Walter only intended to convince the people in the room that he really was in their corner on the issue of "gay marriage."

It is interesting to note that Cronkite and others like him see this issue as black and white, while they try to convince us that all moral questions are gray. Those who are opposed to homosexual agenda are evil Neanderthals, while those who support it are enlightened. Walter may be "pink" in more ways than one.

WALTER CRONKITE AND FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

I normally would end this article here with a few comments about how Cronkite should never again be called the most trusted man in America. Not only can a man not trust him with his wife, a wife might not even be able to trust him alone with her husband.

However, Walter Cronkite has been chosen to be a speaker for the 2004 Freed-Hardeman University (hereafter referred to as FHU) benefit dinner. The purpose of this yearly dinner is to raise scholarship money for needy FHU students. As a graduate of that school with an MA in New Testament, I have no qualm with that goal. I have never been very comfortable with "our schools" using non-Christians in this capacity, but I have not expressed this opposition publicly. I consider this to be a matter of judgment as schools are adjuncts to the home, not the church (*But, as is true of all Christian activity, we must have biblical authority for all we believe and practice, Colossians 3:17. To do otherwise is to sin-Editor*).

In the past FHU has used speakers who, while not Christians, were at least not on record as being unscriptural in the culture/moral war. I really doubt that men like **Norman Schwarzkopf** or **Archie Manning** were calling Christians who opposed "homosexual marriage" obnoxious, or that they were wondering aloud if they should have married a man. If they do believe this, at least they did not tell it to a bunch of newspaper reporters in San Francisco, knowing that it would be printed.

AN EXAMPLE FOR FHU TO FOLLOW

A few years ago, Mars Hill Bible School had invited **Charlton Heston** to speak at their annual

fundraising dinner. Between the time of his invitation and his actual speaking on the program, he made a beer commercial (“Bud Light”). From my knowledge of Heston’s reputation, I was taken off-guard by his appearance in a beer commercial. It seemed to me that Moses would not sell beer. I can see how Mars Hill Bible School would have been taken by surprise with this development. They made the proper decision and cancelled Heston’s appearance. The President of Mars Hill Bible School, **David Vester**, was quoted by the AP at the time as having said of the cancellation, “We’re a Christian school, and part of our purpose for being is to teach against the evils of drinking.” Vester, who is seen by many in the area that knew him as a liberal, followed Sewell as President of Mars Hill Bible School, when Sewell went to FHU as its President.

I can say that Walter Cronkite’s statement in favor of “homosexual marriage” was not out of character. If you had asked 100 people what Cronkite’s position was on that issue before his visit to San Francisco, at least 90 would have said that he was in favor of it being legal. It is very interesting that the article in the San Francisco Chronicle appeared on March 2, 2004, while the press release concerning Cronkite’s invitation to FHU is dated March 2, 2004. I know that not everyone reads the San Francisco Chronicle daily; I surely do not. I found the article linked from the *Drudge Report* as did millions of other daily visitors to his web page. The next day, I heard **Rush Limbaugh** discuss the story with his twenty million listeners. That night, *Special Report With Brit Hume* had the story in Hume’s segment called “The Grapevine.” Surely someone at FHU keeps up with the news. If they do not pay

attention to at least one of these outlets for news, we may now have bigger problems at FHU than we thought.

Since they know Cronkite’s position now, will Sewell follow the example of Vester and cancel Cronkite? If he does, I have an idea for his comment to the national media when they call, “We’re a Christian school, and part of our purpose for being is to teach against the evils of homosexuality.” If you have any influence with FHU, please call President Sewell and ask him to cancel Cronkite. If he will not take a stand on the issue Cronkite’s publicly advocating homosexual marriage and calling those Christians who disagree with him obnoxious, will he ever stand for anything (that question is not rhetorical if you have seen Sewell’s record at FHU)?

Instead of speaking at FHU, Cronkite should be asked to travel there to meet an obnoxious fellow like me on the polemic platform on the subject of homosexual marriage. I believe that most on the Bible faculty would endorse me in that debate. I wonder where President Sewell comes down on the subject. Will he stand on this issue at least as firmly as President Bush? If he does, I wonder if Cronkite will come to FHU and raise money for a bunch of obnoxious Christians. I also wonder if Cronkite will be told not to address this topic at the dinner. If he does attack the obnoxious Christians in his audience, will President Sewell publicly oppose him? If he will not, will someone at the dinner please slip my business card to Cronkite and tell him at least one “obnoxious Christian” would like to see him defend his position in debate. I might even bring him a pink dress to wear during the debate. Maybe we can have the debate at FHU. I know that they do not mind Cronkite speaking on their campus. Whether or not I would be welcome may be another matter. I will try not holding my breath until I turn blue; since I cannot turn pink, it probably will not help.

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EXAMINING ANOTHER FALSE DOCTRINE ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

David P. Brown

We are being told by some that God will not join together a man and a woman who are authorized by the New Testament to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage and who *intend* marriage if one or both of them have a *motive* for marriage that is less than the ideal motive set out in the New Testament. Furthermore, we are being told that even though one or both persons have professed and declared publicly in accordance with all scriptural obligatory and expedient customs and laws applicable to being married, that after the fact, admission is made that one or both lied in his or her public vows, promises and declarations pertaining to marriage, that God never joined them together in a Matthew 19:6 marriage. Thus, they may obtain a civil divorce and one or both, as the case may be, are scripturally eligible to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage with anyone else who is scripturally qualified to marry. This article will study these matters in the light of what the Bible teaches on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NARRATION

(1) If it is the case that the Bible teaches that a certain *motive must* be behind an eligible person's *intention* to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage in order for the marriage to be realized;

(2) And, if it is the case that each person *intending* marriage to one another declared that *motive* in the vows and promises to each other and God before witnesses in the public marriage ceremony;

(3) And, if it is the case that according to said persons' declaration of *their intention to marry*, which intention is based upon said *motive*, that each one declared to each other and to God before witnesses in the vows and promises of said ceremony, they are, therefore, pronounced to be husband and wife.

(4) Then, as far as the witnesses to the marriage ceremony are concerned, it is the case that God joined them in a Matthew 19:6 marriage when they were pronounced to be husband and wife.

(5) Then, it is also the case that all others must accept said two persons to be in a Matthew 19:6 God joined marriage.

(6) However, if it is the case at a later date following the marriage ceremony of said persons, said persons confessed that they lied to man and God in the marriage ceremony regarding their *motive* behind their *intention* to marry each other.

(7) It is also the case that the question arises as to whether said persons were telling the truth when they stated their vows and made their promises to each other and to God before witnesses in the marriage ceremony and were, thus, pronounced to be husband and wife; *or*, are said persons telling the truth after the fact when said persons declare they lied in their vows and so on in the marriage ceremony and thus God did not join them together according to Matthew 19:6?;

(8) It is also the case that said two persons lied at one time or the other.

(9) And, since it is the case that those who witnessed the vows and promises of said two persons made to one another and God by which said persons publicly declared their resolve to enter into a Matthew 19:6 God joined marriage;

(10) Then it is the case that the safe and scriptural ground for all others regarding said two persons is to view said two persons as being in a Matthew 19:6 marriage.

