

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS



Archie W. Luper
[1912-1998]

Contending FOR THE Faith™

Volume XXX, No. 1

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Editorial...

ARCHIE W. LUPER

Friend and Supporter of Our Work For 35 Years Dies in Tennessee

That I have had many extraordinary friends and supporters in gospel work across the years goes without saying—though none quite like Archie W. Luper, who died at 1:45 the afternoon of Monday, November 2, 1998, at Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Since I first came to know brother Luper in 1964, he and I were practically inseparable. It is a wonder that such could happen—especially since Archie was wealthy, used to the very best, and I was an evangelist living on whatever churches of Christ chose to pay their gospel preachers and missionaries.

6,000 BIBLES TO JERUSALEM

Even before we met, Archie already had been around the world a time or two. Years earlier, when one of his sons was desperately ill, he had prayed the Lord to spare the child's life, saying that if so or if not, he would devote the rest of his own life helping to spread the gospel of Christ into all the world.

Another son, Kenny, accompanied his father on at least one of those earlier trips around the world. He recalled that brother Luper, instead of just sight-seeing, made it a point to visit the missionaries all along the line, inquiring after their needs, wherever they went.

[It may have been on this journey that Archie came in contact with Ralph Henley, then helping to reestablish the church in the land of Israel. He told me of brother Henley's asking him to send Bibles for distribution in his work there. When Archie got back Stateside, working through the East Gadsden elders, in Alabama, he raised enough money to send more than 6,000 Bibles to Jerusalem—so many, in fact, that Ralph finally had to ask him to stop, that he had no more room to accommodate so many Bibles!]

FIRST TIME WITH ARCHIE AROUND THE WORLD

Having myself been three times around the world with brother Luper, dates and places all seem to run together. As I recall, it must have been about 1965—maybe later—when he asked me to go with him that first time. I was happy to do so; but our financial disparity presented a problem—at least to me.

I explained to him that I would accompany him—provided that I pay my part. "Archie," I said, "you like to stay in the best hotels and eat the choicest food. There is no way that I can afford that kind of expense."

He asked me how much I then paid for a hotel room. "Six dollars a night," I replied. [That was long before inflation rendered such impossible.] How much for breakfast? "A dollar and a quarter." How much for lunch? "A dollar and a half." How much for dinner? "A dollar six bits." Admittedly, Archie thought those figures incredibly

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New Staff Writers and Departments Added

It is always our desire to make *Contending for the Faith* a greater tool for good. With that goal in mind, we are adding four new staff writers. **Annette B. Cates** has accepted our invitation to write for us. She will be writing primarily for women under the caption of "One Woman's Perspective." **Noah A. Hackworth** has accepted our request to handle our query department. His articles will appear under the heading of "Questions and Answers." **Lynn Parker** has agreed to contribute articles concerning the edification of the church. He will be writing under the topic of "Building up the Local Church." **Eddie Whitten**, has accepted our offer to write regularly for us. Under the caption of "The Last Word" his articles concerning various subjects will comprise the final article of each issue of the paper.

We believe that these writers and their topics of interest will add much to the worth of *Contending for the Faith*. These writers are uniquely qualified to deal with the areas on which we have invited them to write. Of course the first and foremost qualification for their invitation to write is their faithfulness to the Lord. While we never intend to cease our work of exposing false doctrine and its proponents, we are mindful of the sound brethren who are in need of materials that will aid them in their spiritual growth and development. We do not intend to become a "one-issue paper."

By way of introduction to our new staff writers following this article we are including pictures and brief biographical sketches of each writer.



Annette B. Cates was married (October 29, 1960) to **Curtis A. Cates**, director of the Memphis School of Preaching. They have two sons, **Curtis Anthony, Jr. (Andy)** and **Daniel Frazier (Dan)**. Andy is married to **Michelle Cicchetto** and lives in Olive Branch, Mississippi. They have one son **Curtis Anthony, III (Trey)**. Dan is married to **Shelly Jones**. They are the parents of **Maggie**, and

live in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sister Cates attended Alabama Christian College (now Faulkner University) (A.A.), Livingston University, Auburn University (B.S.) and holds the Master of Library Service degree from the University of Alabama.

Annette Cates' undergraduate training was in secondary education, with teaching credentials in Social Sciences and English. She taught in these fields in the Alabama Christian High School in Montgomery, Alabama. Her teaching of children's Bible classes has been extensive.

Annette has directed the Southern Christian University Library and the Columbia Christian College Library, served as a Reader Advisor at the Alabama Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and is presently Information Services Librarian at Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee. She also acts as consultant for the Memphis School of Preaching Library and as a mentor for new li-

brarians in West Tennessee colleges. She serves as a volunteer alumni representative for the Graduate School of Library and Information Service at the University of Alabama. She participated in the writing of the book **DART: DIRECTIONS FOR ALABAMA READING TEACHERS**, and contributes to the **RESTORATION SERIALS INDEX**. She speaks at various lectureships, ladies' day programs and teacher training workshops.

Interests for Annette include antiques, puzzles, crochet, and collecting "cat stuff".



Noah A. Hackworth was born in Oklahoma but grew up in California. He is married to the former **Glenda Nunley**, and they have three children. He was educated in California colleges with a major in Speech.

Noah completed thirty years of work with the Church of Christ in San Mateo, California. In 1996 he resigned the work in San Mateo and accepted the work at the

West Visalia Church of Christ in Visalia, California. He has taught Hermeneutics, Homiletics, New Testament Epistles, and The Preacher and His Work in preacher training schools. Past member of Pace Literary Society, and Director of Annual Greater Visalia Lectureship. Served San

Mateo as an elder for 15 years. He has preached and/or held meetings in ten states. He has made two trips to Singapore and three trips to Ethiopia to preach the gospel.



Barry "Lynn" Parker was born in 1958 in San Marcos, Texas. He married **Mary Ann McCarn** in 1980. They have four children: **Caroline, Hannah, Garland, and Rebekah**. They also kept foster children for eight years.

Lynn has a Certificate of Theology from Alabama School of Religion and further work at Texas A & M at Texarkana, Southern Christian University, and Montgomery County College. He preached his first sermon at 14. Criminal Investigator for District At-

torney's Office, and Assistant Director of Houston College of the Bible.



Eddie Whitten worked in industry for thirty years before going into full-time preaching. He attended Brown Trail School of Preaching (1967-1969). He preached in San Antonio before returning to Brown Trail where he worked as the Administrator and Director of the School of Preaching from 1971-1989. He served as an elder of the Brown Trail Church for 15 years.

Eddie now preaches for the Northeast Church of Christ in Hurst, Texas. He and his late wife are the parents of three daughters, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

ARCHIE W. LUPER

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low—but, in those days, that is how I normally traveled.

TRAVELING WITH ARCHIE ON "FIFTY-FIFTY" BASIS

Archie asked if I could pay those amounts on our hotels and meals with him paying the difference, would I go on with him around the world?

I said I would—on one condition. That he would agree that the part I paid, based on **my** income, was **my half**, whereas the part he paid, based on **his** income, was **his half**. He might be paying 90% to my 10%; however, his 90% would be **his half**, and my 10% would be **my half**. Thus we should travel together on a fifty-fifty basis.

It was on this basis that we finally agreed, which led eventually to our being together around the world not just once but three times besides countless other times when we did not travel nearly so far!

UP TO MY ELBOWS IN ARCHIE'S PANTS POCKETS? NOT ON YOUR LIFE!

Many surmised during all those years we traveled together, that I must be living up to my elbows in Archie's pants pockets. I *could* have been; but it *never* was the case.

Truly, on our many journeys together, we stayed in the best hotels and ate the finest food this world has to offer; but it always was on *his* initiative, *not mine*. He liked to tell that I was "one missionary who traveled first class," which was so when I traveled with him. However, I always paid my part based on my income and he on his. I doubt that we

could have stayed together those more than three decades on any other basis.

TYPEWRITER BOUGHT IN HONG KONG

Our first time around the world, Archie and I flew to San Francisco—he from Los Angeles; I from Nashville—to begin our trip together overseas. When he saw me writing multiples of letters by hand answering mail on the plane, he cringed.

Did I *have* to do that? he wanted to know. I assured him that missionary support is based on *communication*—that if I did *not* reply to all those letters, support would dwindle and my missionary work would suffer.

Following the Great Circle Route from San Francisco past Alaska and the Aleutian Islands to Japan, I wrote scores of letters in longhand. By the time we reached Hong Kong, he must have had writer's cramps from watching me write; so he bought me a portable Olivetti typewriter.

[However, I think he lived to regret such generosity. After that, as we traveled, instead of sympathizing with my writing by hand, he got little uninterrupted sleep from the tap-tap-tap of my typewriter.]

FIRST MAIN STOP: SINGAPORE

In Singapore, Archie fell in love with the property that I had raised the money for and purchased at 131 Moulmein Road. From then on he always associated that address with my missionary work in Singapore. He often said that more such work was coming out of that address than anywhere else he had been worldwide.

[It was then that brother Luper first met and came to know my son in the gospel **Tan Keng Koon** and his wife **Baby Tan**, who had established a congregation in their own private house at 28 Jalan Geneng. He could hardly be-

lieve the number of converts then meeting at that place. They had overflowed the living room, the bedrooms, the kitchen, the front porch, and the front yard all the way to the street! Today that same congregation meets at 20 Lim Ah Pin Road in the Upper Serangoon area and is known as the Lim Ah Pin Road Church of Christ.]

VISITING THE WORK IN CEYLON

From Singapore, our next stop was in Colombo, Ceylon, where some of J. C. Choate's work was in its early stages.

Not only did we visit and encourage the local preacher and his young congregation there, but, while in Ceylon, Archie took me to see one of his jewelers, where earlier he had bought two cat's-eye rings, which he always wore.

That jeweler had one huge cat's eye, a chatoyant gem, as big as a golf ball for which he was asking \$54,000. Archie wanted to buy it, but could not figure out how to wear such an imposing, heavy jewel; so he didn't.

J. C. BAILEY'S WORK IN INDIA

From Ceylon, next we flew to India, where J. C. Bailey had begun his missionary work, from Canada, a couple of years before. Having started working with Prenshon Kharluki in a village called Maulai Phudmawri, just outside of Shillong, in the state of Assam in northeast India, by this time, long since, brother Bailey had moved down the east coast to the large city of Madras.

Flying into *New Delhi*, Archie took me into *Old Delhi* on another gem-buying expedition. When we walked into an establishment owned by a Mr. Prem Nath, he asked the clerk to show him some "good ones." Not satisfied, he said to show him some "better ones." Still not satisfied, he was about to ask to see his "best ones," when, from the back of the store an Indian voice shouted, "**ARCHIE!**"

LUPER FOUND WHAT HE SOUGHT

It was Prem Nath himself. He had not seen brother Luper in years but recognized him immediately. Inviting Archie and me to the back of his store, this Indian jeweler led us past sub-machine-gun-toting guards into a place surrounded by black-velvet curtains. Inside those curtains it was pitch dark. We could not see a thing until Mr. Nath suddenly switched on a spotlight high-overhead, revealing millions of dollars worth of jewels in a huge pile on a velvet cloth spread on the floor.

Archie and Mr. Nath talked animatedly as only old friends can and do. They both loved precious jewels—and Archie was keenly aware of the honor being bestowed by his old friend showing him the very best he had.

NATH SHOWS ARCHIE A JEWEL-STudded REPLICA OF HIS BUSINESS CALLING CARD

The last time that Archie passed that way, he had left one of his beautiful business calling cards with Mr. Nath. After Archie had left to return home, Nath had made a large replica of that card (possibly 12x18 inches in size), which he had studded with all sorts of semi-precious stones.

While we were there, Nath brought out that replica to show us, saying that he had sent it to Archie several years before but it had been returned unclaimed. Archie could not thank his old friend enough for such a generous, unsolicited gesture. After he and Mr. Nath had discussed jewels to their hearts' content, his Indian host invited us both to lunch at his house nearby, showing us his collection of 75 vintage cars along the way. It was my first and only time to witness such a collection of mint-new automobiles from yesteryear—to say nothing of the fabulous jewels he had shown us back at his store.

ON AROUND THE WORLD —THEN HOME

After leaving India, missionary work was so sparse in most countries that we had little chance to visit and encourage such till we got back to Europe. We did make stops in Tehran, Iran; in Istanbul, Turkey; and in Athens, Greece. Unable to locate brethren in any of these places, we tried to do so from Rome, Italy. We tried at least 30 different telephone numbers of brethren and churches supposed to be in Italy without success.

We did find some brethren in Lucerne, Switzerland, where one of them insisted on giving each of us a holy kiss (on both cheeks, I might add!).

Flying on to Paris and London, by then both of us were completely exhausted from much travel. [Archie had sent money to one of the missionaries in Northern Ireland to buy a car. We flew to Glasgow, Scotland, then over to Belfast. The missionary met us, showing us the work in Belfast, then by car over to Lisburn, where both of us spoke.

Returning to London, Archie decided to fly over the north pole back to Los Angeles, whereas I continued across the Atlantic and home.

OUR SECOND TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

Three years were to elapse before brother Luper and I ventured out again for our second trip around the world (in 1968). Meanwhile I had found a property at Punggol Point which my then overseeing elders asked him to go with me to evaluate in Singapore. His being a successful business man, they trusted his business judgment re: such a purchase.

Before leaving the States, he and I had decided to visit Russia this time out. I had filled a suitcase full of Russian Bibles, Testaments, gospel booklets, pamphlets and tracts, hoping that somewhere en route we might secure visas to Russia that we might distribute them there.

RUSSIAN VISAS IN TOKYO

While in Tokyo, Archie and I located the Russian Embassy and made applications for respective three-day visas. They agreed; however, they said, it would take "at least a month" to let us have them.

I asked why it should take a month just to stamp visas into our passports, saying that it should not take more than five minutes! They said we did not understand—that when

Russians tried coming to the States, our government took much longer than that!

Just then Archie—with those spaniel eyes of his—intervened. Explaining that we had only two more days in Tokyo, that we had air tickets via Moscow, and that we knew of nowhere else to secure Russian visas along the way, He said it would mean a lot to us if such might be expedited.

In almost no time Archie got those visas stamped into our passports and we were on our way. [This was not the only time that Archie's powers of persuasion would stand both of us in good stead.]

BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE, INDONESIA AND CEYLON

Stopping in Singapore for several days, Archie agreed that the Punggol property I was seeking to buy for Four Seas College was indeed worth the money.

After taking care of that and other missionary matters in Singapore, I needed to touch bases with the Pat McGees, in Jakarta, Indonesia, relative to their missionary work there which they had initiated the previous year. Brother Luper decided to wait for me in Singapore.

While I was in Indonesia, however, he decided to go on to Ceylon, leaving word for me to meet him in Colombo. (I had learned, long since, that to travel with Archie Luper one had to keep flexible; plans could change without a moment's notice.)

Planning to be with Archie in Colombo for the next four days, upon arriving at the Colombo International Airport at Ceylon, I saw him on top of the airport waving for me to hurry. Inside, he said he had canceled our hotel rooms in Colombo and that we were boarding the Aeroflot plane already on the tarmac, bound for Moscow. I was learning to keep flexible indeed.

OVER THE HIMALAYAS TO TASHKENT

For the next few hours, from Ceylon, we flew across India, then high over the Himalaya mountains, landing in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, U.S.S.R.

Thus arriving in Russian territory that first stop, it was at Tashkent that we had to go through Russian Immigration and Customs. Having secured our Russian visas from Tokyo, we had no problem with Immigration. But going through Customs was another matter.

Those who knew Archie Luper remember how fastidious he always was about his person. He had packed his clothes ever so neatly in both bags so they would still look freshly pressed when we got to Moscow. He could hardly contain his displeasure, therefore, when the Customs people began pulling out every suit, all his trousers, every shirt and all his ties, running their fingers up and down every seam searching for something—he knew not what.

They did not find anything they were looking for; but Archie gave them such a hard time for rumpling and mussing his clothes, that when they came to me, they asked, "Are you with him?" When I said I was, they said, "Go on!"

They were not about to have another scene with me like they had just been through with Archie Luper!

[What they did *not* know was that *my* bags were jam-packed with all those religious materials in the Russian language that I had brought from the States. If they *had* opened my bags, no doubt they would have confiscated it all, if not turned us back entirely. But due to Archie's having given them such misery with *his* bags, I thus was able to get all those Bibles, Testaments and other Russian language gospel printed materials inside Russia without a hitch. Neither he nor I planned it that way; but that is how it happened.]

BEAUTIFUL UNIVERSITY STUDENT CALLS

Of course, those were the days of the "Cold War" between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. We had been warned that the Russians might try to inveigle us into their spy apparatus to use us in some way. All the same, imagine our astonishment, when we reached Moscow several hours later, had already checked into the Metropole Hotel and gone to bed, when, well past midnight, the telephone rang.

Picking it up, I heard a lovely voice on the other end asking by name if this was Mr. Rice? When I said it was, she described herself as "a beautiful university student," and that she was wondering if I might like some "female companionship." Explaining to her that another gentleman and I were traveling together and that we both already had gone to bed, "Not tonight," I said. Sounding disappointed, she hung up the phone.

"They are already on to us!" Archie exclaimed, when I relayed this conversation. "Let's get out of here!" Nothing could be done that night; so we slept.

ROUGH AS A COB—LITERALLY!

In my growing-up days back in Oklahoma we had a saying about things being "as rough as a cob." I never dreamed, however, that anyone would make *toilet paper* out of *corn cobs*. Before going to bed that night, Archie and I both had taken our baths; and I could not help noticing corn grains in our bathroom tissue.

And what a difference in the way their bathtubs were made. In America, ours have hot-and-cold spigots at one end. In this way, if incoming water is too hot or too cold, at least one can stir it with his foot. In Moscow, however, the spigot was in the middle of the *side* of the tub. If the water was either too hot or too cold, one *had to get out of the tub* to adjust the water.

ONE ORDER? OR TWO?

Archie's and my sleeping and eating habits often conflicted. When I awoke early the following morning, I left him asleep while I went down to the restaurant for breakfast.

When the waitress brought the menu, of course it was in the Russian language, of which I knew nothing. Finding something on the menu which I thought might be eggs, without a word, I pointed to it, holding up two fingers. Wide-eyed, she pointed to that same item on the menu, holding up *one* finger. I held up *two*. Again she held up *one*.

Flouncing out of the restaurant toward the kitchen, a few minutes later she returned with a covered dish. Removing the cover with a flourish, again she held up *one* finger. Looking on the plate, I immediately saw that she had been right all along. It had three fried eggs! If she had actually brought what I ordered, it would have been half a dozen! All this without a word spoken on either side.

ALL OVER MOSCOW BY SUBWAY

When Archie finally woke up, we agreed that since we were already there, we should at least see what Moscow was like, giving me a chance to scatter some of those Bibles, New Testaments and other religious materials I had smuggled through.

Seeing only a few cars on the streets, we learned that most Moscovites (at least in those days) did not travel above ground, but by subway.

Inquiring how 8½-million people could depend on subways for transportation, we were told that Moscow had 76 subway stations underground connecting more than 3,000 miles of railroad tracks! We made no attempt to visit all 76 stations—but of those we saw, each one was beautiful—a veritable work of art.

Also, we noted that, particularly in the downtown area, each station was served by three extremely long escalators. During rush hours in the morning, two escalators ascended, while only one descended. During rush hours in the evening, only one escalator ascended, while two descended. We decided those Russians were pretty clever, after all.

RESORTING TO TAXI ABOVE GROUND

But, as fascinating as those underground railroad stations really were, much of Moscow could not be seen by subway. After a few hours, Archie hired a taxi so we could see what was aboveground, as well.

In no other city that we visited across the years did we ever see so many statues and monuments. Perhaps Russia's embrace of communistic atheism explained it. After all, if there is no God and no hereafter, all the recognition and honor anyone could ever receive would have to be in the here and now.

VISITING LENIN'S TOMB

When he approached Lenin's tomb in the enormous square in front of the Kremlin, those waiting to get in were lined up, three abreast, for, we estimated, six or seven

blocks. We were told it had been that way since Lenin died approximately 45 years before.

Our taxi driver managed to get us ahead of most of those lined up; so we did not have to wait all day. He told us we could take photos up to—but not inside—the mausoleum. That they had preserved Lenin's body for all to see like the day he died, and they feared that photoflashes might change the temperature inside the tomb allowing his body to decay.

I kept on taking pictures right up to the door leading to Lenin's body's open display. When a guard stuck his sub-machine gun under my chin, motioning for me to put up my camera, however, I decided they meant business about no photos inside; so I complied.

What an eerie feeling it was to look on the actual face of Lenin as his body lay there in state, he having died decades earlier! The Russians had done a superb job of embalming.

SKI-JUMPING IN AUGUST TO SOUNDS OF ELVIS PRESLEY

Although, during Stalin's time, American music had been declared "decadent," by the time we were in Moscow that August, Communist rulers must have reconsidered. Even though it was hot summertime, ski-jumpers from 20 Communist countries were in Moscow for an all-U.S.S.R. competition. No snow being available, they had erected ski-jumps with slides of plastic shingles. It sounded like a freight train, when one of those ski-jumpers roared down those plastic-shingled slides jumping high through the air and landing in deep piles of plastic pebbles below. Making the scene all the more incongruous, huge loudspeakers were blaring Elvis Presley songs from the ski-jumps all over Moscow.

ARCHIE DECIDES TO HEAD FOR LONDON

The morning of our second day in Moscow, Archie decided he had had enough of Russia. For one thing, his acid stomach could not adjust to Russian food—especially borsch, a hot beet soup that I particularly enjoyed. Also, he could not shake the feeling that we were under constant surveillance by Russia's KGB.

When he suggested that we take the next plane for London, I reminded him that we still had a day and a half left on our Russian visas. Besides, what about Helsinki!

He told me what I could do about Helsinki, that he was going where he could get something to eat that would not make him sick, and, besides, he wanted a bath and some fresh clothes.

Leaving me writing letters at the hotel, Archie was gone that morning for a long time. Upon his return, when I asked where he had been, he said to the airline office to get his ticket changed—that he was going to London on the next plane.

Realizing he really meant it, I had to make a quick decision. Was I going to insist on remaining that extra day and a half in Moscow—alone—or forfeit that part of our trip, by-passing Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, to be with Archie in London? Reluctantly deciding on the latter, I finally agreed to go with him.

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"Give me your ticket and passport!" he sighed in frustration. "I'll go get it changed." He was gone another hour and a half; but when he got back the second time, we checked out of the hotel and headed for the airport.

GIVING OUR TAXI DRIVER OUR LAST RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Ever since reaching Moscow, I had been placing all those Russian Bibles, Testaments and other Christian literature in strategic places where I knew they would be picked up. However, when we got to the airport, I still had some of it left, so I decided to give it to our taxi driver if he would accept.

When I made the offer, he seemed pleased—especially when I included an inexpensive short-wave radio. However, before he would let me give any of it to him, he ran inside the airport to buy something for me in return.

Meanwhile Archie had preceded me to the check-in counter. I was concerned lest the KGB discover what I was doing and make trouble both for our driver as well as for us. So, when the driver ran back to the car where I was waiting, he and I both got down in the floor of that taxi and exchanged what each of us had for the other. And that is how I got rid of the rest of my Russian Christian literature that I had smuggled into Russia less than two days before.

Even after leaving the ground on our take-off for London, I kept wondering what if the KGB discovered my leaving all that Christian literature and had our plane recalled. Soon, however, we were beyond their reach.

MAYFAIR HOTEL AND MARYBELLE'S RESTAURANT

Talk about "first class!" When Archie and I reached London, he checked us into the world-renowned Mayfair Hotel. I do not recall what everything else cost, but when I noticed they charged the English equivalent of U.S./\$10.00 just to launder underwear, I decided mine could wait until I got home.

On our way from Moscow, Archie told me about Marybelle's Restaurant in London and how he could not wait for us to eat there that night. Just like the Mayfair Hotel, Marybelle's prices were "out of sight;" nevertheless, according to his and my agreement, I ate my share.

[From that night onward, Archie always enjoyed telling folks that I looked only on the left-hand side of the menu for what I ordered but not on the right for what it cost!

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Probably so. But until the day he died, Archie always seemed to enjoy saying that I was at least one missionary who had traveled first class. I do not deny it. Archie Luper saw to that!]

GETTING OUT LETTERS IN LONDON

Because of jet-lag, after we went to bed that night, by 2:00 o'clock the following morning I was wide awake. Knowing that Archie could not sleep with my typing in our room, I got my typewriter and stationery together and slipped out descending to the main lobby on the first floor.

Even though no one was around, the desk clerk said I could not type there. Seeing no one in the bar, I started typing on one of the tables there. The bartender said I could not type in the bar either.

Explaining my situation to the night manager, he suggested I type in the ladies room, saying that no one would be there until 6:00 o'clock that morning. I was somewhat astonished at his suggestion; however, opening the door to the ladies room, I saw a nice dressing table made to order for my purpose.

[I wish you could have seen the look on that first lady's face when, about 6:00 a.m., she entered the ladies room and found this American preacher in there "typing up a storm," answering missionary mail! Embarrassed, I quickly gathered up my things and got out of there. None of which would have happened, of course, but for trying to let Archie get some sleep.]

AFTER LONDON—THEN HOME

By the time Archie and I had been in London a couple of days, his stomach settled back down from all that Russian food earlier in the week in Moscow and it was time to return home.

On our way across the Atlantic, word came through the intercom that the Watts Riots had broken out in Los Angeles. Archie wondered if the riots might be a problem when he got to the Los Angeles Airport, since he had to go 65 miles north from the airport to his home in Ventura.

South of Greenland, as we headed toward Labrador, I noticed scores, possibly hundreds, of icebergs floating in the North Atlantic more than 30,000 feet below.

"Oh, Archie, look at all those church of Christ budgets!" I exclaimed. "Church of Christ budgets?" he queried. "Those may look like icebergs to you," I explained, "but they look like church of Christ budgets to me."

[Once frozen, there is nothing in this world colder than a church of Christ budget. Missionary work may need something RIGHT NOW; but if it is not ALREADY IN THE BUDGET, most churches or elderships will not even consider emergency needs until budget time the following year!]

Archie knew exactly what I meant. He told of approaching an eldership in southern California about a financial crisis that one of our missionaries, Arley Moore, was facing. Archie knew that church had a huge accumulation of money in its treasury. But when he asked those elders to send just a few thousand dollars to relieve brother Moore, they protested, "We are saving that money for a rainy day."

Archie pointed out that it was “already raining” on the mission field where Arley Moore was concerned; but those elders refused because it was not in their budget already! No matter how much they had in the bank, they were just too cold-hearted, stingy and unconcerned even to consider sending anything to Arley’s relief—however crucial—JUST BECAUSE IT WAS NOT ALREADY IN THEIR BUDGET!

[Archie himself, however, sent something out of his own pocket (which he often did); but he never forgot this incredible experience with those uncaring, covetous elders. *Genuine* elders can be wonderful; but elderships such as these are mainly why it is so hard to get the gospel among “all nations”—worldwide.]

LUPER NAMED CO-CHAIRMAN OF FOUR SEAS COLLEGE BOARD

After brother Luper and I got back to the States from around the world that second time, I was having so much static from at least two of my three overseeing elders (over publishing my book *Axe on the Root*—Volume II) that it seemed best to disconnect from them entirely.

That our preacher/teacher-training work at Four Seas College, in Singapore, might continue unimpeded, we established a Board of Directors. Of those chosen for the Board, I was asked to serve as Chairman with brother Luper as Co-Chairman, a relationship lasting until his death 30 years later. [G. O. Reynolds, the one elder of my former sponsoring congregation who remained doctrinally sound, also was named to the Board, along with Dalton P. Ellis, Houston T. Ezell, J. W. McCorkle, M.D., and Paul W. Moore.]

LUPER NAMED TO EDITORIAL STAFF OF CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

A circumstance not understood by some was that brother Luper became part and parcel with me not only in *extending* the gospel worldwide but also in *contending* for the faith both at home and abroad. When, over a five-year period, I wrote and published three books against liberalism (*Axe on the Root*—Volumes I, II and III), Archie was with me all the way. Devoted as he was to the truth of the gospel, he had no use whatever for those who would compromise it—especially those responsible for erroneous translations, such as the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), the *New International Version* (NIV) and others similar to them.

In 1970, seeing that occasional books such as those mentioned above could not cope with all the doctrinal departures being fostered, brotherhood-wide, I initiated a monthly publication, *Contending for the Faith*. At first, it was no more than a leaflet, similar to a newsletter. However, as time went on, it seemed best to expand it into a full-fledged monthly magazine.

By the July issue, of 1976, an Editorial Council was formed, changed the following month to an Editorial Staff. From the beginning Archie Luper counseled with me on practically every article or editorial I wrote; therefore, it was but natural that he was named both to our Council and Staff, remaining thereon for the rest of his natural life.

Since he avidly read and re-read all issues and volumes of *Contending for the Faith* across the years, he often teased that he knew more about *Contending for the Faith* than I did as Editor. He was probably right.

INTEREST IN WORLD MISSIONS CONTINUES

Although his and my mutual concern for doctrinal soundness among the churches of Christ continued, our equal concern for worldwide evangelism never wavered. In 1972, he was instrumental in helping set up a College of World Evangelism with the Downtown Church of Christ, in San Francisco.

By 1974, Archie felt we should visit the missionaries around the world one more time, and asked me to go with him. Our first main stop was in South Korea. To our amazement and chagrin we found that most of the missionaries there—almost all of them, in fact—had departed from the faith embracing a type of Pentecostalism. Belief in miracles and the direct operation of the Holy Spirit was the order of the day in Korea. What a change had come over most of “our” work there—missionary work which earlier had seemed so sound, almost exemplary!

After encouraging the brethren in Hong Kong and Singapore, we had planned preaching/teaching stops in Ceylon and India. As we were landing in Ceylon, however, we were shocked when the captain of our flight announced that civil war had just broken out and that this would be the last plane out of Ceylon until the war was over!

ARCHIE SCRAMBLES FOR SEATS

We had planned being in Ceylon this time for four days—then on to India. But, with this announcement, it was clear that if we went into the city, we could be stuck there for months—even years! What to do?

Archie said that if I would collect our checked bags off the plane when we landed, he would try reserving seats so we could leave on the same flight we were coming in on.

As crowded as such flights always were in those days, I knew this might not be easy to come by; however, it seemed our only way out.

Shortly after landing, I got all our bags together and waited. After what seemed an inordinately long time, here came Archie. He had succeeded in securing us two seats.

NEXT STOP: DOHA

Getting back on the same plane we had just left, soon we crossed southern India and were way out over the Indian Ocean, when it occurred to me that neither of us knew where this plane was headed.

We asked a stewardess. “Doha,” she said. “Doha!” we repeated. “Where’s that?” The stewardess didn’t know either! Hours later, we finally landed in Qatar, a tiny, desert country squeezed between Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Doha was its capital city.

“YOU WOULDN’T LIKE IT!”

By the time we landed, Archie’s queezy stomach was acting up again. He needed to get somewhere so he could lie down. All we could see was desert sand.

Approaching the airport manager, "Where is the nearest hotel," I asked. "You wouldn't like it," he replied. "But where is it?" I pressed. "You wouldn't like it," he said. "I know we wouldn't like it," I agreed, "but where is it?" As far as Doha was concerned, he never said. He did say that a Gulf commuter plane would be by in three hours, and that we should fly 50 miles north to Bahrain, that we could find accommodations there. There was nothing for Archie to do for the time being but do his best to tough it out.

FROM "NO ROOM IN THE INN" TO "PRESIDENTIAL SUITE"

When we reached Bahrain, Archie asked for the best hotel in town. Our taxi driver knew just where to take us. When we got there, it was a run-down hotel—third rate by U.S. standards. Characteristically, Archie asked for the best room in the hotel. The manager said no rooms were available—that the hotel was completely full. "What about your presidential suite?" Archie asked. "Oh, that!" the manager exclaimed; yes, the presidential suite was available.

Too sick to haggle or try elsewhere, Archie took it. They wanted \$65 a night (a lot in those days); but he didn't argue. He had to have somewhere to lie down. Even their two-bedroom "presidential suite" was nothing to brag about; but at least it was a place to rest and recuperate.

BEST SHOW IN TOWN

When time came for our evening meal, brother Luper finally felt recovered enough to eat something. We were hardly seated in the restaurant until two of the drunken customers got into a fist-fight. No one tried to stop them. They fought all over the restaurant for approximately 45 minutes, then out through the doors into the courtyard.

Being somewhat addicted to boxing, both of us enjoyed the spectacle; eating our dinner, it definitely was the best show in town!

SETTLING UP IN THE DESERT —THEN BACK ON TRACK

On our way to the airport the following morning, our taxi driver was playing hurting songs straight out of Nashville on the radio. Archie had the driver to stop the car. He said we should settle up my account. "I'll pay you when we get home, Archie," I protested. "No," he said, "we're going to settle up right here." He would not let us go any farther until I paid the \$27-plus that I owed on travel expenses to that point! He considered it a big joke—on me!

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Archie had heard of some Christian brother then living in Iran; so, to get back on track, from Bahrain, we flew north to Tehran. I mentioned to Archie that from the description in the Bible, I wondered if the lush farming area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the adjoining country (Iraq) might be where the Garden of Eden was located. Fascinated, when we failed to find that brother, Archie suggested we rent a car and go check it out for ourselves! No such car being available, we flew on to Lebanon.

ARCHIE TREATS ME TO BAALBECK

Reaching Beirut, Archie asked if I had ever seen the ruins of the ancient temple to Baal and Baalbeck. I had never even heard of them!

He knew that in 1961, my family and I had traveled the road leading to Damascus from Beirut.

"You passed within three miles of Baalbeck!" he exclaimed. (It made no difference—I still had not heard of it.) Baalbeck is situated some 65 miles southeast from Beirut; so Archie hired a taxi and took me there to see those ruins.

Actually, at Baalbeck, there were not just *one* temple, but *three*—all having fallen into ruins many centuries ago. Having read about Baal worship in the Book of Judges and elsewhere, this visit helped me to better understand how the ancient Jews were so attracted to Baal. Even in ruins, those temples were magnificent indeed. In one of them it was estimated that 10,000 temple prostitutes could fornicate with that many Baal worshippers at one time.

SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, THE BALKANS, PARIS, SCOTLAND—AND AGAIN HOME!

Returning to Beirut, after stops in Istanbul, Athens, Rome and Lucerne, we visited **Otis Gatewood** and his fellow workers in Vienna before investigating missionary possibilities in Budapest, Hungary; Bucharest, Romania; and Prague, Czechoslovakia. Since these latter three countries still were under Communist control at that time, we concluded that little could be done, evangelistically speaking, for the time being.

In Paris, Archie wanted me to see where he had studied culinary arts at the Cordon Bleu School. (He also had attended the Montana Hotel and Restaurant School in Lucerne, Switzerland.)

After one final stop in Glasgow, Scotland, we headed home again to the U.S. our third and final time together around the world.

OUR 1979 VISIT TO CHINA

A great deal was accomplished toward world evangelism, by those round-the-world journeys among the missionaries; however, the most momentous of all probably was our 16-day visit to mainland China in January, 1979.

Archie was well aware that I had been trying to go to China every year for 24 years, since first going to Singapore in 1955. When President Carter eventually recognized China in December, 1978, Archie immediately successfully sought tickets and visas for us to accompany a group of 92 tourists into China the following month. We were not allowed to go in as missionaries; however, for the first time, tourist visas were made available.

Gathering first at a hotel in Hong Kong, we entered China via Lo Wu Station, just north of Sheung Shui. At Lo Wu, our tour guide, spoke to us before we all proceeded by train to Canton.

"Today," he said, "is tieless Tuesday. In China, men do not wear ties. Please take your ties off and do not put them back on until you leave China." As addicted as Archie and I both were to wearing ties, nevertheless, obediently, we both took ours off as instructed.

ARCHIE WAS AMAZED HOW CHINESE RESPONDED TO POLAROID AND THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

I had two things going for me that first visit into China—my Polaroid camera and being able to speak a little Mandarin. Archie could not get over how common Chinese people responded wherever we went. First, I would take a photo of them with my Polaroid camera, then speak to them in Chinese when I showed them their photo some 60 seconds later.

How I ached to be able to speak to them about God unrestricted! Archie and I were both sure that we could evangelize China if only the Communist government would get out of the way.

It was the same wherever we went. Over 16 days we visited not only Canton, but Hangchow, Shanghai, Beijing, and the Great Wall as well as the Ming Tombs. Everywhere we went it always was the same—a Polaroid shot followed by a few words in Mandarin and hundreds of people would come running.

LUPER FAMILY INVITES ME TO PREACH ARCHIE'S FUNERAL

All through the months of brother Luper's final illness ending in his death November 2, 1998, he had insisted that when he died, I was to be the one to preach his funeral. I felt honored by the sad-happy privilege of doing so.

Inside the funeral program was a eulogy by W. A. Sharp, entitled, "ARCHIE WILLIAM LUPER," which, read, as follows:

Archie William Luper, Chairman of the Board of Luper Enterprises, Inc., of Ventura, California, started his successful food-service career in Oklahoma in 1941. In 1947, he opened his first restaurant in California in the city of Ventura. Although this restaurant was a small twenty-two seat accommodation, it proved to be very successful. Since that time, throughout Southern California, under the trade name of "Loop's," he built and operated 13 restaurants, 3 cafeterias, 1 wholesale and retail bakery, 1 luxury 96-unit motor-hotel, a produce company, and many other successful enterprises. His famous "Red Carpet" service became a tradition in California. An outstanding man in his profession, Archie W. Luper in 1960 was named to the American Restaurant Magazine Hall of Fame. He completed five trips around the world, 13 trips through Europe, 12 trips through the Orient, making an extensive study of the food and beverage industry. He studied culinary arts at the Cordon Bleu School in Paris, France; also attended the Montana Hotel and Restaurant School in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Brother Luper was recognized as an outstanding West Coast business man who served on the Board of Trustees of the City of Hope, Los Angeles, and the Board of Directors of the California Restaurant Association. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, the Board of Directors of the Blue Ridge Encampment in Black Mountain, North Carolina, and Co-Chairman of the Board of Directors of Four Seas College in Singapore.

Archie W. Luper was widely known as a speaker of unusual ability. He delivered major addresses in many cities in the United States as well as in the capitals of many foreign nations. He has given major speeches and commencement addresses at the following colleges, universities, and schools of preaching: Freed Hardeman University, David Lipscomb University, Fort Worth Christian College, Westmont College, Abilene Christian University, Pepperdine University, International Bible College, East Tennessee School of Preaching, San Francisco College of Evangelism, Bellview School of Preaching, and Florida School of Preaching. In his own community of Ventura County, he was in constant demand as a speaker and civic worker.

As an active member of the church of Christ, brother Luper has distinguished himself as a religious leader and worker. He was an inspirational Bible School teacher for many years and preached in churches throughout the United States and around the globe. Throughout the world, Archie W. Luper has been recognized for his interest in religious mission work and is known intimately by missionaries in every country of the world. He helped establish the "Bibles for China" program which has raised many hundreds of thousands of dollars to help spread God's Word to those who do not know him.

The Blue Ridge Encampment Distinguished Service Award was presented to brother Luper in 1977. This award was given to him "in recognition of his unselfish service to the Encampment, the church and the community." Of him brother J. M. Powell wrote, "His advice and guidance have been of immeasurable benefit and advantage to countless people around the world. He established himself as missionary, benefactor, peacemaker, business man, servant of Christ, friend of sinners, lover of souls; his integrity, untiring energy and keen insights have won for him the admiration and warm esteem of all who knew him."

BURIAL IN SHELTON CEMETERY

As honored as I was to speak at brother Archie's funeral, there was no way that I could cover such a mountain of material in the 20 to 25 minutes I was allotted for his eulogy. I had to pick and choose the best I could.

During the memorial service, five songs were sung by a special group in the rear of the auditorium: *On Jordan's Stormy Banks*, *When We all Get to Heaven*, *The Last Mile of the Way*, *Take My Hand Precious Lord*, and *Victory in Jesus*. Scriptures were read by two of his grandsons, Nicky and Joshua Luper. A granddaughter Karen Luper read a poem she had written. Prayer was led by Wayne Lankford; and, of course, I delivered the eulogy. Pallbearers included Archie Luper, Jr., Joshua Luper, Leonard Crouch, Kenny Luper, Nicky Luper and Terry Day. Archie is survived by his widow, Francile, author of a magnificent study of the Old Testament, *The Essence of Time*. Born January 12, 1912, and living until November 2, 1998, Archie W. Luper lacked just two months and ten days being 87 years of age at the time of his passing. He was my friend; but more than that he was a friend of the Cause of Christ which he and I both served together for more than 35 years.

Archie's eldest son Kenny Luper delivered the final words at his graveside in the Shelton Cemetery some 20 miles south of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. His body now lies there buried; but his spirit has returned to God who gave it. I look forward to being with him once again when both of us are resurrected when Jesus comes on that great Day.

—Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Editor.

"DARING TO DANCE WITH WOLVES"

A Review of the book "Daring to Dance with God" authored by Jeff Walling

Barry Gilreath

Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Paul reaffirmed the Lord's prediction when he said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

There has been no scarcity of individuals eager to fulfill these prophetic utterances. Regardless of the time under consideration, false teachers always have abounded. This is one compelling reason why elders, preachers, and other concerned Christians must be informed regarding specific individuals and doctrines that are infiltrating the church abroad. To ignore the facts or express apathy toward individuals and erroneous doctrines that have divided brethren and caused countless thousands to fall from God's grace is irresponsible and contrary to the Christ we claim to follow.

WALLING'S NEW BOOK

Jeff Walling is one such man who has proven himself to be a false teacher in our generation. This was once again made known in his most recent book entitled, *Daring to Dance with God*. The very title itself is one intended to shock and provoke interest. I recently read his book in conjunction with a class I was teaching and was frustrated, shocked, concerned and disappointed to say the least.

In chapter one Walling sets the stage for the theme of the book where he discusses a situation that he was confronted with years earlier as a third-grade student. In a particular class he was studying folk music and learned that students would soon be square dancing as a part of the curriculum. After going home excited and telling his mother of the new experience he would get to engage in, he learned that dancing was not an acceptable activity in his household. Although he credits his parents for being great parents and teaching him of Jesus, he affirms that "there were a few areas in which their *opinions* (emphasis mine, JBG) were fixed. Dancing was one of them."

This event in Walling's early life seems to provide a basis upon which the rest of the book centers upon. He makes an exhaustive attempt to play on the word "dance" by associating it with the Christian walk of life. Every chapter uses dancing terminology or illusions to make points regarding a relationship with God. Chapter titles include "Dancing on Thin Air," "Doing the Sinners Tango," "Dancing in the Dark," and "Save the Last Dance for Me," just to name a few.

One of the first scripture references he uses is Luke, chapter 15. This chapter tells the story of the prodigal son and reveals a gracious father. Walling refers to Luke 15:25

where the older son heard music and dancing in his father's house, and then Walling asserts the following:

God is inviting us to come and dance with him! Now there's a partner to line up for...Just imagine! God invites us into intimacy with himself; he calls us into celebration of all that's good and glorious. And he asks not that we stay at arm's length; rather he pulls us in tight, taking us for the dance of a lifetime...Dancing with God is allowing him to take our breath away as he whirls us through the dark and light places that life leads us...But above all dancing with God is learning to let go (pages 11-13).

LET GO AND LOOSEN UP A LITTLE

"*Learning to let go*" is a key thought in Walling's book and is the underlying agenda that he is attempting to push. Especially is this demonstrated in chapters eight and ten. These two chapters seem to be most revealing about Walling's intentions and his desire for changing the church. This review will primarily deal with these two chapters.

In chapter eight Walling is dealing with Christians whose "dancing shoes are too tight." In other words, they need to learn to let go and loosen up a little. He rightly condemns worshipping God in mere ritualistic exercises, but then lays the groundwork for one to jump to the other extreme. There is no balanced presentation of his topic. What he accuses some of doing in one extreme, his illustrations, points, and scripture twisting would justify in the other direction. There was no emphasis on the importance of worshipping according to the pattern as set forth in scripture. He calls upon the reader to "praise him with abandon" (page 117). One cannot help but wonder what or who Walling wants the reader to abandon in praise.

Jeff Walling referred to some Christians as the "Gospel Gestapos, ever on patrol lest someone do or say something that's not exactly as they think it should be." He went on to write:

Driven by a fear of anything that's new and a reverence for everything that's middle-of-the-road, people with this mind-set can't be comfortable turning loose of their inhibitions and singing at the top of their lungs or raising their hands in spontaneous praise.

His bizarre assertions appear to be an attempt to gain sympathy for the agenda that he and some other brethren are promoting. Personally I have never met a single Christian who believed that it was wrong to sing out loudly in worship. But by associating singing loudly with the practice of hand raising, he seeks to cause the readers to have an unfavorable opinion of those who oppose spontaneous hand raising in worship. After all these are the same people who oppose *singing out*. How absurd! He concludes the chapter by continuing his theme of letting go. He lists several ways in which one might let go and then boldly writes:

Whatever form of expression you choose will probably be uncomfortable at first, but go ahead and be extravagant, outlandish, and demonstrative. Pour out perfume. If it comes from a heart filled with gratitude, the smell of your sacrifice will motivate and inspire others to let their praises ring out as well.

"CHURCH POLICE"

Chapter ten dealt with a sin that Walling referred to as "Michalepsy." Again there is a play on words used. He began the chapter by telling of a woman who was extremely angry at her husband for something he had done. We soon learn that the woman Walling is describing was Michal, the wife of King David, and that the context of his study centered around the time when the ark had been returned to Jerusalem after being gone for some time. Walling took extreme liberty with the text in several sections in this chapter to make the story very dramatic. In doing so, I believe he drew false conclusions that the inspired writer never intended to be drawn. The Bible records that David removed his clothing and danced before the Lord. Michal was angry because her husband had disrobed himself in the sight of the slave girls in such a vulgar manner (II Samuel 6:20). Nowhere do we find even a hint that God was pleased with David's vulgar dance. I am therefore bewildered at the interpretation and application that Walling attempts to make. In all respects, his position is one of the most absurd hermeneutical conclusions that I have read in some time. According to Walling, Michal was the one in the wrong for despising her husband's vulgar public dancing. She was not focusing on what was really important: the ark being back in Jerusalem. David's angry reply, that he was dancing before the Lord and that he would become even more undignified, was according to brother Walling a seemingly "long overdue rebuke." He then went on to describe Michal as the first in a long line of "church police" who see it as their mission in life to insure that praising, if done at all, is done with refinement and propriety. "What Michal needed was a review of a basic principle of good dancing...her desire to regulate her husband's behavior could have been curbed if she had followed two simple rules." Those rules recommended by brother Walling were that she needed to keep her eyes on her own dance partner (in other words, mind her own business), and keep her eyes off others' dance with God (the vulgar dance of praise David was doing in the name of God).

Walling's twisting of the scripture is intended to justify his conclusions regarding our own response toward others' expressions of love. In his words, "Spiritual freedom is a two-edged sword. It allows me to express my love for God in any form I choose, but it also allows others to express their love in ways I may not care for!" He concludes the chapter by affirming, "Michal's end should convince us that criticizing the praise of others is not a dance that God will join us in." The end he refers to is the fact that she did not have any more children with David. He assumes that David or God was punishing her for her protest of his "dirty dancing."

After reading this chapter and reflecting upon his misinterpretation of the scripture, I cannot help but wonder what Walling would do next Sunday, if while preaching, an elder jumped up, stripped off his clothes as David and began to prance across the stage while raising his hands and singing loudly before the Lord. Based upon the justification for the assertions made throughout the whole chapter, he would be obliged to keep his eye on his own "dance partner" and keep right on preaching. To do otherwise would cause brother Walling to commit the sin of "Michalepsy."

WALLING AND LUCADO DANCE TOGETHER

Although Walling makes some valid points at times, I cannot recommend his book as one which will promote spiritual growth. His offensive play on words by associating the holy with the profane with allusions to God as a "dance partner," twisting of certain scriptures, and lack of reverence for truth, proves once again that he truly is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It is also revealing to see who Walling chose to write the foreword to his book, **Max Lucado** who has publicly taught that one becomes a child of God by saying a simple prayer And that one is baptized not in order to be saved, but because one is already saved. Walling in return acknowledges Lucado for his inspiration, encouragement, and letting him call him friend (page xiii). Can you imagine the apostle Paul or any other first century writer using a false teacher to promote a gospel message and then thank him for his inspiration, encouragement and friendship? Jesus said, "**Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you**" (John 15:14). James wrote, "**whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God**" (James 4:4). It is inconsistent for some to stand in opposition to brother Lucado and his erroneous doctrinal stances and then turn around and support and defend men like Jeff Walling who have embraced him. To do so is to truly engage in a dance. Not with God, but with wolves. Daring to dance with wolves is truly a dangerous dance of death.

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DO WE NOT KNOW WHO WE ARE?

Wayne Coats

F. LaGard Smith, “believes the Churches of Christ are suffering from an identity crisis...” **C. Leonard Allen** believes, “...the Churches of Christ are the fruit of a ‘restoration movement’ that began early last century.” According to Dr. Allen, its founding fathers were swayed not just by the apostle Paul but also by the philosopher **John Locke**, among others! “The result: a tradition that stumbles along with an enlightenment hangover, claiming all the while to be nothing but a first century church.”

The above are words penned by **Paul R. Buckley**—staff writer of the *Dallas Morning News*. The material was written apparently on November 21, 1998, which is of recent vintage. It seems that Buckley obtained his information by interrogation of the different parties. We have no reason to question the validity of Buckley’s remarks but we do vehemently deny the asseverations of C. Leonard Allen. Allen clatters the usual spiel which some of us heard years ago but we had sense enough to consider the unfounded sources and reject them in toto.

Notice carefully the blatant assertion that, “Churches of Christ are the fruit of a ‘restoration movement’ that began early last century.” Please, where did Allen learn this? Did Buckley misquote Allen? When did Allen learn so much about that movement? Did he learn all that profound information while in kindergarten or as a sophomoric scholar? Surely he will not be averse in telling us the source of his brilliance. It is far past the time for men such as Allen to make known their sources of wisdom. Some of the rest of us might like to revel in those sources. I did not say we would like to accept them.

At some point in time and at some place, men such as Allen have heard someone say that “Churches of Christ are the result of a movement which began in the last century.” Maybe Allen and the rest of his kind, read from someone who posited such a view. I would give a cup of dog chow if I could learn just exactly who Allen depended upon for his brilliant education which enables him to declare that Churches of Christ are the result of a last century movement.

Is it known that the expression, “Churches of Christ” began to be used first of all, during the last century? When we speak of the “Churches of Christ” are we using a term or expression which was never used in the New Testament? We need Allen’s help along this line.

If there were such entities, things, or people who comprised the churches of Christ in the first century, is it impossible for churches of Christ to exist today when patterned after those early congregations in word, worship and work; May we preach and teach about the church which Jesus built? May we study the Bible and know whether Jesus built the church? Is it possible to be the Church of Christ, if we follow the pattern of the New Testament?

The liberals such as **Rubel Shelly** in a sarcastic tone ask, “which church do we want to follow? The Church at Cor-

inth with its adultery and division? The Church at Galatia or Rome?” How much education does it take for one to know that Paul’s letters to the congregations were not to sanction the serious problems but they were regulatory, condemnatory, and corrective? It is absurd and foolish for one to attempt to beg the question by asking to make some sort of point with respect to the blunders of the early church.

Was there a person in the first century such as Jesus Christ? Is it possible for me to adhere to his instructions which were given to the apostles who later wrote by inspiration? I contend that such is possible.

To the liberal, cultic characters the scriptures are no more than discarded waste paper. Who needs the scriptures in such a fast ongoing age?

Is it not exceedingly strange that we no longer understand what Isaiah, Daniel, Luke, and other inspired men wrote? How is it that we have been able to sit at the feet of modernists and become so smart? Is it not the case that Isaiah was moved along by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21). He wrote:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3).

Please notice that Daniel wrote, “**And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...**” (Daniel 2:44); of course the kingdom was set up as the prophets had promised. The church and the kingdom are the same in spite of the hallucinations of the liberals to the contrary.

The modernists have killed God, they have turned Jesus into an illegitimate son of a woman of ill repute, as per **Resnor**, and now the hue and cry among the liberals is that the church is nothing more than a movement with roots in the last century. I would not give a dime’s difference in the entire crew. Destruction is the goal of these fellows.

Almighty God thundered from heaven, “**...and it shall stand forever.**” In spite of this and to the contrary, a crew of liberals would try to deny that the kingdom actually exists today as the church of Christ.

If the church is nothing more than some sort of movement sprouting out of the 19th century, I ask how in heaven’s name could it be the church of Christ? It may be just a counterfeit, spurious something like these modern apostles who deceive the gullible. Why waste time with a counterfeit shadow? Why waste money paying a preacher to perform in a completely social club?

In the first-century men wrote of and spoke about the churches of Christ. May I speak of the same? In the first

century man believed the truth, repented of their sins, and were baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38). Which little teacher of error will have to deny me the remission of my sins when I believed, repented, and was baptized for the remission of my sins? In the first century when people submitted to the commands as preached by the apostles, we learn that God added them to the church (Acts 2:47). The saved were added by the Lord to the church. They did not become a part of some man-made movement or human enterprise. Can people be saved today? If so does God add them to the church? Did God only add the obedient to the church in the first century? If people can be saved today, do they remain outside the church? If one can be saved, why can one not be added to the Lord's church?

We have been using the inspired word of God for, lo, these many years as we preached about the salient features of the church. We have spoken about the church as the family of God. And indeed it is. Will the liberals consent for God's family to exist in our time? Can people become children of God today? How does one become a child of God? Is it not by faith and baptism (Galatians 3:26-27)? Are the children of God in the church or out of the church? Are God's children in God's family or out of God's family?

It is a lie palmed off on the illiterate to prattle that the Church of Christ is nothing more than the fruit of a 19th century movement. Liberals never make any sense.

Allen speaks of "...its founding fathers..." How did he come to know so much about those "founding fathers"? In liberal fashion he knows so very much more than any of the "founding fathers" which he dreams about. Who were those founding fathers? Did any of those "founding fathers" attempt to become founding fathers? Whatever their offspring, it is certain that they were/are bastards and not sons (Hebrews 12:8).

The result of all this bungling is that there is, "a tradition which stumbles along with a hangover, claiming to be a first century church." That is pretty sour language. Now you no longer have an identity crisis. You can know that you are nothing more than a tradition. You cannot stand straight, but the best you can do is stumble along. If you believe you are thinking rationally, Allen would diagnose you as suffering from a hangover. Why claim to be a first century church when all the liberals forbid it?

There is no possibility that such will ever happen. However, it would be nice to be able to corral the liberals where they could not escape and run. Their foolishness could be brought to light.

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BAPTISM: You Can't Have Your Cake and Eat it, Too

Tyler Young

To take a definite position on an issue is to risk offending those who disagree. That appears to be more than some of our brethren can stand. As the church of Christ we have correctly taught that baptism is, as Peter plainly said in Acts 2:38, “**for the remission of sins.**” But upholding the truth that a sinner cannot be saved without being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27) has made the faithful people of God offensive to most of the denominational world (and an increasing number of our own as well). Thus, certain brethren among us have become experts in avoiding plainness of speech on the issue. With all the skill of a shrewd politician, they please all and offend none by speaking in somber but nebulous tones of the “importance” of baptism while carefully avoiding dogmatism on the absolute necessity of baptism for the remission of past sins.

WEST TEXAS BULLETIN

A recent bulletin from a congregation in the west Texas town of Snyder offers a perfect example of this kind of fence-riding. A brother says:

Is baptism necessary for salvation? Here's my two cents: yes, in a way, and no, if you want to get really technical...It is deeply linked with salvation, as is prayer, and fellowship, and evangelism, and study, and meditation, and fasting. None of those things can save you. All of those things are marks of a Christian. And there are many other marks (forgiveness, gentleness, etc.). Will any of these marks keep you out of heaven? I really don't think that's the point...Jesus did not die on the cross so we can spend the rest of our lives worrying about if we've done enough to get into heaven....

So is baptism necessary to salvation or not? From these equivocal remarks, who can tell? It is somehow “deeply linked” with salvation, but in the same way as fasting or meditation. This kind of answer allows him to affirm some fuzzy connection between baptism and salvation while simultaneously denying that it is absolutely essential to be saved without coming right out and saying so.

Discerning readers should see a problem with the assertion that baptism is “deeply linked” to salvation in the same way as prayer, evangelism, meditation, and fasting. Does a sinner have to fast in order to pass from a lost to a saved state? Is a man lost in sin ever commanded in scripture to “meditate” for the remission of sins? Can someone be saved before he evangelizes? These things may be “marks” or characteristics of the Christian life, but they are not essential for a man to be born again and enter into the family of God. This is exactly what denominations teach about baptism; they assert it is something done—not *to be* saved, but because one is *already* saved. There is not a denominationalist alive who would object to saying baptism, like

prayer or Bible study, is *important*. The whole issue is whether or not it is *essential* to be saved.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

The latter is what the Bible clearly teaches (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 22:16), and what our denominational friends deny. After considering the question as to whether or not baptism will “keep you out of heaven,” our brother says, “I really don't think that's the point.” But that is *precisely* the point. If God declared baptism to be “**for the remission of sins,**” then one cannot enter heaven unless it is done. When denominationalists say otherwise by moving it from before salvation from past sins—where God put it—to after, they reject the word of God and therefore God himself (John 12:48; II John 9). Our brother denies this, but he beats all around the proverbial bush to get it done.

By answering the question as to whether or not baptism is necessary to salvation by saying, “Yes, *in a way*, and no...” our misguided brother appears to want to have his cake and eat it, too. And many no doubt are satisfied with such murky musings and dodging of the issue. But this kind of double-talk is killing the church and costing souls. The faithful must expose this kind of nonsense for what it is and call for a loving but bold declaration of the truth.

GREAT PLAINNESS OF SPEECH

Christ and the apostles were not hard to “pin down” on issues. Jesus did not say, “Is repentance necessary to salvation? Well—yes and no...” He said, “**Except you repent you shall all in like manner perish**” (Luke 13:3). Peter was not afraid to say, “**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 2:38). One cannot have the remission of sins without scriptural baptism, and brethren who will not come out and say so are simply refusing to “**preach the word**” (II Timothy 4:2). The church must stop tolerating this “Here's my two cents” drivel which passes for biblical instruction and get back to “**Thus saith the Lord**” (I Peter 4:11). It is time to let brethren who are speaking out of both sides of their mouths on such fundamental issues of salvation know that their indistinct offerings are not going to pass for soundness in the faith. We are not going to let them have their cake and eat it, too.

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Sunday, February 28

- 9:30 A.M. "A Review of the Woods-Franklin Debate on Holy Spirit Baptism and Miracles" Keith Mosher
10:30 A.M. "The Design and End of Miracles" David P. Brown
4:00 P.M. "The United Pentecostal Church" Lynn Parker
5:00 P.M. "Romanticism—the Philosophy Behind Pentecostalism" Joseph Meador
6:00 P.M. "What is the Meaning of 'that which is perfect'?" Bobby Liddell

Monday, March 1

- 9:00 A.M. "What is the 'Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Inc.'" Roddy Covington
10:00 A.M. "Water Baptism—Not Holy Spirit Baptism—Is the One Baptism" David Baker
11:00 A.M. "A Review of the Wallace-Vaughn Debate on Miracles and the Godhead" Tom Wacaster
1:30 P.M. "Where is the Evidence For Miracles Today?" Pat McIntosh
2:30 P.M. "What Does I Corinthians 1:6-8 Teach?" Charles Collette
3:30 P.M. "Pentecostalism and the Godhead" Clifford Newell
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Contradictions in the Various Doctrines of Pentecostals" B. J. Clarke
8:00 P.M. "The Doctrine of Direct Divine Illumination" Jesse Whitlock

Tuesday, March 2

- 9:00 A.M. "Miracles of Christ" Tom Hicks
10:00 A.M. "Old And New Pentecostalism" Michael Light
10:00 A.M. **Ladies' Class—"The Godly Woman, or True Spirituality—Part 1" Irene Taylor
11:00 A.M. "'Nashville Jubilee' and Pentecostalism" Gary Grizzell
1:30 P.M. "Experiences are not Authoritative" Billy Bland
2:30 P.M. "Miracles of the Apostles" David Jones
2:30 P.M. **Ladies' Class—"The Godly Woman, or True Spirituality—Part 2" Irene Taylor
3:30 P.M. "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" Noah Hackworth
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "A Review of the Woods-Hicks Debate on Holy Spirit Baptism and Miracles" Robert Taylor, Jr.
8:00 P.M. "You Can't Have the Tongues Without the Snakes" Ronnie Hayes

Wednesday, March 3

- 9:00 A.M. "Biblical Spirituality Versus Emotionalism" Toney Smith
10:00 A.M. "Atheists and Pagans Can Speak Gibberish" Gary Summers
11:00 A.M. "What Do I Corinthians 13:9-13, Ephesians 4:8-14 and Romans 12:6-8 Have in Common?" Daniel Denham
1:30 P.M. "The Nine Miraculous Gifts" Lester Kamp
2:30 P.M. "A Review of 'The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ Today'" Eddie Whitten
3:30 P.M. "Pentecostalism Undermines the Authority of the Bible" Michael Hatcher
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Miracles of the Old Testament" Curtis Cates
8:00 P.M. "The Destructive Consequences of Pentecostalism" Dub McClish
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What Does It Mean To Speak, As The Oracles Of God?

Noah A. Hackworth

The two books written by Peter were written in the second half of the first century (ca. 65-67). They were written to the elect who were sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (I Peter 1:1). Peter spoke to **"them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Peter 1:11). In the first epistle, Peter declared: **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..."** (4:11). *Oracles* is a word used to refer to "the law given to Moses" (Acts 7:38), to the Hebrew scriptures (Romans 3:2), and to the word of God (Hebrews 5:12), but what does it mean to speak as the oracles of God? Men have through the centuries, even to this day, attempted to speak for God. Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah the prophet of God, said, **"To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them"** (8:20). Of some prophets, God said, **"Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they teach you vanity; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah"** (Jeremiah 23:16). **"I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied"** (23:21). Everyone, and there are no exceptions, who attempts to teach as the oracles of God must (1) speak only that which agrees with the truth of the Bible, and (2) speak **all** that the Bible says, without addition, subtraction, or modification (Acts 20:27). This most assuredly means the preacher and/or the Bible teacher:

1. Cannot speak lies and cause people to err (Jeremiah 23:13, 25, 32)
2. Must not cause people to forget God's name (Jeremiah 23:25, 27, 32)
3. Cannot steal God's word and keep it from their neighbors (Jeremiah 23:22)
4. Must not pervert the words of God (Jeremiah 23:26; Galatians 1:6-9).
5. Cannot seduce the people (Ezekiel 13:10)
6. Must not strengthen the hands of the wicked (Ezekiel 13:22)

There is unquestionably an awesome responsibility upon anyone who holds the Bible in his hand; he must speak *only* what is bidden by the Lord (Jonah 3:2). The preaching we do today must not be so general as to create a margin for error in the minds of others, or allow them to forget God's name. Our preaching must consist of our best effort to **"declare the whole counsel of God"** which includes everything that is profitable (Acts 20:20, 27). As for perverting the words of God, **"let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints"** (Ephesians 5:3). Even the angels were not allowed to pervert the gospel of Christ. To do so would have brought the anathema of heaven down upon them (Galatians 1:8). It will be noticed that what the KJV renders "accursed," the ASV 1901 renders "anathema," which is not translation but transliteration. Some scholars suggest that "cut off forever" is inherent in the word.