(11) To do otherwise it would be the case that other people must take the word of two proven liars that they did not mean what they said to one another and to God in the marriage ceremony;

(12) And whether or not God joined said two persons in a Matthew 19:6 God joined marriage at the time of the marriage ceremony when they were pronounced to be husband and wife is irrelevant.

(13) In such a case it is irrelevant, because it is impossible to prove when said two persons were telling the truth;

(14) And, since we are obligated to "**prove all things**" and "**hold fast that which is good**" (I Thessalonians 5:21);

(15) And, since it is the case that there is no way to prove when said persons were telling the truth;

(16) Then, it is the case that it is better to consider said persons in a Matthew 19:6 God joined marriage and responsible to all the restrictions and liberties thereof, than to believe their second story which we *know* is given to us for the purpose of seeking to get out of a marriage relationship without the Matthew 19:9 restrictions.

(17) And, it is also the case that men can get themselves into great big messes by their sin.

(18) Then, it is also the case that the sins (espe-

cially in intimate matters such as are involved in marriage, divorce and remarriage) can be of such a nature that others cannot determine the truthfulness and veracity of those entangled in the sinful web of their own design and making.

(19) Please remember, “...the way of the transgressor is hard” (Proverbs 13:15).

A CASE IN POINT

(1) If it is the case prior to the marriage ceremony Everett Chambers and Jane Doe *intended* to marry with the *motive* of gaining entrance into the United States;

(2) And, if it is the case that prior to the marriage ceremony Everett and Jane *intended* to terminate their marriage before either one died;

(3) And, if it is the case that Everett and Jane lied in the marriage ceremony when they declared their *intention* to live together in marriage until death parts them;

(4) And, if it is the case following the marriage ceremony as well as Everett and Jane’s entrance into the United States that they terminated their marriage with a civil divorce;

(5) Then, it is the case following the termination of their marriage with a civil divorce as well as entering the United States that Everett and Jane are authorized to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage with anyone else who is authorized by the New Testament to contract said marriage.

(6) It is also the case that the question arises as to *how* anyone else can determine that points 1-5 are true;

(7) And, it is also the case that others will have to take the word of one regarding the *dissolution* of a marriage when the same one admits that he has lied regarding the *formation* of a marriage.

(8) And, it is also then the case that the question arises as to how Christians are to apply I Thessalonians 5:21 to such a case whereby they can come up with a scriptural answer that would allow them to abide by Colossians 3:17 in their dealing with said matter.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE SCENARIO

(1) If it is the case that one person intended marriage for life and the other person did not;

(2) And, if it is the case that the person who did not intend marriage for life lied to the prospective spouse and everyone else previous to and during the marriage ceremony;

(3) And, if it is the case that after a time the liar declared that there never was a Matthew 19:6 God-joined marriage because he/she never *intended* before the marriage ceremony to be married till death ended the marriage;

(4) And, if it is the case, if one person’s intention

voids the intention of the other person;

(5) Then, it is the case that the question arises as to which person’s intention takes precedence over the other?

(6) For, it is the case if one person intended preceding the marriage ceremony to be married for life and if, preceding said ceremony, the other person did not (but lied and said that he/she did intend marriage till death ended it), one of said person’s *intentions* will take precedence over the other in canceling the contrary one out.

(7) Practically, concerning point 6, we will give the reader three guesses, with the last two guesses not counting, as to which person’s *intent* will take precedence over the other.

IS HE IN OR OUT?

Let us see how this kind of reasoning works in another contractual relationship.

1. If it is the case that Everett intends to join the army;

2. And, if it is the case that Everett must agree to three years of service in the army in order for him to join the army;

3. And, if it is the case that Everett’s intention before joining is to leave the army when he gets ready;

4. And, if it is the case that the army’s intention before Everett joins the army is that he will remain in the army for three years;

5. And, if it is the case that Everett lied when he signed the documents of his induction into the army for three years;

6. And, if it is the case that Everett’s intention takes precedence over the army’s intention;

7. Then, it is the case that Everett never was legally in they army.

8. And, it is also the case that Everett is not legally bound to serve in the army for three years.

9. And, if it is the case that after six months of service “in the army” it suits Everett to “leave the army” in which he was never legally involved;

10. Then, it is the case that, regardless of the time element stipulated in the agreement Everett made with the Army prior to entering it, the army is legally obligated to honor his intention to leave when he desires to do so because he was never legally in the army in the first place.

If the intention not to be married for life and engaging in lying in the marriage ceremony means that God will not join two persons who are authorized by the New Testament to marry in a Matthew 19:6 marriage, why would it not work the same way in joining the army for a period of time less than that stipulated in the legal agreement made with the army and then lying about it when one signed the agreement?

When two people have vowed before and to God, as one another, and the witnesses to the marriage cer-

emony that they are marrying one another, what are people to believe? However, some time later the two declare that before the marriage ceremony they really never intended marriage for life, so therefore, God never joined them together in a Matthew 19:6 marriage. Thus, they reason that they can obtain a civil divorce and are scripturally free to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage.

OLD TESTAMENT ACCOUNTS

Let us take a look at some other examples. In the days when God tolerated polygamy, Jacob married Leah thinking he was marrying Rachel. Although it was after the fact, Jacob learned of and agreed to his father-in-law Laban's terms for marriage to Rachel. According to their custom, the terms of the marriage contract stipulated that Leah must marry before Rachel. After the fact and upon being informed by Laban of the conditions for marrying Rachel, Jacob *intended* marriage for Leah. But why did he remain in the marriage to Leah? The answer: his *motive* for remaining in the marriage with Leah was so that he could marry Rachel.

In the preceding account written for our learning (Romans 15:4), we may deduce something else pertaining to marriage. Please consider the facts of the matter.

(1) Originally Jacob intended marriage to Rachel.

(2) After his marriage to Leah, Jacob learned from Laban of the custom that the older daughter must marry before the younger daughter may marry.

(3) After the fact Jacob agrees to the terms of the marriage contract.

(4) Jacob receives Rachel as his wife.

From this biblical account we learn that one proper *motive* for marriage can be to meet certain requirements in order to attain a desired end—such as entering into the U.S. Please note that while the scripture reveals Jacob's great love for Rachel, such is not said of his disposition of heart toward Leah. *The contractual aspect of marriage is what is herein emphasized.* Thus, Jacob was as married to Leah as he was to Rachel. And, there is nothing in the scriptures that reveals that Jacob failed to perform his responsibilities as a husband to Leah.

A MODERN DAY EXAMPLE

If it is argued that such Old Testament accounts where polygamy was tolerated are not proper examples regarding the correct motives for marriage, please consider the following scenario. Surely we recognize that over the years it has happened time and again.

(1) A man and a woman commit fornication.

(2) The woman becomes pregnant out of wedlock.

(3) Because marriage is/was held in high esteem, a common option available for the couple to honorably correct such a problem (especially many years ago) is/was for the man and the woman to marry.

(4) In many such cases if there had been no preg-

nancy the man and the woman may have never considered marriage to one another.

(5) But, for the sake of all involved, and especially the mother and child, marriage was proposed and realized.

(6) *Question:* Did said man and woman *intend* to marry? *Answer,* Yes.

(7) Was the *motive* for their marriage necessarily their love for one another and the baby, or was it an obligation they believed they had to one another because of the pregnancy caused by their fornication with each other? *Answer:* The motive for their marriage could be their love for and duty to one another and the baby. But, it could also be *only* out of a sense of duty to one another and the baby.

(8) Thus, said two people contracted a marriage out of a sense of duty.

(9) And, in this manner Jacob's marriage to Leah is parallel to the previous enumerated modern day matter that lead to marriage—*Jacob's motive for marrying Leah was to be able to marry Rachel.*

(10) Will those who say because the *motive* for such a marriage in the case of the two persons who committed fornication was less than what it should be, that the marriage was not a Matthew 19:6, "God-joined" marriage?

Let us suppose that some time later the man in our preceding narrative declares that since his *motive* to marry was simply one of *duty* to the woman and child, that, therefore, God did not join him to the woman in a God-joined Matthew 19:6 marriage because his motive was one of duty and not love. Therefore, he obtains a civil divorce to make everything legal. He then declares himself to have never been in a Matthew 19:6 marriage. Hence, he declares himself to be authorized by the New Testament to contract a marriage with anyone else who is eligible for marriage. Who believes such a view and conduct of the man in our story to be authorized by the New Testament?

Does the Bible teach that persons who are eligible for marriage and intend to be married *must* fully understand God's teaching on every aspect of marriage, divorce and remarriage before God will join them together to be husband and wife? If the answer is "yes," then how is it possible for atheists, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, and the like to be in a Matthew 19:6 God joined marriage? Surely the Bible does not teach that only Christians who are correctly informed about marriage, divorce and remarriage (and many of them are not at the time of their marriage as informed as they should be) are authorized by God to contract a "God joined," Matthew 19:6 marriage. *Indeed, marriage is not a church ordinance.*

Please consider the following "true"/"false" statement.

T F All other things being scripturally equal, if a man and a woman *intend* to marry each other with

any other *motive* than their love for one another, God will not join them together as husband and wife (a Matthew 19:6 marriage).

I certainly will not answer “true” to the foregoing statement in the last paragraph. The reason being that one’s *motive* for entering into a scriptural marriage does not necessarily alter or nullify one’s *intent* to enter into a Matthew 19:6 marriage contract that each person has legally and publicly declared themselves to be entering.

The same would be true regarding one person’s wrong intention taking precedence over the right intention of the other person. When two people who are authorized to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage publicly declare themselves by their vows to God, one another and before the witnesses at the marriage ceremony to be husband and wife, that is what they are. If one or both of the parties at a later date state they were lying at the time of the ceremony, then one or both of them as the case may be should be held suspect. Is one or were both of them lying after the fact or were one or both of them lying when the vows were taken in the marriage ceremony? *All anyone can safely do is hold him or her to the vows they made in the*

marriage ceremony and treat them accordingly.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SITUATION

- (1) Everett desires to enter the United States.
- (2) Everett knows he can only gain entrance into the United States if he is married.
- (3) Everett meets Jane and for a time courts her with the *intent* to marry her, his *motive* being to gain entrance into the U.S.
- (4) Everett intends to divorce Jane after gaining entrance into the U.S.
- (5) Jane loves Everett and knows nothing of his *motive* for marrying her or his *intent* to divorce her after they have gained entrance into the U.S.
- (6) In the marriage ceremony they profess to each other, God, the state and to the witnesses that they intend to marry until death parts them.
- (7) Everett lies to all involved in the marriage ceremony.
- (8) From the time of the marriage ceremony until the time it takes to get into the United States Everett changes his mind and decides to remain with Jane as her husband and she his wife.
- (9) Are Everett and Jane in a Matthew 19:6 God-joined marriage?

(10) Did such “marriage” become a Matthew 19:6 marriage when they are declared to be married at the ceremony or when their motives change.

CONCLUSION

The only way Jane or any other human could think of and treat Everett and Jane’s relationship would be that it was a marriage according to Matthew 19:6 and had been since the ceremony in the foreign country. How could it be treated otherwise? And, if Everett some years later, decided to divorce Jane on the basis of the fact that he lied in the ceremony because his *intent* was not to enter a marriage that would only end in death, should one believe him at the time of the marriage ceremony or at the later time when he declared otherwise? The only thing that would matter would be what was officially done and the vows that were publicly made before witnesses that the marriage would last till death ended it. The rest would have to be left up to God.

The preceding conclusion is based on a biblical, common sense approach. To do otherwise is to get into a mess the confusion of which makes the misunderstanding among the people following the destruction of the Tower of Babel pale into insignificance.

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IS IT A FACT PASSAGE OR A HOW PASSAGE?

Jason Rollo

The turmoil surrounding the work of the Holy Spirit is seriously misunderstood in religious society. This subject does not have to be so confusing, for the Bible gives us the answers (II Timothy 3: 16-17).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DEITY

The Holy Spirit is Deity (Acts 5:3-4). He is the third person of the ONE GOD of the Bible. Genesis 1:26-27 clearly shows us that while God has one essence, He is composed of three distinct persons, namely the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:14-17, 28:18-20). Second Corinthians 13:14 declares, **“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God (i.e., the Father), and the communion of the Holy Ghost (better rendered “Spirit”), be with you all. Amen.”** Note, the Holy Spirit is not an “it” or “a force,” rather he is a person—he is God!

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ACTIVE

Like God the Father and Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit is living and active. The question is not one of “Does the Holy Spirit act?,” rather the question is, “How does the Holy Spirit act?” Just as God the Father and Jesus the Son serve in separate capacities, so does the Spirit. The Father planned or purposed (Ephesians 3:10-11). The Son executed or carried out the plan (John 1:1-3, 14). The Spirit is seen in the organization of the plan. For instance, Genesis 1:2 shows the “Spirit of God,” moving upon the face of the waters in a manner to bring about organization in the creation. This work of organization can also be seen in the function of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament era. The Spirit’s work clearly involved the organization or revealing of God’s truth (John 15:26-16:13). John 16:13 states:

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.

Thus, the Holy Spirit was the person of Deity to reveal truth to humanity through the vehicle of the apostles. The Holy Spirit was active in inspiring the apostles and other holy prophets and through the message they penned He is still active today (II Peter 1:21, I Corinthians 2:4-16, Ephesians 3:3-5, John 8:32, 17:17).

This truth is clearly pointed out in Ephesians 6:17 wherein it reads that the “sword of the Spirit is the word of God.” This is why Jesus prayed that all men would become unified in one, based on “their (i.e., the apostle’s Holy Spirit inspired) word.” God the Father sent Jesus the Son to offer salvation to all, and whosoever accepts and obeys the Holy Spirit’s inspired message will be set free from sin!