During the time of Ezekiel, false prophets had **"seduced the people"** (13:10). Peace had been promised when there was no peace. The prophets had built up a "wall" of false confidence in the minds of the people. Our preaching must not lead others to "contend for things not of the faith," or influence them to follow fleshly pursuits. Instead, **"For Jehovah will be thy confidence, and will keep thy foot"**

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from being taken" (Proverbs 3:26). Above all things, our preaching must not strengthen the hands of the wicked. Should our preaching be that which will allow the sinner to feel comfortable in his wickedness, we will have failed in the discharge of our responsibility. And this, I fear, is what happened in Corinth. To the Corinthians Paul said: (1) "one of you hath his father's wife," (2) "ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn," (3) "your glorying is not good," (4) "know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," (5) "purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump..." (I Corinthians 5:1-7). We cannot allow

ourselves or others to find comfort in sin. To do so will put our souls in great jeopardy as well as rob the gospel of its power to change lives (Romans 1:16-17).

Preaching as the oracles of God is a weighty responsibility and it must never be taken with anything less than our greatest respect and sincerity. God's approval and help will be continually manifest to those who faithfully preach his word, but his face will surely be against those who do not (I Peter 3:12).

—4400 West Tulare Avenue
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Building Up The Local Congregation

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Lynn Parker

Part of "contending for the faith" includes building up, and edifying the brethren. While it is necessary to mark those causing divisions by teaching strange and false doctrines (Romans 16:17), it is also essential that congregations give diligent attention to building up brethren (I Thessalonians 5:11). No congregation can afford to sit by and boast, "*We do not tolerate false doctrine here*" when they are otherwise lethargic, inactive, or near death! Thus, this page will be devoted to building up the local congregation. In keeping with the commands of our Lord and the purpose of *Contending For The Faith*, only unquestionably sound men will be used in writing articles that appear under this heading. In a very practical way we want to address needs and problems that arise in congregations, how they can be resolved, and the glorious cause of Jesus Christ caused to progress. Your input is welcomed and appreciated.

SUCCESSFUL GOSPEL MEETINGS AND PREPARATION

Do some research and note the differences and similarities between meetings today, and those held back in the 1950's and 1960's—a time when meetings generally were better attended, longer in duration, and often, more fruitful. In many congregations today, gospel meetings are deemed "ineffective" Not just a few congregations have discontinued gospel meetings because of poor attendance at contemporary meetings especially on the weeknights. A number of congregations report that local, "regular" members do not support gospel meetings as they once did, and that non-Christian visitors are almost nonexistent in each assembly. Let us humbly suggest that the one single cause for a poor meeting is still lack of preparation on the part of the host congregation. Here might be a typical scenario behind a gospel meeting:

Brother Jones: "*It's about time to have a meeting again.*"

Brother Smith: "*OK, when do you have it and who do you want to preach it?*"

Brother Doe: "*Why don't you call my wife's third cousin—I think he's still preaching over in Goshen—and see if he can come sometime next month, or the month after?*"

The call is made, the preaching brother agrees to come, and everyone does nothing until flyers are sent out two weeks before the meeting's start. The meeting comes, the brethren and visitors do not, and at the close of the last service, some bewildered soul remarks, "*We sure don't have meetings like we used to when I was a pup.*" I have been in business meetings where brethren arranged to hold a gospel meeting and it was not a pretty sight! It ought to make us cringe to think that brethren approach such a tremendous opportunity with carelessness and lack of attention. What can be done to make for effective gospel meetings?

PLAN THE MEETING A YEAR IN ADVANCE

Determine the purpose(s) of the meeting, the speaker, and try to fit the preacher to the meeting. Plan, in cooperation with the speaker, the theme, sermon topics, and order of presentation. Too, remember that not any and every preacher is automatically the best choice for a meeting. When setting the date of the meeting, talk to the congregation and determine the best time of the year for optimum participation and attendance. There will always be some conflict with a schedule and that may be unavoidable, but as much as possible, seek feedback from the families in the congregation as to events, travel, and so on. Then choose a date where you can expect optimum participation. Check with surrounding congregations to make sure that the date does not conflict. This too is difficult but be as cooperative as possible. Once you have selected the date, announce it to the congregation and have every family mark it on their calendars. Ask them to clear these days for the meeting.

Develop and implement a plan that involves the entire congregation in gospel meeting preparation. Impress the importance of the effort on them—much like Uncle Sam, **“WE NEED YOU!”** Send a letter, signed by the elders and the local preacher, to every member of the congregation giving them the exact dates and time of the meeting, its general theme, the steps to be taken to prepare for the meeting, and how they can help. Also, send a letter to neighboring congregations and ask them to reserve the dates. Use yard signs, door-knocking, announcements, the bulletin,

special mail-outs, and above all, personal invitations to neighbors and relatives. Invite like you mean it, like this is of utmost importance (it is!), and as if souls are dependent on this effort (they are!). **Emphasize that a great meeting starts and ends with every family in attendance and every family bringing visitors.** When brethren are convinced of personal responsibility in this area, meetings will once again flourish.

— Post Office Box 39
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One Woman's Perspective

HAPPINESS IS....

Annette B. Cates

Some years ago, phrases that began, “Love is...”, “Joy is...”, and “Happiness is...” were quite popular, appearing on posters, pins, and bumper stickers. There are numerous sections of scripture that give us some concise guidelines that we can fit into those phrases and apply to our daily lives. One would be the fourth chapter of Philippians, where we can easily see an outline for defining what happiness is.

HAPPINESS IS in being in the Lord (verse 4). There can be no true happiness for one whose life does not conform to God’s will. It is only in Christ that we can have all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), only through him that we can have the security of redemption and the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7).

HAPPINESS IS in not giving in to anxiety (verse 6). Like Martha, so often we are troubled by many things. Jesus commended Mary, however, for having chosen the good part, that is for having placed spiritual matters over physical (Luke 10:41-42). Martha was “cumbered” by her serving, which indicates that it was an unnecessary burden. Most of our worries are likewise unnecessary. As Christians, we have our heavenly Father who knows all of our needs (Matthew 6:32).

HAPPINESS IS in keeping our thoughts on that which is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (verse 8). When our minds are filled with that which is good and positive, there will be no room left for negative thinking which drains us of energy. What we think determines who

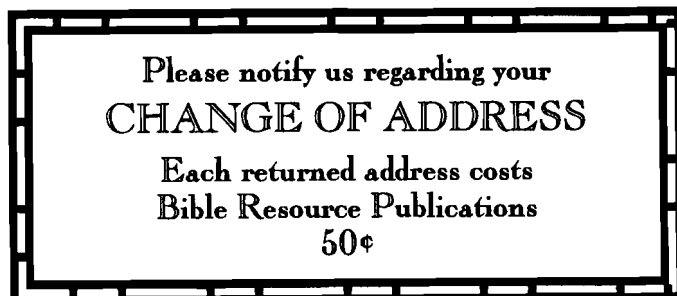
we are. If we are to be happy, then that must be the way we think. **“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”** (Proverbs 23:7). Thinking on the world brings unhappiness and disaster (Matthew 15:18-19).

HAPPINESS IS in being content, regardless of the circumstances (verse 11). This contentment triumphs over our material circumstances, **“...be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”** (Hebrews 13:5). We know **“life consisteth not in the abundance of the things”** we possess (Luke 12:15) and are assured that the righteous will not be forsaken, nor will God’s seed beg bread (Psalm 37:25). Contentment transcends adversity. Paul was in prison when he wrote this Philippian letter. Throughout his years of service to God, he also underwent beatings, stoning, hunger, and various other perils (II Corinthians 11:23-27), yet his heart was filled with joy and contentment. Furthermore, we observe from this verse that contentment can be learned. It takes faith in God’s care for us and self-discipline to eschew the material goods of this world and be willing to make physical sacrifices if necessary to be faithful in service to God. What it all comes down to is what is REALLY important to us (Ecclesiastes 5:10, Luke 12:34).

HAPPINESS IS in knowing that **“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me”** (verse 13). As Christians, our sense of self-worth should be far greater than that of people of the world. While others depend on their own self-sufficiency with its human limitations, **“our sufficiency is of God”** (II Corinthians 3:5) and **“the Lord shall be thy confidence”** (Proverbs 3:26).

HAPPINESS IS in cultivating each of these qualities as outlined in Philippians 4. As one is achieved, the next grows out of it. When we are in the Lord, we have no need for anxiety; our thoughts, and consequently, our lives are pure and positive; we are content regardless of our circumstance and have strength that comes only through Christ.

—9194 Lakeside Drive
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MODIFIED THEORIES: Faithless Scientists, Main Game!

Marvin L. Weir

It is amazing that a human being can be so intelligent and yet so ignorant! Most scientists are well educated in their field, and some possess brilliant minds. But newspaper articles such as the one in the Tuesday, January 23, 1996 *Dallas Morning News* entitled "Galileo data may help revise theories of planets" reveals why most scientists will continue to be a failure. This scholarly group was "surprised" at the results of the Galileo mission. The spaceship was the first to enter Jupiter's atmosphere and collect samples from the giant gaseous planet. The article states: "*The properties of Jupiter and the other three 'gas giants'—Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—are thought to hold important clues to the solar system formation five billion years ago and its evolution since then.*"

A popular theory of many scientists is that "*comets smashing into Earth delivered chemicals crucial to life*" But if the theory is correct, "*then comets should have delivered the same chemicals to Jupiter, enriching it with carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and other elements. But Galileo found otherwise. Jupiter has no more of those elements than are found in the sun ...*" Not to worry though—do not be alarmed! Trust your scientist who says, "*That doesn't refute the comet delivery theory, but it raises questions about it. We are not talking about a major revision*" Dr. Owen said. "*It's rather that aspects of the theories we've been living with are going to have to be modified.*"

Let me give you some "buzz words" that should run up a red flag. First, one must have "**billions**" of years. Why? The theory of evolution requires time—a lot of time! Second, scientific theories are **probably** not wrong, it is just that they must be continually "**updated**" and "**modified.**" Third, they **cannot explain** the data they have gathered (time is needed to put it together although it amounted to less than a typical computer diskette) because it does not fit with their so-called theories. Fourth, they hope to "**revise ideas about how planets form and perhaps even how life began.**"

Flash—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Bible, God's word, needs no revision and has never been proven wrong! Is it not amazing how complicated things become because of lack of faith in the Creator?

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—North Carolina—

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—Tennessee—

Crossville—Lantana Church of Christ, 7004 Lantana Rd., P.O. Box 2686, Crossville, TN 38557, (615) 788-6404. Sun.: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Jimmie B. Hill, Evangelist.

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 or Steve Ellis, Evangelist, (901) 366-6005.

Nashville area—Villages Church of Christ, 436 Belinda Parkway, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m. Fifteen minutes from downtown Nashville, Wayne Coats, Evangelist, tel. (615) 758-7406.

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

Lubbock—Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00 a.m., 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.

Portland—Church of Christ, 2009 Wildcat Dr., Portland, TX 78374, tel. (512) 643-6571, Jerry Moffitt, Evangelist.

—Wyoming—

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 4901 Ridge Rd., Cheyenne, WY 82009. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Loran Gearhart, tel. (307) 634-3040.

Notes & Quotes...

GHANA 1998- TRIP 2

Dear brethren, faithful in the Lord:

My second Ghana trip for '98 began on August 17 with arrival in Accra on the evening of the 18th. The flights were long, but safe. I had a three-hour layover in Amsterdam and then on to Accra. All flights were booked solid. The Custom officials in Accra have streamlined the entry process. If you have nothing to declare, you go one way; and if you have articles that are not duty-free, you take another route. This process has certainly made it much easier on the passengers. Outside is another thing—you have to fight off the boys who want to carry your luggage. They are not content to take Ghanaian money, but instead want dollars. They know the "suckers" and extort large fees for their service. I learned quickly that you carry your own baggage, or wait for those who are meeting you. Upon arrival I was greeted by friends, and we began the process to determine if I had a room for the night. We went to the Ghana Water Sewer Resthouse as the first stop. My friend had not booked a room for me. I learned he was upset because I failed to bring him a gift one year. Friendship in Ghana is generally based on "what can you do for me." We made a hasty retreat and went to SSA (Internal Revenue) Guest House. They have good, clean rooms and serve a continental breakfast. Also this facility is very safe. I had a good night's sleep and was ready to go the next morning. After taking care of business and purchasing groceries, I was driven to Takoradi, Ghana where I spent several days in the Guest area of the Effiakuma church of Christ. This congregation has a rather large building and the attendance is over 400 each Lord's day morning. The congregation conducts several services throughout the week.

On August 22, I was awarded the degree of Honorary Doctor of Philosophy by Sekondi College. This was a distinct honor, and I feel so unworthy of the honor. I certainly feel those who have supported me through the years are more worthy than I of any honor. However, since only one person could accept the award, I accepted it in honor of those who have helped make these trips possible.

Next, I drove up to Vakpo-Dunyo (Volta Region) to investigate some preaching sites to reach the people of the community. It was my intent and purpose to establish a sound congregation in that community. I learned that only a few weeks earlier two preachers from Texas had been in the area and baptized a number of people. I then worked with the local preacher to find some land for a shed building. The Paramount Chief in the area came to greet me, and I was presented a plaque for my service in Ghana. It is quite an honor to meet such a big Chief, and you follow strict protocol

when he calls, or you call on him. He speaks through a linguist who relays the message to you. The entire group greets you by hand-shake, then you go and greet the Chief and his entourage.

When you desire to leave, permission must be asked of the Chief. He granted a piece of land to the church, but protocol demands that you pay him the price of the land as a gift. I have plans for a shed building, which they can add to when funds of their own are available. I preached on the street in the evening, and the Chief came and sat at our table. He heard the truth, and expressed appreciation for our visit. I learned that one of my friends in the village had obeyed the gospel, and I encouraged him to be faithful.

My next stop was a second visit to Takoradi. It was here that more than 162 preachers assembled in a school for lodging, food and a three-day seminar. Don Tarbet of Denison, Texas has conducted seminars for the preachers of this area and beyond for several years. He invited me to be a part of this effort. Incidentally, brother Tarbet raised all the funds for the seminar. We dealt with all phases of the "Change Agent" philosophy, Demonology, and Reincarnation plus the liberalism now running rampant in Ghana. I have ready for the publisher a booklet dealing with various phases of liberalism in Ghana. If this booklet is like the first booklet I published, then those congregations who are supporting efforts in Ghana will disregard all that I have documented. I will not write what I am unable to document. The thrust of the liberal movement in Ghana is based on W. Carl Ketcherside's teachings of "Unity in Diversity." Ketcherside made a distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine," and this has caught on, also. Ketcherside said that the "gospel" was for alien sinners and "doctrine" was for the church. My booklet deals with all of the above, and a copy will be in the mail to you very soon. Don Tarbet is a great coworker! Our brother Daniel K. Ampadu-Asiamah presented three or more important lessons in this series of studies. Daniel has stood fast for the truth and is in great demand among the local congregations.

It was our privilege to help officially open the West Coast School of Preaching. There was a special service at the building, which was well attended. Of course the student body and faculty were present. Don Tarbet and I spoke at this service. This service was not what you would expect at a denominational service, but one of dignity with emphasis on the fact that a building is a means to an end—to train good men to preach the gospel of Christ. John Nat Kassis is the Principal of the school, and is well qualified to lead the training program. I was pleased to be able to participate in such a program.

I certainly want to thank you for your support for this past trip. The Lord willing, I plan one more trip, if my knees do not give out on me. I have been asked to teach a seminar on Counseling, and one brother who is pursuing his Masters in

Philosophy has written to urge that I come and train some men for this important work. The denominations have capitalized on a captive audience by offering assistance to those who are experiencing problems in marriage, and such like. Gospel preachers certainly should be able to recognize personality disorders and other problems and refer them to professionals. Also, those preachers associated with the body of Christ have Bible knowledge and are better prepared than denominational preachers to help those with marital distress. Marriage in Ghana presents more problems than marriage does here in America. Notwithstanding, I recognize that false doctrine abounds on marriage, divorce, and remarriage in America, and this has made its way into congregations in Africa. We must meet the challenges.

My return home was even longer than the flight from the USA. I had an eight-hour layover in Amsterdam. Before my arrival in Memphis, I knew Northwest Airlines was on strike. Northwest had informed Daphne I would get to Little Rock by another carrier, but this didn't happen. There was mass confusion at Northwest counters. I rented an automobile and drove home, arriving about 1:00 a.m. on the 8th of September. I had been without sleep for about 24 hours.

Thank you again for your faithful support. Numbers 6:24-26.

Carroll P. Bennett
501 Palisade Drive NW
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October 26, 1998

AUSTIN, TEXAS- The Southwest church of Christ is pleased to announce that the 18th annual Southwest Lectureship will be held April 11-14, 1999. The theme for this year's lectureship is "As For Me and My House." Speakers from several states have been invited to come and lecture to an expected record number of brethren who will gather in Austin from across the nation to attend this year's lectureship series.

During the lectureship, exhibits of various brotherhood publishers, mission efforts, and works from around the country will be on display (*upon prior approval*). In addition, the sermons and lessons delivered during this series will be published in hard-back book form and will be available during the lectureship along with audio and video tapes of this year's as well as past Southwest Lectureships. The annual Southwest School of Bible Studies Supporters' Dinner will also be held on lectureship Tuesday. For further information regarding this dinner, please contact Joseph D. Meador, Director. R.V. and camper spaces are available at the Southwest building. For additional information and accommodations, you may contact:

Southwest Church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, Texas 78748-5399. Phone: (512) 282-2438 or Fax (512) 282-2486.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Eddie Whitten

"And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself." Acts 26:1

The Apostle Paul's life was in jeopardy because of his proclamation of the gospel of Christ. The Jews had falsely accused him of profaning the temple in Jerusalem. He had been spirited out of Jerusalem by the Roman army to Caesarea. He had laid his case before Felix, then to Festus. King Agrippa, with his wife, Bernice, came to Caesarea to honor Festus. Festus informed Agrippa concerning the strange case brought against Paul. Agrippa wished to hear Paul. On the morrow, Paul was brought before Agrippa and Paul was granted permission to speak his case.

Paul's response stands as an example for all faithful Christians. His answer consists of three essential elements:

1. His "happiness" for the opportunity to speak. Paul had an opportunity to speak before the King! He said, **"I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee..."** An opportunity to present to the king the **"reason for the hope that lies within us (him)"** (I Peter 3:15). It should be the prayer of every faithful Christian to have such an opportunity. The sad fact is that many have opportunities of this magnitude but choose to let them pass. Paul was unashamed to explain his convictions to the king in the presence of the **"chief captains and principal men of the city"** (Acts 25:23-24).

2. The basis of his convictions. It is not much of a man who is ashamed of his beliefs. Perhaps this is the reason for the weaknesses we see in the church these days. True conversion results in fearless convictions. Paul explained the events of his conversion on the road to Damascus. He reiterated two fateful questions asked that day: **"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"** (Acts 26:14); **"Who art thou, Lord?"** (v. 15). Jesus answered that it was he whom Paul was persecuting. Paul conveyed to the king the basis of his faith; his conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. What would we say under the same circumstances? Would we be so bold to state our own convictions so plainly and emphatically?

3. An earnest plea for obedience. It did not matter that Paul was speaking to the king. All he was interested in was the soul of Agrippa and all men. He said, in response to Agrippa's statement, **"I would to God, that not only thou,**

but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:29). What courage! What conviction! What dedication! Paul was not ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16), and he was committed to its proclamation regardless of the consequences.

What would be the result of efforts on the part of Christians today under similar circumstances? Would it be a happy thought to be incarcerated for two years without a charge being lodged against us? Would it be a happy occasion to be questioned before the highest court in the land concerning our stand for truth? Would we be willing to lay our lives on the line to explain the basis for our faith? What would you say? Would you know what to say even if you had the courage to say it? Serious thoughts, these!

Of all the privileges Christians have, perhaps the greatest of all is the honor of teaching lost souls and inviting them to obey the gospel to be saved. You are permitted to speak for yourself. What will you say?

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THE GOSPEL PAPER THAT DARES TO TELL IT LIKE IT REALLY IS!

By the time that Ira Rice Jr. returned from Asia in 1964—after almost a decade as a missionary overseas—he found a full blown apostasy in process among the churches of Christ in the U.S. *Modernism* already was taking its toll; *Liberalism* was on the rise; *Pentecostalism*, *Calvinism*, and *Premillennialism* soon would make themselves felt—to say nothing of *Crossroadism*, *Balesism*, *Evolutionary Creationism*, *Interdenominationalism*, and “*Unity in Diversity*”; which were just over the horizon.

Even now, after all that has happened, since Rice tried to sound out the warning—first with his three-volume set of **AXE ON THE ROOT**, starting in 1966, then with the fighting paper called **CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH**, which began in 1970—he lives in a state of constant shock at how relatively few elders, preachers and rank-and-file members were willing to listen until it already was TOO LATE! Moreover, he could not understand why so few of those who were supposed to be committed to the New Testament Christianity would not join hands in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, while there was still time.

Be all that as it may, the Editor of *Contending for the Faith* was determined that at least one accurate, well-documented, written record would be in existence. It would detail the great and growing apostasy as it developed and pinpoint the departures from sound doctrine. It would dare to tell it like it really was!

We already have brought out 28 BOUND VOLUMES of this contemporary doctrinal digression among the churches of Christ. If you have not begun your own set of BOUND VOLUMES, this would be a good time to start. While you are at it, WHAT A WONDERFUL GIFT a set of these bound volumes would make for each of your children, to a faithful Christian friend, or to your local Church Library, a college or a School of Preaching!

These sets are valuable now. However, they will prove to be invaluable in the years to come. When puzzled brethren look back on this troubled era and try to figure out what happened to the Lord's church they will have a documented record of this apostasy.

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

From The Joplin Summit To Restoration Forum (1984-1998)

J.E. Choate

The 16th Restoration Forum in over 14 years convened November 1-3, 1998, was hosted by the Woodmont Hills Family of God church in Nashville, Tennessee, and was directed by **Rubel Shelly**. He fraternally embraces all "Christian" connected sects, denominations, and the Catholic Church based upon some vague formulated exclusive "core" doctrine.

Shelly described the Restoration Forum as a continuing dialogue among Christian Churches and Churches of Christ for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and unity. Dr. Shelly has caused more confusion and division in Nashville churches than any preacher since **Jesse B. Ferguson** 150 years ago.

FOUR UNITY MOVEMENTS (1909-1998)

Four distinct unity movements have been organized since 1906 to restore unity within the fellowships identified with the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement. The *first two unity meetings* (1909 and 1917) were initiated by leaders of the Christian Church in Nashville to cancel out the losses and to regain the churches in the south that they thought they had lost. That was not the case at all.

The digressives added insult to injury by calling for confrontational debates on instrumental music. They had mostly won with this tactic in the North and calculated to do so in the South. It took The Boswell-Hardeman music debate (1923) to put to rest the Digressive ploy that this would not work in Lipscomb country.

And would you believe that instrumental music was introduced for the first time in a Jubilee '98 worship service.

I was present and heard a woman leading the invitational hymn, two singing choirs, and instrumental music filling the huge Nashville Sports Arena about two thirds full following **Jeff Walling's** invitational. True or false? Want proof? Ask **Harold Hazelip** (who introduced Jeff Walling).

The same thing happened in the opening devotional of Restoration Forum XVI conducted by **Rubel Shelly** in the Woodmont Hills church. I was not surprised, but curious at the sight and sound of a piano being played during a communion service.

Call Rubel Shelly, the "Meister-singer," to tell us more about this. I was the only preacher present identified with the traditional churches who stood in contradiction to this latest pious charade. But do not misunderstand me. I do not stand alone. There are the "proverbial 7000" in the Nashville area who do not offer sacrifices to Baal. Believe me there is growing confusion and disarray in Nashville liberal churches who are breaking rank with each other.

Dr. Shelly did have the support of doctors **Gary Holloway** and **John York**, two Lipscomb scholars, who came one time perhaps to pay their respect to **Victor Knowles** and the College Press which publishes books for Lipscomb Bible professors.

The *third unity* movement between the Christian Church and churches of Christ was mounted in the late 1930's by **James DeForest Murch** and **Claude E. Witty**. It took the famed 1939 Indianapolis address of **H. Leo Boles** to convince the Digressives that there would be no compromises with organized societies and instrumental music.

(Continued On Page 4)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

Volume XXX, No. 2

February/1999

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., *Editor*
David P. Brown, *Associate Editor*

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ALL COMMUNICATIONS received by Contending for the Faith and or its Editors are viewed as intended FOR PUBLICATION unless otherwise stated. Whereas we respect confidential information, so described, everything else sent to us we feel free to publish without further permission being necessary. Anything sent to us NOT for publication, please indicate this clearly when you write. Please address such letters directly to the Editor Ira Y. Rice, Jr., 2956 Allshore, Memphis, Tennessee 38118. Telephone: (901) 363-6498.

ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith was begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by Contending for the Faith. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needful. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

All advertisements must be in our hands no later than two (2) months preceding the publishing of the issue of the journal in which you desire your advertisement to appear. To avoid being charged for the following month, ads must be canceled by the first of the month. We appreciate your understanding of and cooperation with our advertising policy.

MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. COST OF SPACE FOR ADS: Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. CLASSIFIED ADS: \$2.00 per line per month. CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS: \$30.00 per line per year. SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES: Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

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Associate Editorial...

WHEN YOU CANNOT ANSWER THE ARGUMENT OR PROVE YOUR OWN DOCTRINE, ALWAYS ATTACK YOUR OPPONENT

They were preachers and had met for a business meal. The meal and visit were necessary because the older of the two had taught that "except for sin, all of life is worship." His advocacy of this view had resulted in an upheaval unforeseen by either diner. They had not planned on such a backlash of their supporters. Certainly they had not expected the far-reaching consequences that they were presently reaping. Unwilling to repent of his error, the older of the two now sought aid and comfort from his younger companion. He knew the younger man would obey without question whatever he desired him to do.

In the course of their conversation they reminded one another of their great stature, learning and ability. Indeed they knew, whether anyone else could see it or not, that they were in a lofty position from which they alone could examine and understand things. Therefore, this meeting of these peerless wise intellectuals was not a lowbrow two-man "council, or conference." They were not "a self-appointed committee meeting for lunch." This they concluded because each had advised the other that such was not the case. They knew they were eagles and not buzzards. Thus, it was so. Their estimate of themselves was incontrovertible—not open for discussion.

"MEN WHO ESPOUSE UNTRUTH AND IGNORANCE"

As they dined, they reminded one another that such men as met in conference at lectureships comprised those "who demonstrate a mean spirit, poor manners, dishonest dealings, and a profound ignorance of the matters disputed." Each agreed with the other that such men were "fainthearted, intellectually lazy people." On the contrary, this business meal was comprised of noble and courageous Christian gentlemen. Often they had reminded one another that they were "men of honor, courage, diligence, and dedication." Never did they look down their noses at their lesser brethren. Indeed not, for they were noted for their magnanimity and humility. There was not a proud bone in either body!

In their visiting they wondered aloud to one another, asking, "Doesn't everyone know that those who oppose us have 'adopt[ed] a belligerent spirit'?" "Furthermore, don't people understand that such men always become 'embroiled in silly squabbles over stupid questions'?" Neither of the two could understand why people could not see that these sordid

men's "belligerent attitude, raised voice, clenched jaw, scowling face, and prating like a gamecock no more establishes the validity of a position than a baboon beating his chest and showing his teeth establishes his dominance." With that thought in mind each flashed broad opened-mouthed toothy grins at one another. They then laughed rather loudly. At another table a startled diner turned quickly toward the table of the older man and his companion—he thought he heard coming from their direction the racket apes make. He halfway expected to see the two men beating their chests. "No," he thought, "I was mistaken. They are just beating their gums."

THE POPE, HIS PRELATE AND THE "PAPAL BULL"

Finally as the meal was about finished the two compatriots reached a decision as to how they would deal with all the questions and challenges coming their way because of the false teaching on worship.

1. They concluded that there would be no admission of guilt.
2. There would be no repentance.
3. There would be no straightforward and succinct answers of questions put to them.
4. They would employ the same dodges and sophistry others used when they did not desire to be found out. Remember, "It depends on what 'is' is." Indeed, such tactics had been employed on them when they had challenged and queried others.
5. They also counted on the short memories of brethren. They prided themselves in knowing how to manipulate their hearers and readers. Indeed, they knew that some considered the doctrine a comparatively small matter. They would make the most of such thinking. They were just better than anyone else.
6. The younger of the two would publicly declare that he did not believe the doctrine of "except for sin, all life is worship." However, he would defend his friend by labeling all those who opposed him with demeaning terms. He would then declare that, after all, Romans 12:1, 2 was "worship language."
7. However, the strongest effort made to defend the elderly sage, would be to discredit his opponents.
 - A. This would involve an all-out effort to belittle and disdain all their critics.
 - B. By word of mouth, letters, e-mails and publications they would publish such as the following:
Robert's Rules of Order says that you should never enter into a controversy with a man not respected as an honorable equal. It is necessary and proper to refuse to become embroiled in conflicts with men who demonstrate a mean spirit, poor manners, dishonest dealings, and profound ignorance of the matters disputed.
 - C. They would do all within their power to place the false view of "except for sin, all of life is worship"

into the realm of "**foolish questions, genealogies, and contentions about the law**" (Titus 3:9).

- D. They would attack the person of all those who opposed this false doctrine by quoting such passages as "**Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease**" (Proverbs. 22:10).
- E. They would attempt to place the "except for sin, all of life is worship" doctrine into the category of "**vain controversies**" (II Timothy. 2:16-17a).
- F. They would declare that their critics were simply interested in one thing—destroying their work.
- G. Since the older of the two was too far above such a fray, he would use his younger and very willing protégé for his "mouth piece." [The crafty old fellow knew that his younger servant would perceive his action as that of a "defender of the faithful" and not a duped stooge.]

THE CONFERENCE THAT WAS NOT A CONFERENCE ENDS

The meal being ended, their business concluded, they rose from the table very satisfied with their food and, most of all, their profound wisdom. Indeed, they were "marching on with strength and vigor" with a "popularity greater than any time in the past ten years." They stood upon a foundation exceedingly firm. Indeed, from their own estimation of themselves, they had "cornered the market" on "Knowing Truth." They had not flattered themselves, because they were better than what they thought they were. They *always* told the truth.

If you had passed them while they leisurely strolled away from the restaurant you might have thought them to be two of the President's attorneys returning to the White House from the impeachment trial in the Senate, rejoicing over the "not guilty" verdict. However, upon closer examination of the two, you would have seen each man slowly shaking his head. If you had heard their remarks to one another, you would have heard them uttering their only lament—"Why won't the brethren realize what scholarly wise intellects we are and do what we tell them to do without question?"

If you had given closer consideration to the younger man's face you would have noticed a puzzled expression thereon. It was there because, while during the meal he had not eaten cucumbers, he now found himself burping them. He was, therefore, asking himself, "How could this be, seeing that only my sage erudite mentor was the only one of us to have eaten them?" For the wisest of learned intellectuals, some subjects are too profound and deep—thus, the solution escapes even them.

—David P. Brown, *Associate Editor*

JOPLIN SUMMIT...

(Continued From Page 1)

THE FOURTH UNITY MEETING

Now 60 years later this "really big show" is back on the road. This latest unity movement began in 1984 in what was designated as the "Joplin Summit." The reason given for "jump starting" this old unity charade was to discover some ground of agreement upon which the two churches could join some kind of a fraternal joint worship venture.

The Digressives ought to come clean and tell us what we already know because we read the same in the *One Body*. They will change nothing and give up nothing for the sake of unity with the liberal Churches of Christ. For a fact, the "change agents" have no doctrinal problems with the Christian Church.

The "Joplin Summit" took on the name of the Restoration Forum in the second 1985 meeting which has met annually since. This whole story has unfolded under the umbrella of the "One Body Ministry" and its official publication, the *One Body*, now edited by Victor Knowles.

RESTORATION FORUMS (I-XVI)

Some thought that after the close of the Joplin Summit in 1984 that the movement would fade away. But **Don DeWalt** and his successor, Victor Knowles perceived the great propaganda potentials of the "Joplin Summit" to promote the interests of the Independent Christian Church.

No matter how hard they tried, the influence of the likes of H. Leo Boles and **B. C. Goodpasture** hung like a pall over the proceedings. The hapless **Alan Cloyd**, who was chosen by **Carl McKelvey** and the other elders to represent the **Vultee Church of Christ**, removed the printed speeches of the 1939 common address from a display ta-

ble. Cloyd advised any who could not abide by the irenic spirit of the occasion to go home.

The second Restoration Forum got off to a rousing start March 16-20 at the Garnett Road Church of Christ in Tulsa. It was reported a thousand were in attendance for the first meeting. **Marvin Phillips**, full of charm, grace, and charisma, presided over the meetings with bubbling enthusiasm.

The Digressives were caught up in a euphoric state of soaring expectations during the course of Restoration XII hosted by Abilene Christian University. President **Royce Money** gave his effusive blessings to the occasion. **Douglas Foster** served as the director. **Bill Humble** as he is wont to do extolled the paramount role of Alexander Campbell in the Restoration Movement. You would think that Dr. Humble had never heard of David Lipscomb who had a like influence in churches of Christ.

The high point of the unity meetings came during the keynote speech of Rubel Shelly in Hart Auditorium titled "A Call to Bible Action." Shelly was given a prolonged standing ovation. Names of notable brethren present read like a roll call of "Who's Who" in churches of Christ: **REUEL LEMMONS**, **Leroy Garrett**, **Carl Ketcherside**, **Furman Kearley**, **Randall Harris**, **Bill Humble**, **Douglas Foster**, and others.

END OF THE LINE AND ROCK BOTTOM

Who would have guessed that the long running Restoration Forums would come apart at the seams in Nashville which is the birth place of this latest unity movement and that it took place at Woodmont Hills church where Rubel Shelly preaches.

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Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

Second Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 10-14, 1999

Shelly has spoken on the roster of *North American Christian Convention* speakers and written for the *Christian Standard*. The liberal Disciples invited Rubel Shelly awhile back to keynote the *World Convention of Churches of Christ* [a Disciples subsidiary] in Calgary, Canada.

Rubel Shelly and Victor Knowles simultaneously apologized during Jubilee '97 and the NACC for the likes of **David Lipscomb** and **John W. McGarvey** for causing the division in the Christian Church and Churches of Christ. Victor Knowles was surely shocked to learn that Rubel Shelly has no standing at all among area Churches of Christ who apparently boycotted the proceedings.

Restoration XVI proved to be a disaster marked by empty seats. Hyperbolically speaking, nobody came from among the Christian Church notables with the exception of Victor Knowles. Not even **Sam Stone**, editor of the *Christian Standard* came. Keen disappointment was written all over Rubel's face. And two of the speakers, one a Catholic historian-scholar and the other a Pentecostal charismatic, wondered aloud why they had been invited in the first place.

Not a single Nashville notable came as a representative from the Lipscomb University administration and faculty. Not even a single elder or preacher from the liberal churches wanted their faces to be seen under the aegis of a Rubel Shelly performance. Surely Harold Hazelip, **Steve Flatt**, and especially Carl McKelvey, who is one of the original godfathers of the Joplin Summit, should have been present to lend moral support to their ally.

Victor Knowles was puzzled and disappointed at the turnout for the occasion. He wanted to know if Restoration Forum XVI had been locally advertised. The answer was no, and why? I do not know. Except for the speakers, the majority present were visitors from Christian Churches outside Nashville.

Another strange fact is that the preachers and members of the Independent Christian Church and the liberal Disciples of Christ in and around Nashville stayed away. Restoration Forum XVI was a strange affair from start to finish. Only three notables identified with the Disciples of Christ were present. Rubel Shelly stood almost alone in what he perhaps thought would be his greatest shining hour.

Now Victor Knowles and his Joplin brethren must come to grips with the fact that they have been on a fruitless "snipe hunt" in the 14 years since the Joplin Summit in 1984. They thought that Shelly was a great champion held in high esteem by area Churches of Christ. The stubborn fact is that they now realize that they have been dealing with another "Leroy Garrett" whose influence to subvert the mission of churches of Christ has come down to a zero.

POSTSCRIPT

Then there is the forthcoming story of what went on during the course of Restoration Forum XVI which too is replete with stunning revelations which are compromising to the Digressives and our Church of Christ liberals.

—37141/2 Belmont Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

Missions Emphasis Weekend **April 2-4, 1999**

"Go...Teach All Nations"

Friday, April 2

7:00 ***The Challenge Before The Church Today***
Sam Matthews—Moab, Utah

8:00 ***Four Questions (Romans 10:14-15)***
Johnny Ramsey—Arlington, Texas

Saturday, April 3

9:00 ***"Open His Eyes And Let Him See"***
(II Kings 6:8-23)
Howard Cheung—Austin, Texas

10:00 ***Women and Missions (Ladies' Session)***
Maxine Mayo—Australia

11:00 ***Why The Local Church Should Be Involved In Missions***
Sam Matthews—Moab, Utah

12:00 Lunch Break

2:00 ***The Heart Of A Missionary***
Ira Y. Rice, Jr.—Memphis, Tennessee

3:00 ***Can One Man Evangelize A Nation?***
Mike Demory—Valley View, Texas

4:00-6:00 Dinner Break

6:00-6:45 Congregational Singing

7:00 ***"Fire In My Bones" (Jeremiah 20:7-13)***
Lawson Mayo—Australia

Sunday, April 14

9:30 ***"Hear Am I, Send Me" (Isaiah 6:8)***
Lawson Mayo—Australia

10:20 ***Keeping House Or Seeking And Saving The Lost?***
Ira Y. Rice, Jr.—Memphis, Tennessee

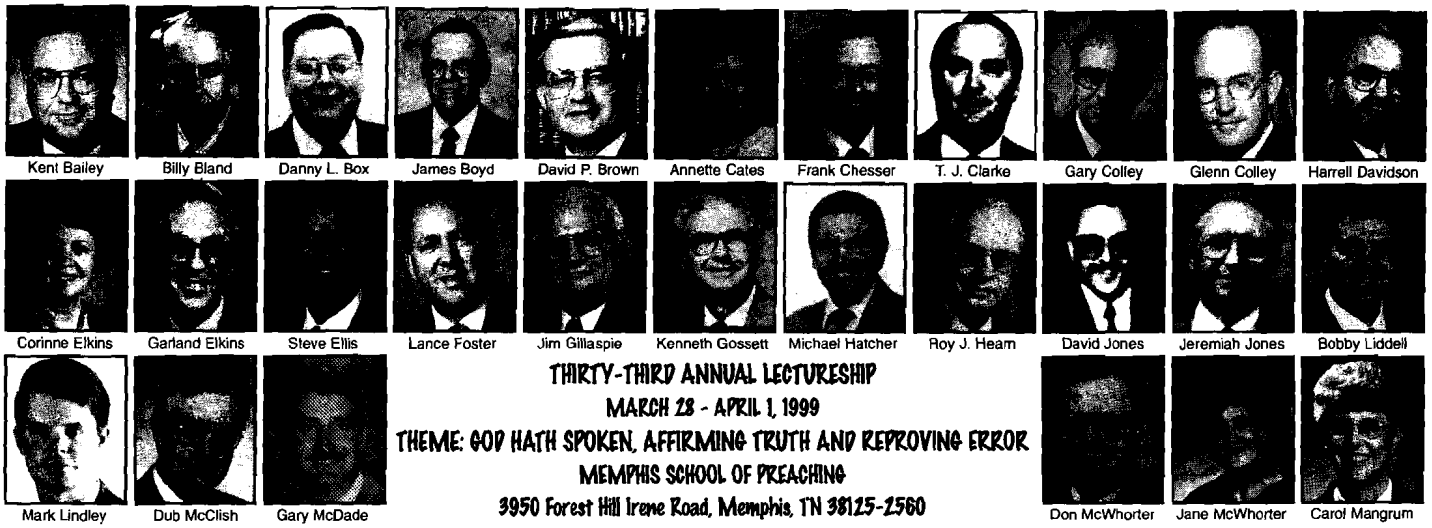
Noon Luncheon

5:00 Congregational Singing

6:00 ***"Speak, LORD; Your Servant Hears"***
(I Samuel 3:1-21)
Everett Chambers—Bedford, Texas

—Stan Harvey, Preacher—

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THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL LECTURESHIP
MARCH 28 - APRIL 1, 1999
THEME: GOD HATH SPOKEN, AFFIRMING TRUTH AND REPROVING ERROR
MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road, Memphis, TN 38125-2560

SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 1999

9:30-10:20 A.M. "The Existence of God"
 10:30-11:30 A.M. "Creation, Not Evolution"
 6:00-7:00 P.M. "Verbal, Plenary, Inerrant Inspiration of the Bible"

MONDAY, MARCH 29, 1999

9:00-9:50 A.M. "Bible Only Making Christians Only, The Only Christians"
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Church/Kingdom Established on Pentecost, Christ Reigning"
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "The Christian Woman's Responsibility to God" (w. class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. "Hereditary Total Depravity Error"
 11:00-11:50 A.M.

Class 1: "Helping Non-Saints from Treasury"
 Class 2: "Book of Mormon Revelation from God Error"
 Class 3: "Mechanical Instrumental Music in Worship Error"
 Class 4: "Deferred Giving and Estate Planning Seminar"

11:50-1:10 P.M. LUNCH

1:10-2:00 P.M. "Immersion in Water the Only Christian Baptism"
 1:10-2:00 P.M.

Class 1: "Women Preaching, Leadership Roles Error"
 Class 2: "Soul Sleeping/ Materialism Error"
 Class 3: "Seeds of Friendship" (Women's Class)

2:10-3:00 P.M. "New Hermeneutic Error"

3:10-4:00 P.M. "Open Forum"

4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION

7:00-7:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**

7:30-8:30 P.M. "Truth Absolute, Knowable, Do-able"

TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 1999

9:00-9:50 A.M. "Human Creeds Heretical and Schismatical"
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Earthly Headquarters and Hierarchy Error"
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "The Christian Woman's Responsibility to Self" (w. class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. "Community Church Pattern, Doctrine Error"
 11:00-11:50 A.M.

Class 1: "Churches Cooperating in Preaching"
 Class 2: "All Persons Having Opportunity to be Saved"
 Class 3: "Everything One Does Is Worship Error"
 Class 4: "Deferred Giving and Estate Planning Seminar"

11:50-1:10 LUNCH

1:10-2:00 P.M. "Baptism to Be in Order to Remission of Sins"
 1:10-2:00 P.M.

Class 1: "Transubstantiation, Other Lord's Supper Error"
 Class 2: "New 'Bibles' Error"
 Class 3: "Troubled Bible Friendships" (Women's Class)

2:10-3:00 P.M. "One Congregation can Withdraw from Another Congregation"

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR

3:10-4:00 P.M. "Open Forum"

4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION

7:00-7:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**

7:30-8:30 P.M. "New Testament the Pattern"

(James Rogers)
 (Steve Ellis)
 (Jackie Stearsman)

(Roy J. Hearn)
 (Billy Bland)
 (Corinne Elkins)
 (Mark Lindley)

(Paul Sain)
 (Lance Foster)
 (Kent Bailey)
 (Bob Swayne)

(Jerry Martin)

(David B. Jones)
 (T. J. Clarke)
 (Jane McWhorter)
 (David Brown)
 (Garland Elkins)

(Kenneth Gossett)

(Gary Colley)
 (Harrell Davidson)
 (Carol Mangrum)
 (Gary McDade)

(Steve Housley)
 (Randall Medlin)
 (Larry Powers)
 (Bob Swayne)

(Frank Chesser)

(Jim Gillaspie)
 (James Boyd)
 (Jane McWhorter)

(Dub McClish)

(Garland Elkins)

(Jerry Moffitt)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 1999

9:00-9:50 A.M. "Sincere, Knowledgeable, Devout Christians in Denominations Error"

10:00-10:50 A.M. "Wearing Man-Made Designations Error"

10:00-10:50 A.M. "The Christian Woman's Responsibility to the Home" (w.c.)

11:00-11:50 A.M. "Impossibility of Apostasy Error"

11:00-11:50 A.M.

Class 1: "Contributing from Treasury to Homes for Needy"
 Class 2: "Roman Catholic Church the Original Apostolic Church Error"
 Class 3: "Witnessing, Testifying Today Error"
 Class 4: "Deferred Giving and Estate Planning Seminar"

11:50-1:10 LUNCH

1:10-2:00 P.M. "Grace Only, Faith Only Error"

1:10-2:00 P.M.

Class 1: "Clapping, Shouting, Dancing, Lifting Up Hands in Worship Error" (Glenn Colley)
 Class 2: "Maintaining Purity, Withdrawal of Fellowship" (Neil Myers)
 Class 3: "Troubled Friendships Today" (Women's Class) (Jane McWhorter)

2:10-3:00 P.M. "Miraculous Divine Healing Today Error"

3:10-4:00 P.M. "Open Forum"

4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION

7:00-7:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**

7:30-8:30 P.M. "The Church of Christ Restored"

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 1999

9:00-9:50 A.M. "Unity in Diversity Error"

10:00-10:50 A.M. "H. S. Operates on Alien Only Through Word"

10:00-10:50 A.M. "The Christian Woman's Responsibility to the Community" (w.c.) (Annette Cates)

1:00-11:50 A.M. "But One Scriptural Reason for Divorce and Remarriage" (Royce Williamson)

11:00-11:50 A.M. :

Class 1: "Not Eating in Meeting House Error" (Johnie Scaggs, Jr.)
 Class 2: "Catholic Tradition and Pope the Authority Error" (Ken Willis)
 Class 3: "Feet Washing in Worship Error" (Ray Penna)
 Class 4: "Deferred Giving and Estate Planning Seminar" (Bob Swayne)

11:50 - 1:10 P.M. LUNCH

1:10-2:00 P.M. "Gospel vs Doctrine, Core/Bull's Eye Error"

1:10-2:00 P.M.

Class 1: "Jesus Only Error" (Robert Williams)
 Class 2: "Man-made Missions of Church Error" (Gary Shaver)
 Class 3: "Dealing with Criticism (Women's Class)" (Jane McWhorter)

2:10-3:00 P.M. "H. S. Operates on Heart of Christian Only Through Word" (Keith Mosher, Sr.)

3:10-4:00 P.M. "Open Forum" (Garland Elkins)

4:00 - 7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION

7:00-7:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**

7:30-8:30 P.M. "The Church of Christ Resurrected, Rewarded" (Robert R. Taylor, Jr.)

NOTE: There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes.

WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED.



WHY PEOPLE LEAVE CONGREGATIONS

Darrell Conley

Although I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, and have been wrong about many things, the perspective and experience of 44 years of preaching and before that of growing up in a preacher's home give me a viewpoint not everyone has. I have preached full-time for nine churches and, while I was at home, my father preached for twelve more. I have also had the advantage of a number of talks with my brother and son who are both full-time preachers, and a number of friends who have been preachers and elders for a number of years. The consensus of their views and mine is to be found in this article.

The majority of people leave a congregation because they move out of the area. They have no choice. A number of years ago, people as a rule would spend their entire lives in one congregation or two. I will never forget **Raymond Hamby**, who was in his 40s at the time and an elder of the Chestnut Drive congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, telling me that my going there was the first time he had ever been involved in hiring a preacher. He had grown up in the Moreland Avenue congregation where **W. D. McPherson** was still preaching after some 35 years and had finally as an adult moved to Chestnut Drive where **J. C. Townsend** was already the preacher and would remain so for a total of twelve years, until I went there. Hamby died at age 70, still an elder at Chesnut Drive, having been a member of only two congregations. Now people move all over the country, often not of their own free will. Of necessity, they must change congregations. May the Lord assist them in having the wisdom to choose a sound one. Today there are more of the other kind!

A few are no longer able to attend because of health. Others cannot attend because they are confined to their homes, or the distance to the building.

THE TRUTH MUST COME FIRST

Some do not like the preacher, so they change. Today there are several congregations within driving distance and we have a choice of preachers. I admit, some men are hard to listen to because of their style. But we ought to judge preaching mainly on content, not style. Some who have poor content have great style. Content (the truth, presented plainly and lovingly) must come first. However, the preacher must do his best in both presentation and content. Let us not be too critical of the preacher. If we are going to have "roast preacher" for lunch every Sunday, we might do him and ourselves a favor by changing congregations!

Others change because they do not like the elders or the eldership. Divisions and conspiracies arise against them in spite of such injunctions in the Bible as Hebrews 13:17, **"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you."** May

I suggest that obedience is more than agreement. It is doing what someone else says in spite of disagreement. Elders, of course, have authority only in matters of judgment. In matter of faith, the Lord has the authority. Some, of course, think they are brighter than those who are the elders of God's people. Some think that they should be made elders and when they are not, pout and leave. Others cause a division and start a new congregation, which may or may not make a go of it.

These days the church has many within it who are more "liberal" than the Bible is—that is, they loose where it binds. Such people are leading many into apostasy. Others (some in reaction) are "antis"—that is, binding where the Bible does not bind. Both extremes will cause us to lose our souls. We have no business remaining in congregations where these things are supported.

THE CHURCH IS NOT HURT

I have never known the church to be hurt or diminished by those who removed themselves because they got angry, because they got their feelings hurt, or because they taught false doctrine. On the contrary, the church was always helped and strengthened when they left. Though sometimes diminished in size, it was strengthened in spirit.

What a shame that all those in a congregation cannot remain faithful to it and mature in the Lord! As I think of some people who have left congregations where I have been, I am grieved. I wish they had stayed and behaved themselves. Some of them did many good works. Some were immature as well. We pray for their repentance, for their continued growth, and for their and our eternal salvation.

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Curtis A. Cates & Garland Elkins, of Memphis School of Preaching, Memphis, Tennessee, devoted the **WHOLE FRONT PAGE** of the school paper *Yoke-fellow* to publicizing *Pressing Toward the Mark* in their issue for January 14. Among the wonderful things included, they wrote, "You cannot wait to read every word [it has been correctly said that brother Rice writes in technicolor] of every chapter...This is not merely a volume of one's early life: it is a veritable history of many events in the church in the first half of our century...Reserve your volume while there is yet time and opportunity!"

Kenneth Gossett, minister, Jonesboro, Arkansas: "I have just finished reading your autobiography, Volume I. From the get-go, it was all we anticipated, and more. The pictures, cartoons, and the beautiful cover were but icing on the cake... Your vision of world evangelism with emphasis upon saving men of every race will surely quicken us all. Thanks also for your well deserved tribute to the men and women of music and song. The world is richer for their efforts... I will certainly do what I can to promote the sale of this volume..."

Vera Barte, Editor's 95-year-old aunt, of Lubbock, Texas: "The book arrived yesterday and I say it is the most elaborate of all in my library. Thanks! Ever so much! The pictures of my kinsmen and nieces and nephews are outstanding—especially yours and Vada's wedding picture and also Foy's and Floy's. I appreciate the book so much...I already knew the contents of the book as I have kept up with all your boyhood antics...episodes too numerous to mention, not omitting the weightier confrontations...So I will spend many hours testing and proving if these things fit my memory...When you come next October to preach your sermon, we will discuss further..."

Bill Northam, gospel preacher, Clayton, Louisiana: "Congrats on getting Volume I of your Autobiography on the market!...I know you must have invested a world of time and work in this effort, but I am sure it will be well worth it..."

Dale C. Flowers, preacher, Westmoreland, Tennessee: "I thought that I would read just a little...I started reading around eight. By five the next morning I

was looking at the picture on page 408. (Eugene Henry at Annapolis). I was too tired to make words out...So, brother, you owe me a night's sleep...The only problem I have now is looking at Volume I and wishing for Volume II...

Doris Darling, widow of George E. Darling, deceased gospel preacher, Myrtle Beach, Virginia: "Just received and excitedly glanced through your book. Wow! It's really great. You did a good job! It's going to be very interesting. Thanks a million!"

Dale & Lynnis Conner, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: "Book arrived safe today...Finished the first 50 pages—good reading ahead!"

Janet Randolph, Cookeville, Tennessee: "The book was received today. I am sure that I will enjoy it. Couldn't lay it aside until turning through and reading about the tuberculosis treatment. (My father, born in 1894, had to swallow a dozen raw eggs per day, he used to tell, when he had this at age 17.) I was born at Cleburne, Texas, which I see is sometimes mentioned. He used to hear Baptist relatives referring to those Tants (not admiringly)...Always like to read of preachers of the gospel...Have done much work of door-knocking...noticed the experience of introducing two women next door unknown [to each other] for 20 years...reminding me of unusual things of this kind working in various countries...so, how could I keep from enjoying it!"

Al & Caroline Thompson, Goodlettsville, Tennessee: "We look forward to the reading of this marvelous book..."

Joyce Humphrey, Clarksville, Texas: "I've just finished reading your autobiography *Pressing Toward the Mark*.



Words cannot express how much I enjoyed it. It was so interesting and so informative. I certainly do want to receive Volume II and also Volume III when you have completed writing them.

Richard H. Feltner, Thomson, Georgia: "I am looking forward to reading your book. I will never forget the time we met in Singapore...My, how things have changed!"

Gene Greer, minister, of Llano, Texas, got the book the day before going in for surgery. "While in bed I read your book *Pressing Toward the Mark*," he wrote. "It's a wonder that you survived with all the various incidents in your early life. I found it to be an interesting book and with many people that I have known mentioned..."

Edward E. Dyche, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: "Thanks for taking the time to write some 'history.' Your words will be important in the future!!"

Ruth Snell, Lebanon, Tennessee: "Thank you for introducing it to me...You have my promise not to charge you for any lost sleep, but I will haunt you to your last day if you don't finish Volume II in time for me to read it!! I am 85 and don't expect to live to be 100!"

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LUCADO PUTS NEW FACE ON CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Robert Dodson

The title of this article was the subtitle of an article on the front page of the religious section in *The Dallas Morning News* on Sunday, November 21, 1998, by staff writer **Paul R. Buckley**. Newspaper stories sometimes do not get the story right, but this one is right on the mark! It begins by telling us that **Max Lucado** has heard the old joke about the church of Christ thinking they are the only ones going to heaven, but that he **believes there really are Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics there**. The article says "that more and more church of Christ members are thinking what he's thinking."

People in the pews, even many preachers, have begun to regard professing Christians at the church down the street as the real thing. Even if they sing their hymns with organs. Even if they take Communion quarterly rather than weekly. Even if they are sprinkled rather than dipped.

In the article, Lucado makes a telling confession, saying "I don't think that a lot of the more strict teachings ever became a part of my DNA." According to the article, one of those "strict teachings" was the belief that baptism is "by immersion and for the forgiveness of sins." If Lucado never accepted this, was he ever one of us? To hear Lucado tell it, he was saved ten years after his baptism by listening to a denominational preacher on the radio!

Lucado says, "We are saved by grace. Baptism is a response to God's gift, not a way to earn God's gift." Apparently, Lucado believes that if baptism is a condition that one must comply with in order to be saved (as the scriptures teach—Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21), then salvation is earned and cannot be of grace. However, **"the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"** (Titus 2:11). Yet, all men are not saved, only those who *obey* the gospel of Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 6:17).

LUCADO PLEASED THAT CHURCH OF CHRIST IS CHANGING

The article further states that Lucado is pleased that the churches of Christ are changing. The Oak Hills church

where Lucado is minister uses mechanical instruments during some weeknight services, according to the article.

The article is also accurate in identifying the position of several other preachers among us. First, it points out how that **Robert Oglesby** (minister at Waterview Church of Christ in Richardson) believes that baptism is commanded for the forgiveness of sins, but will not go so far as to mark Max Lucado as a false teacher. Why not? Does the Bible not teach us to warn others about such wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-30; Romans 16:17-19; 2 John 9-11)? Unfortunately, many preachers are as silent as a tomb about what is going on in the brotherhood of Christ.

GOD CAN DO AS HE WISHES ON JUDGMENT DAY

F. LaGard Smith (law professor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California) is also mentioned in the article. Reference is made to his book entitled *"Who Is My Brother?"* in which he suggests "Mr. Lucado is unwittingly leading his readers astray." The article perceptively points out that though LaGard "cannot easily regard [denominationalists] as Christians" that "he acknowledges God has the prerogative to do as he wishes on Judgment Day." Yet, God has already told us what he is going to do on Judgment Day and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)!

The article does a fine job in describing the churches of Christ as "a brotherhood of independent congregations that claim no authority but the Bible... nothing more or less than the church of the New Testament founded by Jesus." But, then there is **C. Leonard Allen** who says "it's not so simple as all that." Allen taught theology at Abilene Christian University for 15 years. His attitude about the church is well characterized: "According to Dr. Allen, its founding fathers were swayed not just by the Apostle Paul but also by the philosopher **John Locke**, among others. The result: a tradition that stumbles along with an enlightenment hangover, claiming all the while to be nothing but a first-century church."

The article further states that Allen and Lucado like to think they are a part of restoring "a more ecumenically minded" tradition.

It is sad that a newswriter seems to know more about what is going on in the church of Christ than we do. Many brethren will not heed the warning cries of faithful gospel preachers. Perhaps, they will listen to the newspaper.

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"BE YE STEDFAST..."

Jodie Boren

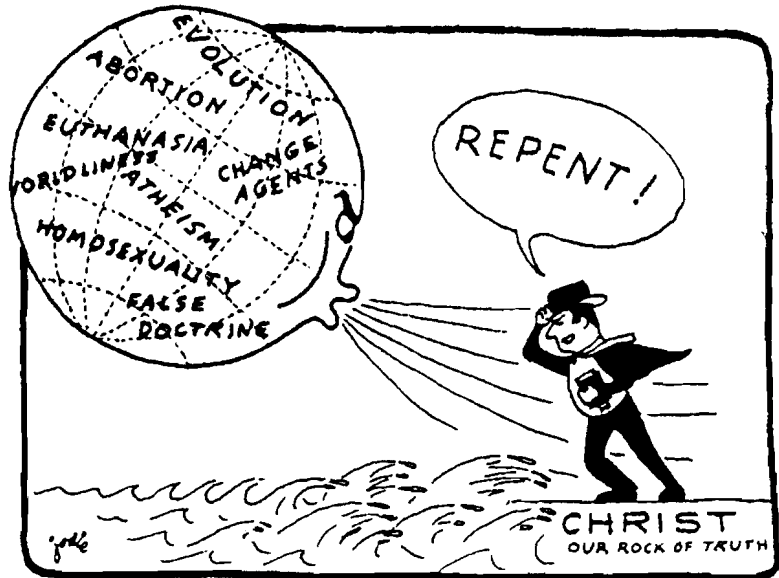
Today the Christian is assailed relentlessly with the "winds" of the world. It would be so easy to compromise or give up the fight, but the words of Paul ring out loud and clear, "...be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (I Corinthians 15:58). The church is in a crisis as it is under attack from within and without. So, we are exhorted, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day..." (Ephesians 6:13). That day is now! We had best realize this and watch and stand fast in the doctrine of Christ and be strong like men and hold on tight (I Corinthians 16:13).

ARE WE PREPARED TO SUFFER?

We need to have the spirit of my good friend, **H.L. Cody**, who is a fearless proclaimer of the gospel. We were talking about the homosexual movement and the acceptability and clout they are gaining. I lamented that it probably would not be long until it would be against the law to preach publicly that this abominable lifestyle is sin. Immediately, brother Cody responded, "Well, you'll just have to visit me in jail because as long as there is breath in my body, I'm gonna preach the whole counsel of God." Laws have already been passed prohibiting the speaking against homosexuality in the work force and it appears that before long such laws will extend to the pulpits of our land. And this is just one example of the "winds" of the world!

On one occasion, Peter and John were commanded by the council not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. We thrill with the courage of Peter and John as they said, "**whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard**" (Acts 4:17-21). May we, as soldiers of the cross, stand fast in Christ, the captain of our salvation and our rock of truth because we may one day soon have to make a decision similar to that of Peter and John.

Could it be that one of the reasons the "winds" of the world have such a strangle hold on our country is that we are not living godly lives? And, could it be that one reason we are not living godly lives is that we are afraid of persecution? Think about it. Remember, Paul said, "**...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**" (II Timothy 3:12). When Paul and his co-workers preached the word boldly in Thessalonica it was said of them that they had "**turned the world upside down**" (Acts 17:6). As a result, there was persecution! In this same chapter it is recorded that Paul reasoned with them out of the scriptures. When was the last time we even caused a slight stir in our community with the teaching of Christ? If we do, we



will receive persecution. Our persecution, or afflictions, could be many, but we must remember that David wrote, "**but the Lord delivereth him (us) out of them all**" (Psalm 34:19).

BE OF GOOD COURAGE

Over and over we read in God's word to be strong and of a good courage. The souls of men are at stake as we are engaged in a war with the forces of unrighteousness. Paul told Timothy to "**endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ**" (II Timothy 2:3). It may not be popular, but preachers have to stop tickling the ears of their listeners and start reproving, rebuking, exhorting, and preaching the whole doctrine of Christ (II Timothy 4:1-4). A watered-down social type gospel that entertains rather than convicts just will not get the job done. The early disciples went everywhere preaching the word. And this is what we should be doing for it is through the word that men are builded up (Acts 20:32). The pulpit is no place to be entertaining, but all preachers must lift up the crucified Lord and tell people plainly and lovingly that salvation is in Christ. Unless they accept the word, believing that Jesus is the only begotten son of God, and repent and are baptized into Christ, they are lost. The elders must stand behind the preachers and encourage them and support them in every way.

Let us be stedfast—strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

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“IS THERE A CONSPIRACY TO RECONSTRUCT?”

Noah Hackworth

Several years ago while in Visalia, California, Glenn L. Wallace wrote a tract, titled, “A Conspiracy to Reconstruct.” In his tract Wallace stated:

None but the man who would be blind by choice would deny that we have a growing army of revolutionists among us as a people. Malcontents, disgruntled brethren, and false teachers are having a field day with their cry that the church must be kept up-dated, restructured, and made relevant so as to answer to the need of the day. One cannot ignore the facts of a conspiracy to wreck us. Revision, reorganizations, and restructure are being preached loudly from the press and the pulpit...Some of us are naive and unbelieving. Some of us want to hush it up and hope it will go away. Some bury their heads and try to ignore it. Some are willing to give up and take the so-called good from this movement and try to live with it. Some see the danger and want to warn against it, even if one must be labeled by the revolutionaries as a troublemaker. We live in a time of decision and the problems are real, more serious than some may think and they demand that we look at a conspiracy that has been developing among us for about ten years.

Glenn Wallace preached in Visalia in 1969 and is believed to have written his tract about 1974. The tract was his diagnosis of, and answer to, problems he saw developing in a California church. History has proved Wallace correct. We have come a long way since then. The “Change Agents” are here. If Wallace were alive today he would not be surprised to see the fruits of the conspiracy he described. He would probably say, “I told you so!” We do indeed believe that a conspiracy has taken place and the conspirators are still at work. They have an agenda and it is no longer a secret.

One of the more notable things produced by the conspiracy among us is the radical changes some have made in their worship services. They have been searching for some new thing and they have found it (Acts 17:21). They have told the rest of us that our worship is “too dull,” that we are leaving our assemblies (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7) with “sad faces” and “empty spirits.” To compensate for what they think they have been missing, the dissatisfied ones among us have turned to “hand clapping,” “choirs,” “body swaying,” and sundry public displays of emotion. A “quick fix” for their religious ailments is what is sought.