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS MISUNDERSTOOD

The extreme misunderstanding of many today regarding the Holy Spirit seems to stem from several things. First, most seem to misunderstand that the Holy Spirit is Deity. He is God, not some “it,” or “mystical force.” John 16:13 refers to the Holy Spirit as “He.” Second, many confuse FACT passages with HOW passages. In other words, many read Bible passages dealing with the FACT that the Spirit indwells or the FACT that the Spirit leads or the FACT that the Spirit strengthens, etc., and they confuse such passages with the HOW of the Spirit’s doing such. Sadly, many, in and out of the church, read passages like Romans 8:11, 14, Ephesians 3:16, etc., and mistake the FACT with the HOW. While reading a passage like the ones listed in the above sentence, one should ask himself, “Does this passage state the FACT of the Spirit’s indwelling, operation, etc., or does it address the HOW of the Spirit’s working? There is a difference between the FACT of the Spirit’s working and the HOW of that working!

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit is Deity—He is the third person of the ONE GOD of the Bible. The Holy Spirit DOES still operate, He DOES still function. The question is, HOW?” How does He operate? He operates through the inspired Word given to the apostles! No, the Holy Spirit is not the Bible; it is through such that He works today (Ephesians 6:17).

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Identifying Trouble Makers in The Church

Marlin Kilpatrick

That the church of our Lord is in deep trouble cannot be successfully denied. Only those who are not familiar with the present prevailing conditions in the church would attempt a denial. The sad fact-of-the-matter is, so many church members seem to be unconcerned. Still, there are some church members who have difficulty in recognizing just who is causing so many of our problems.

One tactic of the “troublemaker” in the church is to give the appearance that he is sound in the faith and, at the same time, accuse others of creating problems within the body of Christ. False accusation is an old tool of the devil. He used this “tool” very effectively in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3). The infamous Ahab tried the same tactic. When the prophet Elijah met king Ahab, the king asked, “...**Art thou he that troubleth Israel**” (I Kings 18:17). Elijah was not fooled by Ahab’s tactic. Elijah replied, “...**I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim**” (I Kings 18:18). Ahab (with Jezebel’s help) was the troublemaker. The leadership of Israel was the real problem, and often it is the leadership (or lack thereof) in the church wherein our real problems reside. God, through his prophet Jeremiah said,

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!..” (Jeremiah 23:1). If God looked unfavorably upon this situation then, how must he look today, when pastors (elders) in the church are allowing the troublemakers to have a field day? Of course, this is not intended to be an open indictment of all elderships. There are many God-fearing men, in various elderships, that are doing all they know how to stop the mouths of false teachers. We must hold their hands up high and give them our full support. However, let us not overlook the spiritual descendants of Ahab and Jezebel who are troubling the church.

In view of the church’s spiritual condition, the question of fellowship with troublemakers must be faced. One of the primary reasons for identifying these “troublemakers” is so that brethren may be warned about continuing to fellowship such individuals. There were 850 false prophets that ate at Jezebel’s table (I Kings 18:19). Quite a fellowship! At whose table will you eat? Jezebel’s? The Lord’s? The choice is ours, but one thing is certain: we cannot eat (fellowship) with both and at the same time have the Lord’s approval. Think about it.

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“Where Will It End?”

David B. Smith

From time to time it is good to review the direction of the “left-wing” movement in the body of Christ regardless of the particular aspect considered. Such reviews offer the positive benefit of general information and awareness. Christians ought to be aware of what is happening, and where certain people are going. By this trends can be established and thereby avoided. Of course, the ultimate goal in conversations like this one is the reclaiming and restoration of souls (James 5:19, 20). But as one will find in these investigations, there are a few people that from the human perspective seem to have reached that horrifying point of no return (Hebrews 6:4-6). Yet there remain questions as to where this movement will eventually end, or if it will end.

DROP THE NAME?

Of the many men to be implicated and found false in these proceedings, Max Lucado is one. Already he has been noted as a teacher of strange and uncertain doctrines, teaching what Paul identified as “unhealthy” to the souls of men (I Timothy 6:3-5). And the faithful have done their part in following the second half of Paul’s assessment, “from such withdraw thyself” (I Timothy 6:5). Unfortunately, this does not always work both ways. Whereas the faithful may withdraw from the teachers of unauthorized doctrines, the false teachers do not always withdraw themselves from the church. And, as in Lucado’s case, this continues to attach turmoil, cast suspicion and darkness as well as bring reproach upon the church. The question has been raised on more than one occasion, “why not drop the name and leave the church alone?” There are at least two answers here. First, there does seem to be a pattern—established especially in the New Testament—that false teachers or heretical groups will cling to the church as long as possible. That is, these people will continue to draw away disciples while themselves posing as disciples for as long as the process renders fruit. Many will not drop the name “church of Christ” until it is understood that the description (and the tie that this entails) is no longer effective for them. Most people are now aware that Oak Hills Church of Christ, where Lucado preaches, is now officially the “Oak Hill Church.” Dropping “Church of Christ” was a strategic move on their part; and this is the second part of the answer. The time is coming, perhaps very quickly approaching, when those involved with the liberal digres-

sion will be required to disassociate themselves from the true “church of Christ” in order to keep a following. The fact is, these people are receiving pressure from more than just “liberal” members of the church. The denominational world is offering the ecumenical hand of friendship to the liberal branch, but on the condition that all association with the church be dropped. Now some might be curious as to how this conclusion can be so surely mentioned. The following offers ample proof.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST SAY “DROP THE NAME”

Some time ago, a letter was written by **J. Larry Holly** (a member of the Southern Baptist Convention) to **Chad Brand** (a professor at Boyce College and who received his doctorate education at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary). In this letter, Holly explained his concerns over association with Lucado and the use of his material. In short, Holly suggested that Lucado (and his material) be held at bay until Lucado denounces his association with the “churches of Christ.” He included in his correspondence to Brand a letter which he had written to the associate preacher at the Oak Hills Church of Christ, **Pat Hile**. The letter to Hile warned of the “dangers” inherent in keeping the name “church of Christ.” And he made the following suggestions to Hile (who, remember, is the associate preacher at Oak Hills):

1. Examine very carefully what you and your church believe about salvation and about baptism. You should state it unequivocally. An unambiguous statement on baptism would be critical, particularly if you choose not to change your name.
2. Publish your doctrinal position on the issues of salvation, security of the believer, baptismal regeneration and the indwelling Person of the Holy Spirit.
3. Provide to Reverend Lucado’s publishers a copy of this statement and insist that they publish an abbreviated form of it on the fly leaf of each of his books and in the credits section of each of his articles.
4. Resolve the conflict over your name. You either are or you aren’t a Church of Christ. If you believe strongly that you want to be known only by the name of Jesus Christ, you could name yourself, The Oak Hills Church, a church of Jesus Christ.

He then offered this statement in his closing words:

What you do, Reverend Hile, is very obviously your decision. I genuinely wish you well and hope that you can resolve these problems in such a way that all of us can fellowship together in the Person and the Passion

of Jesus Christ.

Now place the two together and the agenda is very clear: a very large audience is waiting to engage Lucado and his followers in a fuller fellowship if he will denounce the necessity of baptism, affirm the doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” make this available to his reading audience and drop the name “church of Christ.” Now some may conjecture whether his books have gone this far, but the totality of his writing (including his books) have done just that. Other than a page or two in the front or back of his books supplying a doctrinal statement, Lucado’s books are representative of his theology. Clearly, he denounces the necessity of baptism by affirming that men are saved before they are baptized. Additionally, the name “church of Christ” has been dropped from “Oak Hills.” Can you see what is happening?

None of this is said to mock or belittle the person of Max Lucado, or those who subscribe to his brand of theology. Nor is it spoken with any delight (Job 31:29-30); apostasy is not a laughing matter. But it is presented in order to say this: *there is no longer a shroud of mystery as to where all of this is going or where it*

will end. There is indeed a new denomination developing in all of this and eventually it will sprout wings and fly on its own. It is between stages of growth now. And it will continue to stay attached to the church until it feels sufficient to operate on its own. It will be a big step for them; but it is coming. It is already in the works.

The response of the faithful should be clear enough to this. Above all, saints should be praying for those precious souls caught in the devil’s whirlwind. But the voice of prayer is not the only voice that needs to be heard. Holy people must speak out and stand up (Jude 3). Always, the motivation must be love (Ephesians 4:13). But the church must know history is repeating itself and the end of this present turmoil is now in sight. Some have crossed the line already and have no intention of returning. But God help the church to do what she can to prevent the formation of yet another man-made religion. Souls are at stake. And the price is far too high to sit around and do nothing.

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THOSE “EXTRA CURRICULAR” OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT

Bruce H. Curd

Our hearts are deeply grieved that the Deaver clan have all espoused the dangerous and divisive theory of direct operation (known as Divine Illumination in the denominational world) of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the Christian.

Time was when these able brethren were in the forefront of the fight against sin and error. Now, in his declining years the noble **Roy’s** name is seldom seen on the lectureship circuit. The same is true of his son **Mac** and his grandsons, **Weylon** and **Todd**. Their fine articles and books, long coveted and highly prized are seen no more. Now, they are on the receiving end of countless articles and entire brotherhood periodicals that, without exception, lament the fact that they must expose and refute the false theories these once highly esteemed brethren are propagating along with a few others they have influenced.

Roy Deaver wrote more than fifteen years ago in 1989 the following:

For near fifty years...I have preached the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men, but the Spirit’s working always in and through, by means of, the written word of God, both in the matter of conversion

and in the guiding of the Christian—never separate and apart from the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This I will continue to preach. (Biblical Notes, March/April 1989).

Quoting **Dub McClish** who wrote:

This statement flatly contradicts Mac’s “direct operation” doctrine, which, since 1994, (at least), Roy has endorsed...Does Roy believe what he wrote in 1989, or does he believe what Mac began teaching in 1994? He cannot believe both.

Nor has Mac always believed that the Holy Spirit works directly on men’s hearts. Echoing Roy’s 1989 statement, he wrote in 1993:

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit *indwells* the Christian, but it also teaches that He guides, directs the Christian through the word (of Ephesians 2:22; II Timothy 3:16,17). *Here we stand*; and in opposition to any and all who deny this view (emph. his).

In a recent meeting of brethren...who are seriously concerned about doing what they can to prevent rupture in fellowship—it was stressed forcefully (after many hours of careful, prayerful study) that as long as we agree that the Holy Spirit convicts, leads, directs, and edifies only through the Word of God, what-

ever other differences there may be on the subject ought not to have the least effect on the question of our fellowship (Biblical Notes, Nov./Dec. 1993, emph. DM). (See Gospel Journal, February 2004, p. 3).

It is well known among faithful brethren that the Deavers, along with the lamented **Thomas Warren, Gus Nichols, and Roy Lanier, Sr.**, held to and advocated the theory that the Holy Spirit actually, literally, bodily, personally, immediately, indwells the child of God. They further contended that they were wholly unaware of any sensation of this special, immediate help (“better told than felt”).

The Bible clearly teaches that, when the Holy Spirit operated on men directly, causing them to speak by inspiration, speak in tongues, and such like, those affected were quite aware of it. Why should Mac’s direct-operation-of-the-Holy Spirit activity be different. (Ibid.).

Only the Deavers and a few others of late have allowed their theory to lead them, at least, into the vestibule of Pentecostalism and Calvinism. Their teaching does not allow a direct operation upon the alien sinner, but only upon the saint. Really, then, the only difference is a matter of time—just the time it takes to convert the alien into a saint!

MODERN DAY REVELATIONS

Closely allied with the personal indwelling theory is the concept of modern day revelations. Some religious bodies justify their existence on the contention that their founders received one or more revelations from God (e.g., Mormonism and the Jehovah Witnesses). Only one question is necessary. Why did God give them the purported message? It may be claimed that God gave such in the Bible. But surely this cannot be for the word of God teaches us not to go **“beyond the things which are written”** (I Corinthians 14:6—ASV, 1901; II John 9; Galatians 1:6-9). The religious teacher who claims to have a special revelation that changes what is written contradicts God.

Others say they received their revelation to tell us additional truth. This cannot be taken seriously for the Lord promised the apostles the Holy Spirit, to **“guide you into all the truth”** (John 16:13). If the apostles were guided into all truth it is impossible that modern claimants could be guided into any truth (Acts 20:27; Jude 3).

The Mormon **Farnsworth** in his debate with **Otis Gatewood** claimed that Job 32:8 helped support the doctrine of continuous revelation. He maintained that “one must be inspired by the Spirit to understand the inspired word. The inspired writers revealed nothing to the uninspired. The Bible is not a revelation, a revealing of the mind of God to man, to anyone except one who is inspired. If such be true and if the word when written by inspired, men could be understood only by an inspired audience, Peter, instead of saying, **“Hear these**

words” (Acts 2), should have said, **“Ye men of Israel, be inspired (or illuminated) so that you can understand what I am talking about.”**”

It is further claimed by advocates of progressive revelation that leaders received special revelation to a correct interpretation of the scriptures. This says that the Holy Spirit originally either could not or would not guide the writers of the Bible into thoughts and words to unlock the scriptures for understanding. If God *could not*, where did he get the power to later enable someone else to write plain enough so people could use it to explain plain scripture not understood at first. On the other hand, if it is argued that God *would not*, one is faced with a contradiction as to the all-sufficiency of the scriptures (II Timothy 3:17). It is the rankest fraud to claim the necessity of another revelation to unlock the meaning of the Bible. It would be no more absurd to ask God to give us another plan of salvation than to ask the Holy Spirit to come down and do his work again. And it would be as bad to ask the Spirit to add to what he has done as to ask Christ to repeat his suffering upon the cross.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKED THROUGH THE INCARNATE WORD

Since the Holy Spirit, the eternal third member of the Godhead, worked, and yet works, in the interest of the redemption of human souls, as we all know, we are also aware that God, the Father, manifested a deep and abiding concern for lost souls even before **“times eternal”** (Titus 1:2), evidenced by His **“eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Ephesians 3:1).

Christ, the Eternal Word, who became Emmanuel, “God with us,” was (is) equally anxious to bring about man’s redemption and his reconciliation to God. As the Incarnate Word, He **“gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity”** (Titus 2:14).

Even so, the Holy Spirit was no less interested in the eternal destiny of lost souls. His primary objective was to assist in bringing about man’s restoration to his rightful and proper place with God. To that end, he fully and completely dedicated himself to every act of his work, from his predictions of the coming of Christ through his role in the Incarnation and even in his part in raising Christ from the dead.