We kindly and affectionately suggest that such folks engage in a more serious, and less emotional approach to worship, that they dig more deeply into the scriptures and realize that the **“word of his grace which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified”** (Acts 20:32). As the Lord Himself said, **“For such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers”** (John 4:23).

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THE BENEVOLENT HEART

Annette B. Cates

The Bible is filled with accounts of women of benevolence. We read of Ruth and her kindness toward her widowed mother-in-law (Ruth 1:16, 17). Hannah was a mother who gave her child to God's service (I Samuel 1). The widow of Zarephath fed Elijah during drought and famine (I Kings 17:9-16). A poor widow gave two mites—all she had—into the treasury and was commended by Jesus for having done greater than all of the wealthy who cast in of their abundance (Mark 12:41-44). Dorcas sewed coats and other garments for the needy widows (Acts 9:36-41). Sarah (Genesis 18:1-8), the Shunamite woman (II Kings 4:8-11), and Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) are noted for their hospitality. Rahab (Joshua 2), Jael (Judges 4:17-23), and Esther (Esther 4:14) furthered the Kingdom of God through their courage. The Worthy Woman of Proverbs 31 stretched out a hand to the poor and spoke with the law of kindness. Truly, there is power in examples! **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"** (Romans 15:4).

WHAT IS BENEVOLENCE?

Our understanding of "benevolence" is often limited to the giving of money or material goods. However, it is more far-reaching than that. Benevolence comes from a root word that is also found in such words as "benefit" and "benign," words that carry a positive connotation. Benevolence is an attitude of heart and an aptitude for active service. It is the underlying characteristic that will lead one to be evangelistic with God's word and ready to edify, or be of encouragement toward others.

Benevolence has been a distinctive quality of God's people from the beginning of time. This is as it should be, for we are the beneficiaries of God's blessings. **"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation"** (Psalm 68:19).

WOMEN AND BENEVOLENCE

The ways that Bible women demonstrated benevolence are ways we can do so also. We note that they were active in the Lord's service. As Paul beseeched the Romans, we are to present ourselves **"a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God..."** (Romans 12:1). We give our money and we give our talents. We give kindness in the way we speak as well as in what we say and do. We lift the down-trodden and comfort the troubled. In addition to meeting the needs of others, what do we accomplish when our hearts are benevolent?

1. When we do good toward others, our light will shine (Matthew 5:16).

2. Our giving brings thanksgiving and glory to God (II Corinthians 9:12-13).

3. Our giving brings us closer to God (II Corinthians 9:7).

4. We have joy in our giving (Galatians 6:4).

5. Our hearts will be where our treasures are (Matthew 6:21).

6. The bond of fellowship is strengthened (Romans 15:25-31).

7. The merciful shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7).

Micah 6:8 tells us, **"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"** Notice that all of the verb phrases in this passage show activity: "to do...to love...and to walk...." One cannot walk with God without the benevolence of justice, mercy, and humility. This old sinful world needs Christians who quietly go about their lives serving God and meeting the needs of others, for herein the light of true Christianity shines and God is glorified.

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“MOSTLY FAITHFUL?”

Lynn Parker

It might be that some have a mighty strange view of the word “faithful.” Have you ever heard a brother described as “mostly faithful,” or a congregation as “fairly faithful?” How about this “he is pretty faithful—most of the time.”

The Bible records that Moses was faithful (Numbers 12:7), as was Timothy (I Corinthians 4:17) and Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21). Jesus used the word “faithful” to describe the five and two talent men who were prepared to give account to their Lord in a parable: **“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”** (Matthew 25:23). Paul, through inspiration, set forth that **“here, moreover; it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”** (I Corinthians 4:2). Research the word *faithful* and you will see that it carries the idea of those who are “trustworthy...who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties... one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust... that can be relied on” (Thayer). In light of the meaning, how can one be “mostly, pretty, or fairly” faithful? Either one is or he is not, faithful to God. (Of

course we are not arguing for perfection—it must be understood that faithfulness in God’s children is demanded of God (I Corinthians 4:2). This faithful condition is synonymous with walking in the light (I John 1:7) as we humbly bring our hearts and deeds into harmony with the dictates of heaven.) What ambiguous spiritual condition is represented by the term “mostly faithful?” Could it be a term employed to represent a person, or a congregation, that does some, or even most of what God directs—but not all? Here are some examples of those who fit in the category of being “mostly, fairly, or pretty” faithful:

1. The brother or sister that attends 9 out of 10 Sunday and Wednesday assemblies but forsakes one “every now and then” for TV, shopping, Boy Scouts, walk-a-thons, the Super Bowl, vacation, company at home, or because they are disgruntled with someone or something in the church is probably the person some have in mind when they say, *“he is mostly faithful.”*

2. The brother who preaches the truth on the fundamental matters of salvation, the distinctive nature of the church, and the errors of denominations, but teaches that baptism makes an adulterous marriage into a sanctified one, is labeled by some misguided brethren as *“mostly faithful.”*

3. A congregation that demands soundness from its preachers and teachers, refuses to budge an inch in the face of new and novel doctrines, but neglects to do what God commanded in the matter of restoring the erring and church discipline is one that many would call *“mostly faithful.”*

The “mostly faithful” are “mostly sound” and “mostly obedient.” They pick and choose when and where they will obey God. They will all, on the day of judgment, give answer for the lack of complete submission to Christ’s will. “Mostly faithful” sounds “pretty good” until you realize that the “mostly faithful” will be “mostly lost.” **“Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”** (I Corinthians 4:2).

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The Last Word...

WHEN IT IS GOOD TO FORGET

Eddie Whitten

"... but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before..." (Philippians 3:13).

It is probably a safe assumption that most of us have something in our past that "haunts" us. The mere suggestion of "haunt" implies something dreaded or undesirable. A "haunted house" at Halloween is used to bring forth the specter of ghosts and goblins; something scary and eerie. The same is true when we let conduct of which we are ashamed or embarrassed affect our lives. Many Christians are living with unnecessary guilt because they are unable to forget sins in their past which have been forgiven by God.

MEMORY CAN BE A MILLSTONE

At the present, for the benefit of your future, forget the past. Memory is a treasure. It can also be a millstone. Precious are the memories of good things, good times, good people. No one can experience joy and contentment without memories of pleasant experiences. Happiness is not the effect of the present, but the superstructure of the past. Happy is the person who can look back upon a pleasant past and anticipate a pleasant future. Why should not a person be happy who can truthfully say his life has been an example of good and wholesome productivity?

There is the contrast to happiness. It is misery. A person who is not happy lives in misery. Regardless of the endless reasons, misery describes the person who is not happy. There are as many pitfalls in life as there are stepping-stones. Each individual chooses which he will take. Tragically, some people just bask in misery. They live a miserable life. All they seem to want is pity and sympathy from others. They feel sorry for themselves with no intent to try to do better. They think in terms of the past. As happiness is the product of the past, so is misery. When misery from the past controls the present, happiness flees.

THE PERFECT REMEDY

Paul had the perfect remedy for self-inflicted misery. He said we ought not to think in terms of the past. In our text, Paul was not saying we should eliminate bad memories. He is saying we should not let our past failures and sinful conducts hinder us from doing what is right beginning right now! We cannot undo what has been done, we can only make amends. Paul teaches a tremendous principle paramount to Christian life. Our attention should be focused on what lies ahead rather than on the past that cannot be changed. We have control over what we do, not what we have done. Therein lies the secret of Christian responsibility and service.

My repentance works in the mind of God. God knows my heart, and if I truly repent of sins, He knows it. If I truly repent of my sins, He forgives. When God forgives, those past sins of which I was guilty are gone forever. Many good, honest and sincere members of the Lord's church are suffering from the inability to "forget those things which are past." It is time for us to forget those past sins and forgive ourselves. Happiness cannot be built on guilt.

Paul probably had more for God to forgive than we ever will. He said, **"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it"** (Galatians 1:13). Before King Agrippa, he testified:

I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities (Acts 26:9-11).

What if he had not been able to put those things behind him? He could not have been the great servant of Christ that he was. Neither can we if we cannot forget our God-forgiven sins! There is a time when it is good to forget. Let us, with happiness, press on to the work before us in Christ.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

SHOULD WE “CONTEND FOR THE FAITH”?

Steve Ellis

Jude 3 exhorts faithful Christians to “**earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**” Courageous soldiers of the cross have ever recognized and fulfilled this sacred duty without fear or favor. When Paul encountered misconduct, even on the part of a fellow apostle and one of his most beloved co-laborers, he rebuked them because “**they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel**” (Galatians 2:14). The fact that Peter was an apostle did not deter Paul from condemning his prejudicial behavior “**to the face, because he was to be blamed**” (Galatians 2:11). The fact that Barnabas had vouched for Paul’s sincerity in obeying the gospel (Acts 9:27), recruited Paul to help with the work at Antioch (Acts 11:25-26), and accompanied him on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-2) did not influence Paul to overlook his sin (Galatians 2:13). As trustees of sacred truth, Jude taught that we should evidence this same devotion to duty.

PERVERTED VIEWS HINDER CONTENDING

In spite of such plain teaching on this important subject, some brethren are reluctant or unwilling to contend for the faith. Perhaps the most prevalent reason for this is that many suffer from a perverted view of the Bible doctrine of love. Like misinformed parents who practice a permissive approach to child-rearing, some brethren feel that no discipline and love are more compatible than discipline exhibited in a framework of love. Those who would prefer to sweep all sin under a rose-colored rug of love usually feel that real love and plain Bible-based preaching are mutually exclusive. These non-contenders consider spineless, impotent, watered-down speech-making to be a sweet exhibition of love in the pulpit. The greatest fan of this kind of pseudo-preaching is Satan. He knows that such will not de-

liver the saving gospel to those who hear it, nor true New Testament Christianity to succeeding generations. Altering God’s message for any reason is a perversion of love for God, truth, and the soul of the hearers (Galatians 1:6-10).

There are several other reasons why some do not wish to contend for the faith. Some simply do not want to be involved in controversy of any kind. They would rather see the truth subverted than to overcome their natural temperament and take a stand. Those of this persuasion have a pronounced aversion to rocking boats and prefer peaceful co-existence with error to contending for the faith. Others are hesitant to staunchly defend a divine standard of behavior because we live in an age of relativism and existentialism when most people believe one should be permitted to “do his own thing.” Still others are really working to transform the church of Christ into a liberal, “anything goes” denominational body. They expend a great deal of energy in attempting to discredit those who are contending for the faith by trying to convince people that it is “unloving” to be so serious about obeying the Lord.

YOU CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE

Because some have indeed contended in an improper fashion and spirit, we must not cease forcefully to declare and defend “**all the counsel of God**” (Acts 20:27). The church at Corinth demonstrated real love and concern for their incestuous brother, not while they were puffed up and condoned his sin, but when they disciplined him (I Corinthians 5). Paul would have shown no love for the cause of Christ had he simply ignored the blasphemous behavior of **Hymenaeus and Alexander** (I Timothy 1:19-20).

Being human, it is impossible for us to contend for the faith in a manner that will please everyone. There is little

(Continued on Page 7)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Associate Editorial...

"FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE" (James 4:14)

We must die. We have no choice! By mortal observation and sacred declaration do we realize that "death" is our last appointment on the agenda of our earthly pilgrimage (Hebrews 9:27). It is a migration of our spirits we struggle to comprehend but our finite minds cannot fathom. Only one possible alternative exists; to be shrouded in this tent of flesh when Christ returns at the end of the world. But in either case our state of being must undergo a radical and eternal change. For **"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption"** (I Corinthians 15:50-52). So we wait; for we do not know when either shall appear (Matthew 24:36).

In the light of these sobering facts our sojourn here takes on new and vivid meaning. Material things are seen in a different light; for we hunger and thirst after those things that shall transcend death. We want to go into the judgment with the characteristics that shall abide and receive the blessings of Jesus. In summation, we want to go to heaven. We want to live so as to hear our Savior say to us: **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"** (Matthew 25:21).

BECOMING MORE SPIRITUALLY AWARE

We become, therefore, more aware of the inner man and its needs rather than the needs of the outward. **"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened"** (II Corinthians 5:4). We understand more fully why Paul said:

...but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (I Corinthians 14:16-18).

O, how Marvelous! O, how Wonderful! Through the sacred word by the eye of faith our God has blessed us to see the unseen—the eternal. With the father of the faithful we too can look **"for a city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God"** (Hebrews 11:10).

Where at one time we were worldly-minded with **"...all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..."** (I John 2:16); we now know that for our spirits to be prepared for our "long home" we must:

hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole

duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil (Ecclesiastes 12:5, 13, 14).

For our spirits to be prepared to make their flight into eternity, we must mold them with a love that always brings about a dose of submission to the will of Jesus (John 14:15). Because **"whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him"** (I John 2:5). If man does not have to obey Christ in order to manifest his love to him, what other way is available to do so? We must say with Paul that all that really matters is **"...the keeping of the commandments of God"** (I Corinthians 7:19).

We no longer are anxious about the present because we are anchored in the future (Matthew 6:33). Men cease to cause fear in us because we are servants of God and fear him (Luke 12:4, 5). Contentedly, we work in the church of Christ adhering to the principle of **"...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" (Romans 16:16; Colossians 3:17).

We still do not know when our appointment with death will be or when Christ shall appear the second time. But being faithful, we know we are prepared and we rejoice in the **"exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"** (II Peter 1:4).

With a prayer on our lips and these peaceful and sublime thoughts in mind we can pillow our heads in rest at the end of a weary and toilsome day. We can now drift into a pleasant sleep having the last cares of day vanquished from our spirits by the words of a sweet refrain.

*'There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar.
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there.'*

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

Who And What Do Men Say Churches Of Christ Are?

J. E. Choate

"Churches of Christ: Who or What Are We"? is the title of an article in the September 1998 bulletin of the Harding University Graduate School of Religion written by **Donald Kinder**, HUGSR church history professor. Kinder writes that churches of Christ today are facing **"an identity crisis,"** that the name of our fellowship is now in question, and that broader fellowship lines are being explored.

F. LaGard Smith quoted that **"never before in the history of the Restoration Movement has so dramatic a change occurred in so short a time with such little opposition."** LaGard Smith has not provided a substantive answer to **Who Is My Brother?** He is like the able lawyer representing his clients before the jury; and suddenly switching sides, begins to argue the case of the opposition in a most compelling manner.

There are two possible answers to the question—who and what churches of Christ are. The first is that churches of Christ are rooted in holy scripture, and not a graft in some denomination. The second is that "churches of Christ" constitute a postmodern denomination with roots deeply entwined within Stone-Campbell Restoration traditions.

What is F. LaGard Smith implying in his famous metaphor in which he compares the common-law marriage between a man and woman, and the unbaptized person who otherwise is a faithful practicing Christian? He never precisely says. He chases rabbits all over the field; or in an-

other metaphor, the whole matter is left like a dangling participle without a subject to modify.

That Smith seems to be at loggerheads with **Max Lucado** quibbling over grace, baptism, and fellowship may be amusing to some and taken seriously by others. The actual difference is that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

THE FIRST ALTERNATIVES: WHO AND WHAT CHURCHES OF CHRIST ARE

Does Donald Kinder think that **Richard Hughes** and **Douglas Foster** have something of substance to say about the identity of Churches of Christ in their books, *Will The Cycle Be Unbroken?* and *Reviving the Ancient Faith*.

This is what Hughes says about the matter, and it took him two hours in October 1998 on the Lipscomb campus to argue his case: "We also must attempt to understand at the outset of this book what it means to say that Churches of Christ began as a sect and evolved into a denomination..." We understand, Hughes, but does **Stephen F. Flatt**? What is the motive behind the *Christian Chronicle* which gave a double-page spread to the Foster book to promote the "sect to denomination" contention? Escapes me!

A primary source for this notion of a group movement from a "sect" into a "denomination" as used by **Douglas Foster** to make his case is **Ernst Troeltsch**, a prestigious German scholar. He develops his thesis in a monumental 1000-page work titled *Social Teachings of the Christian*

Churches published in 1911 which covers 2000 years of Christian church history.

David Edwin Harrell, Jr., was the first of our brethren to use the Troeltsch's thesis to explain group movement from "sect" to "denomination"? Harrell in his notable book, *Quest For Christian America*, published by the Disciples of Christ in 1966, documents this contention using Troeltsch's idea as a valid documentation. In his essay titled *Emergence Of The Church of Christ Denomination* (1972), he coins the phrase, "Church of Christers," an "anti" slogan still around.

SPOILED BY THE THEOLOGY OF POST-MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

The fixation of our brethren looking out from the lofty towers of academia is their obsession with scholarship, but intellectual honesty serves as an obedient handmaiden to bona fide *scholarship*. Kinder cites **Bryan Wilson**, renowned Oxford sociologists, who uses the Troeltsch thesis to support the case, from "sect to denomination." in his book, *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study*, published in 1970.

Wilson uses the Disciples of Christ as an example of the group movement from "sect" to "denomination." But Wilson perceived that the Disciples of Christ denomination was not a good fit to make his case. He wrote in this context that **Alexander Campbell** "rejected all the divisions in Christendom [sect or denomination]."

Kinder next introduces an article written by **Newton Fowler**, a Lexington Theological Seminary professor titled "Church and Sect Applied to Early Disciples: Limitations of Troeltsch and Niebuhr," *Discipliana*, Summer 1996. Fowler writes that he saw none of the sociological factors at work in several generations of his own family who were Disciples. The same here. Fowler discounts the "sociological" thesis of Troeltsch with this statement that "the mix of sociological factors with ecclesial traits leads to confusion." Does not Kinder recognize that there is no better example of ultimate "confusion" than in Hughes' *Reviving The Ancient Faith*, which is a conglomerate of information, misinformation, disinformation, and nonsense?

That the name of the Harvard scholar, **H. Richard Niebuhr**, crops up with that of Troeltsch in the title of Fowler's article tells us something that is essential. The Harvard scholar, Niebuhr, is remembered through the 1950's as a leading neo-orthodox theologian and spokesman for the Social Gospel.

Richard Niebuhr uses the Troeltsch model in his book, *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, published in 1929 to make his own case about the American "sect" to "church" movement. He does for the history of the American churches in 200 years what Troeltsch does in two millennia of church history. Niebuhr is of interest because he used the Disciples of Christ as an example to make his case from sect to denomination. Niebuhr's cogent perception was such that he recognized the unique importance of the Stone-Campbell Restoration churches whose history unfolded on the American frontier.

Donald Kinder has rendered a distinct service by calling attention to the "sect" to "denomination" paradigm of

Troeltsch for its influence on Foster and others. Kinder writes there "can be merit in pointing out current trends." Richard Hughes was invited in October 1997, of all places on earth, to the Lipscomb campus to argue the "sect" to "denomination" thesis. What an insulting travesty to the memory of **David Lipscomb** and **James A. Harding**. I am still rubbing my eyes in disbelief over that one!

THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE

The second alternative which Kinder sets up as to the identity of "who and what the Churches of Christ are" goes to scripture. He writes that it is "even more crucial to allow the New Testament to outline our place in a fallen world." More crucial? Pray, what on earth and under heaven could be more crucial? We would think at this juncture that Kinder would have directed his attention to the church which Jesus built, and the churches of Christ that we read about in the New Testament.

The best that he does is to address the church in a loose generic manner, or to address the church in "Kingdom" language, whatever he has in mind. Kinder continues to beg his question: "One's ultimate survival as a Christian depends not only on his tie to his Lord, but also upon his connection to his Lord's community" [church]. He starts right, but ends up short. Why must our brethren be so much like a "Milquetoast" character—too timid to say what we mean in everyday words? Why not just say—**churches of Christ** that we read about in the Bible?

THE BIBLICAL ANSWER

I submit a Kantian principle that it is an absolute moral categorical imperative to go to scripture to define what is essentially normative for the "blood-bought" churches of Christ, e. g., Matthew 16:18,19, and Ephesians 5:21-32. Anything more or less is sacrilegious, ambiguous, and misleading. **This is not a third alternative, but the only choice.**

There is another especially provocative article in the 1999 Winter issue of *Church and Family* published by Harding University with the title, "Every Unchurched Person Wants..." The substance of the article ties directly into the Kinder article. The word "unchurched" comes straight out of **Bill Hybel's** Willow Creek Community Church theology. Have you heard about the new Mayberry gospel according to Andy, Barney, and Goober. Hee Haw!

What is next at Twickingham? What we have in mind here are the spin-offs from "church growth" gimmicks. e.g., Willow Creek, the Vineyards, Kansas City Prophets, and the "Toronto blessing" where there is a whole lot of shaking going on. Just a step back, or one forward, by one or the other, puts the Mayfair and Twickingham Churches back together again.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

We can now begin to reconstruct this "jerry-built" Church of Christ denomination. This the church which **Lynn Anderson** described in 1973 as a "big, sick denomination." It can now be assembled piece by piece from the parts of the golden calves that modern day Jereboams setting up from "Dan to Beersheba." Faithful brethren are be-

ginning to learn that we are not a bunch of wild-eyed radicals out beating the bushes looking for heretics.

Kinder states that "one of our basic commitments at the Graduate School is to the Restoration Principle, rich with potential for insuring the presence of Christians to be today

what the first-century Christians were in their day." Why not restore the biblical principles which brought the churches of Christ into existence on the first Pentecost?

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"...God Gave Them Up Unto Vile Affections..."

Current Events in Morals And Religion

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

"Although rarely classed as a venereal disease, unwanted pregnancy is transmitted sexually and is also socially an [sic] emotionally pathologic...As with other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy occurs primarily in the most sexually active age groups. Both unwanted pregnancies and other venereal diseases seem to have seasonal variations, and finally, the barrier method used to prevent unwanted pregnancy also serves to prevent the other conventional venereal diseases."—Willard Cates, Jr. M.D., David A. Grimes, M.D., & Jack C. Smith, M.S., "Abortion as a Treatment for an Unwanted Pregnancy: The Number Two Sexually Transmitted Disease" presentation at the 14th annual scientific meeting of the Association of Planned Parenthood Physicians (*The Washington Times*, October 19-25, 1998, p. 9)

[Does that make your skin crawl? Children are a disease?—mtm]

.....

Here are some courses one can take at American Universities and Colleges. "Taking Marx Seriously"—Amherst College; "White Racism"—DePaul University; "The Feminist Critique of Christianity"—University of Pennsylvania; "Lesbian Personae: What does it mean to read as a Lesbian?"—Cornell University; "Radical Democratic Feminisms"—Cornell University; "Vampires: The Undead"—University of Pennsylvania; "The Slavic Vampire"—University of Chicago; "Witchcraft, Witch Hunts and Society"—Emory University; "Feminist cyborg Fiction"—University of California-Santa Cruz. (*The Washington Times*, October 12-25, 1998, p. 38 in an article by **Don Feder**)

[Sound weird? Sound radical? Sound like higher education? Perhaps one would say this is consistent with higher degree study. But according to tolerance there should be classes regarding the biblical influence on society. You probably will not find many of those.—mtm]

.....

Human cloning may be "impossible to try to stop," the chairman of the National Bioethics Advisory Committee said. **Harold Shapiro** said the technology necessary for human cloning is developing with "stunning speed," *Knight Ridder* news service reported. The commission is meeting at the request of **President Clinton**. It was

formed after reports that the first human clones had been created by merging human DNA with cow eggs. (*Religion Today*, email news service, 11/18/98)

[Does this bother you as much as it does me? The moral and ethical questions with this are numerous. One thing is for sure—with the number of evolutionist/atheists working in the field, it is assured that biblical morality and limitations will not be ascribed to the situation.—mtm]

.....

Lutherans are calling for more discussion with the Vatican to end their dispute over the doctrine of how sinners are justified before God. *The Lutheran World Federation*, which represents most of the world's Lutheran churches,

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said "further consultation" with the Vatican is needed before it can sign a doctrinal statement, *Ecumenical News International* said. Representatives of the two churches are trying to resolve the dispute, which dates from the time of the Reformation. An agreement would lift condemnations about the doctrine pronounced by Lutheran and Catholic leaders during the 16th century (*Religion Today* e-mail news service, 11/16/98).

• • • • •

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected a homosexual's attempt to stay in the Boy Scouts. **Charles Merino**, a former scout leader in El Cajon, California, argued that equal-protection laws entitle him to remain in the organization despite its policy against homosexuals. The high court turned away his appeal because he did not make that argument in the lower courts, the *Associated Press* said. Similar cases are being heard in state courts and eventually will be heard by the Supreme Court, homosexual-rights lawyers say (*Religion Today*, e-mail news service, 12/1/98).

[There is something wrong in our country when a private organization cannot make its own rules about membership. It is obvious that the Supreme Court would have ruled differently if this argument had been made in lower courts.—mtm]

• • • • •

"We can afford to differ on the currency, the tariff, and foreign policy; but we cannot afford to differ on the question of honesty if we expect our republic permanently to endure" —**Theodore Roosevelt**

• • • • •

"When I use a word...it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less....The question is...which is

to be master—that's all." —**Lewis Carroll** Humpty Dumpty *[You probably thought our President said that.—mtm]*


• • • • •

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Churches around the world are ignoring or condoning violence against women, a major global gathering of Christian women has been told. During a special hearing held as part of a festival in Harare to mark the conclusion of the *Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women*, women spoke publicly about the abuse and violence that they had suffered, including within churches. They told of sexual abuse by clergy, of the unwillingness of churches to support women who had left violent marriages, and of victimization and rejection by predominantly-male church structures. The hearing, which took place on November 28, was one of the first open debates at an international ecumenical gathering about violence against women. Opening the hearing, **Irja Askola**, a Finnish Lutheran woman working on the women's desk of the *Conference of European Churches in Geneva*, and one of the main organizers of the hearing, said that it had become "very obvious" during the Ecumenical Decade that "violence against women in our societies and in our churches" was a significant issue. She referred to the results of a series of team visits to the *WCC's* member churches to discuss the Ecumenical Decade. Altogether 75 teams, each composed of two men and two women, visited more than 300 churches and 650 women's groups around the world. All the teams reported that violence against women was a major challenge facing the churches. According to a document presented at the hearing, the teams also reported "the total insensitivity of many church leaders to this concern." Askola told the gathering: "My hope and desire is that church leaders getting together will condemn violence against women as a sin." (by **Stephen Brown**, *Ecumenical News International*, *PCUSA NEWS*)(Zondervan news service, 1/6/99)

[The church of Christ most certainly condemns violence against women. There is no doubt that women around the world are treated shamefully. Only the true gospel will cure the problem. However, before jumping on the bandwagon of this group, one should be sure what they include in their definition of violence.—mtm]

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“Should We Contend...”

(Continued From Page 1)

chance that proponents of error and persistent practitioners of sin will ever be overjoyed by a plain denunciation of their behavior. Moreover, it is not easy to maintain a perfectly balanced blend of antagonism toward error and love for the one in error. Nevertheless, we must not permit this realization to render us compromisers of the faith rather

than contenders for the faith. Jesus said, **“If ye love me, keep my commandments”** (John 14:15). His commandments undeniably include contending for the faith (Jude 3), and against such things as immorality (Colossians 3:5-11), denominationalism (John 17:20-21), false teachers (1 John 4:1), and every false doctrine (Psalm 119:104).

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THE EVER-POPULAR MAJORITY

Marvin L. Weir

Most folks now know that the Senate did not have the necessary votes to impeach **President Clinton**. In fact, it now appears that many senators do not even want to request any type of censure. The prevailing attitude is that “enough is enough,” or “just let it be, and let’s get on with the work of government.” Although many senators frankly stated that they believed that Clinton was guilty of lying, deception, and attempted cover-up, they quickly added that the majority of people wanted him to remain in office. Is our nation now doomed to honoring what the majority demands even if the majority is wrong?

“THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW A MULTITUDE TO DO EVIL”

Do you realize that in the Day of Judgment no one will desire to stand with the majority? Jesus said,

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it (Matthew 7:13-14).

Have you taken into consideration the track record of the majority when it comes to pleasing God and standing for what is holy and right? The entire world perished in the global flood with the exception of eight people—Noah, Mrs. Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth and their wives (Genesis 7:13, 23). Only four people were spared in God’s destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and one of them disobeyed by **“looking back”** and was turned into a **“pillar of salt”** (Genesis 19:13-17, 26).

It should be clear that “right is right” and “wrong is wrong” regardless of the wishes of the majority. Those who possess integrity and character will always defend what is godly and right and never relent to a majority who cares not about eternal principles. Do you recall a time in history when the Jews wanted Barabbas, a notorious criminal, released instead of Jesus Christ (Matthew 27:15-23)? It takes neither wisdom nor moral integrity to opt for the “Pontius Pilate handwashing trick” to absolve oneself and appease the majority (Matthew 27:24)!

The majority of folks are careless with the name of God and show disrespect for sacred matters! One should never take God’s name in vain (Exodus 20:7) or become careless and flippant with sacred matters. Many use God’s holy name to voice their human emotions. Terrible news or a

horrifying accident often produces the exclamation of “My God” or “Oh, Christ.” It is never appropriate to treat that which is holy in such flippant fashion. Neither are euphemisms such as “darn,” “gosh,” “golly,” or “Jeez” to be used in our conversations. Consult a good dictionary if you do not understand why the usage of the above words are wrong. The majority may choose to show disdain for God, but Hebrews 12:28 reminds all to always approach sacred matters with reverence and awe!

The majority of folks sneer at the word of God! The Bible says, **“The precepts of Jehovah are right...”** (Psalms 119:8). The verse does *not read* that “the precepts of Jehovah are right only when the majority believes such to be true.” Do the majority of people believe all of God’s laws about all things to be right? Do they hate all that is false (*cf.* Psalms 119:128)? Absolutely not! The sins of abortion, homosexuality, and divorce have devastated our society while an ever-growing number sneer at God’s condemnation of such wrongs.

We even have those professing to be members of the church of Christ who sneer at the idea of keeping the Lord’s church **“holy and without blemish”** and not having **“spot or wrinkle”** (Ephesians 5:27). Those claiming to be gospel preachers sneer at God’s plan for one church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4). They falsely teach we have brothers and sisters in *all* churches. No, the majority would blend nicely with those of Isaiah’s day who smugly said to the prophets, **“Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits”** (Isaiah 30:10).

The majority of folks scoff at the people of God! Jesus said, **“If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you”** (John 15:19). It should come as no surprise that those who because of their evil deeds love darkness rather than light (John 3:19-20) will persecute and falsely accuse (Matthew 5:11-12) those who strive to be the **“salt of the earth”** and **“light of the world”** (Matthew 5:13-16). All would do well to remember that God is our standard and not the ever-popular majority!

—5810 Liberty Grove
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CONTINUOUS REVELATION

Tracy Dugger

Doctrines and Covenants, The Pearl of Great Price, The Book of Mormon — these serve as examples of the belief in “continuous revelation.” Mormons believe that God continues to give new revelations in our time. They even believe that God may at times revoke his commands. For instance, Mormons held that the black man was not equal to the white man because he was a recipient of the curse of God through Cain. Although they did not forbid him to become a Mormon they did prohibit the black man from serving as an official leader in the Mormon Church. Later, when this became an unpopular doctrine (Such racial prejudice has always been unpopular with the almighty!) with the masses (Civil Rights Movement) they *conveniently* changed their practice; they explained that God gave additional revelation and repealed that law. If they were truly serving the God of the Bible no such teaching would have been upheld in the first place!

THE CLOSED CANON

We are opposed to the idea that God continues to give additional revelation. As one man so correctly stated, **“The Bible is a closed canon.”** The **“one faith”** (Ephesians 4:5) has been once and for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We are not in need of additional revelation from God. There is not one belief or doctrine that God expects you to understand or put into practice so that heaven can be your eternal home which cannot be found in God’s word. Paul stated:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible completely equips us to become a complete **“man of God.”** On one occasion while studying with a Mormon, I was told that I needed the writings of **Joseph Smith**. In quoting II Timothy 3:16-17 and explaining the

all-sufficiency of the scriptures, I asked if these two passages taught what I contended. I received a “yes” answer. I then asked if Paul needed those same Mormon writings. The reply was, “no.” I then asked if I could be saved just like Paul and if not, why not? This time I received no reply. The silence was devastating to the Mormon doctrine being held by this individual.

NO LIVING APOSTLES TODAY

Since miraculous revelation under the new covenant comes only through apostles, the Mormons justify their “continuous revelation” doctrine by contending that they have living apostles today. This is strange indeed in comparison to what the New Testament teaches regarding the qualifications of an apostle. Peter taught that in order to be an apostle of Jesus Christ one must have been a witness of his resurrection. In Acts 1, Jesus had already ascended to the heavens but not before he had told the eleven to abide in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would come upon them. Later in this chapter a replacement was chosen for the apostleship of Judas. Peter stated:

Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22).

In order to become an apostle one must be a *witness* of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A witness is one who has seen or heard. In this case it was one who saw with his own eyes the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an impossibility that the Mormon Church has living apostles today unless we are to believe that they must be around 2000 years old?

But someone asks, “What about Paul? He was an apostle but not of the original twelve. How was he able to become an apostle?” We must remember that Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). In fact, Paul states by inspiration that he did indeed see Jesus—thus a witness of Jesus’ resurrection. In I Corinthians 9:1-2, Paul gives a defense of his apostleship,

Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

After stating that he was an apostle in verse one he asks, **“Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?”** I do not believe that Jesus showed himself to Paul to make him a Christian but to qualify him as an apostle. See also I Corinthians 15:8 for evidence that Paul saw Jesus after he rose from the dead.

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Again we quote II Timothy 3:16-17:

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“I HAVE QUIT CARING”

Stan Harvey

A discouraged person recently requested that his name be removed from a national journal devoted to exposing smut and garbage from media outlets and magazines across our nation. The person had simply written: *“Please remove me from your mailing list. I have quit caring.”* The quote caught my attention immediately! I was made to feel sick to my stomach, but somehow I was not surprised. As a nation, we have been overloaded for so long with lying, cheating, and immoral behavior, so much so that we have been truly overwhelmed. What is worse, there seems to be in the minds of some who have fought hard and long against such things, the idea that there is no way of stopping the slide, no way of changing the anti-God and anti-Biblical onslaught. As a result, *many just quit caring*. For them it is easier.

The child of God who is committed to following the teaching of the Bible not only faces the problems related to the above, but also he faces the “debarking” of God’s doctrine found in the Bible by those that place little or no regard upon the authority of that word. To those that oppose this fleecing of God’s word, it also appears that it is happening with increasing speed. Those trying to keep the “dam from breaking” are led to believe that nothing can be done to stop the exodus of folks who have accepted this mainstream of liberal thinking. The result? Many once faithful and devoted Christians just *quit caring* because they perceive themselves as not being able to do anything to stop the flood of false teaching and the indifferent attitude toward proper interpretation of the Bible.

There is a lot at stake! God has not left man, but it is man who has left the safety and security of God and his word (cf. Isaiah 55:6-7; James 4:7-8). Without doubt, man has been duped into believing that the Bible is not reliable, that it has many mistakes and that it cannot be understood by scholars, much less the average man or woman. Do not be so deceived (cf. Ephesians 3:3-13). Before falling into the evil web of Satan, think carefully about Paul’s charge to Timothy:

...continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of...And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul then urges Timothy to stand by the scriptures because:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:14-17).

Do you believe the words you just read?

Yes, baptism is necessary to one’s salvation (Mark 16:15-16; I Peter 3:21). No, we are not saved by faith alone (James 2:14-24). Yes, how one worships God is important (John 4:24). Yes, there is teaching about marriage, divorce, and remarriage to which we must adhere (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Yes, we can know the truth (John 8:31-32) and yes, there are moral absolutes (cf. Galatians 5:19-26). We cannot stop caring about God’s truth!

Embattled brethren, *we must not stop caring!* We must **“fight the good fight of faith” “and keep that which is committed to [our] trust...”** (I Timothy 6:12, 20). AMEN.

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The Sword of The Spirit

Jerry C. Brewer

"In conversion and sanctification, the Holy Spirit operates on the hearts of men only through the word of God." A burr under the Calvinistic saddle, that truth can be unwittingly diluted by a misapplication of Ephesians 6:17. The argument is sometimes made that the Holy Spirit wields the Sword of the Spirit in conversion and sanctification, thus proving the Spirit's work through the medium of the word. That argument not only fails to prove the proposition, but actually concedes the Calvinist's position. In his 1938 debate with **N. B. Hardeman**, **Ben M. Bogard** made that very argument in his affirmation that the Spirit exerts a direct influence upon man.

The Spirit works as if there were no word and the word is used as if there were no Spirit. Not separate and apart from each other but together, side by side on the same thing. The gospel is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:15) (sic) and as the sword is distinct from the soldier and the soldier distinct from the sword, yet both soldier and sword work together to slay the enemy, even so the Spirit and the word work together to save the soul. (Ben M. Bogard, 2nd Affirmative, "The Work of The Holy Spirit," *Hardeman-Bogard Debate*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1938, p. 31).

Those who say the Holy Spirit wields the sword make the same fundamentally flawed argument. In the context of Ephesians 6:17, Paul delineates the defensive and offensive items of spiritual warfare to be utilized by the Christian soldier. The truth is girt about his loins, he wears the breastplate of righteousness, is shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, holds the shield of faith, wears the helmet of salvation and wields the sword of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit neither wears the armor, nor wields the sword.

It is said that the word is the sword that the Holy Spirit uses. Rather, the word of God is the sword that the Holy Spirit forged for us to use. The Spirit does not wield the sword—we ourselves wield it, and if we do not wield it, then it will not be wielded. If the Holy Spirit performs some direct operation in wielding the sword, the action and method should be subject to definition and description, and demonstration...

As the smith forges instruments and weapons, the Holy Spirit by inspiration in the apostles of Christ forged the sword of the word for us to wield. (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *The Mission and Medium of The Holy Spirit*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, 1967, p.85).

If the Spirit wields the sword, advocates of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit are correct in their assertions and Bogard was right in his debate with Hardeman. But they argue from a faulty premise. The Holy Spirit does not wield the sword any more than God wears the "whole armor of God." (Ephesians 6:11). The "armor of God" is the armor God provides and the "sword of the Spirit" is the sword the Holy Spirit forged. If the "sword of the Spirit" means the Spirit wields and uses the sword, then the "armor of God" means God wears the armor as a defensive measure. If not, why not?

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HYPOCRITES?

Jodie Boren

Hypocrisy is a despicable action on the part of anyone. A *hypocrite* is one who deceives by pretending to be something other than what he really is. The Devil is called the great deceiver in Revelation 12:9. In Matthew 23 our Lord scathingly rebukes the Scribes and the Pharisees eight times for their hypocrisy. We had best get the message.

PANHANDLERS ON STREET CORNERS

Some time ago there was an ABC special on TV recently entitled: "Freeloaders." John Stossel, the narrator, interviewed several men and women who stand on street corners with a sign that says, "will work for food." Stossel pointed out that passers-by would stop and give them money because their appearances evoked sympathy in them. However, when offered jobs, only about one out of every ten would actually show up to work and even then, not for steady work! It is a scam. These people are professional panhandlers. They are parasites playing on the sympathies of the people for their livelihood. The apostle Paul warned against such people and said, "...that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10). These people have deceived us—we feel taken—we are disgusted.

Let us shift our focus now to most any congregation of the Lord's church gathered for Sunday morning worship. With pious faces those assembled can be heard singing loudly, "We'll WORK 'til Jesus comes..." or some similar song. I do not want to be judgmental for only God can "look on the heart of a man" (I Samuel 16:7). Yet, in Matthew 7:20, Jesus says, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Therefore, I can judge righteous judgment (John 7:24) by observing the fruit of their lives—or the lack of fruit.

FREELADING "CHRISTIANS" IN THE PEWS

Many have been Christians ten, twenty, forty, or more years and have never led a single soul to the Lord, excluding perhaps, their children. Here is a challenge! Take the number of baptisms your congregation had in the past year. Divide this number into the number of members of your congregation and you will be surprised as to how many Christians it took working all year to baptize one person. In this case we can know them by the lack of fruit they bear. Read John 15:1-17. Jesus meant for his disciples to be fruit-bearers. The branch that does not bear fruit is cast forth and burned. We might sing "we'll work 'til Jesus comes," but like the freeloaders on the street corners, are we not guilty of hypocrisy? If we were working as we should, we would be baptizing people—a lot of people. The early church experienced phenomenal growth! Why? The answer can be found in Acts 8:4 where we read that the disciples, as they were forced from Jerusalem, "went everywhere preaching the word." They were telling others the good news of Jesus.



Please do not misunderstand me, I am very much aware and am thrilled that there are many truly dedicated men and women working faithful in the Lord's vineyard spreading the good news of the gospel of Christ. But most of us "are just keeping house for the Lord."

IS GOD DISGUSTED?

As we feel disgust for the freeloaders on the street corner, how must our heavenly father feel toward us as we sing loudly, "We'll WORK 'til Jesus comes," then neglect to carry the gospel of salvation to the lost? And all the while wanting to feed at the banquet table of the Lord.

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ELDERS AND EVANGELISM

Lynn Parker

The building was locked, grass grown up knee-high in the yard, and the sign had decayed to where one could barely read, "CHURCH OF CHRIST." Perhaps this picture can be seen in many places as decades have rolled on, population shifts occurred, and eventually our brethren in certain locations have faded into the sunset.

But could a decrepit sign and an abandoned church building be a silent memorial to tremendous neglect and colossal failure in the supremely important mission of teaching the gospel to a lost world? Might it be that overgrown grass in the yard serves as a reminder of brethren who "played church" until there was no one left to do the playing? More than a few congregations may very well consider their job to be summed up in paying the utility bills, opening the doors two or three times a week, and making sure that crickets are cleaned from the baptistry every few months. If that describes your attitude concerning the Lord's work, shame on you. Jesus said, **"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Luke 19:10). Clearly the concern of heaven, for the souls of men, is seen in the very life blood that flowed from the savior at Calvary. The church of the first century proclaimed the truth in spite of tremendous persecution (Acts 8:1ff). Might it be that certain brethren—even entire congregations—have lost their zeal and, like Ephesus of old, left their first love (Revelation 2:4)? Time, history, and the Judgment Day will tell the story concerning congregations that "love to tell the story" and those that are indifferent to the salvation of souls.

THE CRUCIAL POSITION OF ELDERS

Elders must realize that they are crucial to setting the tone and tenor of the congregation, especially in this matter of evangelism. The apostle writes to elders:

Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock (I Peter 5:2-3).

Feeding, tending to, and seeing to the spiritual needs of the flock (v. 2) is absolutely inseparable from the command that elders make themselves "ensamples" to the church. What is an *ensample*? Translated from the word *tupos*, it

means "an example to be imitated; used of people who are worthy of imitation" (Thayer).

Elders that expect the truth to be taught and the congregation to be zealous for the souls of dying men must themselves be passionate and earnest about evangelism. Too many times shepherds have fired or hired a preacher in a misguided effort to correct evangelistic lethargy when, in fact, brethren are looking to them—the elders—for a spark, an exhortation, and an example of zeal in the Father's work.

ELDERS—TRUE BIBLE STUDENTS

Practically, elders must be true students of the Book. They cannot teach—or inspire others to do so—if they are ignorant of God's word. Shepherds in any congregation must be of a mind to work, and set their priorities accordingly. Brethren will more readily turn off the TV an evening each week or schedule a day for church work when they see elders doing the same. Pastors must feel an urgency about evangelism, and keep the matter continually before brethren. Wise shepherds will provide the training that is needed so that the congregation is made up of more effective teachers. Faithful elders put souls and their salvation ahead of new buildings, creature comforts, and well-endowed church bank accounts. They establish budgets that reflect the true mission of the church. Godly, wise elders work with the preacher to teach the lost and restore the erring rather than shove their work onto the evangelist.

Elders, does the congregation you serve see in you a burning desire to save the lost? The key to motivating the flock to be evangelistic starts with elders who set an example. The reward? The brethren, following your good pattern, will work hard while the moment is still ours, **"and when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away"** (I Peter 5:4).

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"HOW DO WE ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, AND MAINTAIN A STRONG CONGREGATION?"

Noah A. Hackworth

The church for which Christ died is one body with an indefinite number of members (all the saved), but it has no elders, no deacons, and it never meets due to the very nature of the case (Acts 20:28; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:21-23; Romans 12:4-5). This creates the need for a local church. Regarding the establishment of a local congregation, **Robert Milligan** stated:

But, nevertheless, for the sake of order, convenience, and efficiency, this one body may be divided into as many churches or congregations as may be thought necessary; each one of which, when fully organized, should have its own corps of Elders and Deacons.

Since the local church is the highest unit of organization recognized by God, it is his will that it be doctrinally sound, morally pure, and actively engaged in evangelistic pursuits, both local and abroad, and this obviously necessitates strength. We suggest that strong congregations of the Lord's church can be produced through the following:

(1) *Strong and powerful preachers who preach the word without fear, favor, apology, or compromise, and this can be done without rudeness, egotism, sarcasm, or insult (Ephesians 4:15).* We preachers need to be more like Jeremiah who had as it were "a burning fire shut up in his bones" (20:9). Speaking of this prophet, the late **Andrew Connally** said:

This is the cry of a man who carried the burden of the word of God and the souls of men on his back. Here is a man selected by God to do a job no other man could or would do. It was an awesome job with an awesome message, and it called for an awesome man to carry an awesome burden.

If our pulpits were filled with preachers like Jeremiah, the results would be more predictable. Those 10 or 15-minute "sermonettes" with little or no scripture may be entertaining but they do not represent the awesome power of the gospel of Christ which is designed to save souls (Romans 1:16-17). There may be some "value" in the extemporaneous speech, and it may have a place somewhere, but not in the Sunday morning service where people who need to be taught and persuaded to obey the gospel and live faithful

Christian lives are gathered. It is good to remember that it does not take an hour, except perhaps in special cases, to preach a powerful sermon, but a 15-minute treatise, which includes the invitation, is not adequate. **N.B. Hardeman** reportedly said he could state on a postcard his position on any Bible subject and still have room to say goodbye, but it is doubtful that brother Hardeman, a great debater and preacher, was in the habit of making short presentations. And to those who are converted to a 15-minute Sunday morning sermon, may I kindly suggest that it be remembered that a "pint" fills up more quickly than a "quart."

(2) *Elders who take heed to themselves.* Congregations without elders is a workable arrangement, but a scriptural eldership can be more effective. Such is God's plan (Titus 1:5). Our leaders must have vision (what needs to be done), planning ability (the most effective and efficient methods), and direction (the path to follow to accomplish God's work). In addition to this, they will need to uphold the truth, as well as oversee God's flock by leading, feeding, guiding and exercising needful discipline (Acts 20:28; I Thessalonians 5:12; II Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 1:10-11; I Peter 5:2-3). It has been suggested that if failure is the final outcome of our work, the responsibility, to a great degree, is going to lie at the feet of elders who did not uphold or take a stand for truth, and this certainly includes seeing that the local preacher preaches the word (II Timothy 4:1-2; Acts 20:26-27, 31). As one elder said, "If the church is growing weaker and taking part in an era of prosperity, promiscuity, and permissiveness, then the blame must be placed on its leadership."

(3) *"Strength in the pew."* We must have Christians who will support the preaching of the gospel, publicly and privately, and support leadership as it attempts to lead the flock in paths of righteousness and unprecedented growth. There have been times when the local church could not act as "salt" and "light" (Matthew 5:13-16) simply because members did not support the leadership or the preaching of the gospel. In the history of ancient Israel, there was a time when Amalek engaged God's people in battle. Moses instructed Joshua to respond. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; but when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. Moses was placed on a stone and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands until the going down of the sun. Israel discomfited (prostrated) Amalek (Exodus 17:8-13). This is the kind of support needed. The church and its work must be supported by its members. If it is not, we can expect failure

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ACHIEVING PEACE

Annette B. Cates

As we go about our daily lives, we find stress, anxiety, strife, turmoil, and conflict in every direction. This, however, is not the way God would have us to live. In John 10:10, Jesus said, **"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."** Peace with others, with God, and with ourselves is a vital part of abundant living. As Christian women, we should **"Seek peace and pursue it"** (Psalm 34:14) and **"...follow after the things which make for peace..."** (Romans 14:19). While there is no simple three-step formula that will lead to peace, there are some qualities that we can develop that will help us.

WHERE PEACE IS FOUND

Before we can develop a sense of peace, we must be in the peaceable Kingdom (Isaiah 11:69). This kingdom is ruled by Christ who is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:67). It is from being a part of this kingdom that the peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7) can be ours. There can be no true peace when one follows the traditions and doctrines of men, for these are what cry **"Peace when there is no peace"** (Jeremiah 6:14).

Knowledge of the scriptures will help us nurture peace. It is one of the "Christian graces" that we add to our lives as we grow spiritually (II Peter 1:5-6). Knowledge assures us that there is a God upon whom we can cast all of our cares, for he cares for us (I Peter 5:7; Psalm 55:22). Just as knowledge gives us a ready answer when any might ask us about our faith (I Peter 3:15), it will also equip US with a ready answer for OURSELVES when trials and temptations arise to rob us of peace. **"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"** (Psalm 119:11). We have only to observe the example of Christ when he was tempted. With each temptation, he responded with a scripture, **"It is written...."** (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

Selflessness will lead to peace. **"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"** (Philippians 2:3-4). Paul also instructed, **"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"** (Romans 12:18). When we concentrate on the good of others, we will not be focusing on what we lack. Whereas greed for gain leads to a troubled house (Proverbs 15:27), the truly happy life **"consisteth not in the abundance of things"** that one might own or desire (Luke 12:15).

Righteous living in another aspect of peace. On two occasions, Isaiah referred to the fact that there is no peace for the wicked (Isaiah 57:20-21; 59:8). The contrast between wickedness and righteousness can be seen in Romans 8:6, **"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."** **"No man can serve two**

masters: for either he hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). We, like Timothy, are to **"follow after righteousness"** (I Timothy 6:11). James tells us **"And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace"** (James 3:18).

THE SLEEP THAT IS SWEET

By arming ourselves with a good knowledge of the scriptures, seeing to the needs of others, and living righteous lives, we will achieve peace. The result of this is that today and tomorrow will be better for us. While the world will still be in strife, turmoil, and conflict, our own lives will be abundant with peace. Solomon instructed that when we depart not from the wise words, **"Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet"** (Proverbs 3:23-24).

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BE CAREFUL OF FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Eddie Whitten

"And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into the pit" (Matthew 15:14).

Leadership is a quality to which everyone should aspire. The Lord expects every person to be the very best he can be. Therefore, every man should strive to think right and act right. Righteous conduct begets leadership. People respect leadership. One who possesses the qualities a leader should have is usually one who qualifies for that honor. A slothful, lazy, slovenly person is not recognized as a leader. Only those who study and apply themselves in their chosen field are considered as leaders. More importantly, among those who study and apply themselves, it is those who excel in their fields of study who are chosen to be leaders.

Keeping that thought in mind, we turn our attention to the church. Leaders in the church have an awesome responsibility. People follow leaders. Consequently, those who lead must be aware that they are influencing the eternal destiny of many people. A good leader will never intentionally be the cause of someone losing his/her soul. A good leader is one who will study the Bible with all diligence to make sure of the truth of his teaching. He will never follow a pet hobby, or personal agenda. Leadership requires one to lay aside prejudices in favor of objective study of the Bible. Taking favorite texts out of context leads to subjective pretext, and is never acceptable as accurate understanding.

Elders sometimes rely too much on a university-trained preacher. They are overwhelmed with his academia. He has been to college, he ought to know! That philosophy is faulty. **Carroll D. Osborn**, Bible professor at Abilene Christian University, says, in his book, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, with so many questions flying around and so much uncertainty being expressed in various quarters, what an opportunity for the various faculties of our Christian colleges and universities to help shape the future! (p. 14). He further says:

Our graduate programs must train students how to think, to investigate the biblical text afresh, to feel the pulse of the world around them, to sense where things ought to go, and provide the kind of experiences that will enable servants to go out into churches and communities and provide direction (p. 15).

Be careful of following this type of leader! Elders need to be men of the book in order to lead properly.

Preachers are in the limelight. They have an enormous responsibility to lead in the way of righteousness. They probably have more influence than anyone does in the church. The standard they are to follow should be the Bible and the Bible alone. Many helps are available for the preacher's use, but they should never replace the Bible as authority for what they preach. It takes much courage to stay true to the Bible in the light of peer pressure and aca-

demical influence. The preacher should be proven by the scriptures before his teaching is followed (1 John 4:1).

The congregation has a staggering responsibility. No individual is going to be saved by what the elders teach, or permit. They are not going to be saved by what the preacher preaches. They are not going to be saved by what they read in periodicals. They are going to be saved by their obedience to the gospel of Christ. That is why it is so important that we be careful of following a leader. If the leader is true and faithful to the word of God, he is worthy of direction. But that does not make him the focus of our loyalty. The Bible is still the standard all must meet to be found worthy of the Lamb.

Jesus is our leader! He is the only standard worthy of following without reservation. No man has the authority; the knowledge; the power to save the souls of men. Whatever the cost may be, our allegiance is to our Savior. Men can advise, they can teach, they can help and they can lead, but they cannot save. Let us be careful of following the leader!

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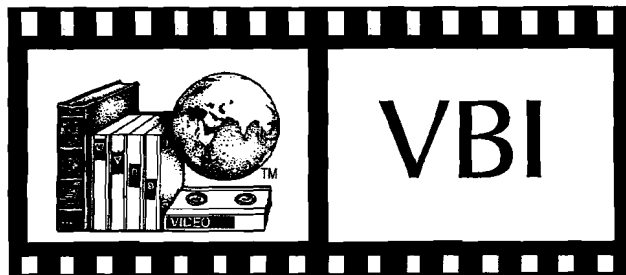
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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

EVANGELISM VERSUS ARGUMENTATION

Tom Wacaster

Evangelism is important. The absence of an evangelistic thrust in any local congregation dooms it to an eventual death. So what I am about to write relative to evangelism and other matters is not to diminish in any way our responsibility to preach the precious gospel to those who are lost. Preaching the gospel to the lost is an important work of the church. It is, perhaps, the greatest single work in which the church can and must engage. That is not to say it is the ONLY work of the church, and to place undue importance upon any single aspect of the work of the church is to be unbalanced in our overall responsibility. Paul wrote of Satan's devices (II Corinthians 2:11). One of his favorite devices is, no doubt, neglect of any single responsibility. *It seems that recently much has been said regarding evangelism and "defending" the truth.* A favorite tactic of the devil is to draw attention away from a defined battle line and concentrate on some things to the neglect of others. If, for example, I emphasized evangelism over family responsibility, then I would be guilty of falling into this trap. The same could be said with regard to helping the needy, while failing to clothe my own children. We must take care to maintain a balance in all things to the neglect of none. Sometimes that calls for a great deal of wisdom, but when lacking ask of God and he will give liberally (James 1:5).

DEFENSE OF GOSPEL NEGLECTED

To be more specific, it is of concern to me that much emphasis is being placed upon evangelism while a "**defence of the gospel**" is neglected, and in some cases, even ridiculed. It seems that some believe that confronting error and "**arguing among ourselves**" ought to cease, and we all ought to join hands in taking the gospel to a lost and dying world. I will readily agree that much "haggling" and "strife" exists within the body of Christ which is harmful to the body as a whole. The senseless arguments over matters

of petty indifferences ought to cease immediately. But, beloved, it is a simple fact that much of the "arguing" (as some would call it) is not only needed, *it is demanded*. A few observations are in order.

First, honest, sincere argumentation among brethren is healthy. Only by open examination of "issues" can we ever hope to come to a knowledge of the truth. When one is in error on a certain issue, our confrontation with that brother will cause the truth to be made known and error to be exposed.

We can rest assured that so long as the world stands, there will be proponents of error. To silence the truth in exchange for an emphasis upon evangelism is to compromise God's word and neglect a most sacred obligation (see Jude 3).

Second, if it is suggested that argumentation specifically "**among ourselves**" is wrong, then may I remind each one of us that error frequently arises within the body of Christ. When Paul warned the elders about false teachers, he pointed out that these wolves would "**enter in among yourselves**" (Acts 20:29). We are naive if we think that those "good ol' boys" in the pulpit would not dream of teaching error. We must face the reality that the greatest danger to the church today is false teachers in the church. To those who propose a cessation of all argumentation, how far shall we carry this proposal? Shall we cease arguing with that brother who believes that the resurrection is already past and actively promotes his false theory? Are we to cease arguing with that brother who denies the reality of hell? Again, shall we cease arguing with the brother who would supplant God's organization of the church with some "human" arrangement? Shall we allow the doctrine that "except for sin, all of life is worship" to simply go unchallenged for the mere sake of peace? Each of these doc-

(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Associate Editorial...

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

"Immutability" is the term, which is most often employed to describe God being unchangeable. **"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed"** (Malachi 3:6).

William G. T. Shedd in his *Dogmatic Theology*, Volume I, Page 351 wrote that:

The Immutability of God is the unchangeableness of his essence, attributes, purposes, and consciousness. Immutability results from eternity, as omni presence does from immensity. That which has no evolution and no succession is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Further, **Charles Hodge** comments on the meaning of "immutable."

As an infinite and absolute Being, self-existent and absolutely independent, God is exalted above all the cause of and even above the possibility of change...So God is absolutely immutable in his essence and attributes. He can neither increase nor decrease. He is subject to no process of development, or of self-evolution. His knowledge and power can never be greater or less. He can never be wiser or holier, or more righteous or more merciful than He ever has been and ever must be. He is no less immutable in his plans and purposes. Infinite in wisdom, there can be no error in their conception; infinite in power, there can be no failure in their accomplishment (*Systematic Theology*, Volume I, Page 390).

James makes it clear that with God there **"is no variableness neither shadow of turning"** (James 1:17). Moses wrote that, **"God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent"** (Numbers 23:19). What did these writers intend to convey to their readers? The primary point made is that God is not human, but divine. His nature is therefore far from anything that the finite mind can totally comprehend. His nature never changes. Because this is the case, we can possess full confidence in the integrity of God. God, therefore, always tells the truth (Numbers 23:19 Samuel 15:29).

THE INTEGRITY OF GOD

In his second letter, Peter further emphasizes the integrity of God. In II Peter 2:4-9, Peter argues to the effect that God keeps his word regarding promised punishment and blessings. The truth of Psalms 34:15, 16 is behind the reasoning done by Peter. **"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of**

them from the earth.”

1. Paul declared that wicked angels are to be punished (Galatians 1:8, 9).

2. Peter declares that such angels were punished (II Peter 2:4).

3. We conclude that God meant what he said concerning said angels (II Peter 2:4).

Reasoning further, Peter emphasized that:

1. God would destroy the evil antediluvian world (Genesis 6:5,7).

2. God did destroy that world (Genesis 7:21, 22).

3. God was true to his word concerning Noah's wicked world (II Peter 2:5).

Regarding the trustworthiness of God's word to save righteous Noah, Peter reasoned,

1. God promised to save Noah (Genesis 6:17, 18).
2. God did save him (Genesis 8:1).
3. Therefore, God meant what he said concerning Noah (II Peter 2:5).

Peter continues this line of argumentation relative to the wicked of Lot's day and righteous Lot (Genesis 19:15, 16, 24, 25). The thought that Peter desires his audience to understand is that since God meant what he said to the wicked and the righteous of the Old Testament period, men today may know that God "says what he means and means what he says" regarding evil and righteous men today. We would do well to heed the message and conduct ourselves accordingly.

—David P. Brown, *Associate Editor*

EVANGELISM VERSUS

(Continued From Page 1)

trines are presently being taught within the body of Christ. Grant cessation of argumentation on any ONE POINT and it will not be long until cessation of argumentation on ALL POINTS becomes a reality. We are already seeing this happen in isolated cases and I fear it will become an all-too-common practice among brethren if preachers, elders, and members do not speak up.

NO CONTENDING—NO EVANGELISM

Third, it is important to understand that unless we stand for the faith, without compromise in any form or fashion, our evangelism will accomplish no good whatsoever. The Pharisees converted men to a "perverted" Jewish religion and upon doing so they made them "twofold more the child of hell" than themselves (Matthew 23:15). The important lesson which Jesus was teaching must not be missed. Conversion to anything OTHER THAN God's simple gospel will not produce a Christian! So it is with denominationalism; so it is with those congregations who may claim to be of the body of Christ, but who have allowed the purity of the Gospel to be compromised.

Fourth, the church of our Lord is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). If God's people do not uphold the truth of God's word, who will? It is altogether possible that we could be zealous for evangelism while neglecting our responsibility in this area under discussion. For years we have pled with the denominations to cease their unauthorized practices and bring themselves

into harmony with the Bible while at the same time spreading the seed of God's word into good and honest hearts. We speak out against error being taught in the denominational world because we know that it is at least a part of our responsibility (II Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 6:1; Ephesians 5:11; Matthew 15:13). Are we under any less obligation to oppose error because it comes from some of our own brethren? Indeed not!

Alexander Campbell penned these now-famous words. They are as relevant today as they were in 1830 when first written:

If there was no error in principle or practice, then controversy, which is only another name for opposition to error, real or supposed, would be unnecessary. If it were lawful, or if it were benevolent, to make a truce with error, then opposition to it would be both unjust and unkind. If error were innocent and harmless, then we might permit it to find its own quietus, or to immortalize itself. But so long as it is confessed that error is more or less injurious to the welfare of society, individually and collectively considered, then no man can be considered benevolent who does not set his face against it. In proportion as a person is intelligent and benevolent, he will be controversial, if error exists around him. Hence the Prince of Peace never sheathed the sword of the Spirit while he lived. He drew it on the banks of the Jordan and threw the scabbard away.

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"GIVE ME WISDOM"

Tyler Young

Ours is a complex world. Often we face diverse and difficult circumstances and we are troubled by uncertainty about how best to handle them. "What should I do?" we ask. In many cases it may be critical that we make right decisions and frustration may overwhelm us as we struggle with knowing what to do.

Thankfully, there is help for the faithful disciple of Christ. As members of the family of God we have a loving father who is willing and able to help us, and before whom we can bring our cares in the name of his son (1 Peter 5:7; John 15:16). One of the tremendous blessings we have in approaching God in prayer is the privilege of asking him for wisdom, knowing he will give it.

GOD GIVES WISDOM

"But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). We may not know what course is best, but we have an all-knowing father who will grant us needed wisdom to help us in our need. From him we can receive direction which he alone can give.

Though the Holy Spirit through James told us God will answer our requests for wisdom, he did not tell us *exactly* how God does it. Some contend he gives it *directly*, perhaps by audibly whispering to us or miraculously "nudging" us here and there. Those disposed toward this kind of thinking tend to interpret everything from empty parking spaces or found coins to goose bumps and indigestion as positive proof of a direct revelation from God. The scriptures do not teach us to look for such signs in answer to prayer.

At the other end of the spectrum there are those in the church who contend we receive wisdom *only* by the scriptures. According to them, to allege that God may give us wisdom in some way other than through his word is to undermine the all-sufficiency of scripture and open wide the door to modern-day miracles.

HOW DOES GOD GIVE WISDOM?

Of course, God does give wisdom through his word. **"Through thy precepts I get understanding...The opening of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple"** (Psalms 119:104a,130; cf., Psalms 2:1-6; Co-

lossians 1:9). The word of God radiates the light of divine principles which give guidance for choosing the right and best way to deal with people and problems we may face. Many have suffered the tragic consequences of rejecting divine wisdom and have brought hardship and misery into their lives by failing to heed God's word. Others have been saved from the snare of death and prospered by taking heed to God's law (Proverbs 13:14-15).