Let it be emphasized that, although it is true that the Holy Spirit constantly worked with the other members of the Godhead for the benefit of lost man, it is equally true that all of his activities were channeled through Christ the Incarnate word. He never once operated in a direct manner to the end that a soul might be saved. During our Lord’s earthly life, all the work done by the Holy Spirit was done through the divine person of Christ. Only those persons were moved upon by the Holy Spirit who came into personal contact with

the Incarnate word or to whom he personally imparted his influence and power. He who would benefit from the operation of the Holy Spirit must come to know Jesus, the Eternal word of God now manifested as the Incarnate word, God among men.

The Holy Spirit is still anxious that souls be saved. His interest has not decreased nor has his method of operation changed. He still operates for man's redemption, but never directly upon man, the sinner, nor the child of God. Just as all that he did for man's salvation, during the earthly life of Christ, was through the Incarnate word, so all that he does now for human redemption is through the "written word."

To state the matter another way, even though the

Holy Spirit and the word are not identical, they are so intimately joined that in his work, the Spirit never goes beyond the written word. The Spirit never enlarges the area of divine revelation. He merely conveys to the individual hearts what the words declare that proceed from the mouth of Christ. The theory of a direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart of saint or sinner makes the Bible as useless and senseless as a boy who writes a letter to his girlfriend and goes to explain it to her (cf. Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17; John 16:13; I Corinthians 2:13).

—64 Carraway Dr.
Marion, North Carolina 28752

12TH ANNUAL GULF COAST LECTURES...

MAY 7-9, 2004 PORTLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST "THE ARMY OF GOD"

FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2004

5:30 pm	Congregational Singing	
6:00 pm	"The Long War Against God"	B. J. Clarke
7:00 pm	"Love in God's Army"	Robert Taylor
8:00 pm	"The Enemy of God's Army"	Floyd Johnson

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2004

9:00 am	"Discipline in God's Army"	Richard Melson
10:00 am	"Dealing With Immorality in God's Army"	Lynn Matheny
11:00 am	"The Armor of God's Army (Ephesians 6:10-18)	Matthew Gibson
	LUNCH PROVIDED	
2:00 pm	"The Battle For The Mind Of Man"	Shannon Grizzell
3:00 pm	"There is No Furlough in God's Army"	Johnny Morris
3:00 pm	"Women In God's Army" (Ladies Class)	Jennifer Paden
4:00 pm	"We Are Saved By Faith Only Without Any Works Of Obedience"	
	(Mock Debate: Shawn Paden-affirm & H.D. Simmons-deny.)	
6:30 pm	Congregational Singing	
7:00 pm	"God's Army Must Be Willing to Stand"	Curtis Richwood
8:00 pm	"Preachers in God's Army"	Eric Owens

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2004

9:00 am	"The Commander of God's Army"	David Baker
10:00 am	"Fellowship in God's Army"	Israel Rodriguez
	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 pm	"Dealing With Persecution in God's Army"	Dub McClish
3:00 pm	"Contending With False Doctrine Concerning The Holy Spirit"	Jerry Moffitt
3:00 pm	"Women In God's Army" (Ladies Class)	Jennifer Paden
4:00 pm	"Elders In God's Army"	Kenneth Moore
6:30 pm	"Laying Our Armor Down"	Steven Patterson
7:30 pm	"God's Army Must Use The Sword Of The Spirit"	Don Walker

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Reaching The Lost With Error?

Marvin L. Weir

Some who have received their education from sources not to be confused with the word of God are now boldly advocating reaching the lost with error. The October issue of *The Christian Chronicle* 2003 (not known for taking a Biblical stance) notes that **Max Lucado** and the *Oak Hills* church have decided to add an instrumental service and then adds:

Other churches known to have added instrumental services—besides 3,800-member Oak Hills —includes Northwest, Seattle, the largest in that region; Amarillo South, Texas; Farmer’s Branch, Texas; and Southlake Boulevard in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

REFUSING TO SEE THE OBVIOUS

The director of church growth studies at Harding University, **Flavil Yeakley**, says, “Is this a trend? I would think of it as five isolated tragedies.” **John Ellas**, director of the center for church growth in Houston “sees a small trend related to music tied to a larger reality.” Ellas also says, “A much larger trend is the willingness to reevaluate previous theological positions, and a growing number of members are coming to very different conclusions about numerous church practices.”

One would have to have his head buried in the sand to not see that for several decades liberalism has infiltrated congregation after congregation of the Lord’s people. Thus, no longer content to respect the authority of God’s Word, many brethren are now working feverishly to lead all who will follow them into apostasy.

Rubel Shelly, ultra liberal preacher for the 2,200 member *Woodmont Hills* congregation in Nashville, says:

I am deeply committed to a cappella music. I do my best to make a strong, reasonable, biblical case for it. I would oppose anyone’s effort to introduce it into our congregational worship at Woodmont Hills. In my view, it would be divisive and therefore wrong for anyone to attempt to do so. I’m not about to champion instrumental music for the Church of Christ. I do plead, however, for a more creative, passionate, and worshipful use of vocal music. Human voices compelled by hearts zealous for Christ are capable of producing powerful, God-honoring, and participant-inspiring praise. I am an unabashed defender of our a cappella legacy. But when someone wants me to go further and to condemn to hell someone who doesn’t agree with my view, or to criticize congregations that choose to use instruments because they believe it will assist their Outreach in a community different from mine, I have no interest in pursuing the discussion. Instrumental music and the atonement are not of the same status or consequence to the human soul and its eternal welfare.

On the one hand, Rubel boldly proclaims he will not be the one to “champion instrumental music for the

Church of Christ,” but on the other hand he will not “condemn to hell someone who doesn’t agree with [his] view.” The “I’m okay, you’re okay” approach is mighty soothing! It is, however, the Bible view that matters. Instrumental music is not in the same optional category as eating meats (Romans 14:1-3, 15). Yes, Shelly, adding the instrument to God-authorized singing will be of eternal consequence to the human soul (Revelation 22:18- 19)!

NUMBERS FOR NUMBERS SAKE

The liberal’s only concern is “outreach” — filling the building with people who are willing to fork over a dollar! The preacher at Southlake Boulevard, **Keith Luttrell**, defends adding the instrument by saying, “Relevance is driving it. Relevance to our community. Reaching out to seekers.” It is stated that over 850 attend each week and more than 600 attend the service that uses the instrument. One thing is amazingly clear— this group of people prefer relevance over scripture as the driving force!

Chris Seidman, preacher at the Farmer’s Branch congregation says that since they have added “a Saturday night instrumental service in addition to two Sunday morning a cappella services, they have grown from 1,000 to 1,400.” He says of the new folks they now have coming, “People with religious backgrounds, but who haven’t gone for some time. They were worn out with the same old thing.” One thing the liberal doesn’t mind doing is giving folks something shiny and new and totally foreign to the Bible.

Amarillo South began using the instrument in 2002 and went from 900 to 700 in attendance. However, minister **Brad Small** says that now they have “grown to 1,200 and the congregation considers itself a non-denominational community church.” Enough said!

The author of the article, **Lindy Adams**, notes, “The churches who have added instrumental services cite a common motivation—evangelism and outreach. All report increases in attendance since the switch.”

Now to the heart of the matter! God will not accept unscriptural worship—worship must be in spirit and truth (John 4:24). There is Bible authority for singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), but no Bible authority for the instrument so it is not according to truth (John 17:17).

It does not matter how many people you pack into a building—you cannot reach the lost and save souls with error!

—5850 Liberty Grove Rd.
Rowlett, Texas 75030

WILDFIRE!

Annette B. Cates

Virtually every year some area of our vast country is decimated by wildfire. Conditions are right—little or no rainfall, dry air, wind—for conflagration. Then, something happens that can be caused by an act of nature such as a lightning strike, or by intention (arson) or the carelessness of someone tossing out a still-lit cigarette or not properly dousing a campfire. Suddenly, flames develop and begin to spread as if there has been an explosion. Whatever the reason for the fire, great havoc is caused by wildfire. Lives may be lost, and property is destroyed. For years to follow, the landscape is totally changed.

I see an analogy here with some of our interpersonal relationships, whether in friendships or marriage, or within a congregation. Our actions toward one another impact the starting of a wildfire of trouble that can forever change the interconnections between or among one another. Two people who were once close friends may reach a parting of the ways over some meaningless incident, and never speak to one another again. A husband and wife may also allow a small disagreement to blow up into a major argument that continues to blaze out of control until divorce ensues and the family is torn apart. A congregation may get into a dispute over something as trifling as whether to heat the building with gas or electricity. The church is hurt within the community, and unity that once was will never be again. [I am not speaking of doctrinal issues in this context. We must stand in defense of truth and against error and those who would promote it (Titus 1:11).] It may well be that in time no one even remembers what set off the disagreement; they just know they do not get along! The landscape of our relationships with one another is totally changed and may never be the same.

How do we fuel such wildfires? Sometimes a wildfire in nature will die down because of a change of conditions or by the efforts of firefighters, only to blaze up again, even more out of control. Why? The fire was not totally out, and it took very little kindling to get it restarted. We fuel our fires with others by not bridling the tongue, by not controlling anger, and by harboring ill-will and not letting go of the past. To prevent a wildfire, we must examine ourselves to be certain we are not in the wrong. **“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the spirits”** (Proverbs 16:2). Regardless of who was to

blame or why a fight started, someone must have the maturity to take steps to heal the situation before it explodes. **“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out...”** (Proverbs 26:20).

Our wildfires often start with an innocent remark that may have been misunderstood. We must be careful with our words, thinking of how our listener will receive them. We should also be mindful of how we speak, that it not be with a sharp tongue that will turn helpful words into hurtful ones. Solomon recognized the importance of the attitude that we use when talking to others. In Proverbs 12:18 he wrote, **“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.”** Further, **“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger”** (Proverbs 15:1). When one is constantly critical, or complaining, others react by distancing themselves, or by responding in like manner. As difficult as it might be, some things are better left unsaid. **“The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness”** (Proverbs 15:2). When we speak, let us not toss a lighted match into the dry brush.

Once the fire has started, uncontrolled anger fans the flames. In Micah 7:18, the prophet speaking of God wrote, **“...He retaineth not his anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy.”** He is **“...slow to anger”** (Nahum 1:3). Can we not have the same understanding and mercy toward those who are loved ones in flesh and in spirit? While we may have our disagreements, those would not break into a wildfire if we were to practice having forbearance and long-suffering with one another (Ephesians 4:2). Although anger is a natural emotion, we can and must keep it under control. **“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath”** (Ephesians 4:28). Anger is the wind that spreads the wildfire across the countryside.

Harboring ill-will prevents the fire from completely dying out. Paul stated that one thing he did was to forget **“those things which are behind, and [reach] forth unto those things which are before”** (Philippians 3:13). When angry, some become “historical,” dragging up past grievances which were, or should have been, settled long ago. The one(s) in the wrong have the obligation to make things right. The wronged person(s) must remember forgiveness means never bringing the matter up again. When no apology is forth-

coming, wrongs should not be dwelled upon by the innocent, even though forgiveness cannot be extended. The one who retains a grudge harms no one but himself. Ill-will keeps the embers burning.

It is possible for a wildfire to be followed by renewed growth and strength. The fire itself leaves fresh nutrients in the soil. Weeds that previously choked out desired growth are gone. Sunlight floods areas that once were shaded by unneeded brush. Those who handle their disagreements in a Scriptural manner, and with the attitudes of a Christian, come out of the situation

stronger, the relationship renewed. Following the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:22-25, the two sides will meet in the middle, make things right, and go on their way united. Destruction does not have to be forever, unless sin is involved and healing cannot take place. Let us strive to prevent the wildfires of life, but when one does occur, let us cultivate rich new ground on which to grow.

—9194 Lakeside Dr.
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38651

“God Told Me...”

Wayne Price

Pat Robertson told his television audience that he believed he had “heard from the Lord” that **President Bush** was going to win the election in November “in a blowout.” He continued, “It doesn’t make any difference what he does, good or bad God picks him up because he’s a man of prayer and God’s blessing him.” Is God incapable of accomplishing his will for a nation unless the people of that nation elect a certain person to be President?

Such subjectivism is not only unconvincing, it gives more fodder for the religious skeptic to attack religion in general! Above all, it is pure subjectivism. The idea that God would prophesy the outcome of an election to one man is quite an assumption, equaling that of another evangelist years ago taking credit for having caused a hurricane to veer away from hitting the coast. This brings the gospel into further disrepute before unbelievers.

Then there was **Albert Pujols**, St. Louis Cardinal baseball player, discussing with reporters his contract negotiations with the team. Pujols declared:

It’s not about me; it’s about what God wants me to have. So if he thinks I’m not ready for a long-term contract, he’s not gonna give it to me. But if he thinks I’m ready, he’s gonna give it to me...

Of course, either outcome will be met with “it was God’s will,” don’t you imagine?

Finally, there was the winner in the boxing match, being interviewed in the middle of the ring, saying: “First of all, I want to give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ for helping me win this match.” Frankly, if I had been his opponent, and knew that the Lord was going to help him be the winner, I would not have entered the ring in the first place. How about you?

Who would make such claims today? Well, ap-

parently there are many. The question should be: Who can successfully give evidence to back up such claims today? Mere affirmation proves nothing; only evidence is conclusive. It is true that in planning our lives, we ought to give serious consideration to the Lord’s will in that planning (James 4:15; see also Acts 18:21; I Corinthians 4:19; 16:7). After all, “man proposes, but God disposes.” We may, and often do, assume that what we planned was either God’s will, or if those plans were dashed, then it was not the Lord’s will. Of the three assertions made above, at least that of Pujols is in agreement with James 4:15 (since it looks to the future), whereas the others (looking to the past) claim to know that God has willed a certain thing to be the case. Would not a good example to follow be that of Mordecai when he asked Queen Esther: “**Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this**” (Esther 4:14, NKJV). Mordecai asked: “Who knows...”, yet many today are quick to aver “I know.” The point is, after the fact, we can only make assumptions, for God has not given anyone today a “latter-day-revelation.”