However, James is telling us of a wisdom which will come as a result of asking God. One may read the Bible and gain wisdom whether he prays or not, but there is wisdom which God gives us in response to asking that we would not receive if we did not ask (James 4:2). This is not to say we should expect direct revelation or anticipate spooky experiential confirmation from God. *But by his providence God can work in this world to bring about circumstances or influences which give us the insight we have requested.* This is not Calvinistic direct operation, but it is guidance that is in addition to scripture.

For example, God may work undetected—in a "behind the scenes," indirect way—to bring us into situations which give us experience and valuable perspective which we may not have otherwise obtained. The Father may providentially arrange for us to come into contact with others who can give us wise counsel in applying the principles of his word to specific situations (consider Philemon 15-16).

There may be other means unknown and unperceived by us through which God provides wisdom, but knowing how he gives it is not necessary. The important thing is to know that if a man asks according to the will of God, **"it shall be given him."** Trust that God hears us and will bless us with wisdom according to his will, and that is reason enough for rejoicing.

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THE CHURCH, AND PRESENT TRENDS

Bob Patterson

As a general rule, most parents want things to be better for their children than it was for them. As we think about this, each member must recognize that the strength of the church today will provide for the strength of the church tomorrow. Thus, there is the need for every member to be what God would have him to be and to do what God would have him to do. Every area of obligation, responsibility, and privilege in serving God must be characterized by our giving all diligence and adding to our faith:

...virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:5-8).

IN JUST ONE GENERATION

In our obeying God, and performing well in the work, worship, and service that God demands, we have every reason to expect that the next generation will be greatly benefited by our efforts.

The basis of our concern is in knowing what can happen within one generation's time! In Judges 2:10, we read, **"And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for them."** Thus knowing what can take place in one generation's time, we had better do our very best! Let us consider, for just a moment, some current trends which we are facing. If these trends continue, "we are concerned that the church in the future...

1. *Will be made up of primarily older members!* Obviously, because God is not a high priority, we are losing many of our young people (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Older saints are truly a blessing, but let us remember that God has so designed his will for man that every accountable being can respond obediently, and begin to live by that inspired word, and grow up in faithful service! As parents, let us teach our children that youth is the time to remember and to begin to serve God (Ecclesiastes 12:1; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20; II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15).

2. *Will be hurting in the area of leadership!* In many places the church will not have elders and will not have much prospect of having elders in the future. Sadly to say, many elderships today are filled with men who either do not possess the qualifications that God has given (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), or they do not have any concept of the work that God has placed upon them (Titus 1:9-11; I Timothy 3:2; Acts 20:28-31; Hebrews 13:17; I Thessalonians 5:12-15; I Peter 5:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-16; James 5:13-16). There are also many attacks against elderships by some who are unwilling to be submissive and obedient to those men charged with the watchcare of their souls (He-

brews 13:17). Thus, there is not very much appeal for men to desire this work!

3. *Will have little (if any) discipline!* The idea of "fellowship" to many is absolutely meaningless, making the "discipline" that is often involved meaningless as well! All manner of misconduct is virtually overlooked (or tolerated) without consequence. We dare not neglect this area, of responsibility (I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:1-9; Romans 16:17-18; II Thessalonians 3:6,14-15; Titus 3:10-11) Discipline ignored for years usually means discipline ignored permanently!

4. *Will have homes which are unscriptural, or if not unscriptural, homes which are virtually powerless as far as having and demonstrating a godly influence!* We are already well aware of the fact that marriage, divorce, and remarriage has crippled the church. As a matter of fact, I was personally told by an elder (in a congregation where I was working) concerning a couple in an unscriptural relationship, "Bob, how can you be so sure? After all, the scholars disagree among themselves." In discussing this area, **Cline Paden** (Sunset School of Preaching) stated to me, "I wish that Jesus had not left us with the problem of marriage, divorce, and remarriage." Can any doubt what direction this kind of "thinking" will lead the church? Jesus, the Master Teacher, was very plain in the area of marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:11-12; Matthew 19:1-9). Beyond that problem, there are many other areas of concern relating to the family which are being ignored (Ephesians 6:1-14; Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 3:10-11; I Peter 3:1-7).

5. *Will replace New Testament truth and work, opting instead to please and entertain the membership!* Should we be surprised? I mean, after all, one who is ignorant of the truth is not going to call for a return to the **"old paths, where is the good way"** (Jeremiah 6:16) because he does not know any better. Likewise, the same will be true concerning various areas of work because one must go to the word of God in order to be **"thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Timothy 3:17). Minus the Bible, ears will be tickled (II Timothy 4:3-4), the church will no longer **"hold forth the word of life"** (Philippians 2:16), fun will be the order of the day, and souls will be lost (II Corinthians 4:3)!

GIVE EARNEST HEED

I sincerely hope that we will consider these points of concern. I am very much aware of the fact that what has been outlined here is characteristic of many congregations of the Lord's church today. We must **"give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip"** (Hebrews 2:1).

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DEFINING TRUTH

Gary W. Summers

On Monday, February, 22nd, the *Denton Record-Chronicle* published the news story, "Lecturer Seeks to Define The Truth." An introductory paragraph states:

William B. Oden, the bishop of the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, talked to local United Methodists Sunday night about the nature of truth, and the human tradition of trying to define it (1A).

Among other things, the speaker said:

Truth is difficult to define—I've heard it said that it is like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall. It's duller than fiction. It doesn't make for a good yarn. It's lumpy. It's shapeless. It needs editing (8A).

TRUTH CAN BE KNOWN

Most of these "definitions" imply that truth cannot be known or that it changes (or that it is boring and not worth knowing). How different from the attitude suggested by the writer of Proverbs: **"Buy the truth, and sell it not"** (23:23). This scriptural statement conveys the idea that truth is valuable, that it can be known, and that it should be prized above inferior material things. If the speaker brought up passages of scripture, they were not mentioned in this article (though the speech did appear to be rich in human wisdom).

As he neared the end of his lecture, Bishop Oden said that words have always been suspect when it comes to truth "because words have always been inadequate to express the deepest truths we know and live by" (8A). We would be sorely tempted to ask what these deepest truths we know and live by are, but apparently the bishop cannot tell us since to do so requires words. The Bishop may be suspicious of these words, but the Holy Spirit inspired them: Jesus prayed, **"Sanctify them through thy word; thy word is truth"** (John 17:17).

CAN'T COMMUNICATE WITH WORDS

Frankly, we ought to be suspicious of someone who cannot communicate through words. What realm have we entered at this point unless it would be the land of subjective feelings or mysticism? God chose to communicate with us through the medium of words. He did not choose to radiate truths in our direction hoping that we would receive them—or come by them via osmosis.

Truth, the bishop said, is not a "what." Truth, he said, is a "who." Truth is relational, something that happens between people—between believers....Jesus is not the truth because his words are true. The truth of Jesus is in us and among us, in our community of truth... (8A).

What kind of gobbledegook is this? When Solomon said to **"buy the truth,"** he was not referring to a "what" but a "who"? When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," he just meant that he was in us, among us, and in our community? One is reminded of a beatnik poetry reading in which people sit around listening to esoteric nonsense

and affirm, "That was deep, man," when they have absolutely no idea what was said.

THE "COMMUNITY"

In a related article appearing on the same date and page, "Bishop Commends Church Caught in Controversy," we learn a little bit more about the "community of truth" in which Jesus allegedly exists.

The bishop was present at the church on "The Day of Listening," the day when delegates prayed for direction on matters of homosexuality, and he said he has been "very aware" that the Denton church had been the target of sporadic protests because a physician who performs abortions is a member there (8A).

It is appropriate to ask: "Why are people praying for direction on matters of homosexuality? Are they wondering if God still opposes it?" Yes, he still destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah over it (Genesis 19); it is still a vile and unnatural practice (Romans 1:26); God still expects people to repent of it (I Corinthians 6:9-11); and it still serves as an example of the suffering of eternal fire (Jude 7). *Praying* for guidance with respect to these facts would be useless; *learn* from them.

If the group is wondering how to deal with homosexuals, that is not a mystery, either. We should love them enough to communicate the gospel to them—just as we would to adulterers, fornicators, and thieves. They need to be told that their practice is a sin—but that it can be forgiven when they repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38).

They fellowship an abortionist, also; she is one who terminates the lives of babies in the womb. Why do they do so—unless they all believe that abortion is acceptable? Otherwise, they would refuse her membership. Why would anyone remotely connected with the holy name of Jesus fellowship an abortionist? As John wrote, **"Ye know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him"** (I John 3:15). [If they do not believe it is murder, let them debate the matter in public.]

This paragraph was followed by Oden's comment that "it can be unfortunate for any church when groups who proclaim absolute truth lobby congregations" (8A). So, is abortion absolutely right, Bishop? If it is not, how can anyone perform it with a clear conscience? Paul wrote that **"whatever is not from faith is sin"** (Romans 14:23). If someone's position is that it is absolutely wrong, and she does it, she is a hypocrite. If she is uncertain whether it is right or wrong, she has no business doing it until she knows. And if she believes that it is absolutely right, then she should be able to defend her position.

"A community of truth can be clear that God's love is absolute truth," the bishop said in an interview following... "When a group decides there are other absolute truths, those absolute truths can become God" (8A).

So there is only one absolute truth, the love of God? Does the Bishop seriously think that it is absolutely true that God is holy and that he punishes sin? If he has not read Ezekiel lately, perhaps he may recall Ananias and Sapphira falling dead for the lie they told (Acts 5:1-11). *God's love forgives sins that are repented of; it does not overlook and tolerate sins in which people persist.*

POST MODERN GIBBERISH

Jesus said that love was the *greatest* commandment—not the *only* one. With the Methodist Church's failure to listen to what the Bible says on homosexuality and abortion, no wonder they need a definition of deep truths that cannot be communicated by words.

In a day when all of us are struggling so hard to talk about and to find what is right and what is true, when we come together as a diverse community of truth, we don't water down truth. We respect one another's perception of truth. It is imperative that we learn respect. We must keep seeing each other as a subject to be encountered, not an object to be changed (8A).

This is some of the finest postmodern gibberish one could ever hope to read. The following observations, however, are in order.

1. Who is struggling hard to find out what is right and true? And how are they going about it? Faithful children of God study the scriptures to learn wisdom and truth, but most of the academic world has simply relegated truth to that which a person feels or thinks about any particular subject. If we are content to relegate everything to a matter of "perception," then in essence the conclusion is that "Truth doesn't matter." If truth is irrelevant, then how can it be accurate to say we are struggling so hard to find it? Instead, people are struggling hard to bury it as an ancient, irrelevant relic.

2. What is "a diverse community of truth"? Does that mean that we all believe what we want, but that we somehow remain united?

3. "We don't water down truth." Oh, so truth does exist, after all? Or is this just a phrase to salve the conscience? Most modernists and liberals try to pass themselves off as truth-seeking, truth-believing conservatives. Occasionally they throw in lines like these, but everything else they say belies this view.

4. "We respect one another's perception of the truth." We don't water down truth but we respect one another's *perception* of truth. What does this phrase mean, if not that "you have your truth, and I have my truth; now let's all agree to disagree"? The only problem with this idea is that biblical truth says the Bishop's perception of truth is wrong. Does anyone recall Jesus, the one who died on the cross for our sins, saying, "You shall have a perception of truth, and that perception will set you free?"

5. "It is imperative that we learn respect." Wait a minute. The Bishop is already on record as having said that "God's love is absolute truth" and "When a group decides there are other absolute truths, those absolute truths can become God." Is learning respect an absolute truth that has become God? In this case, yes. That homosexuality is sin cannot be considered absolute truth; that abortion is murder cannot be considered absolute truth; but respecting be-

liefs which differ from what the scriptures teach, that is an absolute truth (according to them).

6. We must not see each other as an object to be changed. (Why must we not? Is this another imperative, another absolute truth?) We can agree with the part that says not to see other people as objects. If we continue in the truths of the Bible, we will realize that all people are made in the image of God, that all have a soul which will live forever, that all will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and that all will spend eternity in heaven or hell based on what they believe and practice.

THE GOSPEL DEMANDS CHANGE

The Bishop may have been studying too many theologians to recall that the gospel is all about change. When Paul went to Mars Hill, for example, did he try to change people from idolaters to Christians? Yes. Did he view the people as objects? No. The Bishop has set up an either/or situation which is not accurate. People are not objects, but they do need to be changed. If, for example, they think that abortion and homosexuality are all right, they need to get back into the scriptures to learn the truth of the matter.

If they think there are several ways for a person to come to God and be saved, they need to study Paul as he writes that there is one gospel, and if anyone preaches any other gospel, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8-9). If they think that morality can be divorced from serving God, they need to study I Corinthians 5 and 6:9-11. If they think that truth is merely a matter of perceptions, they need to reconsider the word of God, which always presumes that truth exists, that it can be known, and that it can be obeyed.

The problem with many denominational speakers, "Bishops," and such like, is that they are more in touch with the writings of today's theologians than the epistles of Paul, Peter, James, Jude, or John. And whereas they know what Jesus said concerning love in Matthew 22:37-40, they have overlooked what Jesus said concerning the *false doctrine* of the Sadducees just verses earlier (23-32). Jesus did not tell the Sadducees that he respected their perception of truth; he told them, "**You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God**" (29). He also warned his disciples against the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Matthew 16:11-12). Apparently, our Lord was not interested in "a diverse community of truth." Mankind comes to know God (and truth) through the holy scriptures, not the "**wisdom of men**" (I Corinthians 1:21).

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LOGIC AND REASONING

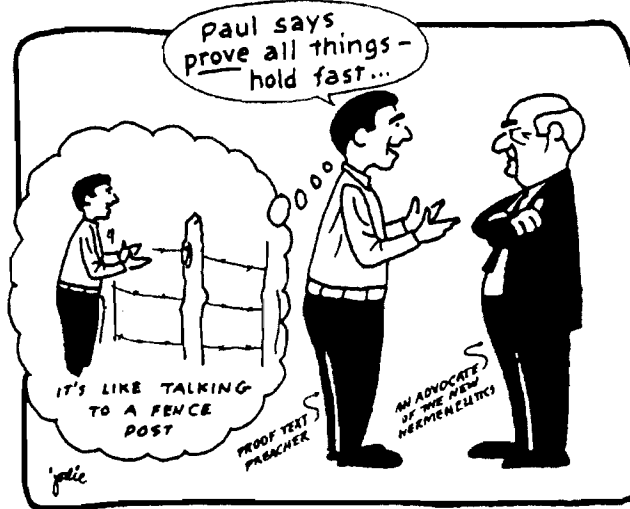
Jodie Boren

My dad was a faithful gospel preacher for some 70 years. Sometimes after trying to persuade someone to become a New Testament Christian to no avail, he would say of that person, "It was like talking to a fence post"—i.e. that person did not want to hear the truth. Jesus encountered such closed minds when he said in Matthew 13:15 that these people's ears were dull of hearing and their eyes they have closed.

REASON AND REVELATION

Many of the advocates of the new hermeneutics have their ears and eyes closed and have a disdain for proof-text preaching and the use of logic and reasoning in converting souls to Christ. Yet, logic and reasoning in preaching God's word was the very way the early Christians reached the lost. They wielded the sword of the Spirit mightily. Paul *reasoned* with those Jews at Thessalonica *out of the scriptures*, explaining and clearly showing them that Jesus is Christ (Acts 17:2-4) which resulted in the conversion of many.

Again in Acts 18:4, Paul *reasoned* and *persuaded* the Jews and the Greeks at Corinth. The word *reason* in verse 4 means "to discuss, to argue." Thus, Paul logically argued the gospel of Christ with winning words and many believed and were baptized (verse 8).



In II Corinthians 5:11, Paul says "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Persuading involves the use of logic and reason in order to convince another person in favor of the issue being discussed. The will of God is reasonable and can be understood (Ephesians 5:17). Not only can it be understood, we are exhorted to *prove* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2). Now, you have to use logic and reasoning to prove any

ideology... in our case, the will of God. A good illustration of this can be found in the book of Nehemiah. In chapter 8 and verse 8, we read, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading:" The law was read—the sense was given (i.e., it was explained with logic and reasoning) and the people understood. Is this not exactly what Paul was doing when he made his defense before Felix? The scriptures tell us in Acts 24:25 that "he *reasoned* of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come..."

ARE YOU AS REASONABLE AS APOLLOS?

Apollos was a Jew who was eloquent and mighty in the scriptures. Being fervent in the spirit, he taught diligently the things of the Lord. He, however, was limited in that he knew only the baptism of John. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and *expounded* unto him the way of God more perfectly. This is recorded in Acts 18:24-26. Notice carefully what happened afterwards. Apollos went into Achaia and *mightily convinced* (argued-confuted) the Jews... *showing from the scriptures* that Jesus was Christ (vs. 27-28). This is a classical example of "proof-text preaching"! It is not out of date and it never will be. Logic and reasoning must be used when trying to teach someone the saving gospel of Christ. The Bible is logical and reasonable and because it can be known and understood, our faith comes from it (Romans 10:17).

The new hermeneutics is, as one preacher said, "disguised disobedience." If one can do away with logic and reasoning, then he can believe anything he wants and do whatever is pleasing to him. To argue with those of this mind set is "like talking to a fence post."

The disciples went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4) and we must do the same. We must invite the lost to "come now, and let us *reason* together" (Isaiah 1:18).

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Hula Worship, Phil Donahue, Top-Ten, Court Ruling, And Cheating

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Hawaiian Catholics can dance the hula as a form of worship. The Vatican banned hula and other traditional Hawaiian dances from church last year because a congregant complained they were more like entertainment than worship. Honolulu Bishop **Francis DiLorenzo** appealed the ban and established guidelines, the *Associated Press* said.

"...Traditional hula uses the hands, body, and feet to communicate a story. Images of women wearing coconuts, flower leis, and short skirts making suggestive movements reflect a more modern version." Hula is performed in church in the "strictest, most beautiful, spiritual sense," a hula teacher, **John Lake**, said. "...This form of gesture is considered praying with one's whole being," DiLorenzo said. The guidelines require that gestures express praise, thanksgiving, adoration, petition, and penitence before they are permitted during specific Masses. Participants are required to wear appropriate dress that respects the liturgy and congregation.

...Ancient Hawaiians performed secular and religious dances before their kings. The dances have been used in all forms of Catholic services, including First Communion, weddings, and funerals. **Pope John Paul II** has encouraged the church to search for new means to bring Christ "in the diversity of culture and human tradition." (*Religion Today*, email news service, 1/8/99)

[So it was not biblical but now it is but with guidelines. When did the Bible change its wording? I wonder if Paul would have done the hula? Think he would have considered that becoming all things to all men?—MTM]

"Here we were in the '60s, marching and singing 'We Shall Overcome,' feeling liberal and proud, and this gay world was opening up to me. I began to question what it must mean to live a life in the closet. To live life as a lie. To have to endure the humiliation of the YMCA arrests and things of that nature. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church was saying, 'Love the sinner, hate the sin.' The Church was legitimizing homophobia while it is one of the world's largest institutional closets. So, I began to see that gayness is not a moral issue, and that we all had to do something about homophobia." —Talk-show pioneer **Phil Donahue** to *POZ* magazine, December issue. (Planet Out email news service, 12/19/98).

[Phil once again proves that he cannot go from point A to point B in a logical fashion. Is he trying to say that because many priests in the Catholic church are closet homosexuals that therefore homosexuality is not a moral issue? And did he say that homosexuals were living a lie while in the closet but this is not a moral issue? Makes you wonder if he has been a Clinton advisor during the Lewinsky affair. —MTM]

CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS— What were the top religion news stories of 1998? The editors and news writers of *Christianity Today* magazine selected their list of 10 top stories for their January 11, 1999 issue. Here they are:

1. Congress enacts law against religious persecution.
2. Midterm election jolts Christian right.
3. Worldwide body of Anglicans rejects ordination, "marriage" for homosexuals.
4. Clinton seeks pastoral counsel after Lewinsky scandal.
5. Papal visit to Cuba stimulates religious freedom.
6. Christians in southern Sudan victimized by war, famine.
7. Public school vouchers gain court approval.
8. Lutheran, Catholics draw closer on justification.
9. Protestants, Catholics in Northern Ireland vote for peace.
10. National Baptists retain indicted leader Lyons.

[I am not impressed with some of this list. Most are very sad indeed. -MTM]

Religious landlords in Alaska can refuse to rent to unmarried couples, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, meeting in San Francisco, ruled January 14. The ruling applies to several other Western states and could override their state housing discrimination laws. The 2-1 decision was a victory for two landlords in Anchorage who refused to rent rooms to unmarried couples because it offended their religious beliefs, news reports said. Circuit Judge **Diarmuid O'Scannlain** said the law interfered with property owners' free exercise of religion. Attorney **Clyde Wadsworth**, who filed a brief on behalf of the Lambda Legal Defense Fund, a homosexual-rights group, said lesbian and homosexual couples "will be swallowed up by that exception by landlords who claim a religious exemption," the *Los Angeles Times* said. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against a California landlord in a similar case last year. (*Religion Today*, email news service, 1/15/99)

[Too bad they cannot rule this way because the Bible condemns such relationships. But at least the court did rule in a good fashion. -MTM]

A cold war is raging across the Internet between cheating students who plagiarize term papers and professors who go online to catch them. A web site in Tel Aviv brags that 270,000 students download 1.6 million term papers from them every month. (*World*, January 9, 1999, p. 10)

[In a world where the President says it is ok for him to lie to a jury, why would a student think it wrong to cheat with a term paper. After all, the student is only doing it to avoid the embarrassment of making a bad grade.—MTM]

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ARE YOU DIGGING A PIT?

Danny L. Box

In Psalm 7:11 we read **"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."** Then in verses 12-14 we see what God is ready to do to the wicked if they will not turn from their wickedness. He has whet his sword and made ready his bow, and is preparing the instruments of death to use against those who are wicked. Now read verse 15, **"He (the wicked man) made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made."** Because of the "pit" that the wicked man had dug with his own hand, he was being told by God that he was going to reap the reward of his iniquities.

This passage of scripture is applicable to untold numbers of people today. Due to our wickedness, God is getting ready to destroy us and we pay little attention to the warnings that we have in his inspired word. We are digging a pit with the way that we live, and because of the way that we live we are **"fallen into the pit which we have made."** Look with me now at some ways that we are "digging a pit" in our lives.

We are "digging a pit" by our refusal to obey the gospel. God is not willing that any soul should be lost, but for us to be saved, we must obey his commands. God commands us to believe the word, then to repent of our sins, confess Christ as Lord, and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of our sins. When we do this, we are added to the Lord's church, our sins are washed away, and we are saved. People who have never done this are "digging a pit" and on the day of judgment they will fall into the ditch which they have dug. They will stand before the Lord condemned, and will have to face the terrible second death in hell.

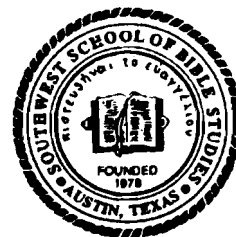
We are "digging a pit" when we refuse to live a faithful life. God has given us directions on how we are to live after we become one of his. We do not have to wonder what we are supposed to do; it is laid out for us. He expects us to **"live soberly, righteously, and godly."** He expects us to be **"steadfast and unmoveable"** in the faith. He expects us to **"contend earnestly"** for the faith. He expects us to **"preach the word"** to a lost and dying world. He expects us to **"add to our faith"** all the other Christian graces. He expects us to avoid all the **"works of the flesh"** and seek the **"fruits of the Spirit."** These and other things are what God expects of us to be **"faithful unto death"** if we want to receive our crown of life. But when we refuse to live as directed by God, then we are **"digging a pit"** and we will fall into it at judgment.

We are "digging a pit" when we try to change God's word. At least three times in God's word, we are told not to add to that word nor to take away from it. The word is the complete will of God. It is simple to understand, and is that "perfect" will given by God to man. In it we find facts to believe, commands to obey, and promises to enjoy. So many people today are **"digging a pit"** by a refusal to take

God's word as the authority for all that we do in life. We are refusing to accept it as our standard or pattern for **"doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"** choosing instead to believe the commands and doctrines of men. Man has perverted the doctrine of Christ and has led untold numbers away from the safety found in God's word. Because of this "pit" that they have dug, many have fallen, and they will be "accursed" in the day of judgment.

The Psalmist has told us that **"God is angry with the wicked every day"** and that he is preparing **"the instruments of death"** for the wicked man. Now let me ask you: Are you that wicked man who refuses to obey the gospel of the Lord, or who would refuse to live the faithful life, or who is trying to change God's word? If so, you have **"digged a pit, and are fallen into the ditch which you have made,"** and God's violent dealing shall come down upon your head.

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However, when winter arrives, the winds blow and the blizzards come and when the weather breaks, the countryside is completely covered with a blanket of dazzling white. Amazingly, even the feedlots have a wonderful attraction made possible by the brilliance of winter. Unfortunately, the beauty is only a temporary cosmetic, for under the snow the feedlot is still the same nasty, steam-covered, rot-gut field of stench.

Well, you do not have to live in the Midwest to know that there has been a foul growth of liberalism in the Lord's church for a number of years. Liberalism is still here! It is as rotten, nasty and sickening as it has ever been, but it is being snow covered with a new designation that the liberal "cowhands" are excited to accept. They are no longer "LIBERAL" rather they have become "PROGRESSIVE." But don't be fooled! Under the snow-covered cosmetic is the same old liberalism that has been stinking up the place for years.

The descriptive term "progressive" is an inaccurate designation which is gladly promoted among congregations willing and ready to compromise God's truth. "Progressive" would imply "progress" and when discussing spiritual affairs "progress," implies spiritual maturity, purity of life, grace and knowledge of the scriptures (II Peter 3:18). Progress would imply growth! Regarding spiritual affairs, growth is not measured in numbers, compromise, tolerance of sin, and the like; rather by truth and knowledge accompanied by rigid, strict adherence thereto (Ephesians 4:15). The congregations carelessly calling themselves "progressive" are not characterized by their conformity to New Testament doctrine and are therefore not "progressive." They are "digressive" because they depart from the scriptures.

A meaning of the word "progressive" in *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* is "favoring progress through reform" (p.1438). The key word is "reform."

Therefore, a congregation that is "progressive" should be seen as one desiring to reform biblical Christianity in the 20th (i.e., 21st) century—not indicative of so-called "progressive" churches today. As the truth heats things up, the snow will melt and folks will be able to see what lies under the surface of "progressive" churches is the same old liberalism that has made for such unpleasant mess in the Lord's church all along.

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DIRECTORY

For advertising in this section, See Masthead, Page 2.

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—England—

England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 253 Coldhams Lane, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Graham Moulton, Tel. 01223-210101. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

—Florida—

Miami—Westwood Lake Church of Christ, 10790 SW 36th Street, Miami, FL 33165, tel. (305) 554-8229. F. Matherly, Evangelist, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (904) 455-7595. Evangelist, Michael Hatcher, Sunday: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—Indiana—

Evansville—West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sunday: 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

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Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed: 7:00 p.m.

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Rocky Mount—Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, tel. (919) 977-7556, Mark McDonald, Evangelist.

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Crossville—Lantana Church of Christ, 7004 Lantana Rd., P.O. Box 2686, Crossville, TN 38557, (615) 788-6404. Sun.: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Jimmie B. Hill, Evangelist.

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 or Steve Ellis, Evangelist, (901) 366-6005.

Nashville area—Villages Church of Christ, 436 Belinda Parkway, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m. Fifteen minutes from downtown Nashville, Wayne Coats, Evangelist, tel. (615) 758-7406.

—Texas—

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

Lubbock—Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00 a.m., 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.

Portland—Church of Christ, 2009 Wildcat Dr., Portland, TX 78374, tel. (512) 643-6571, Jerry Moffitt, Evangelist.

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

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THOSE WHO SERVE AS EXAMPLES

Lynn Parker

Can we ever be too careful about our influence? The Bible has much to say on the subject.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).

The child of God must walk circumspectly, always remembering to **"take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men"** (Romans 12:17). This is an obligation laid squarely on each Christian. For our purposes now though, let us consider those who serve in various capacities in the church, and by virtue of said service, are in the "eye" of the congregation—the "fishbowl" if you will.

Gospel preachers are before the congregation constantly. Their lives must be honest, godly, zealous, and pure. They must take heed to both themselves and their teaching (I Timothy 4:16). Suppose for a moment that the preacher—any preacher—forsook the worship assembly some Sunday evening. Imagine that the preacher attended Bible classes only occasionally. How about if the preacher

stayed home on Wednesday evenings to watch TV. Would there be anything said in the local congregation? In every faithful congregation, there would be plenty said, and the preacher would quickly be out the door. The inconsistency of such actions would not be tolerated in the life of the preacher, and rightly so! The same might be said concerning elders.

But what about Bible class teachers and those men who serve or lead in the public worship assemblies? Should these people be expected to faithfully attend all classes and worship assemblies, and otherwise conduct their lives so that they serve as good examples to those within and out of the church? Think about this. Brother "X" attends some worship assemblies on Sunday morning, and *some* classes on rare occasions. Then at the end of Sunday morning worship, he is called on to lead the final prayer. He prays, *"... and Lord, bring us safely back at the next appointed time"* when everyone present knows Brother "X" *never* attends Sunday evening worship assembly. Such a brother might make an announcement of the assembly times for the upcoming week, but the congregation knows that it is the habit of this brother to often forsake the assemblies he is announcing. Shameful! What about the Bible class teacher who instructs the children on Sunday morning but never darkens the door Wednesday evening? What do the children see? More importantly, what does our Lord see?

Some justify using the unfaithful, the lukewarm, the worldly, the contentious, the spiritually haphazard, on the basis that service will make them attend worship assemblies. Of course, you would not use that person to preach in the pulpit because his words would be defeated by his poor example. **"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ..."** (Philippians 1:27) writes Paul, and deacons are not to be appointed until they first have been proven (I Timothy 3:10). Those men that pray **"in every place"** are to do so with **"holy hands"** (I Timothy 2:8). Using those who are not examples of faithfulness makes a mockery out of the teaching programs and worship assemblies of the church.

We exhort every member of the church to be faithful in life and teaching. We want to utilize every member, in every congregation, in every work for which they are prepared and scripturally qualified. To be faithful to God and the principles set forth in his word, a congregation must use, in public roles and as teachers, only those who are faithful. Are you Biblically qualified to serve?

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WHAT IS "THAT WORTHY NAME?"

Noah A. Hackworth

In the King James Version of the Bible, James 2:5-7 reads:

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

A more literal rendering of the phrase would be "that name which is called upon you" (*cf.*, footnote in the ASV). It is likely that the "worthy name called upon them" in the text refers to the name of Christ. In Acts 5:41, Luke states: "They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." The KJV says, "for his name." But "Christian" is indeed a "worthy" or "honorable" name, because Christ is inherent in it. We cannot say "Christian" without saying "Christ." "Christian" is the most distinctive name by which the followers of Christ could be called.

OCCURENCES AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME

The name Christian occurs but three times in the New Testament and never in the Old. "...[T]he disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). "...Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (26:28). "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed..." (I Peter 4:16). In each reference the word is used as a noun. Christian is from *Christianos* which dictionaries say is a "word formed after the Roman style, signifying an adherent of Jesus." F. C. Cook says, "*Christianus*" is a word of Latin formation (Tacitus, 'Ann' xv. 44).

Of tremendous importance is the phrase "were called" in Acts 11:26. W. E. Vine points out:

Though the word rendered 'were called' in Acts 11:26...might be used of a name adopted by oneself or given by others, the Christians do not seem to have adopted it for themselves in the times of the apostles. In I Peter 4:16, the Apostle is speaking from the point of view of the persecutor; cp. 'As a thief,' 'as a murderer.' Nor is it likely that the appellation was given by Jews. As applied by Gentiles there was no doubt an implication of scorn, as in Agrippa's statement in Acts 26:28. Tacitus, writing near the end of the first century, says, 'The vulgar call them Christians. The author or origin of this denomination, Christus, had in the reign of Tiberius, been executed by the Procurator, Pontius Pilate' (Annals xv. 44). From the second century onward the term was accepted by believers as a title of honour.

"Were called" is the translation of *Chrematizo*, the primary significance which is "to have business dealings with." They were publicly called Christians, because this was their chief business (Vine). The texts where the word,

or a form of it is found, associates it with "a divine admonition, instruction or warning." "And being warned (*chrematisthentes*, having been divinely instructed) of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way" (Matthew 2:12). "And it had been revealed (*kechoematismenon*, divinely communicated) unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26). "... Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned (*echrematisthe*, divinely instructed) of God by a holy angel..." (Acts 10:22).

IT WAS GIVEN BY THE LORD

The evidence is overwhelming. The name Christian was not adopted by the disciples themselves, neither was it given to them by their enemies. It was given by the Lord (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 15:15-17). It is intended to describe those who follow Christ. Therefore anyone who does not follow Christ in faithful obedience to his word is not entitled to be called Christian. This honorable name is sufficient and does not need to be prefixed.

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IS THERE A CROWN FOR ME?

Annette B. Cates

Three scriptures in the New Testament promise a **"crown of life"** for those who are faithful in their service to God: II Timothy 4:7-8, James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10. The jeweled crowns of this earth cannot compare to the promised heavenly crown. It is one of spiritual beauty, not made of materials that will eventually tarnish and decay. One would do well to ask, "What is this crown and how can it be mine?"

The crown of life will adorn the person who overcomes the world and its physical allurements. Earthly crowns are sometimes worn by those who do not deserve them, but the crown of life will be given only to those who have lived in accordance to the will of God.

The crown of life is notable because of the one who will bestow it. Such a glorious reward can come only from the divine, the righteous Judge (Acts 17:31). This crown was bought with a price—that of the blood of the son of God (John 3:16). If God has done his part that we may all be crowned in that day, what part do I play if there is to be a crown for me?

In II Timothy 2:15, the Apostle Paul tells us that if one is to strive for the masteries, he will not be crowned except that he strive lawfully; that is, to do what is necessary in order to be in the race. We infer from this scripture that one must become and remain a Christian in order to qualify for the crown of life. My life must reflect the Holiness of the One who offers the crown of life (I Peter 1:16).

IF THERE IS TO BE A CROWN FOR ME, I will cultivate an attitude of heart that makes me receptive to God's will. A life that is lived in sin is one that is in rebellion to God. Meekness and salvation are linked in Psalm 149:4, **"...he will beautify the meek with salvation."** Jesus tells

us to take up his yoke and learn of him **"for I am meek and lowly of heart"** (Matthew 11:29).

IF THERE IS TO BE A CROWN FOR ME, I will live my life in purity (Philippians 4:8; I Timothy 5:22), loving that which is good and eschewing that which is evil (I Peter 3:11; Matthew 5:8). I must keep my mind free from garbage, not only through what I participate in, but also through what entertains me. The books I read, the television I watch, the jokes I listen to and tell have a strong influence on my inner life for **"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"** (Matthew 12:34). My choice in friends will reflect the same spiritual interests and we will be an encouragement to one another to remain **"unspotted from the world"** (James 1:27).

IF THERE IS TO BE A CROWN FOR ME, I will be tenderhearted, concerned for the cares of others (Ephesians 4:22). Jesus was known for his compassion (Mark 5:19). Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lovingly and tenderly cared for his sheep (Isaiah 40:11; John 10:9, 14-16). He called the little children unto him (Matthew 19:14) and invited the troubled, the weary to rest (Matthew 11:28-30). As his followers, we must exhibit compassion in our lives.

IF THERE IS TO BE A CROWN FOR ME, I will have conviction, the courage to stand for my beliefs (I Corinthians 16:13). The Bible makes many references to standing for one's convictions (Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 10:25; Psalm 27:14; Matthew 5:11, 12; 10:32; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:10; *et al.*) This conviction come from knowledge of God's word (Proverbs 9:18; Acts 17:11; Romans 10:17; II Timothy 2:15). We cannot stand for, nor teach, that which we do not know.

IF THERE IS TO BE A CROWN FOR ME, I will pray often and privately and be steadfastly found in the assembly of the saints. God does hear and answer our prayers. Worship is a time for putting aside the cares of this life and concentrating on God's word and his will for us. Not only is God praised through our worship, but our lives are uplifted by joining fellow Christians in song and in prayer.

Is there a crown for me? Does my life reflect the holiness of the one who will bestow that crown? Let us determine to conform our will to his in order that the crown may be ours.

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"...THOU WAST AS ONE OF THEM..."

Jesse Whitlock

The book of Obadiah is a prophecy directed against Edom because "...thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them" (Obadiah 11). The Edomites stood by doing nothing, while their brethren (verse 10) were carried into captivity. They refused to sound forth a warning. The Edomites actually helped to deliver them to the enemy (verse 14).

Recently I was asked why the Central congregation did not advertise nor promote the "Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop." If you will study the book of Obadiah, then you will understand. Yes, we received the invitation to the March 25-27 workshop. We noted the list of speakers read like the "Who's Who" of change agents among the Lord's people; such as **Jeff Walling, Richard Rogers, Marvin Phillips, Lynn Jones, Terry Rush**, and the list goes on, inclusive of the Accapella Vocal Band!

My New Testament still reads, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that

biddeth him God speed is partaker of the his evil deeds" (II John 10-11).

Have you noted that Jeff Walling and the AVB will go anywhere together? That should not seem strange since the AVB does their best to "imitate" mechanical instruments of music (I guess that is cheaper than having to buy them), and Jeff Walling has made it plain, "I don't go around the country preaching against instrumental music." He is right about that! He never teaches God's truth about Ephesians 5:19 or Colossians 3:16 or I Corinthians 14:15 or Hebrews 2:12.

Realizing many will continue to promote, push, and peddle the purveyors of perversion—the word of God still says, "**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them**" (Ephesians 5:11). That is not a suggestion, that is a **COMMAND!** Either we respect the authority of God's word or we do not! (Joshua 24:15).

—809 East Pershing Drive
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NOTES AND QUOTES...

HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOR MURMANSK, RUSSIA

Sponsored by Southaven Church of Christ:

It is our plan to coordinate an effort in which humanitarian aid will be provided to two hospitals, two orphanages, and needy individuals in Murmansk, Russia. Because of the severe economic conditions which now exist in Russia, there are many who are in need. Through this effort, we hope to ease some of the medical, nutritional, and other hardships these people are presently enduring. We are hoping that you will want to have a part in this effort also. Why is aid to be provided to hospitals and orphanages in Murmansk, Russia? As you may already know, **Clifford Lyons** has been serving in the Murmansk area as a missionary for several years, under the oversight of the Southaven elders, and in cooperation with the Memphis School of Preaching. He, **Robert Hawkins**, and **Alexander Nesterkin** regularly teach God's word at the Murmansk Sloping Hospital for Seamen, in addition to one of the orphanages. Learning of the dire need of these organizations and their patients, Lyons asked if we could assist. The hospitals and orphanages are government owned and supported from Moscow. Support, however, has not been available for sev-

eral months now, because of the country's very severe economic crisis.

Because of numerous difficulties encountered while attempting to make suitable arrangements to ship goods to Murmansk; we have decided to send monetary assistance, in lieu of goods, through the church in Murmansk. The church will ensure that these funds are received by these facilities who will then purchase the needed items. Items to be purchased include food, medical equipment, and supplies. Documentation for purchases will be provided to the Southaven elders by the respective organizations' representatives. In addition to these designated funds, a small amount will remain in the Murmansk church treasury to assist needy individuals there.

Will you help provide this much needed financial assistance? If so, please send your check, payable to the "Southaven Church of Christ," and designated for "Humanitarian Aid." If you desire additional information, please feel free to write or call.

In His Service:

[signed]
Larry Everson, Bill Pierce,
Coleman Simpson, Elders

P.O. Box 128
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(601) 342-2690

NEW BUILDING FOR LIBRARY AT MSOP

Memphis, Tennessee—**N. B. Hardeman's** granddaughter and her family have proposed construction of a 10,000 square foot, two-story library building on the Memphis School of Preaching campus to be named in honor of N. B. Hardeman. They have very generously offered to contribute and raise \$350,000 of the \$700,000 needed. The School is seeking to raise the rest, and has \$142,000 already in hand. Hardeman is truly worthy of this honor, since none has influenced the work at MSOP more than he (Romans 13:7).

With the addition of several preachers' libraries and other donations, the present library facilities are filled to overflowing. The new building will accommodate the present holdings, make room for additional donations already promised, and provide space for desperately needed study areas. In addition, the library will house a display of memorabilia of Hardeman, including debate notes and other writings.

MSOP is thankful to have been chosen as the location of this library with all it will mean to their work, and to the brotherhood. They are confident God will bless them with the needed funds, and that brethren will see the need and the opportunity to join with us in this effort by sending a contribution to: Forest Hill Church of Christ, 3950 Forrest Hill Irene Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38125, marked for "MSOP Library Fund."

A SCRIPTURE THAT NEEDS ANSWERING

Eddie Whitten

"Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" (James 2:24.)

Many religious bodies hold to the Calvinistic doctrines of salvation by "faith only," or "grace only." The Lord's church has long opposed such beliefs on the basis of what the Bible says concerning salvation. When asked, "What must one do to be saved, it used to be that the answer always rested upon a "thus saith the Lord." Emphasis was placed upon the "five steps of salvation" which are: hear, believe, repent, confess Jesus as God's son, be baptized for the remission of sins. These "steps" were predicated on the conviction that a person must understand he is lost in sin until he "obeys" what the Bible says he must do to be saved. Involved in this process is the conviction of the singularity of the church Jesus purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28). Without understanding the premise upon which obedience of the gospel is invoked, the mere performance of the ritual of conversion is meaningless.

In the last 15 years, there has been erosion of conviction regarding what one must do to be saved. Some in the church of Christ have adopted beliefs similar to Calvinistic teachings embracing the "faith only" and "grace only" positions. The result of these sad developments progress from accepting these doctrines, to believing them, to the actual practice of them. The conclusion that must come, if followed to the end, is that there is nothing one must, or can, do for himself to be saved. If we are to be saved, it is only because of our faith in God. Or, if we are to be saved, it is only because of God's grace. Nothing is left to our own action to effect our salvation. There are many reasons why these false doctrines have infiltrated the church, all of which are either misunderstandings or misapplications of what the scriptures teach.

Those who hold to the view that men are saved by faith only have a problem with James 2:24. It is easily understood and harmonious with the rest of the Bible if one can

accept the definition of the "works" of that verse. The "works" of James 2:24 is the doing of what God has said we must do. James also said **"a doer that worketh...shall be blessed in his doing"** (James 1:25). Doing the works of God makes the difference (Ephesians 2:10; John 6:29; Hebrews 5:9).

Involved in the "doing" is the use of our talents. In the parable of the talents, the ones who were blessed were not blessed because of how much they did. They were blessed because they used their talents to do what they could do. The one who was not blessed was not condemned because he did not do anything. He was condemned because he did not use his talent to do what he could do. This is a tremendous challenge to us. The church of our Lord is filled with members who could do many things to strengthen and expand the kingdom of God, but many are not doing what they can do!

James 2:24 is a thorn in the side of Calvinistic doctrine. It is so repulsive to the "faith only" doctrine that Martin Luther described James as "a right strawy epistle," and rejected it as part of the Canon of Scripture. It is senseless to discard a scripture because it does not fit our belief. There are many other scriptures that teach the same thing. Jesus said, **"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work"** (John 9:4). Paul completed the passage upon which the "faith only" and "grace only" believers rely, Ephesians 2:8-9, by writing, in verse 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Those who take the position of the Calvinists that we are saved by "faith only" or by "grace only" need to be painfully aware that James 2:24, plus many others, need to be answered and that the answer must be in harmony with the rest of God's word. So be it!

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

FAITH THAT EMBRACES THE PROMISES (Hebrews 6:12, 10:36, 11:8-22)

Jack Stephens

There are many lessons that can be learned from the life of Abraham. We can learn from Abraham's example of a maturing faith, his example of unselfishness and role of peacemaker in dealing with his nephew Lot. We can learn from Abraham's obedient faith as he acted without hesitation when instructed to offer his son of promise as a sacrifice. We can learn from the flaws in Abraham and the mistakes that he made like the two instances when he failed to supply the needed information about Sarah being his sister and the nearly disastrous consequences of his actions.

There is something more that we can learn from Abraham and the other patriarchs regarding their faith and the patience they exercised during their journey here on this earth. We are told **"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"** (Hebrews 6:12). The Hebrews writer also said **"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise"** (Hebrews 10:36). Understanding the need for faith mixed with patience, let us turn our focus to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

FAITH, PATIENCE, AND EMBRACING THE PROMISES

In the first seven verses of Hebrews eleven, we see faith explained as **"substance (assurance, ASV-1901) of things hoped for and the evidence (a conviction, ASV-1901) of things not seen."** We see faith exemplified—in Abel as faith worshipping, in Enoch as faith walking, and in Noah as faith working. We also see faith emphasized for without which it is impossible to please God and in that we

must believe God exists, and he rewards those who diligently seek him.

Yet another aspect of our faith pertains to "the promises" in which we hope. We are warned not to fall short of what's been promised (Hebrews 4:1). We see that faith, along with patience, is necessary to inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:11-12). The faith which pleases God, then, is one that embraces God's promises." In Hebrews 11:8-22, we learn of the faith of those who "embraced the promises" And because of their faith, "God is not ashamed to be called their God" (Hebrews 11:16).

Do we have the sort of faith that Abraham and the patriarchs had that makes God unashamed to be called our God? To answer this question, let us use the text of Hebrews 11:8-22 to review their faith.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM AND THE PATRIARCHS

By faith Abraham "obeyed" (Hebrews 11:8). When God called him to leave his country, he obeyed the voice of the Lord, even though at first he did not know where he was going. This is an example of conviction in **"things not seen."** Here we see that faith and obedience are linked together. Indeed, Jesus is the **"author of eternal salvation to all who will obey him"** (Hebrews 5:9). Jesus said **"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"** (Luke 6:46). Is our faith an "obedient faith" like Abraham's?

By faith Abraham **"sojourned"** (Hebrews 11:9-10). His faith required him to live as in a foreign country. Even though it was the **"land of promise"** he and his descendants would not have it for four hundred years. He pa-

(Continued on page 3)

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Associate Editorial...

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

There is so much to be learned from the Old Testament regarding the Lord's church. One of those lessons is found in the building of the temple. Paul emphasized this when he wrote, **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope"** (Romans 15:4).

Keeping in mind Paul's inspired directive, let us learn some timely lessons from the building of the temple that are perpetually applicable to the Lord's church.

THE TEMPLE WAS ERECTED IN SILENCE

All parts of the temple were prepared before they were brought to Jerusalem to be assembled on Mount Moriah. There was no noise as the parts of the structure were fitted together (I Kings 6:7).

In speaking of the growth of the kingdom, our Lord likened it to **"...a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree;..."** (Luke 13:19). Jesus also taught that **"It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened"** (Luke 13:20-21). Spiritual growth and development is without the fussiness, racket and clamor of this present religious world.

THE TEMPLE WAS ERECTED ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN

Solomon was not sent to the pagans of his day to learn how to build the temple. As wise as Solomon was, God did not allow him to build the temple without his guidance (I Chronicles 28:11-19). The writer of Hebrews declares of Moses,

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount (Hebrews 8:5).

One of the words used to describe the church is that of the temple (I Corinthians 3:16). Surely we can learn from one of God's types of the church, the temple, a lesson that will help us in the erection of God's temple of the New Testament.

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.. except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalms 127:1). **"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars"** (Proverbs 9:1).

—David P. Brown, *Associate Editor*

FAITH THAT EMBRACES...

(Continued From Page 1)

tiently waited and looked for the city **"whose builder and maker is God"** (Hebrews 11:10). This suggests that the promises he embraced were more than just those pertaining to the land of Canaan. Later, we will see he had a heavenly hope!

Peter reminds us that our faith also requires us to live as in a strange country for we, too, are sojourners and pilgrims (I Peter 2:11, ASV). The Hebrews writer tells us **"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come"** (Hebrews 13:14). Is our faith a "sojourning faith" like Abraham's?

By faith Abraham **"offered up Isaac"** (Hebrews 11:17-19). His faith required him to be willing to offer that which was closest to him, his son Isaac, through whom the promises he embraced were to be fulfilled. Abraham knew that God could raise Isaac from the dead, if need be, in order to keep his promises (Hebrews 11:19). Thus Abraham illustrated the assurance **"in things hoped for."**

Our faith often requires forsaking those things closest to us. It may be our loved ones, even our own life (Luke 14:26-33). We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2). Is our faith an **"offering faith"** like Abraham's?

And what of the faith of Abraham's wife, Sarah? By faith she received strength to conceive a child even though he was beyond the normal age of child-bearing. And even though she laughed when she first heard of God's promise, she later **"judged him faithful who had promised"** (Hebrews 11:11). Through her faith, the promises of a great nation were fulfilled!

Our faith also requires looking to God for strength, and trusting he will provide. We must look to God that we may **"obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"** (Hebrews 4:16). Paul wrote **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"** (Philippians 4:13). Is our faith a "receiving faith" like Sarah's?

And what of the faith of Isaac? He blessed Jacob and Esau regarding things to come (Hebrews 11:21; cf., Genesis 48:14-20). This illustrates how Isaac by faith "embraced" the promises. And the faith of Jacob, who blessed the sons of Joseph when he was dying (Hebrews 11:21; cf., Genesis 48:14-20). His blessing involved the promises of God, showing how he embraced them also. And Joseph, who, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of Israel out of Egypt and gave instructions concerning his bones (Hebrews 11:22; cf., Genesis 50:24-26). And in doing so, Joseph's faith demonstrated that he too had embraced the promises!

Such was the faith of Abraham and the patriarchs. I purposely skipped verses 13-16 in Hebrews 11, for what is said there not only applies to Abraham, but also to Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. As we now look at these verses, we learn in particular how their faith pleased God.

HOW THE PATRIARCHS' FAITH PLEASED GOD

Quite simply, the patriarchs' faith was pleasing to God by reason of their willingness to embrace the promises of God (Hebrews 11:13-16). They did not receive the promises during their lifetime, yet by faith they could see them afar off. They freely confessed to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth. This implies that they sought a homeland, but what they desired was a better one, indeed a heavenly country. They died **"in faith,"** holding fast to the promises, embracing them (Hebrews 11:13).

Therefore, God was not ashamed to be called their God (Hebrews 11:16). He was well pleased with them. It was their faith embracing the promises that pleased him. He prepared a city for them. What they waited for, he prepared.

That which he has is what we look for, too—**"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come"** (Hebrews 13:14). **"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"** (II Peter 3:13).

WHAT KIND OF FAITH DO YOU HAVE?

What kind of faith pleases God? Certainly a "worshipping faith" like that of Abel, and a "walking faith" like that of Enoch, and no doubt a "working faith" like that of Noah, but also a "waiting faith" as seen in Abraham and the patriarchs! The kind of "waiting faith" that would have them dying **"in faith."** The faith that pleases God is one that "embraces the promises" made by God. Patiently waiting for their ultimate fulfillment, even if it does not happen in one's lifetime, but with confidence of "things hoped for" and "things not seen."

With conviction and confidence we are to obey his calling. With conviction and confidence we are to sojourn as strangers here on this earth. With conviction and confidence we are to "offer up" whatever he asks of us. With conviction and confidence we are to "receive strength" to do whatever he bids us. And with conviction and confidence of things hoped for and things not seen, we are to "make mention" of his promises from generation to generation!

This is the kind of faith in those **"who believe to the saving of the soul"** (Hebrews 10:39). This is the kind of faith in those of whom **"God is not ashamed to be called their God"** (Hebrews 11:16). May we work diligently to develop this kind of obedient and saving faith!

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FATHER AND SON TALK

Dad: Son, come in here, we need to talk.

Son: What's up, Dad?

Dad: There's a scratch down the side of the car. Did you do it?

Son: I don't believe, if I understand the definition of "scratch the car," that I can say, truthfully, that I scratched the car.

Dad: Well, it wasn't there yesterday, and you drove the car last night, and no one else has driven it since. How can you explain the scratch?

Son: Well, as I've said before, I have no recollection of scratching the car. While it is true that I did take the car out last night, I did not scratch it.

Dad: But your sister Monica has told me she saw you back the car against the mailbox at the end of the driveway, heard a loud scraping sound, saw you get out to examine the car, and then drive away. So again I'll ask you, yes or no, did you scratch the car?

Son: Oh, you mean you think you have evidence to prove I scratched it. Well, you see, I understood you to mean did "I" scratch the car, I stand by my earlier statement, that I did not scratch the car.

Dad: Are you trying to tell me you didn't drive the car into the mailbox?

Son: Well, you see, sir, I was trying to drive the car into the street. I mishandled the steering of the car and it resulted in direct contact with the mailbox, though that was clearly not my intent.

Dad: So you are then saying that you did hit the mailbox?

Son: No, sir, that's not my statement. I'll refer you back to my original statement that I did not scratch the car.

Dad: But the car did hit the mailbox, and the car did get scratched as a result of this contact?

Son: Well, yes, I suppose you could look at it that way.

Dad: So you lied to me when you said you did not scratch the car?

Son: No. No, that's not correct. Your question was "Did I scratch the car?" From a strict legal definition, as I understood the meaning of that sentence, I did not scratch the car...the mailbox did...I was merely present when the scratching occurred. So my answer of "No" when you asked "Did I scratch the car" was legally correct, although I did not volunteer information.

Dad: Where did you learn to talk like a complete idiot?

Son: From the President of the United States.

—From the Internet

GRANDMA DRISKILL AND HER HATCHET

Stephen D. Eckstein, Jr.

Thirty miles to the southwest of Austin in San Marcos, the small church which had been planted in 1855 but had dwindled away during the Civil War, was reorganized in 1869 by **J. L. Green**, **S. D. Jackman**, **I.B. Donalson** and **William Gosden**. Although the original building on Gold Street, constructed of lumber hauled by Jackman and Green from Austin, was renovated several times, it still stood in 1948. Evangelist **J. J. Williamson**, assisted by Green and elder **J. A. Driskill**, preached in the church for many years.

After the organ was introduced in 1887, the congregation lapsed into inactivity. Williamson and Green favored the use of the organ but were opposed by Driskill. Rallying to the support of her husband, "Grandma" Driskill went into the meeting house and demolished the organ with a hatchet. The organ faction, nevertheless, retained the

building but soon disintegrated. While visiting San Marcos in June, 1889, **John Poe** found the meeting house door ajar. Upon entering, he was astonished to see the interior covered with dust and cobwebs. Probing through the deserted building, he found a Sunday School roll dated "January, 1888," apparently indicating that the congregation had not met during the past eighteen months. Although there was no organ in the building, Poe candidly remarked, "The Devil is still in the brethren...they attend sectarian churches...while their own house and own altar is neglected." In 1893, however, the anti-organ group regained possession of the building and began a slow rebuilding campaign.

—From *History of the Churches of Christ in Texas*
Pages 132-133

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—May/1999

“THE THEIST CANNOT LOSE”

Jason R. Roberts

On October 6 - 9, 1947, a debate on “*The Existence of God*” took place on the campus of Harding College. This debate is in book form and well worth reading. The disputants were the late **James D. Bales**, former professor of Harding College and **Woolsey Teller**, one of the founders of *The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism*. The debate was held in the old auditorium on Campus before the entire student body, faculty, area preachers, and numerous atheists. Forty-one years later I enrolled as a Freshman at Harding University. Upon reading the book, I walked to Bales’ house between classes one day. I wanted to meet him and thank him for the devastating arguments he set forth that had Teller in a frenzy throughout the debate. I told him that I had just finished reading the debate, whereupon he said to me, “Brother Roberts, **THE THEIST CANNOT LOSE.**” The following irrefutable opening statement was made by Bales during the first night of the debate.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to call to your attention that in this particular discussion I have nothing to lose, even if my friend is right. For if he is right and I am the accidental by-product of the workings of the laws of nature, I shall drop out of this life on even scores with him. I cannot lose. I have lived this life in hope of a life to come. I have had joys that he cannot know. I have had a hope that has sustained me in difficult times, that he cannot have; and finally I drop out of life on even scores with him, even if he is right. On the other hand, if he is wrong and I am right, he would admit that he is teaching a doctrine which is the most horrible doctrine that a man could teach: that would rob man of a hope and purpose for life, and when we drop out of this life it will not be on even scores. I do not say this to prove that I am right. I simply point out that I cannot lose, that I have everything to gain and nothing to lose; and that he has everything to lose and nothing to gain (14,15).

Teller made no rebuttal to this statement, but conveniently overlooked it. As **Thomas B. Warren** has said, “*No man turns against reason until reason first turns against him.*” There are several *encouraging* points for the Christian and several *discouraging* points for the atheist that we learn from Bales’ illustrious statement.

First, Christianity is the most rewarding life there is to live. This cannot be said truly by any atheist. It is true that an atheist can live a strong, healthy, physical life, but so can the Christian. And if man possesses only a body then the Christian and atheist would share equal footing in this regard when they die. But if man is a dual-creature (which he is), possessing both body and soul, then the Christian and the atheist are not on equal terms. One is living a life that ONLY rewards the here and now. The other is living a life that rewards the here and now AND the there and then (Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 25:21, 23)! The atheist has nothing meaningful for which to live in this life. He lives for

self, he answers to self, he dies miserable. I have never known of one Christian who has ever regretted that he lived a faithful Christian life. I have never seen or heard of a Christian who was in abject misery as he lay upon his deathbed. In stark contrast, consider what the famous author and infidel **Thomas Paine** said as the curtain of his tragic life was finally drawn to a close:

I would give worlds, if I had them, that *Age of Reason* had not been published. O Lord help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God’s sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one (Lockyer, 132).

When an atheist dies he is often found cursing God with the very breath he gave him (Genesis 2:7). However, when the Christian dies he is found praising God. Paul said “**For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain**” (Philippians 1:21). Truly, Christianity is indeed the most rewarding life one can live.

Second, Christianity is the most revolutionary life there is to live. Nothing has impacted our world for the better more than Christianity. And, nothing has been more detrimental to our world than the ungodly doctrine of atheism. It is a proven fact that our world has been revolutionized for the better because of Christianity (Proverbs 14:34a; Matthew 5:16). How many atheists can rise to their feet and truly say, “Our world is a better place in which to live because of people like me?” How many hospitals were founded by atheists? And, if there are any hospitals founded and operated by atheists, how many people would prefer atheistic care over Christian care? How many orphan homes do you know of that are operated by militant atheists? How many atheists are called to an open grave to provide words of comfort to families who are burying their loved ones (*cf.*, I Thessalonians 4:13-18)? What hope can the hopeless atheist give to a grief-stricken cancer patient?

Christianity always has had and always will have a tremendous positive impact on the world in which to live! Even an imperfect human effort to imitate that Perfect One “**who went about doing good**” will ever be a blessing to mankind (Acts 10:38).

As for the *theist* and *atheist*, they represent two vastly different systems of belief, resulting in two vastly different eternities. For the atheist, life is a *hopeless end*. But for the theist, and more precisely, for the true Christian, life is an *endless hope*. Truly the theist (who is a Christian) cannot lose!

[Editorial Note: Would that Bales had reasoned as well regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage as he did regarding the existence of God.—DPB, Associate Editor]

—3950 Forest Hill-Irene Road South
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“...God Gave Them Up Unto Vile Affections...”

BIBLE-BASED TOWN, “YOU ARE GOD,” THE MORMON CHURCH, PROFANITY, A FEMALE CHAPLAIN, AND MORE

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Residents in northern Alabama want to form a town based on Christian ideals. Residents of Brookville, an unincorporated community of about 140 people, say they want the King James Bible as the town charter and the Ten Commandments as its ordinances. People would follow standards of common decency, without the need for elected city officials, they say. Residents would look out for one another and help children and the elderly, **James Henderson**, 56, a self-described street preacher, told the New York Times. “...When I was a child in the 1940s and 1950s, we had a sense of community, built around the church, on people helping each other,” he said. “Over the years, that’s gotten frayed around the edges. I’ve watched the issue of the separation of church and state get out of control.” Henderson and others are collecting signatures to put the decision of incorporation as a Bible-based town to a vote in February. ...State officials say there may be practical barriers to such incorporation. State laws require a town to have a mayor and a council (*Religion Today*, email news service, 1/14/99).

(Nothing wrong with them incorporating a town the way they want to. It would be nice if all towns and cities would rally around the scriptures as basis for moral government. But it would be a lot nicer if they would become Christians. It is sure that this will draw much attention before it is over.—MTM)

“If I had to put the philosophy that I hold very dear into words, it would be this: You are God. I believe in love as the foundation of everything. I also believe this foundation has gotten trapped in a lot of separation and hate, fighting and warring against individuals and groups, and everything else. My personal belief is that we are all God. If you look to another, you can see that in him. And you can pass that along. If we all just started passing that along, we’d have a much better place to live, and then the foundation would return to love. That’s what keeps me going. I know there is that world, that universe, that is truly accepting of all individuals. I believe that’s really the only important thing. To get people to understand this about themselves is a gift we must give every time we see someone. ...When I was 18, I began therapy for the first time. **Dr. Bernie Rosenbloom**, who I’m still in touch with, started me on this course, or made me aware of it. It’s the most incredible experience to start on this journey of self-exploration. My reward was meeting and falling in love with **Ellen [DeGeneres]**”—Actress **Anne Heche** to Entertainment News Service, Nov. 28 (*Planet Out*, email news service, 1/16/99).

(Obviously the term God does not mean that there is absolute truth or that there is omniscience. Notice that self-

exploration is what made her realize that she is God. Exactly what scripture tells us will happen if we take our eyes off of the true God. By her definition, Howard Stern is also God. No, thanks, that takes way too much faith [and the evolutionist and modernist talk about a leap of faith!]. I will stay with my belief in the true God.—MTM)

The Mormon Church has forbidden its missionaries to use email and faxes to stay in touch with family and friends back home. The new policy broadens already stringent guidelines for the missionaries, who are allowed to phone home only on Christmas and Mother’s Day and are not permitted to write letters more than once a week, news reports said. The policy is an effort to keep missionaries, who are typically between 19 and 22 years old, focused on their work during their two years of service. Constant contact could make a missionary homesick, church spokesman **Dan Rascon** said, according to CNET news. **Bonnie Carter** of Orem, Utah, whose son **Andrew** is a missionary in Sweden, called the change “a cruel move,” the Associated Press said. There have been times when she and her husband have needed to communicate with Andrew about urgent matters, she said (*Religion Today*, email news service, 1/13/99).

(The Mormon church has always been off on this point. While a man is not to let earthly concerns get in the way of God’s work, he is to demonstrate God’s will for the church through the parallel of the family. How can one adequately tell someone that they can be brothers in Christ when he is not allowed to demonstrate familial love to those he is trying to teach? We can also go to extremes when trying to do God’s will. We must be ever vigilant to be moderate—but not compromising on doctrinal matters.—MTM)

The University of Maryland athletic department is urging civility among student fans at home basketball games. The department is asking fans to stop the profanity. Students are revolting over the anti-profanity drive. Instead of getting better the students are getting worse (*The Washington Times*, December 14-20, 1998, p.30).

(This is so sad. Our nation has truly gotten into the gutter when college students do not think they can have fun without cursing another person. They have several chants and songs which repeatedly use foul words. The school administration is giving in to the vulgarity rather than showing character and sticking with their original intent—civility.—MTM)

Ted Turner in a speech was elated about the latest elections. “There were some good things that happened in this

election. The Christian right didn't roll us...They didn't roll us!...I like almost everybody—except **Rupert Murdoch** and fundamentalists.” It is reported that he was grinning triumphantly while speaking these words (*The Washington Times*, November 23-29, 1998, p. 16).

(Ted is not one of my favorite individuals, either. His only endearing quality is that he owns the Braves and the Falcons.—MTM)

Out of 70,587 criminal cases filed in 93 federal districts during the 1996 fiscal year, only six involved obscenity violations, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. “President Clinton is a total supporter of the industry, and he’s always been on our team” stated **David Schlessinger** of the adult-oriented Vivid Videos. “It’s not that Clinton has been outwardly supportive of the adult industry, but rather that he hasn’t tried to quash it the way the Republicans did back in the 1980’s (*Insight*,” December 14, 1998, p.41)

(Isn't it nice to know that the adult entertainment industry looks upon our President as a supporter? What a disgrace!—MTM)

A female chaplain has been promoted to brigadier general. U.S. Air Force chaplain **Col. Lorraine Potter**, a home missionary for the American Baptist Churches is the first woman chaplain in the military to be promoted to brigadier general, American Baptist News Service said. She is based in Randolph Air Force Base in Texas. ...Potter became the first clergy woman in any of the military services to attain the rank of full colonel in 1992. She is the first woman ordained by the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island (1971), the first American Baptist clergy woman endorsed for military chaplaincy (1972), and the first woman chaplain in the Air Force (1973). ...In 1992 she hosted a delegation of military officials from the Commonwealth of Independent States who wanted to examine the American model of military chaplaincy in order to re-establish a chaplaincy of their own. (*Religion Today*, email news service, 2/5/99)

(Political correctness again. Not only is our military being dismantled and demoralized but we now have a woman in charge of the chaplaincy. Not to mention that it is not Biblical for a woman to be usurping such authority.—MTM)

Society pays an economic cost for gambling, a new study has found. Each of the 4 million problem gamblers in the

United States costs society an average of \$3,000 a year, according to the research. That includes unemployment benefits and money employers spend finding and training replacements for gamblers who are fired, the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Council said. Approximately equal proportions of men and women gamble, the study said, according to the Associated Press. Problem gamblers are defined as those who had suffered at least three adverse effects, such as a job loss. The study was conducted for the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, which is preparing a report for the president and Congress (*Religion Today*, email news service, 2/11/99).

(State governments continue to push for legalized gambling with lotteries. But I forgot, it is always to help education. Anything goes if it will build a school. That in itself should make an ethics and moral statement.—MTM)

NewsPlanet Staff—Thursday, January 7, 1999, All but one member of the Arkansas Child Welfare Agency Review Board voted January 6 to ban gays and lesbians from serving as foster parents. The Board refused to accept public testimony, to the disappointment of an overflow crowd of dozens of opponents and a handful of supporters of the ban. The outcome was pretty much a foregone conclusion, since all but one of the nine Board members has agreed to the ban since Board member **Robin Woodruff** first proposed it in June (in fact, the Board had hoped to ban fostering by all unmarried persons, but the state advised them that would be illegal). This vote closes the issue for the Review Board, which was created in 1997 to establish minimum licensing standards for child welfare agencies. But the Child Welfare Agency itself must now hold hearings and accept public comment for at least 30 days, after which the proposal will be sent on to the Arkansas Legislative Council, where yet another hearing may be held. In addition, the American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas has been closely monitoring the progress of the proposal, and has promised to file suit if a discriminatory policy is put into place.

(We can only hope that this holds up. More states should do the same.—MTM)

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NOT-SO-VERY-SACRED COWS

Darrell Conley

What follows are a number of statements that are unthinkingly accepted as true by many church members, yet are demonstrably false. I have heard them stated over and over in sermons, lectures, teacher training programs, and the like. It is time to take a closer look at them.

"I'm not concerned about the church going into a great apostasy, because the Bible says the church is indestructible. It is safe from apostasy because its seed is the eternal gospel." The church is indestructible because its seed is the eternal gospel. But that simply means if there is no faithful child of God on earth, the church still exists in seed form here, and in Paradise in reality. The same Bible that teaches us about the eternal kingdom of God foretells the great apostasy of the middle ages. Apostasy is always a possibility. In the long run, it is a probability. We should be very concerned and alert.

"The greatest need in the Bible school is teachers who are well-trained in teaching techniques and the use of visual aids." We need such, but what we need most in our Bible schools are teachers who are students of the Bible. Yet, our teacher training schools continue to emphasize technique, rather than content. I fear many Bible school teachers in some congregations would fail elementary Bible quizzes.

"Every dead church has a dead preacher in the pulpit." That is just not so. Some dead churches do have a dead preacher in the pulpit, but many do not. For instance, many young men come out of preacher training schools on fire

with the gospel of Christ, get a job with a dead little church, struggle for a year or two to resurrect it, and finally take their zeal elsewhere.

"We have placed too much emphasis on rote learning, memorization, and recitation of facts in our Bible schools." On the contrary, we have placed almost no emphasis on these things in the past 50 years and as a result many have graduated from our Bible classes biblical illiterates.

"There is something wrong with you conservatives because the denominations and the liberal churches among us have more people, bigger buildings, bigger contributions, and more buses than you do." I am completely out of patience with hearing the church of our Lord compared in this way to false and apostate churches. We should have learned in elementary school that you cannot compare apples and oranges. The church in many places is sadly deficient in zeal, but why not increase our zeal by biblical preaching rather than trying to shame us with the "accomplishments" of those who emphasize emotion rather than conviction, easy religion rather than the way of the cross, indulgence rather than repentance, the impossibility of apostasy rather than faithfulness, and who are not inhibited by scripture from any program or inducement!

"If we just love God, everything else will take care of itself." I heard one gospel preacher say, "If we love God, we can do anything we want to." His point was that if we love God, we will want to do only that which is good. But this is a gross over-simplification. There are many religious people who would say sincerely that they love God, but who displease God by violating his word. We must not only desire to please God, but we must know his will. Samuel told Saul, **"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,"** (I Samuel 15:22).

"We cannot withdraw fellowship from them; they have already withdrawn from us." To say this of someone who has become unfaithful to the Lord is to evince a fundamental misunderstanding of church discipline. Withdrawal of fellowship is for the purpose of letting the world and our brethren know that we do not approve such conduct and thus retain the good influence of the church, (Matthew 5:13-16; I Corinthians 5:6-7). It teaches babes in Christ what church discipline is. None of these objectives is met by simply allowing the unfaithful to drift away.

Let us carefully examine statements before we accept them as true. A statement is not true just because it sounds plausible.

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MY PREACHING

Tracy Dugger

As a preacher, there are always those who want to tell me what kind of preaching that I need to do. I do not necessarily mind suggestions or criticisms. I welcome guidance from those who are wise (elders, those mature in the faith, and so on). The only way I can confidently assess my preaching (striking the proper balance) is by comparing it to the sermons of the master teacher—Jesus Christ.

Some attack negative preaching and teaching! What does this mean? Does that mean forbidding certain things, condemning particular actions, and exposing sin and error? If so, then these who attack such teaching need to get rid of most of the Bible! The Bible is full of negative charges.

THE PREACHER'S DUTY

What is the preacher's charge? What is his duty? Paul addresses this very issue with a preacher named Timothy:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine (II Timothy 4: 1-3a).

The standard of preaching is "the word" (the gospel, the truth and the faith, and so on). The duty of the preacher is to preach God's saving truth continually. Exhortation must be given, but also there is the need for reproof and rebuking!

When I assess my own preaching, I use Jesus Christ and his word as my standard. The proper idea of a preacher must come from the Prince of all Preachers, Jesus Christ. When I examine his sermons I learn about the kind of preaching which is needed. Take for instance "The Sermon on the Mount." We find a sermon full of negative preaching! Oh, yes, it has many positive things, but Jesus corrects many false ideas and practices.

WHEN SOMEONE COMPLAINS

When someone begins to complain about my sermons, I first examine my own attitude. Have I preached God's word with a loving disposition (Ephesians 4:15)? Do I have a love for God and for my audience? Paul told the young preacher, Timothy, to examine himself: **"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee"** (I Timothy 4:16). (See also II Corinthians 13:5.)

I next inform them of my intention to pattern my preaching after the sermons in the Bible. I have an obligation as a preacher of the gospel to preach all the council of God (Acts 20:26-27). Yes, I know that I could preach many sermons without specifically propagating any error, but this is not what God requires of a herald of his word. I must at times deal with controversial subjects, expose error, and rebuke sinners. I do not gain pleasure from this, except the

pleasure of obeying God's commandments. Thus, I am led to a challenge for those who oppose my preaching. I request to be shown how my sermons are different than the ones in the New Testament. I do not claim perfection; I am a man of clay just like everyone else. I can be wrong. However, I want to be shown from the Bible. How do the things I say compare with the ingredients of the Lord's sermons? How do they relate to what Paul preached? Not that I presume to compare myself with the Lord or Paul, but they are my examples in preaching. They are my goal! Just as they are my examples in living the Christian life (I Peter 2:21; I Corinthians 11:1).

PREACHING TO PLEASE GOD

As a preacher of the gospel, I feel privileged to stand before any audience and deliver God's word. It is my humble prayer to do it without fear or favor. It is my sincere intention to preach out of love for the truth, for God, and for the souls of mankind. It is my prayer that God may help me in being the kind of preacher which pleases him.

Again, Paul told Timothy, **"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained"** (I Timothy 4:6).

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THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE

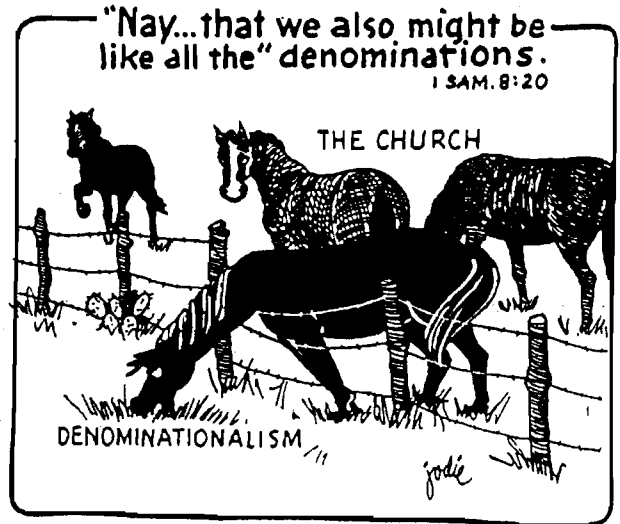
Jodie Boren

If you have ever driven through the country, you have seen a horse or cow with its head on the other side of the fence, straining to reach the "greener grass" of the other pasture. There seems to be a compelling appeal to that which we do not have. The devil has been very successful in convincing us that if only we can have these things, whatever they may be, happiness and fulfillment will be ours. This is not a recent wile that he has come up with; this has been in his arsenal for a very long time.

SAMUEL'S GOOD EXAMPLE

A classic example of this is found in I Samuel 8, when the elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded of him "to make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (5). Samuel felt rejected, but God assured him that it was he—not Samuel—they had rejected (7). Samuel tries to warn them of what kind of life they can expect under a king (10-18), but the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and said, "Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations..." (19, 20).

Today, faithful gospel preachers shed many a tear as they see the people of God desiring to be like the denominations around about us. Satan has deceived many into believing that the old paths where is the good way (Jeremiah 6:16), are no longer relevant to the culture of our advanced society and that we must conform to the ways of the world or the church will dry up and die. So, using the new hermeneutics to justify their practices, these misled brethren are bringing into the worship of the church the "greener grass"



of denominationalism: the instruments of music; the observance of religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas; choirs; women in public roles; the partaking of the Lord's supper anytime during the week; the acceptance into fellowship anyone who professes a belief in Christ; a denial of the essentiality of baptism; that we are saved by grace—and by grace only and the grass of the devil's pasture appears greener and greener.

SPEAK UNTO US SMOOTH THINGS

There seems to be a feeling that the way to church growth is through entertainment. Offer them "smooth" things and the numbers will increase dramatically. There is no doubt a lot of truth to this, but if you want true growth—spiritual growth—you must preach the unadulterated word of God. Paul, to the elders of Ephesus, said, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up..." (Acts 20:32). It is this word that gives light (Psalms 119:105 and 130). Through this word comes understanding (Psalms 119:104). Faith comes by hearing the word (Romans 10:17). We are sanctified through the word which is truth (John 17:17). Estranged man is reconciled to God through the word (II Corinthians 5:19). The word draws us to God (John 6:44, 45) and it is by this word that the soul is converted (Psalms 19:7). No wonder Paul exhorted the brethren to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16).

The grass of the devil's pasture may appear greener, but in reality it is a wild vine that will bring death (II Kings 4:39, 40). It is the word of God that brings life (James 1:18 and I Peter 1:23) and it is this word that saves (James 1:21). Let us not change God's way. He has promised us that if we sow the seed, he will grant the increase. May we ever be true to God and preach the word in season and out of season!

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TELEIOS

Shan Jackson

There are so many tragedies in life. Death, hunger, privation, just to name a few. Perhaps the most touching is the death of a child. The realization that he will never grow up to see the fruition of life's offerings. Perhaps sadder still is to see a person grow physically but not mentally. To see a strong, healthy body uncontrolled by mental faculties. Sadder still is to see an individual grow normally in the area of body and mind yet remain an infant spiritually.

SPIRITUAL BABIES

The New Testament has much to say about spiritual growth. The Greek word we chose for our title suggests the reaching of maturity. However, unlike physical maturity, which can be measured with a tape or a scale, spiritual maturity cannot. The gauge for legal driving, voting, and such, is determined by months and years, the gauge of intelligence by testing, but one might be old enough to drive, or smart enough to pass a test, yet still be an infant, spiritually speaking. The only standard which reveals spiritual maturity is the New Testament. The reaching of a mature level [TELEIOS] is what Christ seeks for us to find.

Paul writes, "**Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men**" (I Corinthians 14:20). Here, the word elsewhere translated perfect, is rendered men. Paul is telling these Corinthian brethren that, in many respects, they are acting like little children. While this childlike attitude is free from malice, he still calls on them to mature in their spiritual understanding. In Hebrews 5 we are reminded that "**strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age**" (14). These Hebrew brethren had been members of the Lord's church long enough to have reached a degree of maturity, however, instead of this they were still savoring the milk of the word.

Christians today are not immune to this same malady. Unable to digest the meaty treasures of the Bible, many remain milk-fed and unskillful in the word of righteousness. There are so many things God wants to reveal to us in his word that he cannot until we are able to grasp, with wisdom, its revelation.

MATURE CHRISTIANS

There are many benefits which parallel spiritual maturity. A mature Christian can easily determine right from wrong, control actions, overcome evil with good, and so on, however, the benefit we mention now is his ability to be unshaken by false teaching. Paul's indication is that Christians with maturity will not be "**carried about with every wind of doctrine**" (Ephesians 4:14). Maturity produces conviction. With conviction we can know the truth (John 8:32), and it can be a steadfast, unmovable source of strength. Let us always strive to be "**perfect in Christ Jesus**:" (Colossians 1:28). Let us always pray that God will help us stand "**perfect and complete in all the will of God**" (Colossians 4:12).

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MAN'S PROPHECIES VERSUS GOD'S PROPHECIES

Dave Dugan

Man has made many prophecies about many things. Here are five very interesting prophecies:

1943—**Thomas Watson** chairman of IBM said "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

1949—*Popular Mechanics* predicted "Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."

1957—The editor of business books for Prentice Hall said: "I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out this year."

1968—An engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM, commented on the microchip: "But what...is it good for?"

1977—**Ken Olson**, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation said: "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."

Today, the computer is an integral part of almost every phase of life for many people. The computer has entered many homes today and, in fact, some have more than one (I have four). The microchip goes into everything. There is now a Timex watch which can be programmed from a computer. It is amazing that one can use a computer to communicate with people in all parts of the world instantly. But, look at the prophecies of the men who should have known better.

It is interesting with this information in hand, that man can then look at the Bible and ridicule the prophecies that

are made by God. Especially in the light of man's failure at prophecy (see above again). According to Vine's expository dictionary, *prophecy* is the "speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God." Vine's goes on to explain,

Prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore-telling. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means, Matthew 26:68; it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see Genesis 20:7; Deuteronomy 18:18; Revelation 10:11; 11:3 (W.E. Vine, *An Expository of New Testament Words*, pg. 221).

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Bible. Several years ago two men, **Peter W. Stone** and **Robert C. Newman**, would calculate the probability of one man fulfilling only eight of the prophecies regarding Jesus Christ coming true (Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 63:7; Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9; 11:12, 13; 13:6; Malachi 3:1). The answer was "1 in 10 to the 17th power." Then they illustrated it this way:

Suppose we take 10 to the 17th power of silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that it is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from there to the present, providing they wrote using their own wisdom (*Reason and Revelation*, December, 1991).

Jesus did fulfill the eight prophecies referred to above and more. We should all give thanks to God in heaven for the positive proof of his precious son being the Messiah. Which is better? The prophecies of men or the prophecies of God? Man should stick with God and not be swayed by men, especially in the area of religion.

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DEACONS—WORKERS IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

Lynn Parker

If it is not broken, do not try to fix it. But what if it is broken? "...And the only way you can tell we have deacons is by reading their names on the bulletin masthead." If this sounds familiar, it may be because some misunderstand the function of deacons, or some deacons have not been given specific work to do. Perhaps the deacons are too busy with secular interests and demands to properly see to the work before them. Maybe a deacon is too lazy to do the work. And then, it could be that work goes undone due to a combination of all these factors.

WHAT IS A DEACON?

The original word behind our English, "deacon," carries the meaning of a servant. A deacon is a man who has met certain qualifications (I Timothy 3:8 ff), been appointed to a work, and then, implied in the very word, "deacon," **he does that work**. Is it possible that some congregations have deacons who will not "deac?" Yes, it has been the case that some specially appointed servants will not serve. It could be that some deacons consider their position as more "official" than active; more "title" than work. The late **Guy N. Woods** wrote, "Men selected to to be elders and deacons are appointed to a *work* and not to an official position" (*Questions & Answers*, Volume I, p.223).

Practically speaking, there are many necessary works to which the deacons might be assigned in any local congregation. Regardless of whether or not you believe the seven men of Acts 6 to be deacons (and we would not dogmatically argue the point), the work done by these virtuous men can illustrate that certain tasks need to be removed from the preacher and handled by others (Acts 6:2). Here, it was the care of needy widows by godly men so that the apostles could continue in the "ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Let the preacher and elders be expected to do everything in the congregation and you quickly have work undone or only partially done, grumbling, and burnt-out preachers and elders. The Lord's plan calls for deacons who will put their shoulders to the wheel and stick to the job. The late **L. R. Wilson**, in his book, *Congregational Development*, summarized this point by saying,

We have already seen that they are *servants*. The duties of a servant are to *serve*. But are there any *particular* duties that deacons are to perform? There are *some*, we think. On the other hand we may say that there is hardly any service which may be needed that they may not perform (page 53).

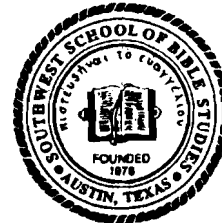
Deacons may be appointed to care for benevolent cases, care for the physical property of the church, help with finances, look after the Bible class program, organize men to serve in worship assemblies, and these are just a few of numerous tasks that may be assigned to deacons.

DEACONS NEED ASSIGNMENTS

Every deacon should be assigned some special duties and be made responsible for seeing that the work is done. But all assignments should be made by the elders. And the work should be done under their supervision and with their approval...And the elders should hold them accountable for doing this work. Naturally, the deacons are responsible to the elders in all matters and should recognize that they may be asked to do any particular work necessary to the success of the church (L. R. Wilson, *Congregational Development*, p. 55).

So then, elders, have you made assignments? Have you given deacons the tools needed to accomplish the task? Deacons, are you devoting proper diligence and time to the work in the local congregation? Are you handling your duties as a competent steward who will give account (I Corinthians 4:2)? For a congregation to effectively reach its potential in God's vineyard, it can ill afford to have deacons who will not serve and work. Such is tantamount to having a preacher who will not preach!

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DOES GOD CARE FOR HIS CHILDREN?

Noah A. Hackworth

One of the most touching, comforting passages in the New Testament is unquestionably I Peter 5:7: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." More literally the passage reads: "All your care cast upon him, because with him there is care about you." "Casting" translates the word *epirripto* (aorist tense, a once-for-all act) which means our cares are "deposited" with the Lord. Berry uses the word *epirripsantes* (having cast) which more clearly brings out the aorist. "Anxiety" is from *merimno* or *merimnan* which is seemingly connected with *merizo* which means "to draw in different directions, anxious care, distractions." Here is a splendid example:

Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they: And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lillies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

DO WE NEED A PSYCHIATRIST?

God's people are at times frustrated, distracted by worldly cares and pulled in different directions, and what is to be done when this occurs? What many people do is

head for the psychiatrist's office for some time on the couch and a brain analysis. What can more profitably be done is for the "right thinking Christian" to take these cares and cast them upon the Lord once for all. This is what is to be done when suffering is more than can be handled. This is what must be done when the burden or the cross we must bear gets too heavy. Paul offers similar teaching: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). "But each man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:5). There is a different Greek word used in these passages. In the former it is the word *bare*. In the latter it is *phortion*. In the former the burden can be borne by the individual person with no required help. But in the latter the burden (load) is too heavy and help is needed. Our Lord is available 24 hours a day. He is always ready to receive our requests (cf., Isaiah 55:6; Philippians 4:6).

AN EVER PRESENT HELP

When the Lord said "[A]nd lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20), He meant that he is with us always, every day, all the days, *pasas tas hemeras*, until the completion of the age. The Lord hovers above us watching over us. He walks beside us sharing our load with us. He is under us supporting us, and he walks behind us encouraging us. An unknown author has written:

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking across the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me." The Lord replied, "My son, my precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

This is a vast universe God has created and each one of us is only a speck in it, but God in his omniscience knows exactly where we are and what is going on in our lives. He loves each one of us as though there was only one to love. Whatever cares and burdens we bear, and there are many, let us take advantage of the advice given to us by the Holy Spirit through Peter, "All your care having cast upon him, because with him there is care about you."

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HOW SHALL I BE REMEMBERED?

Annette B. Cates

From time to time in our lives, events occur that should cause us to take stock of where we have been, where we are, and where we are heading. The occasion may be the coming of a new year, a birth date, an anniversary, or the changing seasons. One of the considerations we should make at such times has to do with our relationships with others. The question to ask is, "How shall I be remembered?"

THE STRUGGLE FOR BALANCE

We live in a society where women are actively involved in many different areas, and a balance among the roles is not easily achieved. We are juggling parents, in-laws, and children, careers and families, church and community. Are we too busy with all of these to do any of them justice? Will our families have good times and joys to recall? Will our friends and/or co-workers have better lives because of our association with them? Or, will there be wounds that were never healed? Will there be a lack of forgiveness when it should have been extended? Will there be a sense of relief that a trouble-maker is gone? Will our lives have been lived in such a way that Heaven is our home and we have influenced others toward eternal reward? Or, will we be lost, and likely have caused someone else to go astray? With these questions in mind, let us look at some of our life's roles.

How shall I be remembered as a wife? To the Christian, marriage is a permanent bond, ordained by God—"until death do us part." Husbands and wives are to love one another as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:22-25). This relationship forms the basis for the Christian home. Married love is to be unconditional, but it needs to be cultivated as surely as a rose garden. Without proper care, a garden (or a marriage) will die or be choked out by weeds. Love leads one to forget "me" and create "we." Love refrains from doing anything destructive to one's mate and focuses on positive qualities. For the difficult times, demonstrating forbearance (Ephesians 4:2) will strengthen the marriage. Am I a wife who loves her husband and works at developing the best relationship possible?

How shall I be remembered as a mother? Mothering a child goes far beyond seeing to his physical needs. It is the making of loving memories that warm a child's heart for all of his life. It is the proper building of a child's self-esteem that will help him in his relationships with other people. It is discipline that helps him develop self-control and to have respect for authority. Mothering costs time more than money. Home should be a haven, a respite, when the rest of the world is in turmoil. It has been said that home should give children two things: roots and wings. While we must not underemphasize the role of the father, it is usu-

ally the mother who does the nurturing of the children. Am I a mother who works at giving my children the spiritual, physical, and emotional nourishment they need?

How shall I be remembered as a daughter? Ephesians 6:1,2 is not limited by age or by whether or not the parents deserve honor. To "honor" is to have high regard for, or to elevate to a position of superiority, and to show genuine consideration for their needs. We honor our parents because they are the ones who sacrificed for us and directed us to become productive, responsible adults. We do so by living in such a way as to reflect on our parents positively. We do so by including our parents in our adult lives to a healthy degree, not to remain in a dependent child's position, but to relate to one another as adults. We do so by seeing to their needs in such a way as to preserve their sense of dignity, pride, and independence. Am I a daughter who loves and honors her parents?

How shall I be remembered as an "in-law?" Will I be remembered as a problem or as one who became as family? In-law problems have destroyed many marriages. This should be a sobering thought for those who say their actions are out of love, when what it all comes down to is selfishness. When "adult children" establish their own homes, they and their families must respect the sanctity of that unit. The role should be that of mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, because it was love that first united, then law. True love always multiplies and never divides. The book of Ruth provides the ideal examples of in-law relationships. Am I a Ruth or a Naomi?

How shall I be remembered as a friend or co-worker? It has been said that "A friend in need is a friend in deed." A Christian will respond when needed. She knows how to keep confidences. She will speak with wisdom and with the law of kindness (Proverbs 31:26). She will follow a high ethical standard and be as a light shining before the world (Matthew 5:14-16). Whoever we are, wherever we go, whatever we do, we represent what we believe. Am I one who follows Solomon's admonition to commit my works unto the Lord (Proverbs 16:3)?

DOES MY LIFE REFLECT CHRIST?

How shall I be remembered? As did righteous Abel, we will speak from beyond the grave (Hebrews 11:4). Do my relationships with others reflect Christianity? Have I done in life that which is good, having acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with my God (Micah 6:8)? Let us pray as did David in Psalm 8:8, 15: **"Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."**

—9194 Lakeside Drive
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THINGS PERTAINING TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

Eddie Whitten

The Lord's Supper should be one of the most solemn and reverent acts a Christian can observe. Of course our singing, praying, giving and studying are just as important to our worship as observing the Lord's Supper. It is because of the seriousness of all we do in worship that we must be "in spirit" as well as "in truth." There is no room in the worship of God for frivolity, casualness, familiarity or insincerity. Our worship is given in Godly fear (honor), and deserves our best attention and devotion.

Because of the lack of understanding in the observance of the Lord's Supper, these few cautions are presented for your consideration:

1. Preparation. There should be a time to prepare for bringing to our minds the death of our Lord. Most congregations sing an appropriate song prior to observing the Lord's Supper. This helps prepare the minds of the worshippers to partake of the emblems. This is good, but it also takes individual discipline to remove the secular thoughts from each member. Paul emphasized the necessity of properly "discerning" the Lord's body (I Corinthians 11:29). There must be a conscious concentration of Jesus' body nailed to the old rugged cross, bleeding and dying for my sins. We should be spiritually humbled in appreciation and thanksgiving for the unspeakable sacrifice Jesus made on Golgotha as he died.

2. Purpose. The reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper on every first day of the week is to remember the Lord's death. It is for the purpose of remembering the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus for all the sins of all men who will repent of them. It is not a celebration! It is crass disrespect to denigrate so great a sacrifice as a celebration such as we would celebrate independence day, or a world series championship.

We do *not* remember, in the Communion, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus and Paul clearly state the emblems represent the body and the blood of Jesus, which is given for our sins. It is true that Jesus was buried and that he arose again the third day, but the occasion that is remembered is his death. Therefore, in our thoughts, we witness the scene of the execution of our Lord on Calvary as we remember his death for us.

3. Prayer. We dishonor Jesus and the Father many times when we gather to take the Lord's Supper. It is not uncommon to hear prayers directed to Jesus instead of to the Father by the men who serve the Supper. Also, it is not uncommon to hear prayers directed to God the Father in thanksgiving for his sacrifice on the cross. May we gently, but firmly, bring to our minds the consequences of such prayers? *First*, there is a difference between God the Father and Jesus the son. We pray to the Father by the authority of Jesus (Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; John 16:23). We do not pray to Jesus. Therefore, when we pray, "We thank thee for the privilege of gathering around thy table," we are praying, actually, to Jesus. This is incorrect. It is the Lord's table. *Second*, when we pray, "We thank thee for this thy sacrifice," we are either praying to Jesus, or we are acknowledging that God the father is the one whose body was nailed to the cross! Both are incorrect. It was Jesus the son who died on the cross. While he was suffering on the cross, he appealed to the Father, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" *Third*, we err when we pray, "Let us remember the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on the cross." Again, it is the DEATH of Jesus we are remembering at the Lord's table. Finally, we desecrate the Lord's Supper when we pray about any and everything else that crosses our minds when we are memorializing the Lord by remembering his death. Praying for aunt Sukie's lumbago may be needed, but not at the Lord's Table.

Let us be careful that we offer our worship to God "in truth" as well as "in spirit." The Lord's Supper is a beautiful memorial for the greatest sacrifice ever offered by anyone for anyone on the earth. We would do well to be mindful of its meaning and significance.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

RESTORATION FORUM XVI: NEXUSES AND PRAXES

J. E. Choate

Restoration Forum XVI, which was hosted by the Woodmont Family of God church, met November 1-3, 1998 for the 15th consecutive year in Nashville. The annual meeting was directed by **Rubel Shelly**. Having a good knowledge of all previous such unity meetings since 1909, I am confident that those of us who were present at Woodmont Hills were witnessing the imminent demise of the Restoration Forum. Its presumptuous *raison d'être* is now exposed, compromised, and eroded beyond fixing.

The Joplin Independent Christian Church leaders have been consumed with the confidence since the 1984 Joplin Summit that they could established a liaison with the Churches of Christ through the annual Restoration Forums. But there have been forces operating against them which came to the surface during the course of the 1998 Forum.

The worst suspicions of **Victor Knowles** were confirmed first hand that **Rubel Shelly**, their man in Nashville, has no base of support at all among traditional churches of Christ. He had to take notice also that the three-day event was almost totally boycotted by the area Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ.

And that was not all. Major spokesmen of Restoration Forums past, *e. g.*, **Sam Stone** of the *Christian Standard*, **Bill Humble**, of ACU, **Leroy Garrett**, *et. al* chose to stay away. Dr. Garrett, the perennial "anti" foe of the traditional churches of Christ, was in Nashville for an official meeting of the Disciples of Christ Historical society, but left the day before the convening of the 1998 Forum.

PRAXIS AND NEXUS

The purpose of this article is to analyze the parts of the infrastructure of Restoration Forum XVI. We submit a ho-

listic summary of the annual meeting as narrated in the 1999 Winter issue of the *One Body*.

Praxis and *Nexus* are not household words, but widely used in postmodern cultural academic settings. The use of these words is to show the causal connections between the integral parts of a larger corporate whole, *e.g.*, man, state, church, Jubilee, or whatever.

The meaning of *praxis(es)* addresses the exercise of an action or practice in a larger body of an art, history, science, theology, and philosophy. The word, *nexus(es)*, carries the idea of the casual links which connect and bind together ideas in groups, or series of ideas. The postmodern "Church of Christ" denomination is well defined in the contexts of modern theology and church growth gimmicks.

For example, the parachute affiliates of the Church of Christ denomination [see Poster and Hughes] such as Restoration Forum, Jubilee, Tulsa Workshop, Winterfest and such are well established satellites. Churches sending their young people to Winterfest just may be "throwing the baby out with the wash." The "change agents" are clever fellows. When the "sweet voice" of Jacob, is heard, look for the "hairy hand of Esau."

Restoration Forum XVI is one of the adjuncts of the Church of Christ denomination. The stated purpose beginning with the Joplin Summit (1984)—has been to discover common ground upon which the Christian Church and Church of Christ could jointly engage in some fraternal activity to achieve a form of unity.

LOOKING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

We begin with the two introductory paragraphs which are plainly Shelly rhetoric: "For the first time in the history
(Continued on Page 4)

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Associate Editorial...

THE SCRIPTURAL MOTIVATION TO PREACH

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). This verse does not say that we are to speak error in love. Paul declared that love "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (I Corinthians 13:6). Hence, when Paul states that the truth is to be spoken in love, he means that the preacher is motivated by his love for God, the truth, lost souls, himself, and the church. He speaks the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Love demands this and nothing else will do. Paul put it this way, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:16). The aforementioned three verses clearly set out the only motivating factor for anyone to become a gospel preacher. Hence, to preach anything other than the truth is not preaching in love!

THE DEMANDS OF LOVE

If a preacher has the right motive for preaching the gospel, he will want to warn brethren of false doctrine and teachers. In fact, he will be keenly aware of his obligation to do so. It is quite interesting to note that the context of Ephesians 4:15 is one of warning brethren of error. Paul told the brethren not to be, "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). When a person claims to be motivated by a spirit of love in his preaching, but will not warn people of false doctrine and teachers, love is not the motivating factor. Love *demands* that preachers oppose immorality, dishonesty, error of every kind, filthy language, greediness, ignorance of the Bible, bitterness, anger, wrath, malice and an unforgiving attitude. The person who preaches the truth in love will encourage all children of God to, "...walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). This truth means that godly preachers will teach and practice longsuffering, kindness, being tenderhearted, compassionate and forgiving (Ephesians 4:2, 32).

If one preaches with a loving spirit, he will uphold God's seven planks in his platform for unity (Ephesians 4:1-6). In love, Paul forcefully declared that there is one body of the redeemed, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He did the same regarding the one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God. How can we say that we preach the truth in love and not do as Paul did? When Paul says that there is

one faith and our religious world says there are many faiths acceptable to God, the preacher who is motivated by love will oppose those who teach that there are many faiths approved by God. To preach the truth in love is to uphold every single solitary principle of gospel truth and all that is implied by them. It also means that all that is opposed to said truth will be vigorously and strongly confronted and exposed (Jude 3).

To preach the truth in love means that preachers of the gospel will do all they can to spiritually build up the body of Christ. Christians are to **"grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ"** (Ephesians 4:15). Notice that this is found in the latter part of the verse that demands we preach the truth in love.

Lethargic and lukewarm church members must be warned that their life style is unacceptable to the Lord (Revelation 3:16). Those who attend the assemblies of exhortation sporadically and haphazardly, must have their sin clearly set before them (Hebrews 10:25). In other words, when a gospel preacher presents what the Bible says concerning the plan of salvation, worship, the church (its identification, importance, work, organization, mission, and destiny), as well as a constant and consistent life of sobriety and godliness, he deserves the complete support of all those who love the truth.

The same Lord who said **"consider the lilies"** also scathingly denounced the hypocritical Jewish leaders (Matthew 6:28; 23). One group needed the appropriate truth as much as the other. Woe to the preacher who is so lacking in love that he considers only the lilies and not the brimstone of hell fire!

NEEDS AND WANTS

Preaching the truth in love simply means that the preacher preaches to the people what they need. *Many times what they need and want are two different things.* Notice the difference in Paul's statements to the Philippian brethren from his words to the Galatians. To the Philippians he wrote, **"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you"** (Philippians 1:3). Note how he described them in the following verse.

"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Philippians 4:1). I do not know of any one who thinks Paul was not addressing the Philippians in love. However, it is with just as much love that Paul wrote to the Galatians the following words. **"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain"** (Galatians 4:11). Furthermore, he told them that **"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace"** (Galatians 5:4). He even asked them, **"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"** (Galatians 3:1). Paul told the Philippians and Galatians what they deserved and needed to hear. Hence, he manifested his love for God, Christ, the truth and his brethren. One should note the difference in the words of Paul to his enemies in the church in Corinth from his words to his faithful brethren Aquila, Priscilla, Timothy and Luke (II Corinthians 10-12; Romans 16:3, 4; Philippians 2:1-22; II Timothy 4:11). All these words are from the same Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul. *Yes, unpleasant words of truth are just as important (sometimes more important) as the pleasant ones.*

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor



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RESTORATION FORUM...

(Continued From Page 1)

[15 years] of the Restoration Forum, a communion service was observed." Rubel Shelly was in charge of the Sunday evening devotional. **Douglas Foster** offered prayers for the loaf and the cup.

And a strange thing happened in **David Lipscomb's** old neighborhood in a "Church of Christ" worship service. During the devotional there was the scene of a piano being played accompanying the singing of a hymn during the passing of the bread and cup. [For additional information, contact Dr. Shelly.]

Dr. Shelly tells us that the event was significant since it took place in the home of David Lipscomb University and the *Gospel Advocate*. He neglects to tell you that the Lipscomb administration, faculty, students, and the *Advocate* owner and editors did not attend. And Dr. Shelly said in the final session— "because of the Forum, we are healthier than we were 15 years ago." [Fie, fie on you, Dr. Shelly, for this calculated disinformation.]

Victor Knowles was puzzled at the extraordinarily poor turnout. So was I. He questioned if the event had been advertised in local media. The answer was "no." Obviously, Dr. Shelly would not advertise a disaster already in the "works."

Dr. Shelly next tells us in the *One Body* that all three streams of the Restoration Movement came together in another effort "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Not true. There is no *prima facie* evidence that there has ever been a time between 1906 and 1968, and be-

tween 1968, and now when traditional churches of Christ, Independent Christian Church, and the Disciples of Christ churches have at any time come together as a united fraternal group for any reason.

CHURCH OF CHRIST "QUISLINGS"

Mike Root was the Sunday evening "keynote" speaker. He followed **Walt Leaver** at the Antioch church. Walt is the best Pentecostal church of Christ preacher in Nashville. His address was titled "A Passion for Unity." He said his first passion was a "Root with an axe." His passion now is to whack away at churches of Christ.

The Monday evening speaker was **Dr. Richard Goode**, Lipscomb history professor. He holds a Vanderbilt Ph.D. in history. What he knows about Restoration history he says that he has learned from **Robert Hooper**, Douglas Foster, and **Richard Hughes**. Goode talked about the influence of the "Gilded Age," and the "irascible social attitudes" of the times. He said these were causes of the 1906 division—not the organ and the missionary society. As **N. B. Hardeman** would say—this is not even "good nonsense."

Mike Armour, Skillman Avenue preacher, former president of Columbia Christian College and Pepperdine Dean strove to say something profound in the "Athens of the South" and the modern "Jerusalem" of churches of Christ. He said he would not compromise the doctrine of *Christology* whatever he had in mind. He apparently agrees with Rubel Shelly that baptism, instrumental music, and social drinking are not "go to hell" issues.

THE DIGRESSIVES AGAIN ON THE PROWL

The Digressives came again to Nashville with the same old arrogant ultimatums of a century ago. **Dr. David Weed**, typical Digressive "hard liner," was the senior pastor of the First Christian Church in Nashville where Rubel's church met during their building program.

He said there were three reasons why the Christian Church and Church of Christ divided in 1906: Civil War, impoverished churches too poor to buy pianos, and he had forgotten the third. When called upon to prove his contention, Dr. Weed cited **Dr. Henry Webb**, a Milligan College Christian Church Restoration historian, as his authority. Would Dr. Webb show us his stuff by documenting, North or South, just one local church which divided over the Civil War. Dr. Weed well knows there is no escaping the logic of fact.

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Morning Worship	9:55 a.m.	Wednesday	
Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.	Bible Study	7:30 p.m.

Dr. Weed's second reason dwells in the "silly" category. He named Dr. Robert E. Hooper as his authority who said that the southern churches of Christ were so impoverished they could not buy pianos and organs. What about the impoverished Methodists?

THREE EXTREMELY ODD BEDFELLOWS

L. H. Hardwick, Jr., is the Senior Pastor of the 6000 member Christ Church in Nashville. The unusual story is told that there is a special room in Christ Church to serve the Lord's Supper to their members who left the Church of Christ. Dr. Shelly was guest speaker May 29, 1994 for this Pentecostal church.

Shelly ridiculed the churches of Christ then as is his usual practice. He said: "I leaned over to L. H., and said awhile ago: 'Do you hear a lot of acappella singing being done among you? That's those church of Christ folk who came in among you (laughter).'" Dr. Shelly is much given to such "cute humor" designed to slur churches of Christ.

The only speaker who interested me was **Dr. Richard M. Tristano**, Professor of History in the Catholic Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. Dr. Tristano's book, *The Origins of the Restoration Movement*, is indeed a scholarly book of interest to the Restoration historians. He declined to answer questions on Catholic theology or ecumenical policy as he is not an official Catholic theologian. Dr. Tris-

tano expressed no interest whatsoever in the design of the Forum.

The most bizarre episode of all was **Don Finto** conducting the Tuesday morning devotional. Finto and Shelly, "troublers of churches," had the unmitigated gall to talk about church unity in Nashville! Are we such dolts that we are to remain silent in the face of such an effrontery?

NOW READ THIS:

The 1999 Restoration Forum XVII will move to Calgary, Alberta, Canada to run on a special track with the Western Canadian Convention. It is billed as a genuine partnership between the Independent Christian Church, Church of Christ, and Disciples of Christ. *Folderol* and *tomfoolery*!

For future reference, keep in mind these *praxes* and *nexuses*: Rubel Shelly, Steve Flatt, and Walt Leaver were in charge of incorporating Nashville Jubilee; Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, and **Phillip Morrison** started the woe-be-gone *Wineskins*; and Rubel Shelly has been a chief spokesman for the Restoration Forum since the Joplin Summit. That Jubilee, *Wineskins*, and Restoration Forum began their dumbing down during Dr. Shelly's watch is a matter to watch. Stay tuned.

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Saturday, June 12

7:00 pm	Denying Ungodliness And Worldly Lusto	Noah Hackworth
8:00 pm	Living Soberly, Righteously, And Godly	John Moore

Sunday, June 13

9:00 am	Causes Of Worldliness	Clifford Newell
10:00 am	Examining One's Life	Tommy Hicks
11:00 am	Lunch Break	
2:00 pm	Materialism	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
3:00 pm	Wastefulness	Eddie Whitten
4:00 pm	Humanism	Daniel Denham
5:00 pm	Dinner Break	
7:00 pm	Immodest Apparel	David Baker
8:00 pm	Alcohol, Tobacco, And Drug Use	Danny Box

Monday, June 14

9:00 am	Homosexuality	Kent Bailey
10:00 am	Purity of Mind, Life, and Speech	David Brown
11:00 am	Pride	Joel Wheeler
12:00 pm	Lunch Break	
1:30 pm	Covetousness	Wesley Simons
2:30 pm	Envy	Flavil Nichols
3:15 pm	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00 pm	Dinner Break	

7:00 pm	Gambling	Garland Elkins
8:00 pm	Lying and Corrupt Communications	Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 15

9:00 am	Dancing	Roger Jackson
10:00 am	Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech	David Brown
11:00 am	Backbiters and Gossips	David Hester
12:00 pm	Lunch Break	
1:30 pm	Pornography	Stanley Ryan
2:30 pm	Hedonism	B.J. Clarke
3:15 pm	Open Forum	Dub McClish
4:00 pm	Dinner Break	
7:00 pm	Denominationalism	Dub McClish
8:00 pm	The Media	Jerry Murrell

Wednesday, June 16

9:00 am	Abortion and Euthanasia	Tim Smith
10:00 am	Purity of Mind, Life, and Speech	David Brown
11:00 am	Anger, Hatred, And Malice	Marvin Weir
12:00 pm	Lunch Break	
1:30 pm	Stealing	Guss Eoff
2:30 pm	Fornication And Adultery	Curtis Cates
3:15 pm	Open Forum	Curtis Cates
4:00 pm	Dinner Break	
7:00 pm	Disobedience To Parents	Jesse Whitlock
8:00 pm	Consequences Of Worldliness	Ronnie Hayes

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TRAGEDY IN COLORADO

Mark K. Lewis

Tragedy, unfortunately for man, is a part of this earthly existence. On April 20, at least 15 high school students were brutally murdered when some maniacs went on a shooting rampage in a school in Littleton, Colorado. Rational people shake their heads in wonder and disbelief; how can anyone commit such an abominable deed? However, such has been happening since, well, since two sons of Adam and Eve.

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

Liberal politicians will use Littleton as another excuse to cry out for more gun control. Stricter firearms regulations may be good or bad, depending upon your perspective; it is not the purpose of this article to debate that subject. But gun control is not the ultimate answer. Taking away inanimate objects from people will not remove the hatred in the heart that is the true source of this crime. Guns have been legal in this country since it was founded; why, all of a sudden, is there this sudden increase in school/gun violence? And, more importantly, what is the answer?

There is an answer, of course, but it is not the answer one will hear on all the nightly talk shows; it is not the answer "crisis counselors" will give; it is not the answer that will come from the lips of the president of the United States or congressional leaders. The answer to Littleton, and all such crimes and sin, is the answer that the vast majority of American people have already rejected and no longer want to hear: the answer is Jesus Christ, the same Jesus who taught that if hatred were removed from the heart, murder would be impossible (Matthew 5:21-22). Yes, that same Jesus whose message is just as vital as when first spoken: **"Love thy neighbor as thyself"** (Matthew 22:39). That same Jesus who insists that we follow him alone (John 14:6; Luke 9:23) down a path of love, peace, compassion, and a purity of heart where sin will not sprout (Mark 7:20-23). Yes, that same Jesus who, when he walked upon this earth, was killed by God's own people because they hated him and everything he stood for (John 3:19-20; 7:7). If the majority of God's own people do not love him, then surely the world will hate him and refuse to listen to him. And that is why Littletons happen and will continue to happen.

CONVERSION TO CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

I affirm, unreservedly, that if every accountable human being in this country would truly convert to Jesus Christ there would be no murder, rape, theft, drug abuse, spousal or child abuse—every vile and despicable act would cease. It would work, but it is not going to happen because men love darkness rather than light (John 3:19). And that is the greatest tragedy of all, far greater than the sadness of Colorado. The loss of innocent human life is a misfortune; the loss of the soul is an eternal disaster which is humanly incalculable.

But the cry of so many, after a heartbreak like this shooting, is "where was God? Why does he let these things hap-

pen?" God actually is/was where he always has been, in heaven **"look(ing) down...upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand and seek God"** (Psalms 14:2). God gave us his word, told us exactly how we ought to behave ourselves on this earth and what will happen to us eternally if we refuse. How can it be his fault if men refuse to listen to him and obey?

DON'T BLAME GOD

Yet, God always seems to get blamed when men do monstrous things. "God shouldn't let such mass murders happen. God could stop these things if he so chose." Of course, the logic of this is that God should intervene whenever WE think he ought to, to stop whatever tragedy WE think needs stopping. Indeed, God COULD intervene and stop every sin; but we doubt that those who desire God's intervention in Littleton would accept the logical consequences of that. I wish God would intervene and stop abortion, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, lying; but chances are, the "where was God?" crowd would strenuously object to his interference in these matters. The point is, neither I nor the current God-haters, are going to dictate to the Almighty what he must do. He has told us plainly how we should live; if we do not pay heed, it is our own fault.

Unfortunately, for man on this earth, sin often has hideous consequences for the innocent while the guilty go unpunished. But as long as our society continues to excuse sin, glorify it (via Hollywood), and shift blame and responsibility for it on to others, then tragedies like the one in Colorado will continue to happen. The president of the United States commits gross and repeated adultery, tries to cover it up, lies about it under oath, and yet, for all his sin, he suffers no consequences, indeed is defended vociferously by a large portion of the American public. Sin, but no (immediate) consequences; and even many Christians readily jump to his defense. If the leaders of our land can commit flagrant sin and escape unscathed, what message does that send to the rest of the country—especially our youth—regarding the consequences of sin? People sin, and do not pay, and then we wonder why lunatics go on shooting sprees! Our courts kick God out of our education system, then are flabbergasted when the products of that system act in ungodly ways. And then blame God for allowing it to happen! When the collective IQ of the "intelligentsia" of this country hits 50, I would advise them to sell.

"I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). **"Be sure your sin will find you out"** (Numbers 32:23). There is a Great Day coming, a dreadful day for many, when justice will indeed be meted out. Yes, there is a consequence for sin, a consequence of eternal duration.

—2912 North Chester
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JESUS CHRIST

Thomas F. Eaves Sr.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things which accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed on a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat. When he was dead he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the center piece of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that one solitary life! (Author unknown)

The study of the life of Jesus Christ is one of the richest studies one can engage in because it is in Jesus that man obtains his salvation (Acts 4:12) and enjoys the hope of glory (Colossians 2:17).

The name of Jesus is equivalent to the Hebrew name Joshua which means, "Jehovah is salvation." The angel which appeared to Joseph indicated that Jesus would also be called "Immanuel" which is interpreted, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Christ is the Hebrew equivalent of Messiah. The name Jesus Christ designates Jesus as the fulfiller of the Messianic hopes of the Old Testament and the Jewish people.

The New Testament tells us of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, that is, he existed before he came to earth to be a perfect sacrifice for all men (John 1:1 and 14; Colossians 1:13-17).

CHRIST IN SECULAR HISTORY

Non-biblical sources testify that Jesus was a historical person. The Roman author **Suetonius**, wrote biographies of the twelve Caesars from Julius Caesar onward. In his book on Claudius (24:5) he tells of a disturbance which he blames on Chrestus (a common slave-name and a popular misspelling of the name of Christ) which resulted in the expulsion of Christians from Rome. (The apostle Paul mentions this event in Acts 19:2.)

Tacitus, the Roman historian, writes in his work, *Roman Annals* (written between A.D. 115-117) that Chris-

tians were named from Christ whom **Pontius Pilate** executed.

Pliny the Younger, imperial legate of the Roman Empire, wrote to **Trajan** (Emperor of Rome, A.D. 98-117) seeking advice on how to deal with Christians, the followers of Jesus Christ.

About 52 A.D. **Thallus**, a freedman of Tiberius who wrote a history of the eastern Mediterranean world, is quoted by **Julius Africanus** as bearing witness to the crucifixion of Christ and the darkness which accompanied it.

Josephus, a Jewish historian who, according to **Ori-gin**, did not believe in Jesus, wrote about Jesus as:

1. A historical person
2. Being a brother of James the Just
3. Having a reputation of being a miracle worker
4. Being crucified under Pilate
5. Being the founder of the "tribe of Christians"

THE BIBLICAL JESUS

The Bible student gets his/her first glimpse of Jesus in Genesis, chapter three, when God says that the seed of woman would bruise the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16). Again Moses prophesies of Jesus Christ when he tells Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-2). Isaiah prophesied the coming of Jesus and that he would be born of a virgin (a woman who had never had sexual relations with a man) (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

Someone has written that there are over 300 prophecies of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. A few are given to illustrate.

PROPHECY

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23
Micah 5:2
Hosea 11:1
Isaiah 53:9
Isaiah 53:10
Psalm 110:4

FULLFILLMENT

Matthew 2:9
Matthew 2:4-6
Matthew 2:14-15
1 Peter 2:22
Acts 2:31-32
Hebrews 7:1-17

The many prophecies of Jesus Christ were translated from the Hebrew into Greek sometime during the life of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B.C. 285-246). These prophecies concerning Jesus Christ were in print at least 200 years before the birth of Jesus, thus they could not have been made after the fact, that is, prophecies made after the event. This Greek translation of the Hebrew scripture is called the "Septuagint" or designated as "LXX".

We are thankful to God that Jesus came into the world and accomplished his Father's will (John 1:29). Through Jesus Christ all men have the opportunity to become children of God and be saved eternally.

—1350 Carmel Drive
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SINCERITY AND TRUTH

Tim Ayers

If someone sincerely believes something is right, does that make it right? In the 37th chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we read that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. They took Joseph's coat of many colors and dipped it in goat's blood. They presented this coat to their father, Jacob, who said, **"It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."** Jacob then **"mourned for his son many days."** Also, when his other children tried to comfort him, **"he refused to be comforted"**

Did Jacob sincerely believe that his son was dead? Yes, he did. Was Joseph really dead? No, he was not. Would Jacob have mourned more deeply if Joseph had really been dead? The Bible text indicates that he would not.

If you believe sincerely that something is right, that does not make it right! Jacob sincerely believed that his son was dead, but that did not make it so. We must understand that sincerity alone is not enough, because we might be sincerely wrong!

If you are sincere in what you believe, does it matter what you believe? Saul of Tarsus, who later became the apostle Paul, was involved in the death of Stephen, the first

Christian martyr (Acts 7:58; 8:1). After that, **"Saul laid waste the church,"** and was also **"breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord"** (Acts 8:3; 9:1). Then Saul was converted to Christ, became a Christian, and began to preach that which he had been persecuting (Galatians 1:23).

Later, after his name was changed to Paul, he said, "I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day," **"and I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"** (Acts 23:1; 26:9). Paul sincerely thought he was right in persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ. Did that make it right?

If you believe something is right, does that automatically make it right? Paul was sincere in his persecution of Christians, but he was sincerely WRONG! Sincerity alone is not enough! We must also be right. God's word is truth (John 17:17), and we need both sincerity AND truth (Joshua 24:14; I Corinthians 5:8).

—1404 Kingston Circle
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PREACHING AND PRINTING

Preston Silcox

Most conscientious souls never want to intentionally offend, hurt, or anger other people. We are reared to be polite and well-mannered. In *fact*, the Bible demands that we be **"kind one to another"** (Ephesians 4:32). But does this mean that we are to avoid all "controversial" and "offensive" subjects? Please consider the following.

OBJECTIONS

On more than one occasion, Jesus received objections to both his actions and his teachings. John 5:10-16, for example, tells of some who disapproved of his healing on the Sabbath. In like manner, John 6:60 mentions a number of his own disciples objecting to his "hard sayings."

Since Jesus had those in his time who disagreed with him, is it not shocking that many today object to those who follow the Master's example (John 15:18; I John 3:13)? When it comes to the preaching and printing of truth, legion are they who cry out, "objection!" Still, though, the whole council of God must be declared (Acts 20:27).

OBLIGATIONS

II Timothy 4:1-2 makes it very clear that the truth must be proclaimed—no matter which way the proverbial wind might be blowing.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in

season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

This inspired obligation involves another responsibility, namely that of defending the gospel. Jude 3 requires Christians to **"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."** Even though many in the world and some in the church might say, **"Stop, lest some be offended,"** we must **"obey God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29).

OBSERVATIONS

The 19th century gospel preacher, Benjamin Franklin once observed, *"If all printers were determined not to print anything till they were sure it would offend nobody, there would be very little printed."* With these words in mind; notice what John T. Lewis said: *"I would rather have thousands to say to me at the judgment, We heard you preach, and you hurt our feelings, than to have just one soul to say, I heard you preach, but you did not tell me the truth."* We say to both Franklin and Lewis, "Amen!"

No, it is not enjoyable to see people offended, angry, or hurt by things preached or printed. Much more pleasing is it to see people learn, accept, and grow spiritually by those things. No matter what, though, the truth must prevail.

—509 Mount Pelia Road
Martin, Tennessee 38327

DON'T BUY A PIG IN A POKE

Jodie Boren

Back some 1500 years ago, a Saxon would take some piggies to sell at the marketplace. Once in a while a knave would add a cat or two to his poke and, therefore, cheat the buyer who thought he was buying just piggies. Thus, the expression—“Don’t buy a pig in a poke.” The caveat is certainly applicable to us today because many false teachers (Matthew 7:15) fill the pulpits of the land and even of the Lord’s church (Acts 20:30).

TRUTH MUST BE EMPHASIZED

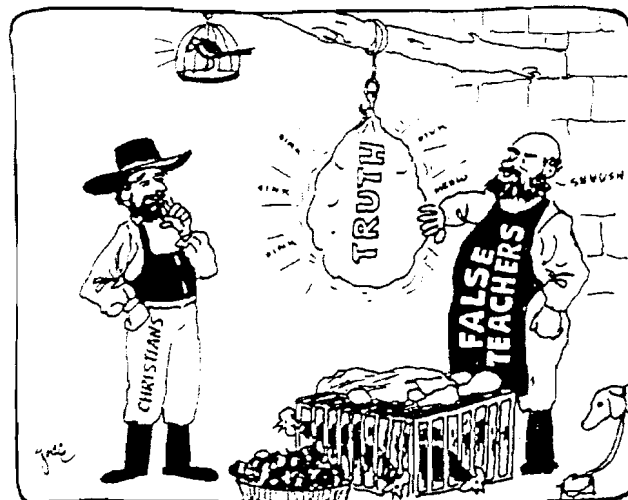
The wise man said in Proverbs 23:23 that we are to buy the truth. Truth is all important. We are to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). He is nigh to all who will call upon him in truth (Psalm 145:18). We are to serve him in sincerity and in truth (Joshua 24:14). God wants us to walk before him in truth (I Kings 2:4). This truth should cause us to rejoice (I Corinthians 13:6). When we talk with our neighbors we are to speak the truth (Ephesians 4:25) and to speak it in love (Ephesians 4:15). We are to think on truth (Philippians 4:8) and write the truth upon the tables of our hearts (Proverbs 3:3). Truth is a part of the Christian armor (Ephesians 6:14). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). In light of the above, truth cannot be minimized. It must be emphasized!

WE CAN KNOW GOD’S WILL

Before we buy a poke labeled “truth,” we must search the scriptures daily to find whether the things labeled as truth, are indeed, truth (Acts 17:11). Did not Jesus say to some who appeared to be faithful disciples, **“in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men?”** (Matthew 15:9)

Can we know truth? Some who parade as gospel preachers say we cannot know truth! It never seems to occur to them that they make this statement as truth which is contradictory to the very thing they are advocating. It also contradicts the plain teachings of Jesus where he says in John 8:32, **“ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”** Implied in this statement are two things. First: it is possible to know the truth. Second: that if one is to be free from the shackles of sin, he must believe and obey that truth. Since Ephesians 5:17 teaches us to understand the will of God, it follows, therefore, we can know his will—or truth.

Jesus prayed to the Father that we might be sanctified through his truth for his word is truth (John 17:17). So, to know the truth is necessary to our sanctification. No won-



der Paul exhorts us to **“let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”** (Colossians 3:16). James tells us that we should purify our hearts (James 4:8) and Peter explains that this is accomplished by **“obeying the truth”** (I Peter 1:22)—or God’s word.

WE ARE TO WALK BY THE TRUTH

The Lord will judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth (Psalm 96:13). Jesus corroborated this when he said, **“The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48).

When I worked for Hallmark Cards, they had a company slogan that said, “Individual acceptance of responsibility is the thing.” This has really impacted my life. It is especially meaningful and true with our relationship to God. For when we stand before God in judgment—as on that day all of us will—it will be an individual accounting (II Corinthians 5:10). You can not stand in for me—nor I for you. Therefore, when we consider buying a poke of truth from today’s change agents or whomever, let us open that bag of teachings and very carefully examine them. Are these teachings authorized and according to God’s truth. Remember, Paul exhorts us to **“walk by the same rule”** (Philippians 3:16) which is the rule—or law of Christ.

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FEMINIST ETHICS, PRESBYTERIAN MORALS, IRS SINS, CHURCH MUSIC, THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER’S VIEW OF VALUES

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Boston College Professor Mary Daly refuses to teach advanced feminist theory to men. After administrators at the Jesuit institution ordered her to admit men in her “Introduction to Feminist Ethics” class, Daly took a leave of absence. Daly believes that men’s presence is distracting and disruptive to female students engaged in emotional and intellectual feminist debates. Letting in men, Daly explained, would compromise her belief that women tend to defer to a man whenever one is in the room. Boston College officials said Daly’s actions violate federal civil rights laws and school policy. The college will not let Daly continue what spokesman Jack Dunn called “her archaic and stereotypical notion that men should not have access to her perspective.” Dunn noted that it would also be inappropriate if a male professor tried to bar women from his classes (*The Associated Press* and *The Washington Post* “Professor raises storm by closing class to men” as published in *The Seattle Times*, February 26, 1999, A4). *[I love it. Their own arguments are being turned against them. Of course, I would be happy if no one had to listen to the feminist garbage. And if the feminist professor admits that women tend to defer to a man naturally, doesn’t that say something about the way God intended things to work?—MTM]*

Because the rules in the Presbyterian Church(USA) ban only homosexual “marriage”, the presbytery, or church region, voted 107-35 to affirm “the freedom of any [congregation] to allow its ministers to perform ceremonies of holy union between persons of the same gender” (*The Washington Times Weekly*, February 22-28, 1999, p.12). *[It doesn’t matter if you call it a duck or not. If it walks like a duck, sounds like a duck, looks like a duck, and lays duck eggs it must be a duck. These folks have learned Clintonese quite well.—MTM]*

Internal Revenue Service employees stole at least \$5.3 million sent in by taxpayers over a recent 2.5 year period, including a scheme in which a check to the IRS was altered to read, “I.R. Smith” (*The Washington Times*, November 30-December 6, 1998, p. 13). *[Imaginative. Those who want to ascribe altruistic motives to government forget that human beings make up government. Government is not a living creature. Government is people. And people sin.—MTM]*

In 1970, about 1 in 10 single parents were fathers. In 1998, it was 1 in 6. The number of single parent families headed by fathers has grown in the past 3 years from 1.7 million to 2.1 million. By comparison, 9.8 million mothers head single parent households. Overall, single parent families constitute 27 percent of all families (*The Washington Times Weekly*, January 11-17, 1999, p. 33). *[Disturbing*

news. The increase of single parent fathers would have to be from an increase in mothers leaving the household for adulterous affairs. This would go along with the increasing numbers of mothers working outside of the home. To be fair, some of the increase could be due to judges more willing to give custody to fathers than they used to be. But more than likely mothers are giving up their God given duty for other things.—MTM]

While most church’s youth programs are not particularly well attended, there is evidence that young people today are hungering for spiritual content. A study by Barbara Resch, a music professor at Indiana—Purdue University, found that teenagers from all church backgrounds—including the unchurched—overwhelmingly prefer traditional hymns, rather than pop compositions, as being “right for church”. *The Wall Street Journal* recently featured an article on the religious traditionalism among young people today, for whom Gregorian chants and ancient prayers are now in vogue (*World*, January 30, 1999, p.25). *[Elders need to take a hard look at this. This does not say that the contemporary worship now in vogue does not draw more numbers. What it does say, is that the young people are seeing it as being entertained more than worshipping. They like being entertained. But in their own minds, they are not really worshipping God as solemnly as they think they should.—MTM]*

Germany’s highest court ordered Bavaria to join the rest of the country and permit abortion clinics to operate. A Bavarian law prohibiting the clinics was overruled by the Constitutional Court, which said it was detrimental to women’s health by forcing them to travel to get an abortion (*World*, November 7, 1998, p.10). *[They obviously are not worried about the babies’ health. Seems the United States are not alone in immoral thinking on God’s gift of children.—MTM]*

Theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether says we need to develop a “spirituality of recycling, a spirituality that includes ourselves in the renewal of earth and self. We need to compost ourselves.” We must realize that “nature does not need us to rule over it. We are parasites, utterly dependent upon the rest of the food chain. Nature would be much better off without us” (*World*, August 15, 1998, p. 22). *[Nature might be better off without her. But God put man over nature to take care of it. Man is at the top of creation. This lady needs to study the Bible a little bit more.—MTM]*

Dr. Ben Bova, ex-editor of *Omni* magazine and now a member of the *USA Today* editorial board, states in a new book, “Death will become an option rather than an inevita-

bility" in the near future. "Between the geneticists and the cellular biologists we can eliminate the diseases, including cancer. We've always lived with the idea that our lives are finite. Now that concept has got to be changed. I do think that is where the research is going" (*The Washington Times*, October 26-November 1, 1998, p. 27 in an article by **Matthew Katz**). [*Atheistic futurists have been making this claim for over 100 years. It has not come true and it will not. God separated us from the tree of life when he sent Adam and Eve from the Garden. Our years are now numbered to average 72 per David himself.*—MTM]

"A week old baby is not a rational and self-conscious being and there are many non-human animals whose rationality, self-consciousness, capacity to feel...exceed that of a human baby a week or month old. If the fetus does not have the same claim to life as a person, it appears that the newborn baby does not either, and the life of a newborn baby is of less value to it than the life of a pig, a dog or a chimpanzee is to the non-human animal."—**Peter Singer**, just named professor of bioethics at Princeton University's Center for Human Values (*Insight*, August 31, 1998, p. 33). [*Just goes to show that you do not have to be intelligent to be a professor. Obviously Princeton has decided to forego Biblical principles in its ethics department.*—MTM]

One of the first acts **Michael Eisner**, head of Disney, did when he became new chief was to remove a certain

motto from business cards. That motto was, "We create the finest in family entertainment" (*World*, November 14, 1998, p. 27). [*And it is obvious that they do not anymore. At least he stands by his beliefs.*—MTM]

Tony Blair, Prime Minister of England, says, "My vision of the 21st century is of a popular politics reconciling themes which in the past have been wrongly regarded as antagonistic. Patriotism and internationalism, rights and responsibilities, and the promotion of enterprise and the attack on poverty and discrimination." "We can only realize ourselves as individuals in a thriving civil society. Values are not absolute, and even the best can conflict. Our mission is to promote and reconcile the four values which are essential to a just society: equal worth, opportunity for all, responsibility, and community" (*World*, October 10, 1998, p. 24). [*Mr. Blair manages to contradict himself within these few sentences. Why should we believe in his four essential values when he just told us that there are no absolute values? If there is no absolute, then why should I take on responsibility? Maybe not all need opportunity. Perhaps there is no such thing as equal worth. You get the picture.*—MTM]

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ELDERS AND A DESIRE TO SERVE

Lynn Parker

Certainly elders are to be men that have met qualifications set forth in scripture (I Timothy 3:1ff; Titus 1:6ff). But let us narrow our study and look at an elder's approach to the weighty work before him. The attitude of elders, and those that would be elders, is of utmost importance to the spiritual welfare of every congregation. As those that will give account not only for themselves, but also for the flock over which they exercise oversight (Hebrews 13:17), the bishops simply must be men that are mature, godly, well-balanced, and desiring to serve.