How can anyone “know” God’s will? Answer: Only by learning it from the inspired word of God! (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). God revealed his will miraculously to the 1st century apostles and prophets (I Corinthians 2:11-12), and it was fully revealed in that first century (Jude 3). But today, “**If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...**” (I Peter 4:11).

—P. O. Box 760
McCloud, Oklahoma 74851

A CONTRADICTION: WILL HONESTY PREVAIL?

Victor M. Eskew

After some 1200 years of extreme darkness while the Catholic Church prevailed, men began to turn their attention to the teaching of scripture. This era of history is often called the Reformation. The mistake of the reformers was to put their beliefs into written publications known as creeds, manuals, disciplines, and confessions of faith. Once this was done, study ceased, a denomination resulted, and those who held to the creed were forced to defend it.

One of the creed books that was written is entitled, *Baptist Church Manual*. Its author is **J. M. Pendleton**. This little book contains 182 pages. It is divided into seven chapters and an appendix. On one of the cover flaps we read the following: “For more than a century Baptists have found this little book to be a helpful guide for the organizational life of a church.”

One of the problems that creeds have is that they often contradict the Bible. Another problem they face is that they contradict one another. A third problem is that they often have contradictions within the creed itself. The latter is one of the problems of the *Baptist Church Manual* by Pendleton. We want to expose this contradiction to our readers.

On page 47 there is a section entitled, “IV. OF THE WAY OF SALVATION.” It reads as follows: “We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the Mediatorial offices of the Son of God The word that is intriguing in this statement is the word “wholly.” *Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines this word in this manner: “to the whole amount or extent; totally; entirely” (p. 676). Thus, the Baptist manual declares here that salvation is totally and entirely by grace. If such is the case, nothing else is needed.

However, when the reader of this manual turns to the next page, he comes to a section called: “V. OF

JUSTIFICATION.” This section states: “We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer’s blood...” (p. 48). The phrase of interest is “solely through faith.” Two points of difficulty arise. First, if salvation is wholly of grace, nothing else, not even faith, is needed to save. The Baptist manual, however, says that faith is needed. Therefore, salvation is not wholly of grace. Second, let us look at the word “solely.” Webster’s definition is simple. He says it means: “1 alone 2 only, exclusively, or merely.” Now the Baptist manual asserts that only faith is needed in order to be saved. If it is by faith alone, then grace is excluded.

Surely the honest reader sees the contradiction that exists in the Baptist manual. It teaches that salvation is wholly of grace and solely by faith. The words “wholly of grace” exclude faith. And, the words, “solely by faith,” exclude grace. “Wholly” and “solely” are strong words. They both denote exclusiveness to the thing they describe. Our question is:

“Will honesty prevail?” Will our Baptist friends admit that a contradiction exists? If so, will they be willing to give up the Baptist manual?

Some of our readers may argue that they do not hold to any manual. They will admit, however, that they believe in the doctrine of salvation of grace by faith alone. In essence, they believe that only faith is essential for God’s grace to be appropriated. This teaching stands in contradiction to the teaching of the New Testament. Faith alone does not save. Repentance is necessary (Luke 13:3). Confession of the name of Christ is essential (Romans 10:9-10). Even our Baptist friends will admit to the necessity of these actions. If repentance and confession are essential to salvation, then salvation is not by faith alone. The Bible also teaches that baptism is essential (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21). There are numerous “conditions” one must obey to be saved. Salvation has never been by any one thing alone. As we close, we again ask our question: “Will honesty prevail?”

—9664 Highway 49B
Brookland, Arkansas 72417

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Directory of Churches...

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Somerville-Union Church of Christ, located on Hwy 36, one mile east of Hwy 67, Somerville, Alabama, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, Evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

Tuscaloosa-East Pointe Church of Christ one block from Exit 76, off I-20, I-59, Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed., 7 p.m. Abiding in God's Word—The Old Paths. U of A student, visitor, or resident? Welcome! Andy Cates, Evangelist. (205)556-3062.

-England-

Cambridge-South Cambridge Church of Christ, Brian Chadwick, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Publishers of "Oracles of God". Tel: (01223) 501861, e-mail: brian.chadwick@ntlworld.com

Cambridgeshire-Ramsey Church of Christ, meeting at the Rainbow Centre, Ramsey, Huntingdon. Sun. 10, 11 a.m.; Wed. (Phone for venue and time); www.Ramsey-church-of-christ.org. Contact Keith Sisman, 001.44.1487.710552; fax:1487.813264 or Keith Sisman.net. Research Website of 1,000 years of the British Church of Christ; www.Traces-of-the-kingdom.org and www.Myth-and-Mystery.org.

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW 30120-4222. Tel. 770-382-6775, www.cartersvillechurchofchrist.org. Sun. 10, 11 a.m., 6 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist-email: bdgayton@juno.com.

-Indiana-

Evansville-West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

-Louisiana-

Chalmette-Village Square Church of Christ, 200 Delaronde St., Chalmette, LA 70044. Mark Lance, Evangelist, (504) 279-9438.

-Massachusetts-

Chicopee-Armory Drive Church of Christ, 26 Armory Drive; Chicopee, MA 01020, in-home, (413) 592-4834, Ken Dion, Evangelist.

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Dan Goddard, Evangelist. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Scheffield Drive Church of Christ, 3309 Scheffield Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27802 (252) 937-7997.

-Oklahoma-

Porum-Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, Evangelist, email: lawson@starnetok.net.

-Tennessee-

Memphis-Forest Hill Church of Christ, 3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd., Memphis, TN 38125. Sun. 9:30, 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. (901) 751-2444, Barry Grider, Evangelist.

Rockwood-Post Oak Church of Christ, 1227 Post Oak Valley Rd., Rockwood, TN 37854. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., Wed. 6 p.m. Contact Glen Moore, (865) 354-9416 or Mel Chandler, (865) 354-3455.

-Texas-

Houston area-Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. Home of Spring Bible Institute and the SBI Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February. www.churchesofchrist.com

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

Hurst-Northeast Church of Christ, 1313 Karla Dr., P.O. Box 85, Hurst, TX 76053. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Jason Rollo, Evangelist, (817) 282-3239.

Lubbock-Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00, 9:55 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Sunday worship aired live at 10:15 a.m. over KFYO 790 AM radio. Tommy Hicks, Evangelist. (806) 794-5008 or (806)798-1019.

New Braunfels-1130 Hwy. 306, 1.5 miles west of I-35. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7 p.m. Lynn Parker, Evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

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

Roanoke-Church of Christ, Corner of Rusk and Walnut, Roanoke, TX 76262. Sun. 9:45, 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 pm. (817) 491-2388.

Schertz-Church of Christ, 501 Schertz Pkwy., Schertz, TX. (210) 658-0269. Sun. 9:30a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m., take Schertz Pkwy. Exit off I-35, NE of San Antonio, Kenneth Ratcliff and Stan Crowley, Evangelists.

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne-High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Gerald Reynolds, Tel. (307) 635-2482.

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