BEING AN ELDER IS HARD WORK

The Bible tells us, **"Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"** (I Timothy 3:1 ASV). The word translated "seeketh" means "to stretch oneself out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something" (Thayer). Is it proper that a man desire to serve as an elder? Not only is it proper, it is essential that an elder desire the work, and a most burdensome and demanding work it is! It requires effort, energy, zeal, time, study, and much prayer. It is not fulfilled at three worship assemblies each week or by having one's name on the bulletin masthead. Peter writes that God's elders oversee the flock willingly and not of constraint (I Peter 5:2). L.R. Wilson correctly observed:

One should never undertake the work of an elder as a matter of compulsion. One who reluctantly attempts to do so will miserably fail. This great work cannot be successfully done with an unwilling spirit. No matter how great the sacrifice or how arduous the task, it must be done cheerfully, gladly, and of a ready mind" (L.R. Wilson, *Congregational Development*, p. 26).

Pity the elder who would rather be doing something—anything—else than doing the work enjoined by God upon the pastors of the church. He views his work as a drudgery, perhaps an unwelcome burden, and he is an elder only because his arm was twisted. Pity the flock with whom this unwilling elder works as it will never receive the proper, due, diligent care from one who does not want to serve. A child would never enjoy confidence and security in a home where mom and dad were unwilling and unhappy to be parents. Let such an elder step down "yesterday" for the good of the church. Do not coerce such a man into serving—he is not qualified to be an elder.

THE DIOTREPHE'S SYNDROME

On the other hand is the ambitious man who covets the "title" elder for personal gain, personal promotion, or to further his personal agenda. The apostle of love warned of **"Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them"** (III John 9). Here is the man who seeks to be an elder out of less than noble motives. Perhaps this man is absolutely convinced that he ought to be appointed an elder, and resents brethren who do not share his conviction. You surely have heard of someone who desires to rule or ruin, but the Bible states that the bishop cannot be a self-willed man (Titus 1:7). In other words, he is not an arrogant, self-pleasing man. The "Diotrephes" attitude is one of "my way or the highway." It is tyrannical and dictatorial. It is unapproachable. It craves applause, and gets intoxicated with authority. It is often associated with the man who is contentious, quick-tempered, and hyper-critical. Look among the chief critics of elders in any congregation and you may very well find a man who, although he will not admit it, is disgruntled because he was not appointed to be an overseer. Such an attitude proves that he has no business being an elder, and the congregation was wise in not appointing him.

GOD'S MAN

So then, between two extremes is the proper attitude that humbly seeks to serve, that loves souls, and that finds joy in the most challenging and difficult of works. He gently leads the flock, protects it from error, and loves the precious church of our Lord more than life itself. Let us be thankful for faithful elders who desire to energetically serve. May we ever be co-workers with them and never discouragements to them. To you truly qualified, godly elders we exhort you to continue on in your good work, **"And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away"** (I Peter 5:4).

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What Does It Mean To Speak As The Oracles Of God ?

Noah A. Hackworth

The two books written by Peter were written in the second half of the first century (ca. 65-67). They were written to the elect who were sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (I Peter 1:1). Peter spoke to **"them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Peter 1:1). In the first epistle, Peter declared: **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..."** (4:11). "Oracles" is a word used to refer to the law given to Moses (Acts 7:38), to the Hebrew scriptures (Romans 3:2), and to the word of God (Hebrews 5:12), but what does it mean to speak as the oracles of God? Men have through the centuries, even to this day, attempted to speak for God. Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah the prophet of God, said, **"To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them"** (8:20). Of some prophets, God said, **"Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they teach you vanity; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah"** (Jeremiah 23:16). **"I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied"** (23:21). Everyone, and there are no exceptions, who attempts to teach as the oracles of God must (1) speak **only** that which agrees with the truth of the Bible, and (2) speak **all** that the Bible says, without addition, subtraction, or modification (Acts 20:27). This most assuredly means the preacher and/or the Bible teacher must not:

1. Speak lies and cause people to err (Jeremiah 23:13, 25, 32).
2. Cause people to forget God's Name (Jeremiah 23:25, 27, 32).
3. Steal God's word and keep it from their neighbors (Jeremiah 23:22).
4. Pervert the words of God (Jeremiah 23:26; Galatians 1:6-9).
5. Seduce the people (Ezekiel 13:10).
6. Strengthen the hands of the wicked (Ezekiel 13:22).

There is unquestionably an awesome responsibility upon anyone who holds the Bible in his hand; he must speak only what is bidden by the Lord (Jonah 3:2). The preaching we do today must not be so general as to create a margin for error in the minds of others, or allow them to forget God's name. Our preaching must consist of our best effort to **"declare the whole counsel of God"** which includes everything that is profitable (Acts 20:20, 27). As for perverting the words of God, **"let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints"** (cf. Ephesians 5:3). Even the angels were not allowed to pervert the gospel of Christ. To have done so would have brought the anathema

of heaven down upon them (Galatians 1:8). During the time of Ezekiel, false prophets had **"seduced the people"** (13:10). Peace had been promised when there was no peace. The prophets had built up a "wall" of false confidence in the minds of the people. Our preaching must not lead others to follow fleshly pursuits or the ways of the world. Instead, **"For Jehovah will be thy confidence, and will keep thy foot from being taken"** (Proverbs 3:26). Above all things, our preaching cannot be that which will strengthen the hands of the wicked. Should our preaching be that which will allow the sinner to feel comfortable in his wickedness, we will have failed in the discharge of our responsibility. And this, I fear, is what happened in Corinth. To the Corinthians, Paul said, (1) **"one of you hath his father's wife,"** (2) **"ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn,"** (3) **"your glorying is not good,"** (4) **"know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,"** (5) **"purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump..."** (I Corinthians 5:1-7). We cannot allow ourselves or others to find comfort in sin, to do so will put our souls in great jeopardy as well as rob the gospel of its power to change lives (Romans 1:16-17).

Preaching as the oracles of God is a weighty responsibility and it must never be taken with anything less than our greatest respect and sincerity. God's approval and help will be continually manifest to those who faithfully preach his word, but his face will surely be against those who do not (I Peter 3:12).

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GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Annette B. Cates

The Christian life can be compared to a collage, a work of art created by blending various elements into a cohesive whole. In II Peter 3:18, we are told to **"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."** God has not left us without some instructions to help us achieve this maturity. In fact, we find in II Peter 1:5-8 an outline for blending spiritual characteristics into a collage of the beauty of holiness.

FAITH, VIRTUE, AND KNOWLEDGE

The first element given by Peter is faith, a quality which permeates every aspect of the Christian life. Faith is the basis of our hope (Hebrews 11:6) and the core of the work we accomplish for the Lord (I Thessalonians 1:3). Faith begins when we hear and believe God's word (Romans 10:17) and is nurtured through prayer. We should be like David in Psalm 55:7, **"Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray...."** We are to **"pray without ceasing"** (I Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer keeps us aware of the omnipresence of God. Faith also grows through Bible study which includes attending all services of the church and daily planned reading of the Bible and Bible-related materials. Additionally, faith is developed by seeing the goodness of God in all things. The intricacies of creation and the beauty of nature should overwhelm us with an awe for the omnipotent God. As we think of the collage of Christian living, we see faith spread about the canvas forming the foundation.

Another element in our collage is virtue, which is moral and spiritual courage. Virtue brings strength to the Christian life. The Bible is filled with examples of people who had the fortitude to stand for what is right regardless of the cost. Joseph (Genesis 39:7-12), Moses (Hebrews 11:24-27), Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:7-9), Ruth (Ruth 1:16, 17), Vashti (Esther 1:10-12; 4; 5), and others sacrificed everything because they recognized that there is a higher goal than daily comfort, counting the cost (Luke 14:28). To the collage of Christian living, we develop the strong colors of virtue.

A further element for our collage is knowledge, which justifies faith and fortifies virtue. The importance of knowledge is seen in John 8:32 and II Peter 1:3. It is knowledge that changes behavior. When one learns to do better, then one will do better. We live in an age when the greatest tools of information ever are available, but our society is filled with gullible and ignorant people. They take what they hear in the mass media, whatever sounds "good," never questioning and following up to learn if it is true. As did the New Testament Bereans, we must search to see if what we are told is true (Acts 17:11). To the collage of Christian living, let us bring out the clear colors of knowledge.

TEMPERANCE, PATIENCE AND GODLINESS

Temperance (self-control) is another element to bring out in Christian living. The Apostle Paul compared the

Christian life to that of an athlete in training (I Corinthians 9:24-27; Hebrews 12:1). Temperance places spiritual values over materialism. It sets life's priorities. Solomon said that one who rules his spirit is better **"than he that taketh a city"** (Proverbs 6:23). In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"** (Luke 9:23). Temperance in our collage will keep out any ugliness that would mar the beauty we are developing.

Patience is added to the preceding elements of our canvas. The Biblical usage of the term includes steadfastness and endurance. Patience helps us to "hang in there" even when the going is tough. Adversity may be all around us, but we will prevail (Luke 21:19). The trying of our faith brings patience, which makes us perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:2-4). Patience is the quality that brings the shades of softness to our developing collage.

Godliness further enhances the canvas of Christian living. It can be summed up as devotion to goodness, honor, and duty, as an attitude of reverence, worship and obedience. We are to exercise ourselves unto Godliness which is profitable unto all things (I Timothy 4:7,8). **"Godliness with contentment is great gain"** (I Timothy 6:6). It is not a facade of spirituality or "love" without substance, for true Godliness comes from within. It should be liberally distributed throughout our collage.

BROTHERLY KINDNESS AND LOVE

Brotherly kindness further enhances our canvas. The first commandment is to love God, and the second is to love others as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). We show brotherly kindness through our words (Proverbs 25:11) which can encourage, strengthen, and comfort. We show it through those actions which consider and serve the needs of others. Brotherly love contributes unity to our collage.

The culminating element in our canvas of spiritual growth is love. Love desires the highest and best for others. It includes loving the unlovable and our enemies. **"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love"** (I Corinthians 13:13). Love is the brilliant light that shines in every aspect of the collage of Christian living.

THE SPIRITUAL PRODUCT

As we grow spiritually the resulting work of art will be more beautiful than anything man can put on canvas. We will be a living collage before a world that is lost in sin and without hope (Matthew 5:16). **"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Peter 1:11).

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THE FOUNDATION OF LIFE

Eddie Whitten

The Apostle Paul wrote **"For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"** (I Corinthians 3:11). What do we mean when we refer to the "foundation which is Jesus Christ?" There are probably several answers that could be suggested, but let us consider a few that come to mind.

THE FOUNDATION OF LOVE

The entire concept and nature of God and the church is that of love. **"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16). **"God is love"** (I John 4:8). Jesus loved us enough to die for us (Philippians 2:7,8). Jesus instructed us to love one another (John 13:35). Man cannot match or surpass the foundation of love Jesus laid for his people.

The idea of love has taken a turnabout in the thinking of many in the world and in the church. Love means various things, many things, except the way it is meant in our relationship with our fellow man. Personal feelings are strong and deep. When it comes to loving our family or friends, it is very hard to gently correct when error arises. We would not hesitate for an instant if our friends or family were approaching physical harm to warn them with every fervor of our energy and strength. Unimaginable feats of superhuman strength have been demonstrated by some that have seen people they did not even know in peril. Unable to explain their display of strength beyond their ability, they are surprised themselves. Protecting, or rescuing someone from physical harm is common and commendable.

When the same concern for the spiritual welfare of friend or family is shown, tempers flair and resentment is expressed in many cases. It takes tremendous love to risk a friendship in the effort to save one's soul from death. Jesus laid this kind of foundation when he died on the cross for the sins of all men. We need to build on that foundation.

THE FOUNDATION OF OBEDIENCE

Jesus provided the means of reconciliation between man and God. Man cannot absolve the sins of men even though some claim to have that power. The father has given the terms of acceptance into his favor and those terms demand obedience to his will. Jesus came not to do his own will, but the will of God (Luke 22:42). The inspired penman stated, **"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"** (Hebrews 5:9).

Obedience seems to be the last thought of those who want to promote their own wisdom or hobby. Those who feel an independent self-sufficiency should take stock of their spiritual security. We do not live in a "once saved, al-

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ways saved" context. We can make mistakes that will condemn our souls. Arrogance or an attitude of superiority tends to generate disobedience. The foundation of denominationalism is laid through disobedience to the will of God. Man, not being satisfied with the wisdom of God strikes out on his spiritual own and signs his death warrant in the doing of it.

THE FOUNDATION OF SERVICE

Jesus taught the principle of service. He **"came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many"** (Mark 10:45). The whole life of a Christian should be one of service. Jesus humbled himself (Philippians 2:8), left his home in glory and gave himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all men. He became our example of how to live godly. If Jesus gave his life in service for others, we should be committed to the same high privilege. Service in the kingdom of God is joy, not drudgery! There is a great difference between service and worship. Jesus did not come to worship mankind. He came to minister (serve) them. We serve our heavenly father when we present our worship before his throne. We do not condescend to give an hour of our time on Sunday morning to give lip service to God and call it worship. Neither do we profane the unspeakable blessing of worship by confusing it with the mundane responsibilities and privileges of everyday life. We must prostrate ourselves in humility and with reverence in our hearts "kiss the hand toward" God. This submission in body, mind and spirit attends our actions as we realize we are in the presence of Divine Power and Mercy. We buffet our wills into willing vessels of service as we honor and revere our God. To do less is unacceptable in the mind of God and in the eyes of men.

Service requires the constant realization of man's privilege of having been added to the church for which Jesus

died. Service is the pleasure of living according to principles of righteousness exemplified by our Savior. Service is the joy we receive when we see others coming to glorify our Father in heaven because of the kind of life we display before them. Service is why the world hates us, because we love the Lord, not the world (John 15:19). Service is what makes worship the privilege and joy it is to the faithful child of God, because of the sacredness and dignity of worshipping God on the first day of the week as well as on other occasions when the saints meet.

The foundation of service requires that we not confuse service with worship. Worship is the privilege man has to express his respect and homage to the mighty God in the name (by the authority) of Jesus Christ. Service is expressing our love for God, for Jesus, for the church, for the word of God and for our fellow man in living the humble life of obedience to the will of God. There is a vast difference. We will enjoy the blessings of both worship and service if we will realize the difference between them and exploit every opportunity to do both.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

MACK LYON, STEVE FLATT AND COMPANY

David P. Brown

In my May 1998 associate editorial I dealt with the involvement of **Mack Lyon**, **Hardeman Nichols**, and **Steve Flatt** with the *Granny White Pike Church*, Nashville, Tennessee. Following the publication of that issue of the paper we heard nothing directly from the *Granny White* brethren, Lyon or Nichols regarding what we wrote. However, due to that exposure different churches and individuals contacted Lyon about his involvement in the seminar. Some dropped their support of Lyon's television program "*In Search of the Lord's Way*." An example of one of the letters written to Lyon is the following one from the elders of the *Cullendale Church of Christ* in Camden, Arkansas.

LYON'S RESPONSE TO THE CULLENDALE ELDERS



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

"These were more noble...they searched the scriptures daily..." (Acts 17:11)

August 24, 1998
Elders Church of Christ
2702 Mt. Holly Road
Camden, Arkansas 71701

Dear Elders:

Your letter comes as a disappointment to me. You say you pray I will earnestly contend for the faith as in Jude 3. I doubt you know what that really means.

As a teenager, I was ordered to leave home if I was going to preach what I preach. I made the choice. I walked out on that cold rainy night and never had a family thereafter. I have been literally beaten in the streets and dragged into court on a charge of brawling. (I never struck a blow. The good elders of that church stood by me and paid my fine.) I have been physically attacked in the auditorium of the church building while standing up to a liberal preacher and while the faithful(?) men stood by and watched, the women came to my rescue. More than just once I have been humiliated beyond my ability to describe on campuses of colleges and universities while contending for the faith against the liberals, while preachers and elders like you sit in the comfort of your home and at a distance in your sweet sanctified purity offer not a word of encouragement, but renunciation. No, you don't know the first meaning of the words "contend for the faith."

No, I don't feel sorry for myself or consider myself a martyr. I count it a joy to be worthy to stand up for my Savior who went to the cross for me. And I plan to keep on doing it as long as the Lord considers me faithful.

If you don't want to support the **SEARCH** program, that is your option and I have no falling out with you over it all. In fact, I appreciate your past support and thank you from my heart. You have been a help in getting the gospel out where people can hear it and I will always be grateful. But please be honest enough and be Christian enough about it not to come up with a false accusation you read in someone's paper as a reason for discontinuing your support.

In Christian love,
[Signed]
Mack Lyon

Cullendale Church of Christ

2702 MT. HOLLY ROAD
CAMDEN, ARKANSAS 71701
Phone 431-5228



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TERRY HARRIS
TERRY HARRIS

July 29, 1998

Mr Mack Lyon
Edmond, Oklahoma Church of Christ
P.O. Box 37
Edmond, OK 73083-0371

Dear Mack:

This letter is to inform you that the Cullendale Church of Christ will no longer continue support of the program "SEARCH". The decision to discontinue supporting the program comes after sincere and prayerful consideration.

Your defense and appearance on lectures with Steve Flatt and others, who fail to uphold truth, are of great concern. We will give consideration to the support of "SEARCH" in the future if you will publicly oppose the error being taught by Steve and others.

As elders, it is our desire to earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3) and pray you will also.

Sincerely,
[Signed]

Drew Allen Jerry Berley Roland Brown
Burl Leamons Shane Reddin

(Continued On Page 4)

Contending FOR THE Faith

Volume XXX, No. 7

July/1999



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Editor**



**David P. Brown,
Associate Editor
and Publisher**

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EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT

ALL COMMUNICATIONS received by *Contending for the Faith* and or its Editors are viewed as intended FOR PUBLICATION unless otherwise stated. Whereas we respect confidential information, so described, everything else sent to us we feel free to publish without further permission being necessary. Anything sent to us NOT for publication, please indicate this clearly when you write. Please address such letters directly to the Editor Ira Y. Rice, Jr., 2956 Allshore, Memphis, Tennessee 38118. Telephone: (901) 363-6498.

ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith was begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by *Contending for the Faith*. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needful. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

All advertisements must be in our hands no later than two (2) months preceding the publishing of the issue of the journal in which you desire your advertisement to appear. To avoid being charged for the following month, ads must be canceled by the first of the month. We appreciate your understanding of and cooperation with our advertising policy.

MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS, AND LETTERS TO THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. COST OF SPACE FOR ADS: Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; half page, \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. CLASSIFIED ADS: \$2.00 per line per month. CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS: \$30.00 per line per year. SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES: Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

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Associate Editorial...

New Staff Members Added—Paper's Sized Expanded—Opposition to Error Continued—New Subscribers Needed

With this issue of *Contending for the Faith* we are adding five new writers to our Editorial Staff. These writers will join **Annette B. Cates**, **Noah Hackworth**, **Lynn Parker** and **Eddie Whitten** in writing articles each month under their respective topics. Beginning with this issue we are including pictures of the Editor and Associate Editor as well as pictures of those staff writers who write each month.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF

Jodie Boren

For some time now we have been using Jodie Boren's articles with his appropriate editorial cartoons. Boren is a native of Sweetwater, Texas. He and his wife Peggy will soon celebrate their 49th wedding anniversary. He is a veteran of WWII and a 1949 graduate of the *Kansas City Art Institute and School of Design*. Following graduation he began working for *HallMark Cards* in advertising and, as art director. From 1956 until 1971 he worked with the *Christian Chronicle* and *Christian Woman* magazines. He taught part time at ACC while working with these publications. He left these papers to work full time as a fine artist.

Boren has designed many gospel meeting charts, book and tract covers, drawings, portraits, mastheads and cartoons for brethren. He is one of the foremost Western Artists in the United States. **Johnny Rutherford**, **Byron Nelson**, **Hoyt Axton**, **Marilyn Maxwell**, and **Glenn Campbell** are some who own his paintings.

Boren has been a gospel preacher for many years. He has preached a number of meetings in and out of Texas and spoken on several lectureships. His articles and cartoons are timely and clear in driving home the points made in and with them. His topic is, "Seeing It Helps Say It."

Daniel Denham

Denham is a Florida native and a graduate of *Bellview Preaching Training School* in Pensacola, Florida. He has preached for churches in Florida, Tennessee, and Texas. For two years he did missionary work in Taiwan. He currently preaches for the *Roanoke Church of Christ*, Roanoke, Texas. Denham's preaching career spans twenty years. He has authored numerous articles and lectureship manuscripts. Presently, he is working on three books. They pertain to worship, eschatology (the study of end things) and the book of Revelation. He also has authored two tracts that are now out of print. He is married to the former **Barbara Kay Stancliff**. They

have three children (**Shawn, Trevor and Megan**). His monthly articles will appear under the topic, "Studies From the Biblical Text."

Tom Moore

Moore currently preaches for the church in Port Lavaca, Texas. He is a 1986 graduate of *Southwest School of Bible Studies* in Austin. He also attended Carnegie Human Realtionship Principles in Salisbury, Maryland. He and his wife **Carole** have two children **Brandi** and **Joshua**. He was associate minister from 1984-1987 at the church in Dripping Springs, Texas. He also preached for the churches in Laurel, Delaware; Buna, Texas; and Comanche, Texas. Moore has spoken on various lectureships. He made a mission trip to Ghana and attended a two week course at Jerusalem University studying Christian geography and History. Moore will be contributing sermon outlines under the topic of "Preach the Word."

Jason R. Roberts

Roberts was born in Denver, Colorado but grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. He is a 1993 graduate of *Harding University* with a B. A. in Psychology. He graduated in 1995 from the *Memphis School of Preaching*. He is married to the former **Marcie Thacker** of Dallas, Texas. They have a son, **Addison Paul**. Roberts served as one of the preachers for the *Sixth Avenue Church of Christ*, Jasper, Alabama in 1996 and 1997. He has worked as one of the preachers with the *Forest Hill Church of Christ*, Memphis, Tennessee since 1997. Roberts has worked in television and radio. He has made two mission trips to Southeast Asia. He will be writing for young people under the topic, "Truth for Teens."

Paul Vaughn

Paul Vaughn was born and grew up in Maysville, Kentucky. After completing his work at *East Tennessee School of Preaching*, Paul and his wife **Ricki**, helped establish two churches. One of the churches is located in Brown County, Ohio and the other in Jackson, Kentucky. Both of these mission points were started with less than eight people. Vaughn has preached for the *Highway 77 Church of Christ*, Marion, Arkansas and is currently with *Maple Avenue Church of Christ*, Lancaster, Kentucky.

Vaughn edited a book on the history of the church of Christ in Kentucky and has written commentaries on the books of Hebrews and Daniel. He has been active in radio work for over ten years. He is a regular speaker on the television program, "What Does the Bible Say?" *The Southwest Church of Christ*, Clinton, Mississippi, sponsors the program. Vaughn has debated the Christian Church on the use of mechanical instrumental music in worship to God. He has taught extension classes for the *East Tennessee School of Preaching*. Vaughn will be writing about the restora-

tion of New Testament Christianity. His topic is "Restoration Reflections."

AS SIZE OF CFTF INCREASES AIM REMAINS THE SAME

With this issue we are increasing the size of the paper from 16 to 24 pages. From time to time we ran 24 pages for special events. However, in order to offer our readers more subjects we have decided to run 24 pages on a regular basis. This will allow for the previously mentioned regular writers' monthly articles while at the same time provide room for other articles.

Because CFTF is expanding does not mean that we are going to leave false teachers and their doctrines alone. I think that is obvious from this issue of *Contending for the Faith*.

I have never understood why a gospel preacher would not want to do in a paper what the Bible demands he do in his oral preaching. Indeed, we are to "*comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable*" by preaching the Bible as we are instructed in the sacred word (Acts 20:27-32; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 5:21; II Timothy 4:1-5; Jude 3). Whether orally or on the printed page, it is the *only* acceptable basis by which any preacher should work. The *only* true source of all oral sermons is the sacred *printed* word (II Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:25).

WILL YOU HELP INCREASE THE SIZE OF OUR SUBSCRIPTION LIST?

As I travel around the country I constantly hear brethren tell me how much they appreciate what we are doing on the pages of *CFTF*. However, you know that these sentiments do not come from spineless brethren or the liberal and "anti" apostates. *I am, therefore, making a special appeal to our loyal subscribers to help us get the paper to those brethren who strongly desire the truth to be taught in no uncertain terms and who want teachers of error and their doctrines exposed in the same way.*

If each one of our faithful subscribers would get one more person to subscribe we will expand our influence twofold! That being the case, surely some of you can enroll two, three, or more persons. This is one part you can play in furthering our influence for good in a world lost in sin and a church that has embraced much that is worldly and denominational. We need you. Please help us.

FAITHFUL CHURCHES CAN HELP FAITHFUL BRETHREN KNOW WHERE THEY ARE

How many times have you heard faithful brethren complain about not being able to locate faithful churches while on vacation, traveling or when they move? You can do something about that and help us at the same time. *I strongly urge faithful churches to buy space in our Church Directory!*

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

MACK LYON, STEVE FLATT...

(Continued From Page 1)

CULLENDALE ELDERS ANSWER LYON

September 12, 1998

Mr. Mack Lyon
Edmond, Oklahoma Church of Christ
P.O. Box 371
Edmond, OK 73083-0371

Dear Mack:

In your letter dated August 24, 1998, you questioned our understanding of what it means to contend for the faith. In fact, in the first paragraph these are your words: "I doubt you know what that really means." You ended the second paragraph with this: "No, you don't know the first meaning of the words, contend for the faith". Let us set the record straight. You do not know how much knowledge we have of the scriptures. It is an assumption on your part to make a determination that we sit in the comfort of our homes at a distance in sweet sanctified purity offering not a word of encouragement, but renunciation. For your information, we do encourage those who uphold the truth but will not support or align ourselves with false teachers.

You are to be commended for your past. It is truly great that you left home to preach what you preach. We do not question your past stand for the truth. However, we are questioning where you stand in relation to the error being taught by those connected with the Jubilee. Why don't you come clean and let us and others concerned about this know exactly where you stand. If you agree with those in error make it public. If not, then preach the truth and expose the error. You are in a great position with the SEARCH program to oppose all false teachers.

You need to be careful about questioning the motives of others. We discontinued the support of SEARCH because we have concerns about where you stand. As we stated in the first letter, we will consider supporting the program in the future if you will earnestly contend for the faith.

Sincerely,
[Signed]

Drew Allen Jerry Berley Roland Brown
Burl Leamons Shane Reddin

AN EXPOSE OF LYON'S LETTER

Mack Lyon evidently does not mind making statements that evidence his inconsistency.

Since 1982 the *Cullendale Church* has produced as sound a lectureship as exists in the brotherhood. A few years ago they hosted a debate regarding "antism." They have stood for the truth in opposing liberalism to the point of meeting with the elders of a liberal church to discuss the errors of said church. One thing that the *Cullendale Church* has not done is to encourage an association with known false teachers and castigate others who seek to oppose them.

In the intervening months since our exposure of his duplicity, has he learned his lesson and repented of such conduct? We shall see.

LYON'S DEFENSE

Lyon humbly declares that he does not feel sorry for himself and does not consider himself "a martyr." He then reminds his readers that he "counts it a joy to be worthy to stand up for my Savior who went to the cross for me." Moreover, he states that he intends to continue to do so. Well, Mack Lyon did not do so when he fellowshipped Steve Flatt in May of 1998 in Nashville, Tennessee. When

he continues to this present hour to defend and participate in such associations, just how is he standing up for Christ? Indeed, his actions are louder than his words. Is Lyon trying to tell us that what he did in Nashville is the example we all should follow regarding false teachers? Has he ever heard of aiding and abetting the enemy? Let Lyon gather up some of his professed boldness of yesteryear and tell us whether Flatt is or is not an enemy of the gospel. Remember, Lyon wrote, "And I plan to keep on doing it (contending for the faith -DPB) as long as the Lord considers me faithful." That statement being the case, why could Lyon not have dealt with Flatt and his kind with the words he used on the Cullendale elders?

A FALSE ACCUSATION?

As can be read in his letter to the Cullendale elders he rebukes the elders in the final paragraph of his response to them. He writes, "...be honest enough and be Christian enough about it not to come up with a false accusation you read in someone's paper as a reason for discontinuing your support." What grounds does this soft-spoken preacher have for challenging the "honesty" and "Christianity" of these elders and all the rest of us who oppose his dissimulation in Nashville in 1998? Furthermore, while we were not the only gospel paper reporting the facts of what Mack Lyon did, we certainly reported the matter. Wherein have we falsely accused Lyon in this matter? Let Lyon answer the following questions regarding his charge of our lying about him.

Did Lyon appear on the seminar at the *Granny White Pike Church* in 1998 with Steve Flatt? We reported that he did. Did we falsely accuse Lyon in this? Did Lyon do anything to cause anyone to think that he was not in agreement with Steve Flatt? Did he rebuke Steve Flatt privately, publicly or both? If he did, why did he not tell us about it?

Were we wrong in pointing to his continued association with **Neil Anderson** and the former "Old Reliable," the *Gospel Advocate*? Is he totally unaware of the denominational Bible School material that is put out under the name of the *Gospel Advocate Company*? Is he uninformed regarding the *Gospel Advocate's* annual appreciation dinner for *David Lipscomb University* of whom Steve Flatt is president, the most recent one this summer at the poorly attended *Lipscomb Summer Lectures*?

Since Lyon has reported his history of standing for the truth and opposing error why has he been as silent as the tomb regarding these sins of the brethren? To put it bluntly, let Lyon or anyone else cite just one false accusation we made against him. Be specific. What is it?



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**ELDERS OF CENTRAL CHURCH IN ARDMORE, OKLAHOMA
WRITE LYON ABOUT HIS APPEARANCE ON THE SEMINAR
13 Aug 1998**

**Mr. Mack Lyon
1101 East 9th
Edmond, OK 73034**

Dear brother Mack,

It is our hope that everything goes well with you at this time. As elders of the Lord's church we appreciate all of the good that you do in the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord.

However, something was recently brought to our attention that causes us some concern. It is in regards to your having spoken on the "We Believe Seminar", hosted by the Granny White congregation in Nashville, TN. Last week we received the tapes and noted that on the opposite side of your lesson was a lesson presented by bro. Steve Flatt. This is the reason for our concern and this letter. We would like to know your response in three areas; i.e.:

1) Did you know in advance that bro. Flatt would be one of the participants speaking at that seminar?

2) Were you aware at that time that bro. Flatt teaches doctrinal error on several Scriptural subjects? (If not, see enclosures).

3) If you did know that bro. Flatt would be speaking and that he was a false teacher, the more important question would then be, why would you participate in light of the teaching of 2 John 9-11?

Please know that we are only concerned for the cause of His truth. We would appreciate your response to these matters. We thank you in advance for helping us.

Because of a cross,
[Signed]
Darrell Hubbard, Elder
David Johnson, Elder
James Meece, Elder

(Enc.)

Lyon would not permit his response to the Central elders to be reproduced. We will honor Lyon's request. However, I will report in my own words what he said. Lyon's answers to the elders questions follows.

1. Yes, he knew that Flatt would be on the 1998 "We Believe Seminar."

2. At the time of his appearance with Flatt on the 1998 "Seminar" Lyon said that he was not aware that Flatt taught error. He declared what he had heard of Flatt's teaching was truthful.

3. Lyon revealed that in 1997 he had visited with Flatt and he revealed to Lyon that he recognized the error of *Jubilee*. He said that he was removing himself from it. He stated that he was going to try hard to bring Lipscomb back to a more conservative position (Is having F. LaGard Smith teach at Lipscomb one of the ways Flatt has of making Lipscomb more conservative?). Lyon said that was good news to him. He then cited I Corinthians 13:6-7. He reported that Flatt asked him for his prayers and patience. Lyon then asked what more could he have done. He went on to say that the *Granny White Pike Church* elders had a two-hour meeting with Flatt and that Flatt had told them what he had told Lyon. Lyon then reported that others have talked with Flatt and do not believe him. Lyon concludes that we will have to wait and see what happens. He then stated that Flatt has written and published his intentions, but his critics are picking him to pieces. He said the elders thought that Flatt was the best one to oppose *Jubilee* hav-

ing formerly been a part of it. Lyon went on to say that such is the reason the *Granny White* elders asked him to participate in their 1998 seminar. Therefore, Lyon reported, that the *Granny White* elders asked Flatt to present his sermon on baptism that they had heard him preach over television. Lyon declared that the "Seminar" was for the purpose of refuting false doctrine taught at *Jubilee*. He also stated that he would do the same thing again under the same circumstances. He wrote that this is the case because he was committed to preaching to the lost as well as the saved. Lyon pointed out that the *1998 Granny White Seminar* was an effort to save fallen brethren.

FLATT GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO DECLARE HIMSELF

Jesse Whitlock, then the preacher for the *Central Church of Christ* in Ardmore, Oklahoma, wrote Flatt the following letter. In that letter he asked Flatt 15 questions for the purpose of clarifying certain of his doctrinal positions. The questions follow his letter.

7 Sept. 1998

**Mr. Steve Flatt
David Lipscomb University
3901 Granny White Pike
Nashville, TN 37204-3951**

President Flatt:

It is with grave concern for the cause of truth that I write to you today. In recent weeks your name and teaching has become the subject of controversy in southern Oklahoma. I am sure you are aware that I have heard two sides of a coin. I was wondering what would be the quickest way to ascertain your personal conviction in a number of Bible subjects. The answer was obvious: ask President Steve Flatt!

As President of David Lipscomb University, I am sure that you know you will have a tremendous influence on the direction that school goes from here. I am quite concerned about all of our brotherhood schools and the religious stance they are taking. It would be of great help to me if you would give your candid answer to the attached page of questions. I know that your schedule is busy, but I believe these matters are important.

Allow me to thank you in advance for helping me to determine first-hand what you teach and believe. These matters are of great importance to me in His service.

Respectfully,

[Signed]
Jesse Whitlock, Evangelist
(enc.)

1. Is it right to extend fellowship to those who deny that baptism is essential to salvation?

2. Should Old Testament law be divided into "ceremonial" and "moral" divisions such as Adventism teaches?

3. Is the Sermon on the Mount (i.e., Matthew 5-6-7), a code of how to continue in discipleship to Christ?

4. Is the kingdom and the church one and the same?

5. Should we sincerely pray today as Christ did in Matthew "Thy kingdom come..."?

6. Is it your belief that the Old Law (i.e., law of Moses) has been done away?

7. Has Christ ever repudiated the Law (i.e., the Old Law)?

8. Is it right to fellowship those who teach and advocate that we can use instrumental music in worship to God?

9. Is it your belief that miracles (i.e., spiritual gifts as in vogue in the first century), are still available to New Testament Christians today?

10. Should we extend fellowship to those who claim that God speaks directly to them, separate and apart from the word of God?

11. Do you believe that one can obtain salvation from God by grace only?
12. Do you believe that one can obtain salvation from God by faith only?
13. Should women teach in a Bible class where Christian men are present?
14. Would it be appropriate for us to encourage Christians to attend and hear a man, who goes among denominational circles preaching (?), and producing laughter and scorn among them toward the church of my Lord?
15. Do you believe the kingdom is yet to come?

FLATT'S RESPONSE TO WHITLOCK

October 9, 1998

Mr. Jesse Whitlock
Central Church of Christ
P.O. Box 1782
Ardmore, OK 73402

Dear Brother Whitlock:

Thank you for your letter. I appreciate the sincerity of the inquiry and your desire to clarify or dispute rumors.

I'm afraid that I simply don't have time to give full length answers to each of the questions you asked. Frankly, I don't think I need to. I have taught publicly for over 20 years—over half of that time on nation-wide television. I am confident that those who know me well can attest to the soundness of my teaching.

If you have a specific question as to subject matter I've addressed, feel free to contact the Madison Church of Christ and request any sermon tapes I have delivered over the last 11½ years.

Sincerely,

[Signed]

Stephen F. Flatt

SECOND LETTER OF WHITLOCK TO FLATT

12 Oct 1998

Mr. Steve Flatt
David Lipscomb University
3901 Granny White Pike
Nashville, TN 37204-3951

President Flatt:

You may recall that I wrote to you a little over one month ago with a request for you to answer some questions. There were 15 questions in that request. As of this date I have not received an answer. I know that your schedule must be extremely busy. It may be that you do not have the time to devote to such an effort.

Brother Mack Lyon told my elders that you have written and published your intent to repent of your association with the Nashville Jubilee and your current teaching in regards to some of the matters that my questions addressed. Would you please be so kind as to have your secretary make a copy of that material and send to me? It would be appreciated.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Because of the cross,

[signed]

Jesse Whitlock
Evangelist

THINKING THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE LETTERS CROSSED IN THE MAIL WHITLOCK AGAIN WROTE FLATT

17 Oct 1998

Mr. Stephen F. Flatt

David Lipscomb University
3901 Granny White Pike
Nashville, TN 37204-3951

President Flatt:

It appears that my letter to you (Oct. 12), and your letter to me (Oct. 9), must have crossed in the mail. I was hoping that you would answer at least a few of my concerns. I do realize

that you must be an extremely busy man. I have been attempting to preach the Gospel of Christ for almost thirty years. In that time, when someone has called or written to me with a question about what I preach and what I believe I do not believe I have ever refused to attempt to clarify my personal conviction in the matter under discussion.

You say if I have a specific question as to subjects you have discussed. . . I thought I did ask 15 specific questions!

Let me ask 2 specific questions in light of what Mack Lyon related to my elders: (1) Have you severed all connections and association with the Jubilee presentation? (2) Would you please have your secretary make a copy of your statement about distancing yourself from Jubilee and clarifying your intention to turn Lipscomb University back toward the Bible? Again, I would like to thank you in advance for your help in this matter.

Because of the cross,

[Signed]

Jesse Whitlock, Evangelist

AGAIN FLATT DOES NOT RESPOND— WHITLOCK SEEKS HELP FROM LYON

17 Nov 1998

Mr. Mack Lyon
P.O. Box 371
Edmond, OK 73083

Dear brother Lyon,

I am writing to ask you to assist me in locating some information. This relates back to the current stance and teaching of brother Steve Flatt. I have been very disappointed in his hedging on some very important issues. I am enclosing our correspondence. I think you will quickly see what I mean.

In the letter you sent to my elders you pointed out that in private conversation you learned regarding Jubilee that bro. Flatt "...regretted he had ever been involved with it, and was disassociating himself with it." Also, he desired to "... swing Lipscomb back to a more conservative stance." As you say, that is "good news"! Your letter also mentioned that "He has written and published his intent, but his critics are nit-picking to pieces what he has written" (emphasis—JW). As you will note in my correspondence with bro. Flatt, as of today's date I still do not have a copy of this document. I have asked over a dozen Gospel preachers if they have seen this document. Thus far, I am simply unable to find anyone, apparently, bro. Flatt included, who seems to know anything about this.

If you would be so kind, please send me a copy of your copy. In the event that you do not have a copy, would you be so kind as to let me know where I can find a copy and study what he has written in regards to these most important matters. I want to thank you in advance for your help in this matter for the cause of Truth.

Because of the cross,

[signed]

Jesse Whitlock, Evangelist

LYON DOES NOT RESPOND— WHITLOCK AGAIN REQUESTS LYON'S HELP

7 Dec 1998

Mr. Mack Lyon
P.O. Box 371
Edmond, OK 73083

Dear brother Lyon,

This is just a reminder of a request made in my letter to you under date of November 17th. I would like to have a copy of the published statement that President Flatt is going to swing Lipscomb back to a more conservative stance and that there

will be no more association with Jubilee, i.e., in support of that instrument of error. If for some reason, you do not have a copy on hand, would you please let me know how I could go about getting a copy of this statement?

Thanking you in advance for any help you can give to me in this matter.

Because of the cross,
[signed]
Jesse Whitlock, Evangelist

ONCE AGAIN WHITLOCK WRITES FLATT

7 Dec 1998

Mr. Stephen F. Flatt
David Lipscomb University
3901 Granny White Pike
Nashville, TN 37204-3951

President Flatt:

This is just a reminder of a request made in my letter to you under date of October 17th. I would like to have a copy of the published statement that President Flatt is going to swing Lipscomb back to a more conservative stance and that there will be no more association with Jubilee, i.e., in support of that instrument of error. If for some reason, you do not have a copy on hand, would you please let me know how I could go about getting a copy of this statement?

Thanking you in advance for any help you can give to me in this matter.

Because of a cross,
[signed]
Jesse Whitlock
Evangelist

With nothing coming from Lyon or Flatt, Whitlock published an "Open Letter to Flatt."

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT STEVE FLATT

It is the ides of January 1999. For the final time I make an appeal to the President of David Lipscomb University. In August of 1998 the elders of Central church of Christ contacted brother Mack Lyon. They were concerned about his participation with you in the "We Believe" seminar there in Nashville.

Brother Lyon responded in a letter under date of Sept. 2, 1998. He related that after you were appointed President of David Lipscomb University he met with you for almost an hour. That was the Fall of 1997. He also told of how you realized the errors of Jubilee and regretted that you had ever been involved with such. He said you had a meeting with the elders of Granny White church of Christ that lasted for two hours. Apparently you told them the same as brother Mack Lyon. The letter stated, "He (Steve Flatt—JLW) has written and published his intent, but his critics are nit-picking to pieces what he has written."

Brother Flatt, I still have not been able to find that writing! You may recall that on the 12th and 17th of October 1998 I wrote asking you for a copy of that statement. Then, December 7, 1998 I wrote again asking for where I could find a copy. Thus far, I have not heard. On November 17, 1998 and December 7, 1998 I wrote to brother Lyon asking him for a copy of that which you have "written and published." Thus far, I have not heard.

Brother Flatt, I have asked 25 Gospel preachers if they have seen that writing which I suppose was written in 1997. So far, I have not been able to find any information about it. Let me appeal to the brotherhood at large. If anyone knows where I could obtain that writing please let me know!

Because of the cross,
[signed]
Jesse Whitlock
809 E. Pershing Dr.
Ardmore, OK 73401

Why will Flatt not answer such simple questions as those addressed to him by Whitlock in his September 7, 1998 letter to Flatt? Why does Flatt not make available to the church the "written and published statement" herein noted? N. B. Hardeman could have answered them in a minimal amount of space. What faithful gospel preacher would not or could not do so? Why would Lyon not produce the publicized documents declaring Flatt's intention to sever his relations with *Jubilee* and make *Lipscomb University* more conservative (whatever that means)? This is what Lyon said Flatt had done in his September 2, 1998 letter to the *Central Church* elders of Ardmore, Oklahoma. Where is the proof?

EARL EDWARDS, MACK LYON, STEVE FLATT,
AND PHIL SANDERS

On Saturday, March 27, 1999, the four previously mentioned men cooperated in what was called "Fundamental Truths Re-examined" at the *Lehman Avenue Church of Christ*, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Has Flatt repented of his past conduct? If he has where is the evidence of it?

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS RE-EXAMINED

A Seminar on Basic Issues Currently Facing the Church

Saturday, March 27, 1999

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Lehman Avenue Church of Christ
1002 Lehman Avenue, Bowling Green, KY 42103
(502) 843-8435



EARL EDWARDS
Director of Graduate Studies in
Bible at Freed-Hardeman University

Subject: Fellowship



MACK LYON
Speaker for National Television
Program, *In Search of the Lord's Way*

Subject: Music in Worship



STEVE FLATT
President of Lipscomb University

Subject: The Necessity of Baptism



PHIL SANDERS
Preacher for the Concord Road Church
of Christ, Brentwood, Tenn.

Subject: Authority of the Bible

All Elders, Deacons, Preachers, Bible Teachers, and
Interested Christians Are Invited (RSVP Requested)

1. Do any of the aforementioned speakers believe that it is scriptural to drink beverage alcohol at all?

2. Do any of these same speakers believe that mechanical instruments of music used in the worship of God is sin and, therefore will cause one's soul to be lost?

3. Do any of these speakers on the fundamentals believe and there are faithful children of God in the denominations (Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Christian Church, and the like)?

4. Do any of these speakers uphold Flatt in whom he has teaching in his Bible department at David Lipscomb?

5. Will Edwards, Lyon, Flatt, or Sanders answer the questions that Jesse Whitlock gave to Flatt?

NOT THE FIRST TIME MACK LYON HAS DEFENDED SUCH ACTION

In 1991 Lyon was slated to be on the *Pepperdine University Lectures*. I learned this from brethren in California after the fact. On June 13, 1991, I wrote to him expressing my regret that he would be a part of a program of a school long known for its propagation of liberalism.

6/13/91

Dear Brother Lyon,

I am writing you to express deep regret that you appeared on the 1991 Pepperdine Bible Lectures.

In Austin I do not get to view "Search" but I have always supported the program and you as speaker because of your faithfulness. I cannot understand how it is that you could associate yourself with Pepperdine and the like of those highlighted on the included copy of the lecture brochure.

There is no way that such fellowship can be supported by the Bible.

In Christian love,

[Signed]

David P. Brown

LYON RESPONDS WITH THE FOLLOWING LETTER

June 17, 1991

Mr. David P. Brown
9210 Chisholm Ln.
Austin, Texas 78748

Dear brother David:

After two days of some of the severest and most exhausting face-to-face confrontation with the teachings of Rubel Shelly, Jeff Walling, et al, I came to the end of last week almost totally "wiped out." Physically my strength was almost gone and I was emotionally drained. I was ready to throw in the towel and just quit. (Most preachers my age have already "retired.")

But on the weekend I found some quiet time in a quiet place. I prayed a lot about it, and received strength from God who has been my source always. I was also encouraged by the thought that a lot of faithful and devoted Christians who know me, have put their confidence in me and support me because they see the need for doing what I am doing. And they are depending on me to continue. So, I got up willing to go on a bit further.

Then came your letter. David, let me state unequivocally, I have no fellowship, partnership, participation or sympathy with Rubel Shelly, Jeff Walling, Randy Mayeux or any of that crowd, in any of their false teachings. And, there is a very limited number of preachers among us who openly and vigorously confronts those teachings more than I do. I have no intentions of compromising one word of the gospel of Jesus Christ with their damnable heresies. I have said publicly and persistently that until our schools, churches, elders and preachers stop giving these fellows a platform for spreading their pernicious doctrines, we will not be able to curb their evil

works. If they will not do that, the next best defense of the truth that I see is to take advantage of any opportunity that comes our way for presenting the truth in the forum where the falsehood is presented. To do less than that is unfaithful stewardship of opportunity and responsibility, and in my judgment cowardly, though it may fly the flag of "loyalty."

I have declined their invitations to speak at their Tulsa Workshop and have refused to make even an appearance at their Nashville Jubilee because this would be fellowship or participation in their work. But, my appearance at Pepperdine University was different. In this instance, I was not there at the invitation of Rubel Shelly or Jeff Walling. I was to be a guest of the university, who was offering me a platform for expressing a point of view that would not be expressed by the others. There were no limitations placed on me as to the contents of my speech. I feel I was no more in fellowship with Rubel Shelly in that kind of setting than I am in fellowship with the Pentecostal preacher who follows me on the local television station which provides me a platform to preach the gospel every Sunday morning. And my appearance on the program is no more an endorsement of all that Pepperdine does than my presence on the ACTS television network (owned and operated by the Southern Baptist Convention) constitutes fellowship with the Baptists and an endorsement of Baptist doctrine.

It seems to me we have two alternatives in combating heresy: (1) We can circle the wagons and defensively preach and preach and preach against it over and over and over again and again and again to ourselves within the circle. That would be the easy way because everyone present would be in agreement saying "Amen, brother, preach on! You're the greatest!" Or (2) We can put on the whole armour of God, get outside the circle of wagons, and aggressively take the battle out to where the battle is being fought, and openly encounter the heretic and/or his disciples with hopes of preventing other preachers, elders and congregations from falling victim to his destructive teachings—and perhaps prevent a more widespread apostasy of Christians and congregations. That is what I did last week, and that is what I propose to do as long as God gives me the strength to do it. My mission is to preach Jesus Christ. That's what I've always done "in season and out of season," and if the opportunity comes to do it on Mars Hill, I'll preach Him there! When I am forced by my own brethren to apologize for that or to stop doing that, I'll lay down my armor at the feet of the Captain of my salvation, and let Him judge my stewardship.

I'm thankful beyond my ability to express it for any support and encouragement you have given in the past. I pray I may continue to have it. If not, I'll do the best and most I can with what the Lord supplies, and give Him the thanks and praise.

Sincerely,

[Signed]

Mack Lyon

AN UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT?

Please note that in 1991 Lyon declared, "*David, let me state unequivocally, I have no fellowship, partnership, participation or sympathy with Rubel Shelly, Jeff Walling, Randy Mayeux or any of that crowd, in any of their false teachings.*" Well, then "what meaneth the bleating of "Steve Flatt "in mine ears" and Lyon's "lowing" right along the side of him at the 1998 *Granny White Seminar* of the modern day Sauls and Amalekites (I Samuel 15:3, 8, 9, 13, 15-17, 20-23; Romans 15:4)? Am I misrepresenting Lyon when he stated "unequivocally" that he had not one thing to do with the Rubel Shelly crowd?

In 1991 with reference to the teaching of Shelly and friends Lyon boldly asserted,

I have said publicly and persistently that until our schools, churches, elders and preachers stop giving these fellows a platform for spreading their pernicious doctrines, we will not be able to curb their evil works. If they will not do that,

the next best defense of the truth that I see is to take the truth in the forum where the falsehood is presented. To do less than that is unfaithful stewardship of opportunity and responsibility, and in my judgment cowardly, though it may fly the flag of loyalty.

Does Lyon think that his association with Steve Flatt and the "kinder and gentler" Anderson and Kearley of the former "Old Reliable" to be consistent with his views set out in the previous quote? Did Lyon "fly the flag of 'loyalty'" when he fellowshiped Flatt and rebuked sound elders ceasing their support his work because of his hypocrisy? Flatt is as mixed up with Shelly and company as anyone could be. If Flatt has repented where is the proof?

In 1991 Lyon declared that he, more than many others, "openly and vigorously confronts those teachings (liberal teachings – DPB)." Indeed, it is highly commendable that Mack Lyon teaches the truth dealing with what the liberals corrupt. However, that does not touch top, side, or bottom of his and many others' problem regarding appearing with false teachers. It is not enough to teach the truth. One must expose the error, mark the false teachers, and have no company with them. That is what the "Good Book" says. What is so hard to understand about that? The only association any faithful child of God may have with false teachers is to rebuke them, expose their doctrine to be false, and teach the truth in the place of their error. LYON DID NOT DO THAT AT GRANNY WHITE.

WHAT ABOUT PEPPERDINE?

Why did he not decline the invitation at Pepperdine? He was listed on their lecture brochure for Friday, April 26, at 7:00 a. m. I know that to be the case because I have a copy of the 1991 *Pepperdine lectureship* brochure. Why did he not reject that invitation and the one from *Granny White Pike* as he rejected the invitations to speak at the *Tulsa Workshop* and the *Nashville Jubilee*? He plainly declared: "I have declined their invitations to speak at their *Tulsa Workshop* and have refused to make even an appearance at their *Nashville Jubilee* because this would be fellowship or participation in their work." Using Lyon's own logic, he, by appearing with Steve Flatt, fellowshiped him and participated in his work.

The following is my June 24, 1991, response to Lyon's June 17, 1991 letter. At the time of the writing of this letter I was the living in Austin, Texas and the director of the *Southwest School of Bible Studies*.

Mr. Mac Lyon
P.O. Box 371
Edmond, OK 73083-0371

Dear brother Mac:

Thank you for your letter of 6/17/91. I want to assure you that I have no ill will toward you in any form or fashion. I lived in Oklahoma for eight years (5 in Muskogee and 3 in Tulsa). I was there when Search was started or at least when it started to be well known. I was and am thankful for your faithful gospel preaching and your opposition to Shelly et al. So these matters do not enter into my concern. I ask you to please consider the following questions and contents.

1. What is the difference in an invitation from a university like Pepperdine and an invitation from the *Tulsa Workshop* or the *Nashville Jubilee*?

2. If an invitation to speak at the *Tulsa Workshop*, etc. and your acceptance of such would constitute fellowship with Shelly, et al. then why does not an invitation from Pepperdine and your acceptance to participate with the same persons constitute fellowship with the same people?

3. Are you saying that Pepperdine U. is taking a different stand than the *Tulsa Workshop*, etc.?

4. In your speaking opportunities at Pepperdine, did you confront the liberal teachings and practices of Pepperdine, Rubel Shelly, et al. or only present matters about Search?

5. Would the apostle Paul have appeared on a university lectureship with Demas after Demas had forsaken him having loved this present world?

6. What would be the difference between Paul and John appearing on a lectureship planned and operated by Demas, Diotrophes and their supporters, and Paul and John appearing on a university lecture program planned and conducted by brethren who thought so much of Demas, Diotrophes and others like them that they extended an invitation to them to participate?

7. By Pepperdine's advertising of their '91 lectures how is a person who does not know you going to know that you were not hand in hand with such men as conduct the University and those who appeared on the lectures?

8. Did the university know before you came that you would not only be promoting Search, but that you would be exposing the error of the university having such men as well as the false doctrine of men like Shelly?

Brother Mack, if while at Pepperdine you exposed the error of the university as well as Shelly et. al. like Paul exposed error on Mars Hill in Athens, then know that you have my highest praise. You ought, therefore, to make the tapes of your lectures available and write at least one article for publication setting forth just what you did in exposing that heretical mess!

Brother Mac, if I were to be invited to be on Pepperdine's lectures to promote the Southwest School of Bible Studies, Pepperdine would know before I came where I stood regarding Shelly and like heretics as well the school having such men on their lectures. They also would know that when I rose to speak it would be to expose their error.

Long before there was a *Tulsa Workshop* and such like heretic promotion centers, Pepperdine University was promoting error. In 1969 when James Atterberry was fired from Harding for his heresy that one cannot know absolute truth it was Pepperdine who immediately employed him. They have gone from bad to worse to much worse. You know that these fellows do not believe what you preach. If they did they would not invite Shelly et al. to be on the program.

There is a great deal of difference in buying time from a denominational T. V. Network where everyone knows to begin with that you are going to preach your convictions and in associating with false brethren where it is advertised in such a way that brethren by such advertisement as the school sends out cannot tell the difference in you and the heretics.

Brother Mack because I disagree with you regarding your involvement in the '91 Pepperdine lectures does not mean that I do not deeply appreciate your preaching on Search. I continue to support your preaching on the program and hope that you will see the direction from whence my arguments come.

I do not mind telling you, however, that when you are no longer able to be the speaker on Search that I am deeply concerned as to faithfulness of the next speaker. Knowing you by your reputation and something of the church that now sponsors Search, I do not believe that my concern is groundless. I hope these words are taken with the loving concern in which they are written. May God bless you as you faithfully serve Him.

In Christian Love,
[Signed]
David P. Brown

AMAZING REVELATION FROM MACK LYON

In view of the concerns of certain California brethren about Lyon's advertised appearance on the 1991 *Pepperdine Lectures* as well as his public position on the "SEARCH" television program I did not hesitate to give copies of our correspondence to such brethren. Moreover, most of the brethren who supported "SEARCH" were (and I think continue to be) brethren who do not desire to support any kind of false doctrine, teacher or hypocrisy.

I do not believe any honest, rational thinking person could read Lyons June 17, 1991 letter to me and not conclude that he was defending his participation in the 1991 *Pepperdine Lectures*. However, approximately six months later I began to receive reports that Lyon had never attended the 1991 *Pepperdine Lectures*. I, therefore, on February 27, 1992, wrote him the following letter.

Mr. Mack Lyon
P.O. Box 371
Edmond, Ok 73803-0371

Dear Brother Mack:

In the last couple of weeks several things have been brought to my attention regarding our correspondence of last June that trouble me. I, therefore, would like to clarify and comment on some of these matters whereof I have been informed.

1. Your appearance at Pepperdine U. to which I had reference in my June 13 and 24, 1991 letters to you was Pepperdine's 48th Annual Bible Lectures) April 23-26, 1991. The Schedule shows that you were slated to speak on one of the "Breakfast Programs" Friday, April 26, 1991 at Tyler Campus Center 104, 7-8 a.m. In my first letter to you I enclosed a copy of the official program for said lectures so you would know that to which I had reference. I am again enclosing a copy of the same advertisement so you will once again be informed as to which gathering at Pepperdine U. I made reference. I know nothing about any other appearance you may or my not have made on that campus. Brother Mack, did you or did you not speak as the Pepperdine Lectureship brochure, a copy of which is herein enclosed, advertised you to speak?

2. Having dealt with matters under point number one I would like to know if you were in any way a part at the conference called "Christian Primitivism and Modernization: Coming to Terms With Our Age" held on the Pepperdine U. Campus, Malibu, CA, June 6-9. I have been informed that you were in attendance at this gathering but due to your wife's being sick you did not attend the April 23-26, 1991 lectures. In your June 17 response to my June 13, 1991 letter to you, did you think that I had reference to the conference of June 6 - 9?

3. I became aware of the advertisement that you were scheduled to appear on the 48th Annual Pepperdine U. Bible Lectures, April 23 - 26, 1991, when a brother from the West coast told me that you were scheduled to appear and gave me a copy of said schedule. I told him that I would write you and let him know what your response was. I gave him a copy of our correspondence. Another brother who was present at the time that I was informed about your scheduled appearance on the Pepperdine U. Bible Lectures of April 23-26, 1991 requested a copy of anything that I might receive from you. A copy of our correspondence went to said brother. Upon their request I gave four other brethren copies of our June correspondence. None of these things happened very recently.

4. Brother Mack, now I have received word that you are saying that I am going around trying to destroy a good work. Whether you did or you did not say such, such a statement is nothing less than a falsehood. Frankly, since you did not see fit to answer my 6/24/91 letter to you I have been too busy with my own work to give it much thought. Brother Mac, since when does any one of us rise above being questioned: especially if we saw nothing wrong in allowing our names to appear right along side some of the worst false teachers in the

land?? I SIMPLY REFUSE TO BE MADE OUT THE "BAD GUY" BECAUSE YOU ASSOCIATED YOUR NAME, REPUTATION AND TV PROGRAM WITH A COLLEGE AND LECTURESHIP FULL OF FALSE TEACHERS!

5. Brother Mack, did it ever dawn on you that no one would have ever questioned you if you had NOT done that which warranted those questions? If you are going to expect faithful brethren to support you then please do not do those things that raise such questions. I STILL WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OF MY 6/24/91; ALTHOUGH I WILL NOT HOLD MY BREATH TILL YOU DO.

6. With this letter plus my earlier letters to you, you have every single solitary thing I have ever written or said concerning you on this matter. I do not believe that such is the case concerning what you have said about my questioning your appearance at Pepperdine U.

7. I stand behind my June '91 correspondence with you 100%. I deny completely the scripturalness of an attitude that denounces any one and every one who questions us on our beliefs and actions. It seems to me we ought to be open and above board in our actions and that we should learn to practice what we preach concerning I Peter 3:15.

8. If anyone thinks that I relish and enjoy such confrontations, then they simply do not know whereof they speak. Some of us still do things because they are right, no matter what the consequences are. If I am mistaken in anything regarding any of these matters I would appreciate being corrected; but please do not act like a Christian does not have the scriptural obligation to question what you or anyone else believes and/or practices.

In His Service,
[Signed]
David P. Brown

On March 5, 1992 I received the following letter from Lyon. In view of how he answered me the first time who knows what all he said and, for that matter, what he says today in his attempt to justify his conduct.

March 5, 1992

Mr. David P. Brown
9210 Chisholm Lane
Austin, Texas 78748

Dear brother Brown:

I was not on the campus of Pepperdine University in 1991 for any event or reason.

I make no apologies for anything I've written or said about this "confrontation." Had you never made copies of our private and personal correspondence, no such copies would be in circulation in support of a falsehood against me. You must bear the responsibility. In every instance where elders and others have had enough of the spirit of Christ to bring it to me, I've stood vindicated. In some other instances faithful elders and gospel preachers who know me well, have come to my defense and successfully defended my name and integrity. If that makes you the "bad guy," I'm sure you're willing to bear it in order to be my judge.

Sincerely,
[Signed]
Mack Lyon

By what he wrote it seemed to me that Lyon thought that I was under much pressure from his defenders because of my opposition to him. Such was not the case at all. I was simply trying to figure out how he could deny being at the 1991 *Pepperdine Lectures* while writing a letter to me the contents of which could only be construed as a defense of his participation in said lectures. To this day I do not understand why he wrote what he did to me regarding his scheduled and advertised appearance at the 1991 *Pepperdine Lectures*. Of course you will notice the same kind of "judg-

ing" comment to which all those caught in between a rock and a hard place resort when they do not intend to admit wrong.

On March 12, 1992, I wrote Lyon the following letter including an article from the *Nashville Banner*. He never responded to it.

NASHVILLE BANNER
March 12, 1992

Pat Boone: On Pepperdine advisory board
MALIBU, Cali.—Entertainer Pat Boone is the new chairman of Pepperdine University's advisory board.

Boone, 58, was installed Wednesday in a ceremony at the private, liberal arts college.

The previous chairman was Bruce Herschensohn, a former television commentator running in the Republican primary for the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Mack Lyon
P.O. Box 371
Edmond, Ok 73803-0371

Dear Brother Lyon:

In June 17, 1991, fully knowing that you were not on the campus of Pepperdine University in 1991 for any event or reason." (Your statement to me in letter of 3/5/91) you wrote me as follows:

"...But, my appearance at Pepperdine University was different. In this instance, I was not there at the invitation of Rubel Shelly or Jeff Walling. I was to be a guest of the university who was offering me a platform for expressing a point of view that would not be expressed by others..." (PP. 1-2).

My first question to you in my 6/24/91 letter reads: "What is the difference in an invitation from a university like Pepperdine and an invitation from the Tulsa Workshop or the Nashville Jubilee? Though your "honesty," "integrity," etc. does not allow you to answer questions; and, though your 6/17/91 letter is a defence of an appearance at Pepperdine that you never made, I suppose that the above announcement from the Nashville Banner with the headline "Pat Boone: On Pepperdine advisory board" would have no bearing at all on your appearing a second time (Pardon me, I should have written the FIRST time) at Pepperdine in the future. Maybe at your next, or rather first appearance you and dis-fellowshipped apostate Pat can "advise" Pepperdine out of their problems.

Sincerely,
[Signed]
David P. Brown

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HAS THE LEOPARD CHANGED HIS SPOTS?

From 1991 till 1998 did Mack Lyon change his ways? The evidence is obvious for anyone who wants to see it. And, the answer to the question is a resounding no. Furthermore, there is no indication that he has altered his views on this matter in the intervening months since his appearance with Steve Flatt at the *Granny White Pike Seminar* in 1998.

David Lipscomb said,

A few earnest men and women in the school room, day by day impressing the hearts of the youth with the religious truths that should govern them through life, will do more to advance religion and build up the church than an army of eloquent preachers.

Does anyone one actually believe that today David Lipscomb would be a staunch supporter of the university that bears his name? For that matter, today just which one of the schools of higher education operated by members of the church of Christ would Lipscomb support? If Lipscomb were alive today can anyone imagine an advertisement reading in the following manner?

Hear David Lipscomb (Founding President) and Steve Flatt (President) of David Lipscomb University as they Expose the Liberalism Characteristic of the *Nashville Jubilee*.

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Spring, Texas 77373

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Lynn Parker, Assistant Director
Tom Wacaster, Academic Dean

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THE LORD'S CHURCH: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

AUGUST 8-12, 1999

Sunday, August 8th

9:30 a.m.	The Lord's Church In Purpose, Prophecy, Preparation, and Presentation	David Brown
10:30 a.m.	What Happened To The Lord's Church?: The Falling Away	B.J. Clarke
7:00 p.m.	What Does It Mean To Restore The Lord's Church?	Jim Laws
8:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Jerusalem	Dub McClish

Monday, August 9th

9:00 a.m.	Lessons From The Church At Antioch	Wayne Cox
10:00 a.m.	Lessons From The Churches Of Galatia	Darrell Beard
11:00 a.m.	Lessons From The Church At Thessalonica	Billy Bland
1:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Colossae	David Jones
2:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Sardis	Jason Roberts
3:00 p.m.	Panel Discussion—The Present Condition of the Lord's Church—Strengths and Weaknesses	
7:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Rome	Keith Mosher, Sr.
8:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Corinth	Paul Sain

Tuesday, August 10th

9:00 a.m.	Lessons From The Church At Pergamum	Wayne Jones
10:00 a.m.	Lessons From The Church At Laodicea	Victor Eskew
11:00 a.m.	Lessons From The Church At Thyatira	Keith Cozort
1:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Smyrna	Kevin Beard
2:00 p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Philadelphia	Daniel Cates
3:00 p.m.	Panel Discussion—The Present Condition of the Lord's Church—Strengths and Weaknesses	
7:00p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Ephesus	Ted J. Clarke
8:00p.m.	Lessons From The Church At Philippi	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Wednesday, August 11th

9:00 a.m.	Pictures of the Church—Body of Christ, Household of God	Jerry Martin
10:00 a.m.	Pictures of the Church—the Army of God, the Temple of God, the Kingdom of God	Don Walker
11:00 a.m.	Pictures of the Church—the Vineyard of the Lord	Curtis Cates
1:00 p.m.	The Growth of the Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future	Bill Bryant
2:00 p.m.	The Organization of the Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future	Bobby Liddell
3:00 p.m.	Panel Discussion: Does The Church Need To Change To Prepare For The Future?	
7:00 p.m.	The Worship of the Lord's Church As God Would Have It	Michael Hatcher
8:00 p.m.	Innovations In Worship: Past, Present, Future	Gary Summers

Thursday, August 12th

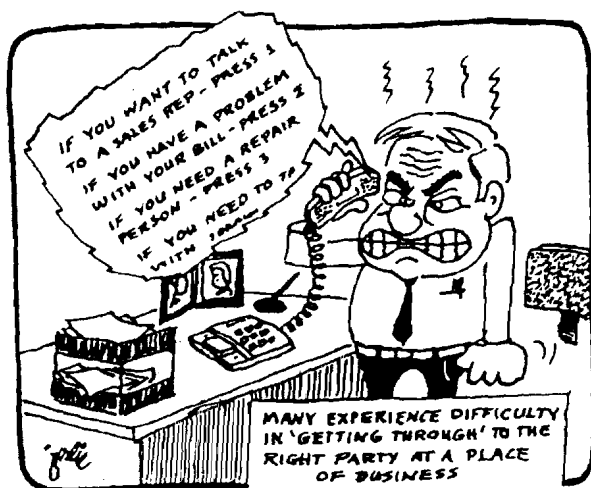
9:00 a.m.	The Mission of the Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future	Michael Light
10:00 a.m.	The Role of Women In The Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future	Tracy Dugger
11:00 a.m.	Discipline in the Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future	Glenn Colley
1:00 p.m.	Some Popular Misconceptions About The Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future	Toney Smith
2:00 p.m.	The Future Destiny of the Lord's Church	Tom Wacaster
3:00 p.m.	Panel Discussion: Does The Church Need To Change To Prepare For The Future?	
7:00 p.m.	Can One Be Saved Outside of the Lord's Church?	James Rogers
8:00 p.m.	The Lord's Church—The Pure Bride of Christ	Garland Elkins

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Is there any difficulty in GETTING THROUGH TO GOD?

Jodie Boren



The answer to the above question is yes and no. I Peter 3:12 makes this quite clear. **“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”** This same thought is expressed by the psalmist in Psalms 34:15-17. So, YES, the righteous can “get through to God” but, NO, those that do evil cannot. It is not that God cannot hear the evil doer but, rather, *He chooses not to hear*. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 59:1-2, **“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have his face from you, that he will not hear.”** Evil is the fruit of disobedience to God—those whose hearts are focused on things of the world and not on things above (Colossians 3:2 and I John 2:15-17). Or, you might say, those who are habitually in rebellion to God.

PRAYER HAS BOUNDARIES

Prayer does have boundaries placed upon man by the will of God. Therefore, our prayers must be in harmony with God’s will. One boundary—or reason that prayers are not sometimes answered—is DOUBT. In James 1:6 we read, **“But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting, for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.”** Jesus said, **“And all things whatsoever ye shall ask, believing, ye shall receive”** (Matthew 21:22). There must be faith when we pray.

Another boundary is set by WRONGDOING. The wise man wrote, **“he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination”** (Proverbs 28:9). King David understood this. He said, **“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”** (Psalms 6:18). God’s commandments are righteousness

(Psalms 119:172) and if we refuse to hear and obey his law, he will choose not to hear our prayers.

God will not hear the prayer of one who is SELF-RIGHTEOUS. In the well known parable of the publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14) we have a classic example of this truth. The publican was humble and recognized he was a sinner in need of mercy. The Pharisee, on the other hand, “prayed thus with himself” calling attention to what he thought was his righteousness. Jesus said the publican went down to his house justified—but not so with the self-righteous Pharisee.

Again we fail to “get through to God” because of SELFISHNESS. **“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye many consume it upon your lusts”** (James 4:3). We must be unselfish as Jesus was. Not only did He die for our sins but he prayed for the very ones who were having him crucified (Luke 23:34).

And, how can we expect God to forgive us if we refuse to FORGIVE those who sin against us? Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-15, **“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”** When we fail to forgive, we destroy the bridge over which we must pass.

We must also be SINCERE in prayer. Paul instructs us in I Corinthians 14:15 to pray with the spirit and with the understanding.

In Luke 18:1-7 we see that we must be PERSISTENT in prayer. **“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them.”**

Prayer is powerful but if we ‘get through to God’ it will only be if we pray according to his will—within his boundaries.

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A RICH HERITAGE

Paul Vaughn

The study of the *Restoration Movement* in America is one that is filled with great joy and delight. As we look behind the veil of antiquity a rich heritage is seen in the hearts of men and women who rejected the shackles of denominationalism for the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. Their goal was to **"speak as the oracles of God"** (I Peter 4:11). No higher objective can be formulated in the mind of man because it glorifies God.

REASONS TO STUDY RESTORATION HISTORY

There are a number of reasons to study the history of the church of Christ and its development during the past 200 years. Pioneer Christians suffered hardships in order to worship God according to the pattern revealed in the New Testament. When **Barton W. Stone** preached at Cane Ridge in Bourbon county, Kentucky there was no heat in the building to warm Christians during the worship services. The chinking between the logs was left out so the worshipers could watch for hostile Indians. The hardships, difficulties and adversities of the church in the early period of the restoration eclipse many of the problems faced today by Christians.

It is important to study restoration history because some of the problems they faced with liberalism, denominationalism, and worldliness were handled by sound brethren years ago. Much can be learned from looking at their defense of the faith. A study of the battle **J.W. McGarvey** fought against modernism would help the student of the Bible defend the faith in modern times. **M.C. Kurfees'** arguments against the use of mechanical instrumental music in worship are just as significant and useful today as they were when Kurfees fought the good fight against their use in the church over a hundred years ago.

L.L. Pinkerton was one of the first liberals in the Restoration Movement. His efforts helped to move many congregations from their first love. Studying Pinkerton's arguments and activity will help overcome those who follow his example today. These are but a few reasons to study restoration history. There is very little interest in the church today of the men and women who sacrificed greatly to restore New Testament Christianity. Yet, the pilgrims of the restoration paved the way enabling the church to grow to greater heights today.

A WORD OF CAUTION

The study of restoration history is meaningful, useful, and important. However, it is not a substitute for Bible study. Man will be judged by the word of God. **"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"** (John 12:48). Paul said, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman**

that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Studying the scriptures will lead man in the way approved by God. If man had been more devoted to Bible study perhaps there would not have been a need to restore ancient pure New Testament Christianity.



It is not my desire to elevate the leaders in history to be on equal ground with the writers of the New Testament. Christians must live by the book and not by the traditions or the teachings of men. The church at Corinth was told **"not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another"** (I Corinthians 4:6).

The lives of Stone, the Campbells, **Walter Scott**, **John T. Johnson**, and **"Raccoon" John Smith** can and will encourage Christians to faithful service to the Lord and His church. These are but a few of the personalities that can be studied from restoration history. Yes, they were men who sinned and fell short of their mark often. They were men reading and studying their way out of religious error with the goal of restoration, restoring the church one reads about in the New Testament.

MONTHLY STUDY OF RESTORATION

This article will serve as an introduction to a monthly study of restoration history. There will be studies about the Campbells, Stone, and Scott. The debates of the restorers and the controversies that came out of some of their efforts will be discussed. We also want to look at congregational histories and glimpse into the lives of the average Christian, people who worked hard for the cause of Christ without notoriety or fanfare.

Because of the tendency to surrender to religious error, time will be spent on a study of the restoration principle, how this principle separates the faithful Christian from the apostate. Christians have a rich heritage. Let us take the time and look deeply into our past to learn more about its beginning.

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BOY SCOUTS OUT, ROMAN CATHOLICS AND ORTHODOX TALK, FROZEN EMBRYO, AND MORAL LEADERSHIP

Mark McWhorter

The *American Civil Liberties Union* wants to get the Boy Scouts out of the public schools. The *ACLU* filed a lawsuit in federal court in Chicago March 14 to prevent schools, military bases, and other groups from sponsoring Boy Scout troop meetings at their facilities. The suit names as defendants the Chicago Public Schools and the United States Transportation Command, whose headquarters is at *Scott Air Force Base* in southern Illinois. It did not allege that anyone suffered discrimination because of programs sponsored by the Chicago Public Schools, said **Robert Hall**, attorney with the school system. "...It is regrettable that the *ACLU* would seek to deny these boys access to the scouting program simply because they promise to do their duty to God," **Gregg Shields**, national BSA spokesman, told the Associated Press. The *ACLU* is a longtime critic of the Boy Scouts (*Religion Today*, email news service, 4/15/99). [*They will stop at nothing to prevent any semblance of God entering the school building. And by filing this suit they continue to give the Boy Scouts trouble and make them use resources for court cases rather than instilling values into the boys—MTM*]

Catholic and Orthodox Christian leaders will meet for the first time in the Western Hemisphere. Baltimore's Cardinal **William Keeler** and Archbishop **Spyridon**, primate of the Greek Orthodox Church, this week discussed their meeting, which will be held in June at *St. Mary's College* in Emmitsburg, Md.... "The work now is to see where the church was before the division" in 1094 that split Christianity into Roman Catholic and Orthodox camps, Keeler said. "We have to get to know each other better." Church leaders will discuss the possibility of seeking full communion and how to help congregations in Central and Eastern Europe, the Associated Press said. Catholics and Orthodox have conducted talks on theological issues since 1988 (*Religion Today*, email news service, 4/16/99). [*That is easy. They need to sit down with the Bible and read it. Then they will know what they need to do—MTM*]

A Texas appeals court has settled the score in the nation's first custody battle over a daughter born of a frozen embryo. The Houston-based court sided with the father, who was attempting to exercise parental rights over the baby. The embryo was created through *in vitro* fertilization and frozen before the divorce, but implanted after the divorce. The mother had argued that her ex-husband lost his rights when they divorced without agreeing about what to

do with the embryo (*Law News Network*, email news service, 4/18/99). [*What a tangled web we weave when we go against God's design for marriage—MTM*]

At a fundraiser after the release of **Ken Starr's** report, Democratic National Committee Chairman made the following comment. "Mr. President, it seems to me that you have demonstrated, at least in my adult lifetime, a higher commitment to the kind of moral leadership that I value in public service and public policy than any person that I have ever met" (*Human Events*, October 2, 1998, p. 24). [*That is what is wrong with political leadership in America today. No morals—MTM*]

Al Gore in his book on the environment: What we need is "a renewed investigation of the wisdom distilled by all faiths. This pan-religious perspective may prove especially important where our global civilization's responsibility for the Earth is concerned." "A growing number of anthropologists and archeomythologists argue that the prevailing ideology of belief in prehistoric Europe and much of the world was based on the worship of a simple earth goddess, who was assumed to be the fount of all life and who radiated harmony among all living things" (*Insight*, October 12, 1998, pgs. 19-20). [*What we need to investigate is Gore's intelligence. He would demean God's word to just another religion among religions. And he would have us believe that all original religion looked to a goddess. He fails to tell us that the only individuals who believe this are some fringe feminist writers. But since when is full honesty a characteristic of anyone in the present Administration?—MTM*]

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THE YOUTH AS GOD WOULD HAVE THEM

Jason R. Roberts

God, in his divine wisdom, has provided a precise pattern of truth by which young people can direct their lives while they journey upon this earth (Psalm 119:105; cf. II Peter 1:3). While the world, with all of its "glitter" and "glamour," earnestly endeavors to hurl in their direction everything that is foreign to the message of the Bible; Christian young people would do well to investigate the only reliable source of information that will bring true happiness here and a lifetime of the same in the hereafter. Unfortunately, some young people are more interested in consulting the secular and sinful literature found in "Teen Magazine," "Seventeen," "Cosmopolitan," "GQ," "Esquire," and like publications, to guide their lives, than they are in ascertaining what God has revealed in the precious book called the Bible. Parents would save their children an untold amount of future harm by instilling within their hearts the word of God, and by making sure that salacious teaching from such literature mentioned above never enters their minds! Just what is God's desire for today's youth? In his sermon on the mount, our Lord spoke some vital truths that will make the youth of today as God would have them to be.

PURE IN HEART

First, the youth as God would have them must be pure in heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Maintaining purity in an impure world is a constant challenge to the hearts of all of us. Satan knows that if he can corrupt the tender, pure heart of a teenager, eventually the scales of destruction will be decisively tipped in his favor.

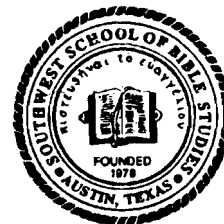
The blessings found in the Bible for those of a pure heart are innumerable. Jesus said that the pure in heart would "see God." In what sense? Is Jesus saying that the pure in heart would one day see him in heaven? It is true that only those of a pure heart will go to heaven (cf., Revelation 21:27). However, it seems that Jesus is referring to something entirely different when he states that only those of a pure heart shall see him. We know that when our Lord returns, every eye (both the pure and impure of heart) will see him (Revelation 1:7). So, what does the Lord have in mind? It is my conviction that those of a pure heart will "see God" in a way that those of an impure heart cannot. A beautiful sunset has more meaning to the person with a pure heart, and he who gazes upon its splendor is reminded of the majestic creation of his heavenly Father (Psalm 19:1). Those of an impure heart cannot appreciate the same, nor can they truly attribute such beauty to the God of heaven.

POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Second, the youth as God would have them must be positive in influence. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify

your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). The old saying, "If you don't use it you will lose it" cannot apply to our Christian influence. There is no such thing as someone losing his influence—period. A person can lose his influence for good, but his influence cannot altogether be erased from his character. How can today's youth maintain a positive influence in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (cf., Acts 2:40)?

A positive influence can be disseminated by their lips and demonstrated by their lives. What we say and do says a lot about who we are and with whom we are associated. When Peter and John were seized by the priests and Sadducees for *SPEAKING* for Christ, the Bible says "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13, emphasis



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added, JRR). Speaking and living for Christ, even in unpopular situations, will provide an atmosphere for the peers of our youth to take knowledge of their having been with Jesus. The world is watching, taking careful notes and “checking them twice,” to see whether or not we measure up to the people whom we profess to be. We must be able to give them an answer for the hope that is within us (I Peter 3:15), and at the same time remembering that we are an epistle of Christ read and known by all men (II Corinthians 2:2,3). The life of Christ sums up beautifully the above thoughts—he not only *told* men how to live (his lips), but he *showed* men how to live (his life) (Acts 1:1).

SPIRITUALLY COMPLETE

Third, the youth as God would have them must be perfect in life. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). This does not mean that they are to be “perfect” in the sense of being sinlessly perfect as in the case of our Lord (Hebrew 4:15). The word “perfect,” as used here, means to be full-grown, mature. It carries the idea of something that has reached its ultimate purpose or goal. An acorn has not reached its maturity, or its ultimate purpose, until it has grown into a towering oak tree. Likewise, the child of God has not reached his ultimate purpose or goal until he has matured, i.e., become full-grown in Christ. This maturity, this perfection, this holiness is a goal that is not out of reach for our young

people. Otherwise, the admonition to become perfect, like our heavenly father is perfect, would not be in the Bible. How can today’s youth mold their lives so that they too can become perfect like Christ? Paul wrote, **“Whom (Christ) we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”** (Colossians 1:28, emphasis added). They need to follow James’ admonition to look into **“the perfect law of liberty”** (James 1:25, emphasis added). And Paul’s instructions that the Holy scriptures and the Holy scriptures alone are the very instrument by which **“the man of God may be perfect”** (II Timothy 3:15-17, emphasis added). While it is true that we are imperfect human beings, nevertheless this standard of perfection is set before all of us. It is a standard that God cannot lower, and it is a standard that man dare not lower!

The challenge for our youth to remain pure in an impure world, influence our world for the better, and at the same time earnestly strive for perfection, can probably be expressed by the following sentiments from a popular hymn:

“Thou art the Potter, I am the clay!
Mold me and make me After thy will,
While I am waiting, Yielded and still!”

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Studies From The Biblical Text...

“CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE”

Daniel Denham

The statement borne above is found in I Corinthians 1:17, and was penned by the apostle Paul. It has often been abused by some to try to “prove” that baptism is unessential to salvation. In his debate with V.E. Howard, Julian Pope, a Baptist preacher, maintained, for example, that Paul taught here that baptism was not in any sense part of the gospel, which is God’s power unto salvation, and therefore baptism was not essential to salvation.¹

But is that really the case? Is that what Paul had in mind when he penned this passage?

AN AXIOM IN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

God’s word is truth (John 17:17). The Bible must be harmonious with itself. The law of non-contradiction will not permit contradicting propositions to both be true at the same time and in the same relationship. The application to biblical hermeneutics is obvious. If the Lord taught that one must be baptized in order to be saved, and that this is true for the entire gospel age and for every accountable person, then neither Paul nor any other inspired writer teaches to the contrary. God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). Neither does his word teach contradictory doctrines.

Any view of the Bible, or any interpretation of it, which implies a self-contradiction must of necessity be false. If the Bible affirms that baptism is essential to one’s salvation under these parameters, then it must be the case that I Corinthians 1:17 does not teach to the contrary.

In Mark 16:15-16 and Matthew 28:18-20 water baptism is presented by the Lord as part of the gospel and its message. Their constructions show that water baptism precedes salvation. Acts 2:38 couples repentance and baptism together with a coordinating conjunction and points each to the same stated purpose—**“the remission of sins.”** It is obvious that one cannot be saved without having his sins forgiven. Water baptism, like repentance, is essential to one’s salvation.

The preaching of the gospel involves preaching water baptism. The Bible in Acts 8:35 declares how Philip preached Jesus unto the Ethiopian eunuch. The query of the eunuch about baptism in the very *next* verse implies that Philip had preached about it! If baptism is not a part of



the gospel, then Philip sinned. If Philip did not sin, then baptism must be a part of the gospel.

THE CASE OF THE CORINTHIANS

Paul teaches that the Corinthians had been begotten through the gospel (I Corinthians 4:15). Luke's record says of the salvation of the Corinthians that, when they "heard" the word (gospel), they "**believed, and were baptized**" (Acts 18:8, emphasis mine, HDD). They obeyed what they heard. How else would they have learned about baptism, if Paul had not preached on it? Paul, thus, was not saying that baptism is not a part of the gospel in any sense, but rather *he was contrasting the preaching of the gospel and the act of baptizing*.

Despite the fact that Paul did not baptize all of the Corinthians, but only a few, the fact still remains that all of the Corinthians who believed were baptized, and that Paul did baptize some of them himself! *The implication is that someone else did the baptizing of those whom Paul did not personally baptize*. Silas and Timothy were present with Paul at one point during the work at Corinth (Acts I 8:5ff.). Some of those whom Paul did baptize could have also aided in performing the baptisms of others (I Corinthians 1:14-16).

THE TEXT IN QUESTION

If baptism were not at all a part of the gospel, then why did Paul baptize some? Such a position implies that Paul knowingly violated the restriction that he enjoins! It has him doing something he was commanded not to do! Paul

did baptize some. Did he sin in doing so? Did he teach them about baptism, and if not, then how did they learn about it, and why did he baptize them anyway, if they were not even to be taught about it as part of his preaching?

Paul employs in I Corinthians 1:17 a figure of speech from a form of *litotes* known as *meiosis*, where one thing is lessened in order to emphasize the greater.² The preaching of the gospel is greater than the act of baptizing *in that without the former the latter would be powerless toward one's salvation*. One could be dipped a thousand times, but without faith in the gospel message while being baptized, he would still be lost! His obedience to the gospel, however, is consummated in the act of baptism. One cannot be saved without obedience to the gospel (Matthew 7:21-27; Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 1:22-23; Revelation 22:14). Baptism's validity depends upon the gospel message and the other obligations which precede baptism. Paul, therefore, is not denigrating baptism, as some assume, but is stressing the need for the preaching of the gospel.

The apostle, contextually, was dealing with the division that was prevalent at Corinth. The "party spirit," wherein various members were saying, "I am of Paul, or I am of Cephas (Peter), or I am of Apollos, and so on" had a strong hold on many. Paul's response was to point out that no one was baptized "in [his] name." The Greek preposition here is *eis*, "into." New Testament baptism is "into (*eis*) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). It involves, therefore, the entering "into" a special relationship with the Godhead through the door of baptism that heretofore the individual has not enjoyed. Baptism is also administered "in (*en*) the name of Jesus Christ" meaning "by the authority of Jesus Christ" (*cf.*, Acts 2:38). Those who are thus baptized are now identified with him (*cf.*, Acts 8:16 where *eis* is used of this change of relationship relative to Christ)—they wear his name (hence "Christians"). They have "put [Christ] on" in baptism (Galatians 3:26-27), and they are buried and raised in relation to his own death, burial, and resurrection through that same act (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). Paul stresses the gospel's importance by showing that baptism was not administered in his name, and that, in fact, he had baptized very few (though he had baptized some and others had baptized the rest). This latter point shows that it was folly for the Corinthian brethren to be professing that they were "of Paul," when in reality they should all have gloried in being "of Christ," the central figure of the gospel!

CONCLUSION

I Corinthians 1:17, then, is a text that explicitly proclaims the importance of the preaching of the gospel, and that implicitly teaches the necessity of *the right kind* of baptism.

1 Julian Pope, *The Howard-Pope Debate*, (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing Co., 1954), p.21.

2 Daniel Denham, "Euphemism, Litotes, and Pleonasm," *Rightly Dividing the Word: Volume II -Special Hermeneutics*, edited by Terry M. Hightower, (San Antonio, TX: Shenandoah Church of Christ, 1991), pp.269-270.

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Final Things: The False And The True

8:30 am	Registration
9:00 am	Do Y2K and the New Millennium Signal the End of Time ...the Rapture...the Thousand Year Reign of Christ? Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
10:00 am	What About the Kingdom Prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Revelation? Curtis A. Cates
11:00 am	Who Are the Antichrist, the Son of Perdition, and the False Prophets? How Are They Identified? Garland Elkins
Noon	LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE CONGREGATION
1:00 pm	Premillennialism: False or True? What About the Signs of Matthew 24? Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
2:00 pm	Are the Gospel Message and the New Testament Church Relevant for the New Millennium? Garland Elkins
3:00 pm	Open Forum

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DIVISION IN THE CHURCH

Tom Moore



I. Introduction

- A. One of the most destructive forces in church today is division from within.
- B. A great number of congregations split each year for various reasons:
 - 1. Some over doctrinal issues, and
 - 2. Others over personalities and opinions.
- C. Many congregations, though they may not split, will have horrible division within.
- D. When this type of evil occurs in the church the devil applauds.

II. Discussion

A. CONDEMNATION OF DIVISION

- 1. Division is an abomination in the eyes of the Almighty ...Proverbs 6:16-19.
- 2. Jesus exhorted against division ...Matthew 12:25.
- 3. The Lamb of God prayed for unity... John 17:20-21.
- 4. The elders in Ephesus were warned concerning division ... Acts 20:28-31.
- 5. We are to renounce those that cause division ...Romans 16:17-18.
- 6. Paul denounced division ...I Corinthians 1:10.
- 7. To be divisive is worldly ... I Corinthians 3:3.
- 8. The church in Corinth was warned concerning the division among them...I Corinthians 11:1-19.
- 9. Paul says we are to strive diligently to keep unity...Ephesians 4:1-6.

B. COMMENDATION FOR DIVISION

- 1. We must reject ungodly ways, doctrines and practices of our brethren.
 - a. Romans 16:17-18
 - b. Remember, it is not those who stand for the truth that cause division, but those who uphold error.
 - c. For example, we cannot biblically fellowship a brother who:
 - 1) Is involved in sinful practices ...I Corinthians 5:11
 - 2) Who teaches and upholds false doctrine ... II John 9-10.

- 2. We are to reject and not be involved in the actions of this world which are contrary to the Lord's will.
 - a. This will mean that at times, when our friends of this world are involved in things that are sinful, we cannot keep company with them at that time.
 - b. If our friends are constantly involved in things contrary to the will of God, we ought to find some new friends.
 - c. I Thessalonians 5:21
 - d. Ephesians 5:11

C. CAUSES OF DIVISION

- 1. Those who reject the truth ...Romans 2:8
- 2. Worldly minded people ...I Corinthians 3:1-33.
- 3. Perverters of the gospel ...Galatians 1:6-10
- 4. Fictious and divisive people ...Titus 3:10
- 5. Those who speak against the truth ...II Peter 2:1-2
- 6. Leaders seeking prominence ...III John 9-10

D. CONSEQUENCES OF DIVISION

- 1. Division destroys ... Matthew 12:25.
- 2. Division will cause many to have a bad taste for Christianity...John 17:20-21.
- 3. Division does not glorify God ... Romans 15:5-6.
- 4. Those who cause division should be withdrawn from...Romans 16:17.
- 5. Those who cause division will not have God ...II John 9-11.

III. Conclusion

- A. May we all strive for biblical unity.
- B. Let us pray that the church be unified—that we truly be ONE church and of the same mind.

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CHURCH FINANCES

Lynn Parker

Money, money, money! The discussion of dollars draws undivided attention in the world of politics, business, and family finances. In the Lord's church, the handling and distribution of finances can also cause a stir. In congregations with elders, and those without, there is a need to properly care for the financial matters, and there are dire consequences for negligence or misuse. Perhaps some practical suggestions, based on solid Bible principles, would be helpful.

MATTERS TO BE CONDUCTED HONORABLY— AFTER ALL, IT IS THE LORD'S MONEY

Charges of negligence and impropriety can be avoided when brethren take to heart Paul's words: "**for we take thought for things honorable [honest - KJV], not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men**" (II Corinthians 8:21). It is an invitation to accusation for one brother to count the money, deposit the money, and serve as treasurer, yet we know of a few places where such has been done. **L.R. Wilson** sagely advised, "The treasurer should never be on the counting committee. He should simply receive the deposit slips and be relieved of any responsibility of actually handling the funds" (L.R. Wilson, *Congregational Development*, p. 112) More than one treasurer, succumbing to temptation, has dipped his hand into the Lord's money, and perhaps with the intention to "pay it back." If it is a legitimate need, it should be approved by the elders (or men of the congregation where there are no elders). Treasurers must be meticulous in accounting and reporting. A yearly audit by others is a practical way to keep financial matters above reproach.

We have heard of treasurers arbitrarily refusing to issue money for purchases authorized by the elders (or where elders are absent, the men of the church) as if the money was personal property of the treasurer. Occasional reports allege that treasurers, acting independent of the church, expend church funds, donate church money to their choice of benevolent causes, and in one case, purchased, from the treasury, equipment "for the church" that was forevermore used at his house. The treasurer is simply the record-keeper and dispenser of funds according to decisions of the leadership in the church. Even if the treasurer is an elder, he still is bound to abide by the decisions of the eldership. The treasurer is not to be a maverick with the money.

PREVENT DISTRUST BY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Perhaps a more consistent complaint arises concerning elders or others in control of the funds that keep the congregation "in the dark" — no financial reporting to the congregation is done from the treasurer, elders, or others handling the money. The late **Bill Jackson** wrote,

Elders should be open and informative about the congregation's finances. Again, why create problems? We certainly are not saying that permission must be obtained

from the members before the elders can use their authority and act in these regards. Nor are we stating that there must be a detailed accounting to the membership on each and every case of paper towels purchased. Most members trust the elders, and feel, as they should, that they will do right in any such expenditures. And yet, if there is hardly any communication as to the finances of the congregation, many members (who most certainly give into this treasury weekly) will tend to be in wonder. The wonder turns to real doubt, and real doubt turns to suspicion, and suspicion turns to distrust, and distrust turns to a refusal to then have a faithful part in the work of the Kingdom! The pitiful thing about these developments is that once there is a distrust of the eldership, when is there a turnaround? (Bill Jackson, *Elders: Those Who Watch Over Souls*, pp.53-54, no copyright)



One congregation had more than \$100,000 in savings accounts, unknown to the congregation, and that at the insistence of the elders. **Bobby Duncan** noted,

The wise eldership will keep those serving God under its oversight informed of what is taking place in the congregation...information directly affecting the members of the congregation and its work should be made available. I can think of no good reason, for an example, why an eldership would refuse to allow any member of the church to examine the church's financial records...it seems wise for an eldership to see that a financial report is made available to the entire congregation on a regular basis. (Bobby Duncan, *The Elders Which Are Among You*, p. 117, no copyright).

Proper reports of finances to the church is the same type of wisdom used in a preacher taking his wife along when he goes to visit an erring young lady. *Why invite criticism and risk suspicion when open communication and information will prevent it?*

Let us handle church finances — never slovenly — but carefully, in an "above board" fashion. Use the Lord's money as a tool to further the greatest work and never let finances become a focal point for dissension.

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"WOMAN, WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE?"

Noah A. Hackworth

Contrary to what some think, Jesus was not contemptuous when he made this statement to his mother. It comes from John 2:4. There was a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, only a few miles from Nazareth; and Jesus, his mother, and his disciples were in attendance. The day of the week on which the marriage took place is not mentioned, but it may have been Wednesday since this was the customary day for the marriage of virgins. Since Jesus and his disciples had been "bidden" to the wedding, Mary was probably invited as well, unless she was a relative of the family. Only Mary is mentioned as being in attendance, not her husband; and this has led some to believe that he was dead.

The presence of Jesus at this marriage feast indicates that he is interested in even the social activities of our lives, even though marriage is not an invention of society (Genesis 2:27; Matthew 19:4-6). As the feast continued the wine (grape juice) eventually failed. They simply "ran out;" more was needed. An overflow of people in attendance, the duration of the feast (*cf.*, Genesis 29:22; Judges 14:12), the amount consumed, or the providence of God could have been responsible for the depletion of the wine, and one of the first ones to recognize this situation was Mary. She consequently turned to Jesus and said, "They have no wine," no doubt expecting him to correct the problem. Jesus' response was, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Mary did not seem upset or surprised at what her son said.

NO DISRESPECT

At first glance one might think Jesus was being harsh with his mother, but this was not the case. The word *gunai* translated "woman," according to the consensus of scholarship, does not express any degree of contempt.

Woman, has no tinge of contempt...So the address to Mary Magdalene, John 20:15, *gunai*, is plainly an expression of compassion.. In English the term woman is frequently used in a solemn and honorable sense, as embracing the characteristic traits of the womanly ideal, when we speak of a good woman, a noble woman, a true woman, be a woman. Christ calls his mother woman on the cross...(Lang)

Were proof needed of the tenderness which underlies the word as used by him, it would be found in the other instances which the gospels supply. It is spoken only to the Syro-Phoenician whose faith is great (Matthew 15:28); to the daughter of Abraham loosed from her infirmity (Luke 13:12); and, in this gospel, to the Samaritan embracing the higher faith (chapter 4:21); perhaps to the sinner whom he does not condemn (chapter 8:10); to the same mother from the cross (chapter 19:26); and to Mary Magdalene in tears (Ellicott).

The *Expositor's Greek Testament* offers a different view but does say *gunai* is a term of respect, not equivalent to our "woman."

With respect to the remaining Greek words, *ti emoi kai soi*, they are a formula taken from the language of common life, and must be interpreted according to the occasion, and the circumstances of the case. It usually denotes impatience of interference, signifying, "What hast thou to do with me" (*i.e.*, with what belongs to me)? And such would seem to be the sense here, though it was probably modified by the tone of the voice, and softened into a mild rebuke for interfering with him, in a matter where her maternal claim to respect could have no authority over him.

"Mine hour is not yet come" is the reason for the statement made by Jesus. There are three important words translated "time" in the New Testament: *chronos*, which refers to "a space of time, either short or long;" *kainos*, which refers to "events" and *hora*, which refers to "the right time," or a "period of time." The word used here is "*hora*," which means that it is not the "right time" or "period of time" for Jesus to manifest himself. Alford says:

This expression is generally used in John of the time of the death of Christ; see *ref.*. But it is only so used because his death in those passages is the subject naturally underlying the narrative. It is any fixed or appointed time; and therefore here, the appointed time.

MARY DID NOT TAKE EXCEPTION

The mother of Jesus, apparently not shocked or surprised by what her Son said, instructed the servants to do whatever they were bidden. Though she may not have really understood the significance of what Jesus said (*cf.*, Luke 2:43-50), Mary nevertheless did not take exception to it, nor was her expectation of what Jesus would do lessened. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Was Jesus being contemptuous? It would be hard to be persuaded to that view.

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"EARTH HOLDS NO TREASURES"

Annette B. Cates

It seems that every day brings word of disaster having struck. It may be a "natural" disaster such as a storm, flood, or drought. It may be an accident such as a plane crash, train wreck, or a building collapse. Or, it may be the result of deliberate action on the part of an individual or a group of people, such as a bombing, murder, or arson. Because of our mass communication systems, whatever the event, we become aware of it almost immediately, regardless of where it is or whom it involves. We tend to sympathize at first, then move on to personalize the tragedy, taking it as if it were something that happened to ourselves, or to a loved one. Our attention is drawn to the scene as it is shown to us over and over again in the days that follow. We do what we can to ease the suffering and offer our prayers for those involved. We try to learn what went wrong and what might have been done differently that could have averted the situation, or could avoid its happening again. One thing that comes from something like this is that we are reminded that **"earth holds no treasures"** (Matthew 6:19-21). We see, if only for a few minutes or days, what is really important. James 1:10 tells us that the wealth of this earth will pass away as the flower of the grass. Later, he shows the folly of riches and pleasure: wealth is corrupted, garments are moth-eaten, gold and silver become tarnished (James 5:1-5). The only thing that REALLY matters is that we live in such a way that Heaven holds all for us. What can we learn from tragedy that will help us in reaching this goal?

GONE IN AN INSTANT

Tragedy teaches us that everything materially useful can be gone in an instant. If we live for "things" and neglect our spiritual development, we truly have nothing. When all of our efforts go into achieving, we are never quite satisfied. We always want for more. Luxuries become necessities in an endless cycle. It is as though we put what we have into a bag with holes (Haggai 1:5-7). This materialism is nothing more than a form of idolatry. Augustine (354-430 A. D.) is credited with having said, "Thus does the world forget Thee, its Creator, and falls in love with what Thou hast created instead of with Thee." How true this is! The idols in our lives are anything that we would put before God. They can be material goods, physical beauty, professional or educational achievement, recreational activities, or even day-to-day living that consumes our time and leaves no room for spiritual life and service. Material loss serves to show us the vanity of our modern-day idols.

Tragedy teaches us that life is going to have trials. There is a saying that into every life some rain must fall. God's

sun rises on the evil as well as the good, and his rain falls on the just as well as on the unjust (Matthew 5:45). It is not wrong to ask at such times, "Why me?" But, should we not also ask, "Why NOT me?" It is how we handle the storms of life that tells us where our treasures are. **"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"** (Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34).



Tragedy teaches us of the strength and importance of the family that is grounded in God's word (Psalms 127:1). A strong family helps one another to endure, pulling together as its members have their ups and downs over the years. If there were ever a place for "one for all and all for one," it is within the family. When the storms have passed over, if a family is still intact, then they have everything.

Tragedy teaches us of the brevity of life. Everything is altered by the forces of time and decay. Physical beauty will change from youth to old age. Achievements will come to nought. In his poem "Union Pacific," **Carl Sandburg** wrote of the owner and the laborer of the railroad, that in time, both were six feet under. Psalm 119:97-101 teaches us that God's word is greater than all earthly wisdom. Recreational activities that kept us from service to God will be meaningless.

THE VANITY OF "THE DAILY GRIND"

The daily grind that kept us too busy to "stop and smell the roses" of life will prove to have been in vain. Solomon asked, **"what profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"** (Ecclesiastes 1:3). He also observed, **"Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit"** (Ecclesiastes 4:6). Then this man of wisdom concluded, **"Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"** (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Job asked some questions that we would do well to consider. **"For what is the hope of the godless, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?"** (Job 27:8-9). Truly, tragedy reminds us that "earth holds no treasures but that perish with using." Things can be taken away in an instant. Let us so live that heaven will hold all for us, a goal to work for and live to obtain.

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CONCEPTION, BIRTH—THEN WHAT?

Eddie Whitten

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught,..." (Colossians 2:6-7). We speak of one who has been baptized as having obeyed the gospel. The past tense of this statement may create the wrong impression. It is certainly true that one must be baptized to obey the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 6:3-4). Being baptized is necessary for one to become a Christian (Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21). Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); but that is not the end of the process, it is only the beginning.



We might compare the new birth (John 3:3-5) with physical birth. *Phase one requires conception:* the sowing of the seed (Matthew 13, the parable of the sower). Luke 8:11 says the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing the word of God. Therefore faith comes from the seed, the word of God.

Phase two is the birth. As the seed of man produces a physical child, so the spiritual seed produces the spiritual child. The spiritual birth is culminated in the burial of the old man of sin and the birth of the new creature in baptism (Romans 6:3-5; Acts 22:16). So, we have, in baptism, the culmination of the spiritual equivalent of the physical conception, gestation and birth of the physical child. Now what? Is the new child left on its own to fend for itself, or is it lovingly and carefully nurtured through the development stages of its life? The obvious answer is the parents give diligence to see that the babe is provided the proper development.

Phase three requires spiritual development sufficient for reproduction. Teaching is an indispensable part of being a Christian. One became a Christian as a result of being taught (Matthew 28:19; John 6:45). He cannot develop as a Christian without further teaching (Hebrews 5:12ff; II Peter 3:18). A Christian slowly, but surely, takes on the attributes of the one he is to emulate (Philippians 2:5, 12). He was taught how to become a Christian, now he must teach others in like manner. Paul wrote to Timothy, **"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"** (II Timothy 2:2).

Phase four is never ending. The physical babe grows into adolescence, then adulthood. He never ceases to grow mentally, emotionally, psychologically, intellectually.

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Once he stops growing and being active, he dies. The same is true for the Christian. He begins his growth at conception. This growth develops into faith. Faith produces obedience. Obedience demands works that are spiritual. Among those works is the teaching of others. In all of the processes of life he continues to study and develop. One of the great treasures of the Bible is its depth. One never reaches the point in his spiritual life when he has completely plumbed the unsearchable riches of Christ. Once he lays the Bible aside and ceases drinking from its unlimited fountain, he ceases to grow spiritually. If this is allowed to continue, he dies spiritually.

FACING REALITY

We must awake to the reality that the church is filled with spiritual babes who have been added to the kingdom of God through the process of spiritual birth. Then, tragically, they have been abandoned to the harsh, cold, unforgiving world to live or die by themselves. Pitifully few survive that kind of neglect, and the church is responsible for their demise!

It is absolutely necessary that the lost hear the saving gospel of Christ. It is imperative that they be taught what is necessary to be saved. It is mandatory that obedience to the gospel be given for the taught ones to be added to the church by the Lord. But, it is just as much a requirement that the new babe receive the **"sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"** (I Peter 2:2). Exercise and proper food develop the strength of the physical man. The spiritual man is developed in the same way. The writer of the book of Hebrews used this very illustration to teach concerning the spiritual development of the Christian. He said,

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of

milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14).

In this passage, both spiritual food and exercise is essential for the growth of a Christian. We must not be lulled into complacency through a misunderstanding that baptism is the end of the Christian's responsibility. It is only the beginning.

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J. E. Choate

A critique is an act of a critical estimate or discussion. The purpose is to review or to criticize a defined subject, e.g., a work of art, book review, classical music, machines, whatever. Whoever would be taken seriously must have earned credentials.

I have been tracking the odyssey of the Nashville/Christian Jubilee Inc., since its beginning in 1989. The ambitious goal of the *Jubilee* corporate founders was to create a national organization much like the annual religious programs conducted on the campuses of our schools. The only meaningful comparison of such a national event is with the *North American Christian Convention* which meets yearly in a major American city. The NACC was organized in 1926 by leaders in the Independent Christian Church to counter the control of their local churches by the militant liberal Disciples. This bitter contest climaxed in the 1968 Restructure.

Over the years, the NACC has become a powerful unifying force bringing together each year 10,000 and upwards of "Independents" for a great fraternal homecoming. The Christian Church leaders are chosen on a rotation basis to make plans for the next NACC. There are no votes taken, resolutions made, or decisions "rail-roaded" through by means of a majority where winners take all.

The liberal Disciples by permission have their displays on the NACC floor, e.g., Disciples of Christ Historical Society, and Bethany College. From time to time, members of Churches of Christ are invited. I would accept such an invitation if invited. But there are selected Church of Christ "quislings" namely **Leroy Garrett** and **Rubel Shelly** who are invited. Dr. Rubel Shelly has appeared on the NACC roster with eloquent words of approval for both camps of the Disciples. He never misses an opportunity to

make a few selected "wisecracks" designed to put down the traditional churches of Christ.

It must have been a surprising revelation for **Victor Knowles** to learn during *Restoration Forum XVI* in Nashville that Rubel Shelly has minimal support in Nashville area churches of Christ which includes congregations known for their liberal persuasions. [Recall the confessions made by Rubel Shelly and Victor Knowles during the annual meetings of *Jubilee* and the NACC. Both apologized for the likes of **John W. McGarvey** and **David Lipscomb** for causing the 1906 church division, and their guilt for keeping the gaping wounds of division open.]

It is my opinion that Dr. Shelly's intense dislike for the traditional churches of Christ better explains his behavior rather than any charitable feelings that he holds for the Degressives. This may be explained partially in the fact that some churches of Christ have denied Rubel Shelly major roles in the affairs of some churches and certain colleges in recent years.

JUBILEES PAST AND JUBILEE '99

I have written articles addressing the fortunes and misfortunes of *Jubilee*. The first two *Jubilees* attracted little more than passing interest in Nashville area churches of Christ. Nashvillians have witnessed numerous sensational religious events over the years. *Nashville Jubilee, Inc.*, turned out to be one of them. Huge audiences came to hear such famous preachers as **Billy Sunday**, **Oral Roberts**, and **Billy Graham**.

The churches of Christ came to the favorable attention of the general public in Middle Tennessee during the Hardeman Tabernacle meetings in 1922, and in recent years by the **Willard Collins** auditorium meetings in Nashville. The Donelson church *Jubilee '97* sponsor made the prediction that the success of *Jubilee '97* would eclipse both

(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr.,
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Associate Editorial...

A "PERSONAL" RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Peter declared: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;..." (I Peter 4:11). Paul instructed Timothy to "Hold fast the form of sound words,..." (II Timothy 1:13). He also told Titus to "...speak thou the things which become sound doctrine;" (Titus 2:3).

If the phrase serving as our title means anything more than assenting to true propositions concerning Jesus, what does it mean? Such terminology is not found in the scriptures. In fact, "A 'Personal' Relationship With Christ" is a meaningless phrase. It means anything to anybody. This lack of objectivity belies the root and source of the phrase under consideration.

This false concept declares that one must not only believe the gospel with one's "head," but also with one's "heart." The truth is found in the inspired statement: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he;" (Proverbs 23:7). The heart is the head and vice versa. This separation of heart and head is from the deluded imagination of modern secular psychologists and denominational theologians. It has no foundation at all in the Bible.

What the modern preacher means by a "'Personal' Relationship With Christ" is some sort of "warm feeling." (Never mind that a cup of hot coffee would cause the same feeling.) They promote something beyond biblical faith (Romans 10:17; II Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 3:17). Thus, the title is not the wholesome teaching authorized in the verses of the first paragraph.

In the secular and religious world (also the Lord's church), we notice all manner of "charismatic" and "modernist" views. What do they have in common? In one way or another they reject the rational nature of man. Their doctrines are nothing more than mindless confrontations and emotional experiences. They have nothing to do with one's faith that comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6).

Remember, no person could have a closer personal relationship with Christ than the apostles, John, the son of Zebedee, and Judas Iscariot. It was not John or Jude's personal relationship with Jesus that made the difference. John was faithful—he believed and obeyed the truth that Christ taught. Judas did not believe (have faith) in the truth Jesus taught (John 8:31,32; II John 9).

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

CHRISTIAN JUBILEE '99

(Continued From Page 1)

meetings in size and interest. It did not happen. I would give the ballpark estimate of the *Jubilee '99* on Thursday evening to start around 4000.

But it was a particular lecture during *Nashville Jubilee, Inc., 1991* which captured the attention of the general public, and precipitated a firestorm of resentment in traditional churches of Christ. **Gayle Napier**, social counselor for the Harpeth Hills which supported *Jubilee*, brought the traditional churches under attack. The caption over his story read—Conservative Churches May Foster Incest. Napier said that “power-addicted preachers in such churches encouraged incest and pornography.” *Jubilee* spokesmen and the Harpeth Hills elders defended Napier then with no apologies since.

Each year thereafter the religious reporters for Nashville newspapers have followed the *Jubilee* story with interest. Two '92 *Jubilee* headlines read—“Churches Divide Over Worship”; and “Roads May Fork For Churches of Christ.” *Jubilee '93* organizers planned a turn-around recovery from past bad publicity. An advertisement was run in the Saturday papers prior to the *Jubilee '94* opening date with the names of churches and notable brethren under the caption reading—“Attend Jubilee.” The last advertisement carried a list of some 200 names mostly preachers from across the country, and 19 local churches all urging—“Attend Jubilee.” The strategy failed.

Jubilee '97 keynoted by **Max Lucado** was planned to be a “blockbuster” event, and indeed it was. Before opening night, Lucado’s Lubbock radio devotional speech was widely publicized in the Nashville media. The result was that Churches of Christ members raised serious questions as to the integrity and loyalty of Max Lucado to his own church which birthed and nurtured him. Today no one questions his loyalty to the denominations as he makes his way to the bank with his book royalties.

It is now a clear and certain fact that when **Jeff Walling** came to *Jubilee '98* with his shovel, dirt, and coffin that he had come to assist in the burial of the traditional churches of Christ. But as it is now developing it was the face of *Jubilees* past, present, and future—which was seen in that coffin.

Walling’s last keynote sermon invitational was followed by a WOMAN LEADING THE HYMN ACCOMPANIED BY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND TWO SINGING CHOIRS. And what can we say about the outcome of *Jubilee '99*? We can confidently express the opinion that time will prove that **Lynn Anderson** is one of several brethren who are performing the last rites over the body of *Nashville/Christian Jubilee, Inc.*, past, present and future.

NOT WITH A BANG, BUT A WHIMPER

Should there be enemies of *Nashville/Jubilee Christian Jubilee, Inc.*, seeking to kill Jubilee—and this question was raised by **Olan Hicks** some time back—why go to the trouble? *Jubilee* has been on a blind path of self-destruction

since 1991. *Jubilee '99* returned to the Nashville Convention Center because it lost in the high-stakes game in the Nashville Sports Arena. Whatever high hopes that the 1997 and 1998 *Jubilee* planners had for a great measure of success have been dashed by the mounting opposition of most of area churches of Christ.

Both the sports arena and the convention center are located just around the corner from the old Ryman Auditorium, the site of the famed Hardeman Tabernacle meetings. And just up the street is the famed Central Church of Christ established by **A. M. Burton** and other notable church of Christ brethren. This year and just up the street from the Central church is the famous old landmark, the McKendree Methodist Church where *Jubilee* lectures were conducted. Why so?

The facilities of the Central Church of Christ have been used annually by *Jubilee* speakers. Its present preacher is **Mike Moss**, Chairman of Lipscomb University Bible Department. Dr. Moss is the brother who told us in his 1989 CSC paper that the New Testament does not provide a pattern for the organization and worship for contemporary churches of Christ. He also tells us that Paul wrote his letters solely for first century Christians. But he said others preserved Paul’s epistles for the use of future generations. Wonder who told him these things?

The *Jubilee* “brain trust” sent a message to the traditional churches of Christ when they chose **Lynn Anderson**, this 62-year-old “change agent,” to keynote *Jubilee '99*. Remember that Dr. Anderson in 1973 during the Herald of Truth “showdown” meeting in Memphis had said that the traditional churches of Christ then constituted a “big sick denomination.” Anderson wrote a short time ago in *Wineskins* that what he said in 1973 he still means, and we take his word without question.

The Nashville news media showed slight interest in *Jubilee '98*. It had become clear that area churches are divided into “Jubilee churches” and “anti-Jubilee churches.” The public’s lack of interest in *Jubilee '99* is reflected in the fact that **Ray Waddle** wrote the only *Jubilee* news story which was a personal interview with **Lynn Anderson** before opening night.

Two things impressed me on the second night of *Jubilee*. This was the poorest attended of all *Jubilees* and with the lowest levels of interest of all *Jubilees* past. There was an almost total boycott of *Jubilee '99* by Nashville church leaders and area preachers. I recognized only one preacher. It would be embarrassing for me to list the names of notable churches and brethren who have supported *Jubilees* in the past, but now do not want to be seen on the *Jubilee* floor.

It was indeed surprising that of all *Jubilees*, and of all people, that **Mark McInteer** honored this *Jubilee '99* with his presence. At least big church accounts remain secured. We do not think Mark supports the silly stuff which has become a trademark of *Jubilee*.

The only Lipscomb lecturer on the program was **Dr. John York**—no surprise here. **Gary Holloway** and **Mike Moss**, chairmen of Lipscomb Bible departments, were scheduled to be on the program, but did not, and we think we know why.

A POSTSCRIPT WITH A PROMISE

Olan Hicks raised a pertinent question following *Jubilee '95* in his news letter—“Jubilee: A Battleground For What?” The fullness of time has come to answer that question. The conclusion of the whole matter may very well be

summed up in the days and nights of *Jubilee '99*. We plan to address these matters in God's own disposition of time with the necessary printing space needed to expand the information.

—3714 1/2 Belmont Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

THE LIVING WATER

Jerry C. Brewer

The outward flowing of the living water of which Jesus spoke in John 7 is inseparably joined with the descent of the Comforter on Pentecost.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39).

Verse 39 is the inspired commentary on Jesus' words in verses 37-38. “**This spake he of the Spirit**” indicated that the living water was connected to the Holy Spirit and “**the Holy Ghost was not yet given**” indicated that the living water would begin its flow commensurate with the descent of the Holy Spirit. That points to the coming of the Comforter on the day of Pentecost and to inspiration in the apostles. They were the recipients of the Comforter, as indicated by Jesus' words in his final discourse to them.

I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17).


But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning (John 15:26-27).

The “**Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive**” of John 7:39 is a reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on Pentecost and the “**rivers of living water**” was the truth which the Spirit revealed through them. (cf., John 16:13-15). That John 7:37-39 refers to the miraculous inception of the gospel dispensation is further seen in that to which Jesus referred when he said, “**as the Scripture hath said.**” He referred to Ezekiel's vision of the healing waters which issued from “**under the threshold of the house eastward.**” (Ezekiel 47:1). What Ezekiel saw was a prophetic vision of the issuance of the living water of the gospel from Jerusalem on Pentecost. That is when and where the law went forth from Zion “**and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.**” (Isaiah 2:3). The waters which issued from the house in Ezekiel's vision symbolized the going forth of the gospel from Jerusalem in the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ. (Luke 24:47). The 47th chapter of Ezekiel is prophetic of the living water of the gospel overspreading the earth for the healing of the nations and connects with the river of life of the New Jerusalem of Revelation 22:1. The connection between the rivers of living water in Old Testament prophecy and Jesus' statement in John is further seen in Zechariah's prophetic utterance.

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. (Zechariah 12:8-9).

The living waters issuing into a great river from the threshold of Ezekiel's vision are the same living waters which Zechariah said would go forth from Jerusalem and both connect with the beginning of the gospel dispensation on Pentecost. Isaiah refers to the “**living waters**” when he said, “**...for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.**” (Isaiah 2:3). That is the import of Jesus' statement in John 7 and his final words to the apostles in Luke 24: 45-47 and all were fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2. The waters of Ezekiel's vision began their flow, Zechariah's living waters went forth “**out from Jerusalem**” and the living water of the gospel flowed from inspired men as Jesus had promised when Peter first preached the “**word of the Lord from Jerusalem.**”

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BEING A PREACHER

Jeff Sweeten

Preaching is an odd profession. It differs from many other types of work because when you decide to become a preacher, it is like getting a tattoo: once it is put on, it is not easily taken off. Some try, but it leaves a scar and a reminder of what once was. It is with you everywhere, whether you wear a suit and tie or blue jeans and a T-shirt. It is not something you do; *it is something you are.*

I used to give wholesale encouragement to every young Christian man I met to become a preacher of the gospel. I love it and would feel crippled, half a man, if I were not preaching. However, after twenty years of Bible studies, personal work, full-and part-time preaching, the good fellowship of some gospel preachers and my disappointment in others, I am convinced that not everyone is cut out to be a preacher. With reward comes responsibility and preaching, in a unique way, can be very demanding.

NOT JUDGED BY SAME RULE

For instance, there exists an unspoken, double standard of conduct. A preacher, and his family, are not always judged by the same rule as your "common" Christian. It is especially hard when a preacher is standing for the truth, because truth is often controversial and unpopular, and no matter how tactfully you put things, some folks do not want to hear it. Since you are not perfect, the door is wide open to the most vitriolic of criticisms. Right or wrong, this double standard is a cumbersome reality. And, while this scrutiny may help some become stronger Christians, it also exposes your humanness to stringent surveillance. This "fish bowl" existence will either keep you humble or breed bitterness. If you have trouble admitting your faults and choke on phrases like "I'm sorry," you don't want to be a preacher.

Then, there is the self-discipline that goes with the job and the life. Most preachers do not punch a clock. Office hours are loosely set and often adjusted (sometimes like spandex). Still somehow you must read your Bible every day and prepare your weekly lessons. The five o'clock whistle rarely means that it's time to go home to the wife and kids and work on the yard. It could be that much of your day was spent at the hospital with brother Smith, or preaching sister Jones' funeral and consoling a hurting family, or Joe just needed someone to talk to ... and your whole day is spent. But, there is still a Bible to read and lessons to prepare. If you are not willing to sacrifice a quiet evening relaxing in front of the TV, you do not want to be a preacher.

Finally, you are not going to get rich. I know this will come as a shock to the **Max Lucado** wanna be, but for the sound preacher it is true. Now, that is not to say that wise money management, dealing patiently with innocent ignorance and careful personal planning will not keep you com-

fortable. But, if you decide to become a preacher, realize that "moving up" in the organization is basically non-existent. The church is not structured for the climber; Jesus stressed a servant mentality, which you will be expected to exemplify to near perfection. This does not imply a vow of poverty, but it is a hollow sermon on sacrifice served from the back-seat buffet of a stretch limo. This world's goods are gifts of God to be used in service to the King. If your definition of success includes mega-bucks, you do not want to be a preacher.

If you can bear up under intense scrutiny, prepare lessons by late lamp-light, and find contentment in material mediocrity, the real rewards of preaching defy description. How does one explain the deep bonds of friendship that develop through the patient counsel of God's word? What terms of honor and prestige fully portray the privilege of being God's mouthpiece in a divinely ordained assembly? No book can contain sufficient terms to detail the elation and emotion of lifting a new creature from that watery grave of baptism! Indeed, the rewards are rich and it is a joy to preach the Gospel,... if you want to be a preacher.

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October 10-14, 1999

Sunday, October 10, 1999

9:00a.m. Michael Hatcher "Bible Translations and Versions"
 10:00a.m. Gordon Brewer "Looking Unto Jesus"
 11:00a.m. Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Lynn Parker "Is Christ's Church Ecumenical?"
 3:00p.m. Terry Hightower "The Bible's Word, 'Redemption'"
 4:00p.m. Lester Kamp "The New Name"
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Curtis Cates "Jesus Christ, the Son of God"
 8:00p.m. Mark Lewis "Controversy: The 'Lunenburg Letter' and the Pious Unimmersed"

Monday, October 11, 1999

9:00a.m. Noah Hackworth "Figures of Speech Used in the Bible"
 10:00a.m. David Watson "The Good Confession"
 11:00a.m. Dan Flournoy "Did Jesus Really Live on Earth?"
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Eddie Whitten "The Bible's Word, 'Justification'"
 3:00p.m. Michael Wyatt "The New Commandment"
 4:00p.m. Tyrone DuBose "The Apostles of Jesus Christ"
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Stephen Wiggins "Jesus Christ, The King of Kings"
 8:00p.m. Tom Wacaster "Controversy: 'Play on Miss Bertha' Introduction of the Instrument"

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

9:00a.m. David Brown "N.T. Applications of O.T. Principles"
 10:00a.m. Kenneth Free "Preaching Jesus and Him Crucified"
 11:00a.m. Gary Summers "Why Does Evil Exist?"
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Royce Williamson "The Bible's Word, 'Sanctification'"
 3:00p.m. Barry Grider "New Heaven and New Earth"
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Ira Y. Rice, Jr. "Jesus Christ, Savior of the World"
 8:00p.m. Marvin Weir "Controversy: Digression and the 'Missionary Society' Division"

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

9:00a.m. Joseph Meador "Jesus' Use of Hebrew Idioms"
 10:00a.m. Neal Abbott "Jesus Loves Me"
 11:00a.m. Don Tarbet "Is Everything in Life Worship?"
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Kevin Rhodes "The Bible's Word, 'Righteousness'"
 3:00p.m. Randy Mabe "The New Birth/Creature/Man"
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Monte Evans "Jesus Christ, Our High Priest"
 8:00p.m. Don Walker "Controversy: The McGary/Lipscomb 'What is Valid Baptism?' Issue"

Thursday, October 14, 1999

9:00a.m. Tommy J. Hicks "Bible Types and Antitypes"
 10:00a.m. David Harendt "Jesus Provides the Answer"
 11:00a.m. Jesse Whitlock "Miracles, Signs, and Wonders"
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Kent Graham "The Bible's Word, 'Reconciliation'"
 3:00p.m. Ken Ratcliff "The New Covenant/Testament"
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Johnie Scaggs "Jesus Christ, the Prophet of God"
 8:00p.m. Robert Dodson "Controversy: Changing Times and 'The Woman Question'"

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JEFF WALLING AND THE 1995 CAMPUS MINISTER'S CONFERENCE

Don Blackwell

Jeff Walling's presentation at the 1995 Youth Minister's Conference held in Memphis Tennessee, brought tears to my eyes the first time I heard it. Without a doubt, it was the most blatant and outright attack on the Lord's church that I had ever heard. Although Walling's "talk" was totally devoid of dignity, I believe that it is the most honest and comprehensive outline of the Change Movement that I have ever heard.

I have set out to review this tape. I believe that the best way to expose Walling and his error is to do so with his own words. For this reason, I have listed various headings indicative of the Change Movement, and then typed quotations from Walling's presentation. I have also added some words of review.

The bad thing about an article of this type is that you cannot hear the laughter in the auditorium and the various silly voices that Walling does during his presentation. I assure you that even after reading the article, you will not have gotten the full effect, until you hear the tape. It is not my intention to misrepresent Jeff Walling. Lest anyone think that I have, I would be willing to send you a copy of the tape so that you can hear it first hand.

THE NON-IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE

One very obvious area that is attacked by the Change Movement is doctrine. If it is going to be changed without opposition, it must first be relegated to a position of non-importance. Notice the way that Walling does this through the use of humor.

And then somebody says, "Will you come and speak to the, you know, the ministerial conference, with the senior ministers?" We don't call em that, but, you know, the preachin' guys. And that always gives you a headache cause they want to ask you all these questions about stuff

that nobody else cares about, you know what I mean? "What's your position on this?" and I feel like saying, "When was the last time a lost person asked you that question, you know?"

ATTACK ON MUSIC

A second prominent area that is being attacked by Walling and others with the same agenda is music. The trend is to make our worship in song

more modern and contemporary. One way in which this is being done is through the use of "praise teams." Praise Teams are nothing more than a group of men and women who are talented singers who stand before the congregation and "lead" the song service. Notice Walling's comments on the "praise teams" at this function.

I'm also honored to, man, come in after two fantastically gifted praises

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teams have reminded me how much things have changed in the last few years. I mean, I remember coming to Campus Ministries' Seminar when we thought it was cool one song leader used overheads. Whoa. whew, cutting edge man. look out! And now, Lordy, I walked in the back door late, and thought I'm in the wrong building here. I mean, you know? I have to admit, though, the last group had something, you guys were fantastic, but the last group had something you guys don't have, and that is one of the best looking Christian sister singers that I have seen anywhere.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

A third area that is attacked by the Change Movement is the role of women. The change is toward women having a more prominent role in the leadership of the church. See if you notice this tendency in Walling's remarks below.

It is exciting to be here at a place where the ability and the gift of a number of Christian ladies is recognized. and their contribution to what's happening to the brotherhood worldwide. Now, I'm happy to say that specifically coming from California, cause right up the road from me, I know that you see Scott Lambert up here, and the one you didn't see up here is the one that makes Scott look so good, and that's my good sister and friend, and one of the "ministers" of the Malibu church of Christ. Luoana Gill, and I know she's not alone. I know there are a number of other ladies, who whether they call you "minister," or call you "women's counselor," or call you, "oh that gal that helps," whatever title they give to you, praise God for the fact that we are able to tap into the wonderful gifts that God has given the ladies that He's placed all around us. Amen? Amen! And we need to, let's praise God for that. That's 'propriate to do. (Round of applause goes up.)

WALLING'S VIEW OF THE CHANGE MOVEMENT

Very little needs to be said about this section. It seems quite evident that Walling is well aware of his role as a leader in changing the church of our Lord. The fact, is however, that on the Divine side, the Lord's church is perfect. Those who are a part of "the cut-

ting edge of change" will tell you that they are seeking to change those imperfections on the human side. The problem with that is that many of the areas being changed are areas that are unchangeable (areas on the Divine side). Walling said:

But I need to tell you, I really believe this is an awfully exciting and important time to be where you are. It's an exciting time to be involved in church of Christ ministry. Of course, we always feel like this is the Golden Age. I don't feel like this is the Golden Age. I do feel like this is the virtual age of, of some kind of virtual reality in churches of Christ, where things are happening so quickly around us. Where the tension level is zooming, as those who would call themselves part of the cutting edge...you know there's like lots of people out in our brotherhood who would like to take a cutting edge to the cutting edge. Do you understand what I'm talking about here? There is a great deal of tension, which makes this an exciting time. It makes it an exciting time because things are changing, old habits are being questioned—old tradition. I mean we've got the most sacred of cows being trodded through butcher shops all over this country in churches of Christ where people are willing to ask questions that would have been heresy to even voice before. And I'm not saying that we have lots of sacred cows that need to be slaughtered, but every now and then it's just good to check the herd to make sure you don't have a few goats in there—if you know what I'm saying.

PROGRESSIVE CHANGE

It is clear from the following excerpt that Walling understands that change must be progressive. He understands that all of the "desired" changes cannot be made overnight.

People will see through that and rebel against it. If one is going to change a congregation it must be done slowly. No doubt, this is why they are often very successful. Walling sympathizes with these youth ministers,

...and you are struggling with how do I meet the needs of these young people? How do I help them to understand? How do I be cutting edge, and new wave, avant garde, and and progressive, without losing my job? and making everyone else in the congrega-

tion really irritated with me...I have to wonder if you're at a place in your ministry where you don't have to go to the church of Christ either. You've looked around too. And from those of you I've talked to, some of you discuss it with a pained expression of somebody who's got one foot one place and one foot some place else, and you're wonderin, "How do I make this meet?" How do I keep my balance? How do I be progressive and cutting edge. and try new things without alienating myself from the very people who not only support me financially, but do support me heart wise and are there for me when I need em?

VULGARITY

Vulgarity, per se, is not a trend of the change movement, but a lack of respect toward those things traditionally considered appropriate is. This movement is very much reflective of our society as a whole. Things once considered taboo are now embraced with arms wide open. The following vulgarity makes the point. Walling continues,

Jesus does have a way for us to keep our balance, and it is only found in him. You see, right in there is where Paul's big "but" comes in. Mark it down in your notes, and then turn to Second Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 14, to find it. Those of you later reading the transcript of this will not enjoy that near as much as those in the audience did. As you'll note. there's only one "t" in the word that I was referring to out of verse 14....and I'm so thankful for Paul's big "but" that he puts right here in the middle of this text, and I want you to think of it that way. I know you won't remember this, "Did you hear about Walling saying 'Paul's big but?'" I want you to remember this.

NO PATTERN THEOLOGY

The attack on doctrine begins with the philosophy that the Scriptures are not a pattern for us to follow. When the pattern is gone, one can only imagine what will come next. Walling states this point very clearly.

...and all we're doin is sayin. "I just want to do what the Lord calls me to." Course, we don't like followin, we like havin a map. Don't tell me to follow you, just give me a map. Some of us think he did; that this is a diag-

nostic tool. I don't need the leading of the Lord, I've got the scriptures. It is my substitute for the leading of the Lord. The problem is scripture doesn't tell me whether to live in Los Angeles or Atlanta. The scripture doesn't tell me whether to be in campus ministry, or pulpit ministry, or senior ministry, or just plain ole ministering ministry. You know, it doesn't tell me. So what have I got to do?...I've got to learn to walk behind Jesus, and say, "Father, you lead me."...And God doesn't give maps because if we ever took a look at a map at where he was headin us, we'd get out of the car right now.

BAPTISM

One area that the Lord's church has been renowned for defending in years past is baptism. Unfortunately, it too has come under attack by some of those who once defended it. Walling asks:

How many of you have been pressed about baptism in the last few years? You guys are water regenerationalists, that's what you are. You believe there's magic in the water, and man we work the water. We try and 'splain how it makes sense, folks. That water makes sense. That water is an important symbol and it shows, and the uniting, and going down and going up. Baptism is silly, no matter how you cut it! Let me make it very plain. If you are out there trying to explain baptism because it makes a lot of sense, and it's this great sym-

bol, and it shows this, and this is the closest thing you ever come to being buried, you know, when you go down under that water, and come back up. That's the closest you ever come to dying, and don't you see how. Folks, baptism is dumb from any standpoint other than God's. You (unclear) somebody up there and dunk 'em up and down in the water, and you try to tell me, "This is really, this is serious business." We get little baptismal suits, make it look formal, you know.

The continuation of the discussion on baptism sounds more like something out of a stand-up comic routine. Walling uses the "funny" voices and there is laughter throughout. He continues:

And I ask you now, and they ask them the confession in the water, and I always wondered, why do we do it in the water? These folks are scared, nervous, half the time the baptistery ain't well heated. We're askin them the most important question in the world, and they're scared, nervous, and frightened. We could say, "Taco and a Coke," they'd say, "Uh huh."

Am I gettin' to you yet? Have I offended you yet? Hang on, we'll get there. I want you to feel the ridiculousness of something that is one of God's choices that

I have quit trying to explain.

There is much more that could be brought out concerning this presentation—as Walling's comments on "brotherhood wranglings," his gross paraphrasing of biblical stories, the use of applause offered as praise to God and several other things. The bottom line is this, "Jeff Walling is a dangerous man!" The evidence is abundant! We need to get the word out, and warn those who are unaware. He is a very smooth talker and sways many people, but the Bible still says, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

[Those interested in receiving a copy of this tape of Jeff Walling, please send me a blank cassette tape, and an addressed envelope affixed with the proper postage.] to: Don Blackwell, Post Office Box 1484, Statesville, NC, 28677

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10:00-11:00 A.M... ..The Church Needs Moral LivingDavid Tillman, Jr.
11:00-11:15 A.M... ..BREAK
11:15-12:15 P.M... ..The Church Needs Effective LeadershipJerry Martin
12:15-1:45 P.M.BARBECUE DINNER/FELLOWSHIP
1:45-2:15 P.M.SINGING
2:15-3:15 P.M.The Church Needs Local EvangelismBruce Stulting

YOUTH (12-19 YEARS)

9:30- 9:45 A.M... ..SINGING
9:45-10:45 A.M... ..Youth Involvement In The Local ChurchDan Cates
10:45-11:00 A.M... ..BREAK
11:00-11:15 A.M... ..SINGING
11:15-12:15 P.M... ..Creation Or Evolution?Preston Silcox
12:15- 1:45 P.M.BARBECUE DINNER/FELLOWSHIP
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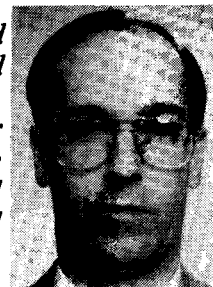
Mark McWhorter

[Mark McWhorter was born in Illinois. He graduated from Harding University in 1978 with a Bachelor of Nursing degree and has done graduate work in Nursing at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. He currently works as a Nurse Clinician in open heart surgery recovery at the University of Alabama.

He and his wife, *Teah*, homeschool their six children. They are on the Board of Roundhouse—an annual get-together for members of the church who homeschool. They are administrators of a cover school in central Alabama for members of the church who homeschool. They own and operate a brotherhood and homeschool bookstore, *Chula Vista Books*. Mark co-directed for two years the *Ashville Road Church of Christ Lectures*. He writes a weekly e-mail column for children, "*Wisdom's Corner*." He also writes for *The Electronic Gospel Herald*. He has taken mission trips to Ukraine, Europe, and Belize.]

Edward DiLoreto donated \$400 to the Downey High School baseball program to sponsor a sign in the high school's ball field. DiLoreto wanted to use his ad space to post the Ten Commandments, but the school refused, saying it did not want to mix religion with public education. DiLoreto has sued, saying the school was discriminating against him on the basis of religion (*Maranatha news* email news service, 7/4/99). [This may come as a surprise, but I back the school on this one. Not for the reason they give however. I deplore their decision not to allow the billboard. But if this gentleman wins his case on the basis of

discrimination, then the school board would also be forced to sell billboard space to atheists or satanists. Again, well intended motives can be a force for some very bad decisions. Allowing the court to decide this case may take local control away from the local school board.—MTM]



The nation's political reporters will be learning more about religion. Journalists from ABC's *Nightline*, CNN, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times* have signed up for seminars taught by the *Ethics and Public Policy Center*. The Washington, D.C. based group received a \$925,000 grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts to bring religion to "one of the most godless groups this side of the flaming abyss," *The New York Times* said. The grant will be used for a series of seminars and luncheons, a content-analysis of 30 years of media coverage of religion, and three summits where reporters spend a day and a half listening to theologians and academic experts. The point is to provide information, not to get reporters to go to church, but "that would be fine if they did," **Michael Cromartie**, director of the center's Evangelical Studies Project, said (*Religion Today*, email news service, 7/19/99). [This is great. It is hoped that much good can come from the seminars. Perhaps some of the reporters will actually decide to check out the truth and learn of the wisdom therein.—MTM]

**The 11th Annual Lectures of the N. 5th & Grape Street Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas
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Great Servants of God in the New Testament

Friday, September 24th

7:00 P.M. Cornelius — A Just Devout Man Joseph Meador
7:00 P.M.* Cornelius — A Just Devout Man (En Espanol) Alfonso Macias
8:15 P.M. Philip — A Servant Sent, A Servant Who Went David Baker
8:15 P.M.* Philip — A Servant Sent, A Servant Who Went (En Espanol) Alfonso Macias

Saturday, September 25th

7:00 P.M. Barnabas — A Fellow Servant With Paul Bobby Bates
8:15 P.M. John the Baptizer — The Forerunner of Jesus Jeff Sweeten

Sunday, September 26th

9:30 A.M. The Apostle John — The Apostle of Love Royce Williamson
10:30 A.M. The Apostle Peter — The Apostle Who Learned Faithfulness David Brown
5:00 P.M. Lois and Eunice — Examples to Our Children (Ladies Class) Tonne Williamson
6:00 P.M. The Apostle Paul — The Apostle Bound For Suffering James Meadows

...the current APA issue of The American Psychologist claims in an article, "Deconstructing the Essential Father," that fathers and two-parent heterosexual marriages are not necessary for the psychological health of children. "[W]e do not believe that the data support the conclusion that fathers are essential to child well-being and that heterosexual marriage is the social context in which responsible fathering is most likely to occur," wrote **Drs. Louise B. Silverstein and Carl F. Auerbach**. The authors also concluded, "divorce does not irretrievably harm the majority of children." Perhaps the APA should re-title its publication, "Deconstructing America" (*The Federalist email service*, 7/16/99). *[The APA is proving itself to be a voice for idiocy and social change. The psychology field is ripe with those who would denigrate anything related to Biblical principles. And no, I am not against anyone being a psychologist. But it should be stated that psychology is the study of the mind. The mind is spiritual. The Bible speaks to the spiritual. Therefore, unless all is based on the Bible it is not true psychiatry. (This is realizing that there are some physical causes for aberrant behavior. But a psychiatrist is not needed for those situations.) I will probably offend some with this line of reasoning. Psychiatry has become a sacred cow in our society.—MTM]*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A recently released report says that some popular music contributes to youth violence. The 13-page document asserts some heavy-metal rock music, as well as some rap music, "dwells on, roman-

ticizes, stylizes, beautifies, consecrates, divinizes and celebrates violence. The results are predictable." While the music industry so far has "denied any role in the current cultural crisis," the evidence shows some music leads some young people to violent actions, the report says (*Maranatha News email service*, 7/15/99). *[I doubt this is a surprise to any Christian. It does not take a brain scientist to know that "garbage in" will eventually "get garbage out."—MTM]*

A witch aided by the American Civil Liberties Union ousted the Christian fish from a city seal. A federal judge ruled in favor of **Jean Webb**, a practitioner of Wicca and former resident of Republic, Mo., who sued the city to remove the symbol known as an ichthyus from its official seal, the Associated Press said. She claimed that the symbol constituted a violation of the First Amendment and created an uneasy atmosphere for non-Christians. U.S. District **Judge Russell Clark** agreed. "While the purpose of placing the fish symbol on the city seal may not have been to endorse Christianity, the effect of the seal is to do so," he wrote in the decision handed down this week. The city has 30 days to appeal the ruling or remove the ichthyus a traditional symbol of Christianity from the seal. (*Religion Today email news service*, 7/16/99). *[Another sad and terrible ruling. Now it is even wrong to have anything symbolic of religion—whether intended to portray religion or not.—MTM]*

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Studies From The Biblical Text...

THE FOLLY OF GOING DOWN TO EGYPT FOR HELP

Daniel Denham

In the eighth century B.C. the prophet Isaiah warned Israel, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord" (Isaiah 31:1).

The prophecy was historically set before the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom, which occurred in 722 B.C. It was a time of widespread apostasy among the people of God. Idolatry and its many attendant ills, including immorality, were rampant in the land, due to the dual influence of the calf worship fostered centuries earlier by Jeroboam the son of Nebat and the worship of Baal encouraged by the house of Ahab. While the latter system had been "pruned back" by the blood purge of Jehu against the house of Ahab, Baalim was still prominent in various parts of the land. Hosea declared of that same general time, "I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled" (Hosea 6:10).

The appeal of Isaiah, like that of his contemporaries, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, was for Israel to come back to the Lord (*cf.*, Isaiah 1:16-20). Hosea cried, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." But Israel had put her faith "in the arm of flesh"—in other men—rather than God. They looked longingly to the armaments of Egypt for deliverance from the armies of Assyria. Pharaoh was to be their deliverer, they thought, rather than the Great "I Am." Chariots, horses, spears, and bows, the battle-ax and the broadsword, would be the instruments of salvation rather than the might of El-Shaddai.

Human nature has not changed. In the midst of apostasy, we observe our own brethren today clamoring for a joining of forces with the denominations to fight the war against the Devil, rather than realizing that denominationalism is



of the Devil, and the entire effort is futile and self-defeating. Yet there are those among us, who, like F. LaGard Smith in his book *Who Is My Brother?*, want to make "common cause" with people who reject the Ancient Order. The unity forums, *The Christian Jubilee Inc.* of Nashville, the scholarship conferences, et.al., have served the wicked one to foster this desire among the churches of our Lord. The liberals refuse to learn the lessons of history. A wise man once said, "Experience is a hard teacher, but the fool will have no other." Spiritual Israel must suffer because of such foolish behavior.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING OUR TRUST IN GOD

One of the key lessons to be drawn from Isaiah's warning to Israel is the pressing need to put our trust in Jehovah God. **"The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear"** (Isaiah 59:1). God is trustworthy—and the only real constant. If we remain faithful to the Lord and his word, God will not fail us in our time of need. David, the sweet singer of Israel, proclaimed, **"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"** And Paul reminds us, **"If God be for us, who can be against us?"** (Romans 8:31).

Israel put its confidence in Egypt, "the land of bondage." They sought to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt (Isaiah 30:2). But that shadow would be their "shame" (v.3)! When the ruthless Assyrians overran Israel, they swept onward into Egypt and brought that nation low. Pharaoh Shabak was soundly beaten in the battle of Raphia by Sargon the Great, and was forced to flee into Upper Egypt just north of Ethiopia to live as an exile from his own land. The Egyptians of Lower Egypt joined with Sargon against Pharaoh, and thus brother came to be pitted against brother, as Isaiah had prophesied some years before (Isaiah 19:1-3). Thus, both the "helper" (Egypt) and the "holpen" (the helped, Israel) were fallen (Isaiah 31:3).

THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEYING GOD'S WORD

Divine blessing has always been predicated upon obedience to the word of God (cf., I Samuel 15:22-23; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 7:21-27; Hebrews 5:8-9; Revelation 22:14). Israel was in trouble because of their rejection of God and his word! They went down to Egypt to help avoid the consequences of their rebellion against divine

authority. They asked not **"of his mouth"** (Isaiah 30:2). They did so by failing to consult with the prophet of God, and thus with God's word, on the matter. The point is that they could not have cared less about what God's word said. They wanted to have things their way, and they would have it thus, or die! They even substituted false and evil things for God's truth and good things (Isaiah 5:20-23). They were willful and high-handed in their rebellion (Hosea 8:12), and profoundly ignorant of the truth (Hosea 4:6).

Liberals are the same today. First, they make a pretense of respecting God's word by trying to prove their errors from it. Then, when their efforts have failed to carry the day in this fashion, they finally turn upon the word itself and attack its inspiration, inerrancy, and ultimately its authority. Read such tomes as *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Carroll D. Osburn and virtually any book touching on hermeneutics from the liberal camp and see if it is not so. They pay lip service to the Bible on one page, and then slap at it on another! The scholarship conferences, tauting the "new hermeneutics" (which really is the old existential baloney of Martin Heidegger, the Nazi), especially have sought to wean brethren away from a dependence upon "pattern authority," which simply put means, "We don't want any more 'Thus, saith the Lord,' for what we believe and teach."

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLINESS

The Israelites were selected to be a separate people unto God. They were to remain separate from other nations, and they were to serve the Lord in truth and righteousness. They were to manifest the greatness, goodness, and right way of God to other nations. They were to influence them, but not be influenced by them! By going down to Egypt they endangered that special status which they alone held with him. Their affinity with heathen powers became the primary source of all their national and personal ills. They came to act, behave, worship, and even talk like the nations round about them.

The same is true of our liberal brethren. They have adopted the ways of the sects and speak "half in the language of Ashdod." Recently, the ultra-liberal Southlake congregation in Southlake, Texas, changed their name to "The Southlake Church." Their desire to be like the denominations has finally manifested itself in open rejection of the uniqueness of the church of Christ! At least, they are honest in admitting that they are no longer "of us." Other liberals are not so open and aboveboard in their efforts. Change agency involves implicitly a methodology of calculated deception.

God's people must remain separate from the denominations (II Corinthians 6:14-16; Ephesians 5:11; II John 9-11). We must be distinct in teaching and practice. We must strive to be faithful and not make sin a way of life. Holiness is necessary for us to make heaven our home (Hebrews 12:14-15). Holiness of life begins with holiness of heart—setting aside the Lord God in our own hearts in order to serve him (I Peter 3:15).

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Second Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 10-14, 1999

THE FIGHT OF FAITH

Jodie Boren

John Paul Jones is often called the "Father of the American Navy." On September 23, 1779, Jones was in command of the ship, the *Bonhomme Richard*. He and his crew attacked the leading ship of a British convoy called the *Serapis*. The *Serapis* was larger and better armed than the ship of Jones. The British commander called on Jones to surrender. It was then, Jones uttered his famous words, "I have not yet begun to fight."

I understand Jones' reply to the British commander, to mean something like the following. "Surrender?! You gotta be kiddin'—you ain't seen nothin' yet!" Jones knew that he and his men were in a deadly combat and that they must fight—and fight they did! Three hours later the *Serapis* fell. Jones had spoken the truth. He and his men were fighters!



Mr. average Christian also speaks the truth when he says the same thing. Sadly, his words mean just the opposite of what John Paul Jones meant. The average Christian today, literally has not begun to fight. Yet, we are engaged in an all-out fight "not against flesh and blood but against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). This fight is for all the marbles so to speak. The destinies of our souls are at stake. Still, so many are indifferent, lukewarm, and complacent—at ease in Zion. This is true; so much so, that one must wonder if they even know there is a fight going on. The church is not growing as it should because so many have not yet begun to fight! We sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" while remaining unconcerned in the hammock.

Paul warns us, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life: that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Timothy 2:4). "...the affairs of this life" refers to the things of this world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Anything that would distract us and keep us out of the battle. Again, in I Timothy 1:18, Paul admonishes Timothy to fight like a good soldier. As soldiers of Christ, we really have no choice but to fight for we are under constant assault by our adversary, the devil. Peter describes him as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). If you ever watch the Discovery channel when they show the lions, you shrink in terror to think of these powerful animals charging at you! An apt description of the devil. He is alive. He is not a myth! He is relentless in his pursuit and Paul tells us in II Corinthians 2:11 that he has a bag full of devices or tricks which he uses to ensnare us. His quiver is full of fiery darts to overpower us (Ephesians 6:16). He is the great deceiver (Revelation 12:9) and he is succeeding in deceiving us to believe that there is no fight going on; and even if there is a battle, there is plenty of time to prepare; and besides, it is not all that important anyway. God loves everybody and is not going to let anyone be lost. So what is the big deal? But remember, Jesus said in John 8:44 that the devil is a liar and the father of liars.

The apostle Paul knew the teachings of Jesus that the crown of righteousness is given only to those who are faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10 and see Matthew 24:13). Therefore, Paul urges Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:12). "Faith" here refers to the teachings and commandments of our Lord and abiding in them.

Each of us is in this fight to receive that glorious crown—but, also as a watchman of the Lord (Ezekiel 3:17-21 and Mark 16:15-16), we must continue in the doctrine and in so doing, save ourselves and them that hear us (I Timothy 4:16). This phrase, "that hear us," implies that we are teaching the word to them.

May we all, as soldiers of Christ, arise and follow the Lord so that when we come to the end of our time we can say with Paul,

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Timothy 4:7-8).

—2557 Campus Court
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THE PRICELESS JEWEL OF WISDOM

Annette B. Cates

If we were to fashion a piece of jewelry made up of the various positive qualities of personality, one of the most valuable Jewels in that work of art would be wisdom. It is of such great value that when Solomon became king over Israel, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, asking, **"What shall I give thee?"**, he asked God for wisdom. Solomon was a young adult at this time and recognized the fact that he lacked the experience necessary to govern this nation of God's people. He explained his request for wisdom, saying **"I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou has chosen..."** We read further that since he asked for wisdom and not for riches and honor, God granted him all three (I Kings 3:5-15).

Like Solomon, we should recognize our need for, and seek after wisdom. Job asked, **"Where shall wisdom be found?"** (Job 28:13). While one can acquire knowledge from universities, as well as worldly wisdom, sometimes called philosophy of men, there is only one source for true wisdom. As ingenious as man is, he cannot come with true wisdom. Jeremiah warned that **"It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps"** (Jeremiah 10:23). We also are warned by Paul that when man abandons wisdom from above, God's revelation, it always ends in vain speculation and vain imaginations (Romans 1:18-22). He further informed the Colossians, **"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"** (Colossians 2:8). Thus, we would do well to develop the kind of wisdom that God would approve.

We exhibit true wisdom when we choose that which is spiritual over the things of this world. Society around us makes light of spiritual ideals while sin is glorified. We are bombarded by this concept virtually every time we turn on a mainstream television program. This is the thrust of the books on best seller lists. Immorality is touted as "acceptable" behavior. Christians, however, are not to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2), but are to come out of the world and be separate (II Corinthians 6:17). When we allow the spiritual values found in God's word to guide us, our steps will be such that we will not stumble (Proverbs 4:11-12).

We exhibit true wisdom when we control the tongue. **"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver:..."** (Proverbs 10:19-20). We are wise when our speech is characterized by truthfulness. Others should know Christians to be people who are true to their words. This is another area where the contrast between the Christian and the world is glaring. **"He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness**

deceit...The lip of truth shall be established forever: a lying tongue is but for a moment" (Proverbs 12:17-18). Lying is one of the things that God hates (Proverbs 6:17) and one who does so will be lost eternally (Revelation 21:8). We are wise when we keep our speech pure. There are over 100,000 words in the English language. Surely we can adequately express ourselves without resorting to filth! **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth"** (Ephesians 4:29). We are wise when we refrain from gossip. **"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter"** (Proverbs 11:13). Gossip is not limited to falsehood about another person; it also can include truth that should not be told. There is a saying that "Truth that is told with bad intent is worse than all the lies one can invent." We are wise when our speech is that of kindness. The Virtuous Women exhibits this quality. **"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness"** (Proverbs 31:26). When we consider the feelings and impressions of others when we speak (Matthew 7:12), we will not do so with harshness and sarcasm. Speech, properly controlled, is well described in Proverbs 25:11, **"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."**

We exhibit true wisdom when we select friends and associates who will be an encouragement to us, and we to them, as we live as Christians. We cannot allow ourselves to be overshadowed by the negative influence of others. The prodigal son found that it was easy to attract the wrong kind of "friend" for he had many until he had wasted all of his money (Luke 15:13, 14). He had not learned that **"Wealth maketh many friends"** (Proverbs 19:4). Nor had he learned not to **"follow a multitude to do evil"** (Exodus 23:2). **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"** (II Corinthians 5:14). We, and our impact on the world, are corrupted by evil associations (I Corinthians 15:33). Knowing this, we should associate with people of like spiritual values, people who will help us grow as Christians, people who will not try to pull us down into the mire of sin. We would do well to cultivate friendships with those of **"like precious faith"** (II Peter 1:1).

If wisdom is a jewel, then it, like a diamond, has many facets. This article has considered only three. Let us examine our daily activities and apply other facets of wisdom in order that we conform our lives to God's will.

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PERPETUAL BACKSLIDING

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

- A. Apostasy is nothing new among the people of God.
- B. Jeremiah was called to the office of prophet to preach to unfaithful Israel.
 - 1. Through Jeremiah, God called for them to repent, but with a deaf ear they refused.
 - 3. Jeremiah 6:16-17
 - 4. Jeremiah 8:5
 - a. In the verses to follow is given the answer to God's question.
 - b. "Why are my people backsliding?"
 - 5. The answer to this question are extremely important for us to understand.
 - a. WHY?... People today have fallen into apostasy for the very same reasons.
 - b. Knowing the reasons why will help us to avoid this great disaster.

II. Discussion

A. NO SELF-EXAMINATION

- 1. Jeremiah 8:6
- 2. One of the most important elements in spiritual stability is self-examination
 - a. This is what Israel lacked.
 - b. They never questioned their actions, they just ran into sin like a war horse would run into the battle.
- 3. Amos 7:7-9
- 4. Self-examination is needed in a great many things in this life (work, sports, etc.).
- 5. II Corinthians 13:5
- 6. James 1:22-25
- 7. II Timothy 3:16-17
- 8. The absence of self-examination is sure of bring about backsliding.

B. WILLFULLY IGNORANT

- 1. Jeremiah 8:7-9
- 2. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7), but Israel no longer feared God.
- 3. Israel, being guilty of idolatry, were warned to repent
 - a. Jeremiah 44:16... They had turned their noses up to God.
 - b. They would not do as they were instructed, and neither did they want to know the instructions.
- 4. Jeremiah 6:16
 - a. Israel was ignorant and was determined to stay that way.
 - b. They did not realize the warning of God... Hosea 4:6
- 5. Today the church has a host of Christians who know shamefully little about the Bible.
- 6. So STUDY!!... II Timothy 2:15

C. COVETOUSNESS

- 1. Jeremiah 8:10
- 2. This is precisely the problem Micah spoke of in Micah 3:11.
- 3. It is sad when preachers preach only the things that the hands that feed them want.
 - a. These kinds of preachers show little concern for the flock.
 - b. John 10:12-13
 - c. Philippians 3:18-19
- 4. We need to have the attitude of Paul.
 - a. Acts 20:20, 27
 - b. We must not omit the profitable things for fear someone might not like it. That will make one like a "cake not turned" (Hosea 7:8).
 - c. We must preach the whole counsel of God—or a weak congregation will result.
- 5. All too often we allow "things" to guide us... Luke 12:15
- 6. Materialism destroys the church!

D. FALSE TEACHERS

- 1. Jeremiah 8:11
 - a. Jeremiah preached that they must repent or be destroyed.
 - b. The false prophet preached "Peace"—everything is all right.
- 2. Isaiah 5:20-21
 - a. Some think that they can redefine terms and thus change God's law to suit themselves.
 - b. By doing so they are calling light—darkness, and darkness—light.
- 3. Malachi 2:17
- 4. II Peter 2:1-3
- 5. False teachers lead men astray and divide the church
- 6. It is not those who stand for the truth that divide the church, BUT THOSE WHO DO NOT stand for the truth who divide the church!

E. NO SHAME FOR SIN

- 1. Jeremiah 8:12
- 2. The people had progressed to a point where they were no longer ashamed of sin.
- 3. Psalm 31:17
- 4. Let us not be indifferent about sin.

III. Conclusion:

- A. What was the result of Israel's perpetual backsliding? Destruction (Jeremiah 8:13).
- B. What will be the result of those who backslide today? ... Revelation 21:27; 20:15.



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THE TEENAGER AND THE MODERN DANCE

Jason R. Roberts

We live in a day and age when the moral fiber of our country is unraveling at a startling pace. Things that were once considered inappropriate and sinful tragically have now become appropriate and delightful. And, if we are not alert, the sinful behavior of the world will eventually weave its way into the lives of church members. The values and convictions that some members of the church of Christ once held dear have unfortunately been replaced with the menace of "moral relativism" and the philosophy of "political correctness." We have allowed *culture* rather than the *Creator* to dictate what is deemed to be appropriate and inappropriate conduct.

THE PROBLEM STATED

I am convinced that the subject of the modern dance is one that is seldom heard throughout our pulpits today. If you wanted to categorize the top ten most neglected sermon topics by preachers for the Lord's church, a sermon on the modern dance would rank near the highest. Some preachers will boldly claim to be preaching "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), while at the same time refusing to preach on numerous Bible issues that may ruffle some feathers in the pew. Wise elders will request that the subject of dancing be preached, regardless if the local congregation over whom they are tending is having a problem with it. Faithful preachers should boldly and lovingly preach on the subject regardless if the elders request that it be done.

What should our attitude be toward the modern dance? I will readily admit that there is no passage anywhere in the Bible that explicitly says, "Thou shalt not dance." The serious student of the Bible is wise enough to know that in addition to the "Thou shalt nots" God has prescribed, he has also given us a book which largely teaches through the avenue of principles. Nowhere do we find written in scripture, "Thou shalt not have an abortion," or "Thou shalt not inject heroin into thy arm."

However, we all recognize that the Bible implicitly condemns the participation of these two activities. Likewise, the modern dance (or prom) implicitly violates a host of scriptures as well as Biblical principles and therefore should be avoided at all costs.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

First does the modern dance promote purity or licence lasciviousness? Is the atmosphere in which dancing takes place an atmosphere conducive to maintaining one's purity or is it an atmosphere that has the capacity to destroy

one's purity (Matthew 5:28)? Peter said, "...abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11). Paul said, "Flee...youthful lusts" (II Timothy 2:22).

It is interesting that people in the world will readily admit the problem of the modern dance and that one's involvement therein has the capacity to incite lustful thoughts. Consider some quotes from some people who have researched and studied the modern dance. Keep in mind that these statements did not originate with a group of cantankerous, right-wing, fundamentalist preachers who had nothing better to do than to speak out against dancing. Some years ago, the F.B.I. released a report which listed the top six avenues that could eventually lead young people into harm. Interestingly enough, dancing was number two on their list. The other five included, drinking, gambling, parking and petting, reckless driving, and mixed swimming. J. Edgar Hoover said, "Most juvenile crime had its inception in the dance hall either public or private." Mrs. T.A. Faulkner, in her book *From the Ballroom to Hell*, wrote, "163 girls out of 200 attributed their downfall from moral purity to dancing." Dr. Frank Richardson, speaking before the *Homeopathic Medical Association of New Jersey* said, "Dance halls are the modern nurseries of the divorce courts, training shops of prostitution and graduating schools of infamy and vice." Arthur Murray, a popular dance instructor said, "The difference between wrestling and dancing is that, in wrestling, some holds are barred." How interesting that people in the world will readily recognize and admit the potential problems associated with dancing, yet how tragic it is that some members of the church, and specifically parents, are unwilling to admit the same!

Second, is my attending the dance a stepping-stone or a stumbling-block to others who will be there? Does my participation in the modern dance provide a conducive atmosphere to let my light so shine before men so that they may see my good works and glorify my father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16)? Would I feel comfortable dancing in the presence of immodestly attired individuals while at the same time mentioning something about Jesus to my dance partner? Would I feel comfortable in the presence of my date by asking God to bless our time together as we dance the night away? Furthermore, if Jesus came back during the night of the prom while I was there would I be happy or ashamed to see him (I John 2:28)?



I know of a teenager who is a member of the Lord's church and whose parents unwisely allowed him to attend the prom. His date was not a member of the church. They danced together and partied the night away. When he finally drove her home late that evening, and walked her to the door, he asked her if she would go to church with him the next morning. She said yes. It just so happened that the preacher that Sunday preached on the sinfulness of the modern dance and the evils associated with the local prom. This was the very first time this girl had ever been in a building where the church of Christ meets, and to my

knowledge, to this day, it was her last. At the judgment that boy will give an account for that girl's soul (II Corinthians 5:10)! His influence was no good. Rather than becoming a *stepping-stone* to lead that lost soul to Christ, he became a *stumbling-block* and drove her away!

There are many questions attached to the modern dance. That being the case, when people question the dance, our spiritual antennas should be heightened to the awareness that there is something intrinsically wrong with it.

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Restoration Reflections...

THE RESTORATION PLEA

Paul Vaughn

The restoration of New Testament Christianity is the grandest *PLEA* that can be made by man. It is a plea for the indispensable truth of the word of God and the integrity of the Bible. The church of Christ will flourish or decrease in accordance with its faithfulness to the restoration plea.

The restoration plea is a statement of defense for New Testament Christianity. Jesus has all authority in the church of Christ. **"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"** (Matthew 28:18). Paul said, **"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"** (Colossians 3:17). Those who proclaim the restoration plea are making a defense for all of the religious world to look to the Lord and follow his teaching to the exclusion of all manmade decrees and regulations. Faithful Christians everywhere are committed to restoring the church one can read about in the New Testament making the following appeal, defense, and plea to all men.

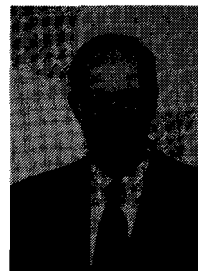
PLEA FOR THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

There is only one doctrine that is acceptable to follow. It is the teaching, doctrine given by Christ Jesus in the New Testament. It is written, **"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"** (II John 9). Progression is good if one is advancing toward Christ and in his teaching. Those who progress beyond the doctrine of Christ have forfeited all the blessings faithful Christians enjoy in fellowship with Christ. All will be judged by the doctrine, words of Christ. **"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"** (John 12:48). Knowing that, **"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"** (Hebrews 10:31). Churches of

Christ proclaim that man **"teach no other doctrine"** (I Timothy 1:3).

PLEA FOR THE NAME CHRISTIAN

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:27). About 700 years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that those faithful to God would be called by a new name. **"And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name"** (Isaiah 62:2). The name Christian, given by the inspiration of God, glorifies God and Christ because one is in conformity with the revealed will of God. Churches of Christ plead that all followers of Christ wear the name Christian, burying out of sight all denominational names that have caused division and sectarianism.



PLEA FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Jesus prayed that all of his followers be united.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 20:20,21).

There is only one way to be one, only one way for the unity that Jesus prayed to come about. Everyone must look to the Bible and the Bible alone. In this there can be unity for all believers in Christ. There have been many men who have tried to weaken the plea for Christian unity for a union comprised of compromise, willing to accommodate for the purpose of gaining numbers or popularity with the religious world around them. Those who have done so have turned their backs on the restoration plea for New Testament Christianity.

Jesus built only one church. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus clearly, plainly, positively, and simply declared that he would build one church. He did not say that he would build different religious denominations. The church of Christ is made of all who have obeyed the doctrine of Christ. Once one obeys the Lord's plan of salvation, he is added to the church Jesus built. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:48). They are not added to a denomination or sect, but to the church that was established almost 2000 years ago in Jerusalem, the church one reads about in the New Testament.

PLEA FOR THE SOULS OF MAN

The restoration plea is a plea for the souls of the lost. The only message that has the power to save a soul from hell is the gospel of Christ. Paul declared, acknowledged, revealed, and published in the book of Romans that exclusively the Gospel of Christ has the power to save. "For I

am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). The importance of the restoration plea is seen today because men have departed from the only message that can save their souls. This is why we must go back to the old paths, declaring the message of salvation, preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ.

It should be the aim of people everywhere to go back to the Bible, back to Christ, and restore New Testament Christianity. This can be only accomplished by searching the scriptures and restoring the pattern that is set forth in the word of God. Because men have departed from God's word, the plea to return to the Bible for all we teach and practice is bona fide and trustworthy for man to proclaim. Will you be a part of the return to New Testament Christianity?

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NEWS RELEASE...

MONUMENTAL BOOK ON FOY E. WALLACE, JR. REGARDED AS A LITERARY MASTERPIECE

Fort Worth resident, Noble Patterson and Terry Gardner of Indianapolis, Indiana, have a mutual and unusual interest in the life of Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Over the past four years their time and attention has been devoted to assembling information and writing a most unusual book on the life of Wallace entitled, "Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Soldier Of The Cross".

What started as a topic of casual conversation, leisure reading and miscellaneous research evolved into a profound enlightenment for both Patterson and Gardner and eventually into an interesting and visually exciting publication. Actually, they have created a literary masterpiece.

For many, the name Foy E. Wallace, Jr. evokes immediate recognition as perhaps the most significant influence in the church since the days of Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone and David Lipscomb. For others, Wallace is linked to a period of time in the church when victories for the church and successful pleas for undenominational Christianity were realized only after hard-fought battles on the polemic platform.

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was well known throughout the brotherhood from coast to coast. He has been widely acknowledged by both his friends and foes as the "single most influential preacher in Churches of Christ" in the 20th Century. He was loved and hated but respected by all. In this new work by Patterson and Gardner, an attempt is made to both un-

derstand and appreciate Foy E. Wallace, Jr. He was one evangelist whose gospel meetings created such intense interest that they often continued for a month at a place, with crowds increasing in number to the last service. And it was often stated that more people would drive farther to hear Foy E. Wallace, Jr. than any other preacher.

Gardner, an attorney, took a rather difficult path of providing a long overdue, precisely documented, historical biography of a great Bible scholar and "Soldier Of The Cross" ...Foy E. Wallace, Jr. This is biography as it should be done, worth reading for the certified content of Restoration history, and valuable as a resource for information. Gardner presents all relevant details with efficiency and readability. As an accomplished historian/biographer he presents Wallace and his unexcelled ministry in an unvarnished fashion.

Patterson draws upon his many years of close association with Wallace, including traveling with him in several states and directing the singing in gospel meetings...to present his reflections on this great servant of God. Patterson, along with Howard Higgins, for several years published the many books written by Wallace.

"Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Soldier Of The Cross" fills in many details unknown to the public, and it provides historical data on events and on the life of one held in the highest esteem by the entire brotherhood.

The book contains a number of unique features. Noble Patterson has written biographical sketches of those men who often led the singing during Wallace's gospel meetings. These men were Tillit S. Teddlie, Austin Taylor, Basil C. Doran, James W. Acuff, Marion Davis, Palmer Wheeler and L. O. Sanderson. Another unusual feature includes articles about each of Foy E. Wallace, Jr.'s eleven major debates which include pictures of Wallaces' opponents, his moderators and the buildings (most long since razed) where the debates took place.

Also, the book includes biographical sketches on the life of Cled E. Wallace, Foy E. Wallace, Sr., W. E. Brightwell, Joe S. Warlick, Will M. Thompson, Charles H. Roberson. Furthermore, the book includes the most significant articles that Wallace wrote during his long journalistic career. Included also is the reproduction of the original Christian Journal issue in honor of Wallace first issued in 1980.

Finally, Noble Patterson and Terry Gardner, have painstakingly selected the best photos (236) from over 300 that were reviewed. These treasured photos create an intimate pictorial history of the Wallace years. The result is a beautiful, oversized (9 x 12) 338 page book.

This publication is destined to become a treasured collectible and a copy should be in the home of every Christian. The book is currently at the printer and shall only be printed in limited quantity. Therefore, if you wish to reserve your copy you should order at once.

This memorial book will not be available through bookstores, but can be purchased by writing WALLACE MEMORIAL FUND P. O. Box 150391, Fort Worth, Texas 76108. The cost of a single volume is \$44.99 with postage and handling included.

CONFESS YOUR SINS

Lynn Parker

James writes, **"Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working"** (James 5:16). Far from the silly, unscriptural notion of the Catholic confessional, James deals with sin on its most personal level. For example, a brother sins against another and the circumstances are such that others are aware of the transgression. What should the transgressor do? Of course he confesses the sin to God. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9). The truly penitent acknowledges his error to God (Psalm 32:5), and eagerly seeks pardon (Acts 8:24). And he seeks reconciliation, not just with God, but also with his brother.

If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matthew 5:23-24).

PUBLIC CONFESSIONS OF SIN

Are there situations where it is proper for a brother or sister to make a public confession of fault to the church? Of course! Realizing that his sin was known by others, and never wanting to **"put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling"** (Romans 14:13), the repentant soul joins with God's word in renouncing his previous sinful actions. If he has forsaken the assembly, others surely know it. If one has gossiped, slandered, created division in the church, or otherwise been unfaithful, there are souls that are impacted by such behavior. The penitent brother tells others—as many as may be aware of the situation—that he regrets his former conduct and asks them to pray with him and for him. The prodigal's desire is to be back in the Father's house, with the fellowship of his spiritual brothers and sisters, and he realizes that such fellowship is predicated on **"walking in the light"** (I John 1:3,7).

You realize too, that there are some things that the truly penitent will *not* do. *He will never make his repentance conditioned on that of another.* The proper heart does not say, "I know I've done wrong but I will not make amends until ol' brother Smith repents, too!" Judgment Day is a personal appointment. **"So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God"** (Romans 14:12). A heart more concerned about the action of others is still not where it needs to be in heaven's sight. **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..."** (II Corinthians 13:5). You cannot afford to let another's action (or lack thereof) stand between you and eternity in heaven.

The truly penitent does not try to "sneak back into fellowship." A brother or sister can get mad at someone in the church, forsake the assemblies for a week or a year,

then appear on the pew one Sunday like nothing ever happened. He expects to be put back to leading public prayers. She wants to resume teaching a children's class. They want to pretend that all is forgotten. Wrong! God has not forgotten the matter. **"He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy"** (Proverbs 28:13). The passing of time does not erase sin or ease its burden. But in the time it takes a stubborn, prideful heart to melt and turn back to righteousness, things can be made right again.

The truly penitent does not wait for others to beg, cajole, humor, and bargain for his return. One man, faced with imminent withdrawal of fellowship, told a congregation that he might come back some day but only if the church stopped the discipline process. God knows of no compromises in the matter of repentance—there are no negotiated settlements. The God of heaven accepts only unconditional surrender to his will. The contrite heart does not care about "saving face"—it does not seek to salvage its wounded pride. **"A man's pride shall bring him low; but he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor"** (Proverbs 29:23). **"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"** (Psalms 34:18). God resists the proud (James 4:6). It is not, "Brethren, if I have sinned..." but rather, "I have sinned against God and my brethren!"

There is a time and place for brethren to confess their sins—one to another. True character is seen, not in throwing down the blood-money and committing spiritual suicide but rather weeping bitter tears and manifesting a godly sorrow that leads to repentance. This is the difference between Judas and Peter in the hours leading up to the cross. It is the difference today between a prodigal who continues to bulldoze a path to hell, and the one who penitently, urgently returns to the Father's house.

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"Were The One Hundred And Twenty Disciples Baptized In The Holy Spirit?"

Noah Hackworth

Subsequent to his resurrection but antecedent to his ascension, Jesus conversed with his apostles over a period of 40 days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). The word "pertaining" [concerning, ASV] translates the Greek term *peri*, a preposition which means "the things concerning a person or thing, i.e., what relates to, can be said about, etc." [Thayer]. Having been assembled with the apostles, the Lord instructed them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father (verse 4). When he had finished speaking these things, the apostles watched a cloud receive him out of their sight (verse 9). They then returned to Jerusalem, entered an upper room, and found a number of disciples who were engaged in prayer and supplication (verse 14). Peter stood up and made a speech that included [1] the fate of Judas; [2] the need to select one to take his place; [3] the qualifications needed by the one selected, and [4] the final selection of Matthias as an apostle by the Lord (verse 26). When the day of Pentecost was fully come (Acts 2:1), they were all "filled with the Holy Ghost..." (verse 4). The "all" of this

verse is presumed by a number of biblical expositors to include the one hundred and twenty disciples. "Not only the apostles, but the one hundred and twenty disciples" [B. W. Johnson]; "Probably not only the apostles, but also the one hundred and twenty mentioned in ch. i. 15" [Albert Barnes]; "We must not think of the gift as confined to the apostles" [Charles Ellicott]; "But the application of the prophecy, 16-21 [Acts 2, NH], seems to require a wider range, taking in those mentioned in i: 14 at all events, and perhaps, Pentecostal pilgrims also" [F.C. Cook]; "It is probable that the all here mentioned means the one hundred and twenty spoken of chap. i. 15" [Adam Clarke]; "All the 120 disciples were gathered together in one body and in one place, probably the upper room, 1:13" [Wycliffe]; "The one hundred-and-twenty as well as the apostles" [Nicoll]; "...The effusion of the Spirit was not on the apostles merely, but on all the new people of God" [H. A. W. Meyer]; "Not only were there the apostles, but also the others" [J. A. Bengel]; "Who were these *apanetes*, these all here mentioned? Probably the 'one hundred and twenty' spoken of chap. i. 15" [John Lightfoot].

One of the mistakes one can make when reading the Bible is to assume that a thought or subject ends when the chapter ends. Such is not always the case. The division of the Bible into chapters and verses was not the work of the Holy Spirit. In the original manuscripts there were no chapters or verses and no punctuation marks, plus the fact that there were no "upper and lower" case and everything was in caps. Acts 2:1 could easily be Acts 1:27 with no violence at all to the text or thought. Observe the use of "us" [1:21]; "us" [1:22]; "they" [1:24]; "they" [1:26]; "their" [1:26]. To whom do these pronouns refer? We suggest they refer to the apostles. We must be careful that we do not go too far back into Acts 1 to find the antecedent of they in Acts 2:1. To make the they of Acts 2:1 refer to the 120 disciples, one would have to go all the way back to verse 15 of Acts 1. Such is not necessary or needful. Ignoring the current chapter break between Acts 1 and 2, the text would read, "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." The context of Acts 1 and 2 shows that the 120 disciples of Acts 1 were not included in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At any rate the question does not affect our eternal salvation.

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NOTES AND QUOTES...

Grover C. Beard, Bryant, Alabama: "I'm sorry you had to lose brother Luper. I know he meant a lot to you. Good friends stick closer than a brother, and he was both.

"I got barred from the pulpit several years ago, because I dared to preach negative; not all the time—but to preach the book how can one do otherwise?

"I don't remember ever seeing a prayer printed in Contending for the Faith. I may be wrong about that. If it is against your policy to do so, please leave it out. I'm sending you a copy of my prayer that you may pass it along. It may be a help to some younger brother.

"I'm proud you are still going strong. You may be the only conscience some brethren have. Don't give up until God calls you home. You shall be rewarded in eternity..."

[NOTE: "Yes, I still miss my friend and brother, Archie Luper," I replied, in part, to brother Beard. "He was not perfect; but who is! He loved the truth of the gospel and stood by me through thick and thin across the years.

"Sorry that you got barred from preaching the truth—negative or not. True preachers must declare the 'whole counsel of God.' Some brethren never understand this..." IYRJR.]

The prayer that brother Beard enclosed reads as follows:

GOD GIVE US!

God give us eyes, that we can see the needs of others about us.

God give us ears, that we can hear a new born baby cry.

God give us lips, that we can sing thy praise, honor and glory.

God give us a mouth, with courage, to speak thy truths even when it hurts.

God give us compassionate hands, that we can reach out to a brother, sister, or friend.

God give us a compassionate heart, so we can feel the pain of a brother who is hurting, or rejoice when he is happy.

God give us knees, that won't wear out in prayer, thanking thee for blessings.

God give us feet with iron shoes, that will help us spread the gospel to the world.

God give us time, to stop and smell the roses, and listen

to a mockingbird sing his sweetest songs.

Finally, Father, we thank thee for Jesus, the greatest gift of all, and that he died on Calvary for our sins.

Amen.

Written by Grover C. Beard
767 County Road 297
Bryant, Alabama 35958

Hico Church of Christ, of Puryear, Tennessee, sent \$1,000.00 toward helping us build the printing press build-

ing where Joshua Gootam publishes the Basic Bible Course and other gospel literature for distribution from Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Brother Gootam preaches in the Telugu language over Radio Sri Lanka once a day, five days each week, inviting Telugu-speaking people to write in for the course.

Andhra Pradesh—perhaps the largest state in India—has more than 90-million Telugu-speaking people, of whom more than a million now are enrolled in our correspondence Bible courses. Joshua's wife, Kabita, is from the State of Orissa and is a scholar in the Oriya language spoken there. She translated the entire 28-lesson Basic Bible Course into the Oriya language and, through newspaper advertising, has signed up more than 40,000 to take this course in Orissa.

Brother Gootam keeps his printing press rolling eight hours per day, five days each week, and still cannot cope with the demand for gospel literature in Telugu, Oriya and other languages.

It now is costing almost \$4,000 each month to pay for paper, printing, stationery, and postage to spread the gospel in this manner to the teeming millions in India—also an additional \$2,000 is needed to provide Bibles in Indian languages to those who complete the course, great numbers of whom are obeying the gospel as a result of this teaching and study.

Congregations and individuals who would like to have a part with us in making these courses and Bibles available in India, your help is sorely needed. Please make checks payable to Bellview Church of Christ, clearly earmarked either for Bibles for India or for Indian Bible Course Work, and address them to 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, Florida 32526.

Dennis & Shirley Gresham, Hobart, Tasmania: "The 5th Annual Eastern Shore Lectureship is coming upon us quite fast. We now have all of our speakers confirmed. Those who will be taking part are: Graeme Walker (New Zealand), Kevin Moore (New Zealand), Eric Lim (Singapore), Ian McPherson (Hobart), Don Blackwell (USA), Graeme Tattersall (Tasmania), Brett Rutherford (USA), Lawson Mayo (Melbourne), Gary Young (Hobart), Jules Cseszko (Adelaide), Eddy Ee (Singapore), and Glen Ary (Adelaide)."

Tommy J. Hicks, Lubbock, Texas: "The Southside Church of Christ is planning to host the SECOND ANNUAL LUBBOCK LECTURESHIP, October 10-14, 1999... As last year, we will publish a beautiful hardback lectureship book... We want it to be sound, informative, and spiritually edifying..."

Red & Marie Herring, of Baxter, Tennessee, when ordering my new book, Pressing Toward the Mark—Volume I, said, "We still enjoy and look forward to 'Contending for the Faith.' With Con-

tending for the Faith, I can handle the Sword of the Spirit. "We have followed your work from Singapore to India and greatly rejoice in it. Our prayers are with you and your family."

[NOTE: "When I got back from overseas in late March," I replied, in part, "I was happy to see your letter and order for my new book, Pressing Toward the Mark—Volume I. Vada, of course, sent it to you on my behalf. I trust that you received it and enjoyed reading it as much as I did writing it.

"Thank you for what you said of Contending for the Faith. If I can hold out until the December issue, it will be 30 years since the paper began in January 1970.

"Your appreciation of my long, long work as a missionary also is gratifying. In March, I was blessed to preach the gospel in my 70th country (Nepal). Now coming 82 (August 3), probabilities of my adding more to that number are not all that great. However, the Lord has blessed me enormously to get even this far..." IYRJR.]

Joye Worde-Armon, Seattle, Washington: "I am Joye E. Worde, the daughter of Robert and Lilian (Cookie). It is such a great honor that you have given my father to include him in your book. He often talked about his father in the gospel (you) throughout his ministry. I worship at the Southside Church of Christ where brother William Harper is the minister. I moved my parents to Seattle in 1994 so they could be close to me.

"At this time, he is living in Seattle—which makes it a little easier for me to care for him. He now has a condition similar to Alzheimer. The Lord is keeping him comfortable and that is all I can ask for. Mama went home to be with the Lord in December of 1996. She was 87 and she went very quickly with a stroke so she did not suffer at all. She was very active right up until the day she had the stroke. I have pictures and good memories. I also have pictures of you and family back in the San Francisco days.

"I'm looking forward to receiving your book..."

[NOTE: Sister Joye enclosed her check for \$23.00 for my biography, postage and handling. "What a pleasure it was to hear from the daughter of Robert and Lilian (Cookie) Worde!" I replied, in part. "Thank you for what you said of my including your father in my autobiography, Volume I. It would not have been complete without him in it.

"As I think back over the years, I cannot think of more sincere and faithful Christians in all my experience—worldwide—than your parents. It always was wonderful to me to be with them—and that he looked upon me as his 'father in the gospel' is a great honor indeed.

"Under separate cover, we already have mailed the copy of my book you ordered. You might mention to the Southside brethren there in Seattle that I'd like to visit brother Worde while he is still alive. If so, others might want copies of my biography, since he and others they might know are in it... Just let me know." IYRJR.]

THE SIGN OF WISDOM AND COURAGE

Eddie Whitten

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

Someone rightfully said, "There is no fear like the fear of not knowing what you are afraid of." All people experience some degree of fear whether they admit it or not. Anyone who boasts of not being afraid of anything is a foolish person. A healthy fear of anything that can harm is nothing more than good judgment. As a young boy, I was deathly afraid of an old "muley" cow (a cow without horns) which belonged to a neighbor. This particular cow had a reputation of being really mean. I do not know how true the rumor was, but it was good enough for me. I knew better than to go around her. My persuasion was that pain and hurt could come if I relaxed my vigil when close to that cow. I suppose that childhood convictions may seem silly or humorous, but caution is still valid. If something can hurt you, it is wise to avoid it.

Using the logic that comes from such personal illustrations, consider the instructions, both positive and negative, of the Lord. Jesus said, **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16). James recorded, **"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"** (James 1:25). The same loving father gives both warning for disobedience and blessing as a result of obedience. Think about it. God wants everyone to come to repentance and be saved (II Peter 3:9). He gives his promise in so many places of salvation to those who will keep his commandments. Yet, he warns, in clear and concise terms, of eternal condemnation to those who refuse to hear him.

To fear the Lord means to have sincere, reverent respect for God. Some go no further in defining fear than just that. It also means to have fear of the condemnation of God. Not to have such a fear indicates a lack of wisdom and a refusal to receive instruction. Solomon says, by inspiration, that a person who does not use wisdom and refuses instruction is a fool.

We see the attitude of superiority throughout the religious world, including the church of our Lord. Denominationalism is a spawn of this type of thinking. Not satisfied with God's wisdom and instruction, men have decided they are more intelligent than God is. They are fools. Will they admit such snobbery? Of course not! But, their actions belie their profession. It reminds us of the child who



DIRECTORY

For advertising in this section, See Masthead, Page 2.

—Alabama—

Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Tel. (205) 796-6802, 429-2026. Sunday: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—California—

Seal Beach—Leisure World Church of Christ, Northwood Club House, 3 room 8, Sunday: 11:00 a.m., Bible Study 10:00 a.m., Don Foslien, Evangelist.

—England—

England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 253 Coldhams Lane, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Graham Moulton, Tel. 01223-210101. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

—Florida—

Miami—Westwood Lake Church of Christ, 10790 SW 36th Street, Miami, FL 33165, tel. (305) 554-8229. F. Matherly, Evangelist, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (904) 455-7595. Evangelist, Michael Hatcher, Sunday: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—Indiana—

Evansville—West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sunday: 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

—Michigan—

Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed: 7:00 p.m.

—Missouri—

Farmington—Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, tel. (573) 756-5925 or 3595. Evangelist, Sean Hochdorf, Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—North Carolina—

Rocky Mount—Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, tel. (919) 977-7556, Mark McDonald, Evangelist.

—Tennessee—

Crossville—Lantana Church of Christ, 7004 Lantana Rd., P.O. Box 2686, Crossville, TN 38557, (615) 788-6404. Sun.: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Jimmie B. Hill, Evangelist.

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 or Steve Ellis, Evangelist, (901) 366-6005.

Nashville area—Villages Church of Christ, 436 Belinda Parkway, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m. Fifteen minutes from downtown Nashville, Wayne Coats, Evangelist, tel. (615) 758-7406.

—Texas—

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, tel. (281) 353-2707. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. **Home of Houston College of the Bible and the HCB Lectures** beginning the last week in February.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

Lubbock—Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00 a.m., 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.

Portland—Church of Christ, 2009 Wildcat Dr., Portland, TX 78374, tel. (512) 643-6571, Michael Wyatt, Evangelist.

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

—Wyoming—

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 4901 Ridge Rd., Cheyenne, WY 82009. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Loran Gearhart, tel. (307) 634-3040.

is caught with his hand in the cookie jar while denying the fact to his mother.

It would behoove all of us to realize that no man has reached the pinnacle of knowledge and wisdom. All of us should realize that we are capable of learning deeper and more meaningful truths from our study of God's word. One of the most elemental of all principles is that he that thinks he cannot be taught is the one who is in the most need of teaching.

The religious world is splintered by denominationalism because men, thinking they are wiser than God, refuse instruction. In their quest to worship God, they have designed their own righteousness and in doing so have

rejected the righteousness of God (Romans 10:1-3). Almost daily some new name is noticed identifying a new religious group. It is evident that the leaders of the new groups have ignored the instruction of God. Jesus says, **"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"** (Matthew 15:13). We recognize the tragedy of denominationalism and we say, "How sad!"

The real tragedy is in the realization that the church is also splintered by the same principle. Smart men, steeped in their own wisdom, and despising the wisdom of God, have ceased to be guided by the instruction of the word of God. In following their own "inimitable wisdom," they have become fools, leading sincere people into the euphoria of "preacheritis" and subjectivism. Every "new" thought, unsupported by truth, pursued and promoted even in the face of Bible teaching (instruction of God) and by faithful men, results in another division in the body of Christ. Souls are at stake, especially the soul of the perpetrator(s). Jesus warned, **"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"** (Matthew 18:7).

The forces of evil, error and pride are powerful in our world. Those who prefer their human wisdom and the hatred of instruction are foolish enough to herald their false teaching far and wide. It takes godly wisdom (the fear of God's eternal judgment) and courage (courage that comes from knowledge of God's word, [instruction]), to fight the good fight of the faith (II Timothy 4:7). **"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"** (I John 4:1).

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THE "ALL LIFE IS WORSHIP" DOCTRINE REVISITED

Daniel Denham

The "all life is worship" doctrine has been a source of much strife and division in the brotherhood. Lindsey Garmon's efforts to push it in the early 1980s in Corpus Christi, Texas led to a split of the Ayers Street congregation with whom Garmon was working at the time. It also led to the formation of the South Church of Christ in that city. Lindsey worked with those brethren for several years. The "all life is worship" doctrine remained a prominent aspect of his teaching.

When the news that H.A. (Buster) Dobbs had embraced a version of the "all life" theory came, it was quite a shock, especially in view of numerous statements that Buster has made in years past attacking that very error. These have been well-documented in material prepared by Tom Wacaster, Lynn Parker, and Gary Grizzell. Since the onset of the controversy, Buster was in contact through e-mail and faxes with Eddie Whitten, who bent every effort to dissuade Buster from pursuing his present course. That effort, unfortunately, failed, much to the distress of many good brethren (not to mention the inevitable effects that such is having on *Firm Foundation*, which is edited by Dobbs). In a fax dated August 28th of 1998, Buster sent a letter to Whitten attempting to defend his version of the doctrine. While he later states unequivocally in one paragraph, "...it is wrong to think that all of life is worship...", he earlier contends that "service" in Romans 12:1 could be properly translated "worship," or more precisely "spiritual service of worship." Buster's most recent editorial on the matter in the June 1999 issue of *Firm Foundation* and an article titled "A Sacrifice that Lives" by Lindell Mitchell in the same issue both seek to defend this use of the text. Lindell is on record as recently as October 1998 (at the Southside Church of Christ lectures in Lubbock, TX) as

not believing the "all life is worship" doctrine. One is made to wonder how one can believe that all service is worship in any meaningful and concrete sense as these brethren are teaching and yet profess to reject the notion that "all life is worship." Sometimes Buster employs a proviso. In some of his letters to Eddie and in an article that he originally intended to publish in *Firm Foundation*, he opines that "all life is worship, except for sin." Now this may offer to some a bit of cover, but it is just a "fig leaf" attempt to divert the issue.



AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY

In an examination of the letter of August 28th previously mentioned, I observed a quotation by Buster that totally astounded me. It occurs at the bottom of the first page and continues at the top of the second. Buster asks Eddie the following question in which the quotation is found:

Also tell me what is wrong with this statement, You see, wherever you are, there is a temple, because Christians are temples of God. You're the temple of God, and wherever you are, there's a priest on the scene because you are a royal priest of God. Now wherever you have that combination – a temple where God is present and where there's a priest on the scene – not only can worship occur, but when you have that combination, worship must occur... (NOTE: Buster's query in which the citation occurs does not close with a question mark, though this is clearly the intent of the paragraph, HDD).

This quotation demands close scrutiny. The identity of the source of this quote is of great interest. Notice the following lengthier version of it:

(Continued On Page 4)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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David P. Brown,
Associate Editor
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ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith was begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7, 17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by Contending for the Faith. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needful. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

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MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. COST OF SPACE FOR ADS: Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; half page, \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. CLASSIFIED ADS: \$2.00 per line per month. CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS: \$30.00 per line per year. SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES: Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

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Editorial...

HOBBY-RIDING CONTINUES DIVIDING CHRIST'S BODY

When the soldiers came to hasten the death of Christ, "they saw that he was dead already." Therefore, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side," (John 19:33-34).

As hideous and gruesome an act as that was, I think I would rather be that Roman soldier piercing Jesus' physical body than to be guilty of dividing his spiritual body, the church, as some seem wont to do nowadays.

DON'T THEY SEE THE HARM THEY ARE CAUSING?

Possibly they are oblivious to the harm; but when otherwise faithful brethren turn a blind eye to the wreckage their "hobby-riding" of certain issues is causing unnecessarily, they just as surely are dividing our Lord's body today as did that soldier at the crucifixion.

In former days, some of the issues that set brother against brother were anti-women teachers, anti-Bible classes, anti-Bible college, anti-more than one container in the Lord's Supper, and anti-church cooperation.

NEW ISSUES JUST AS SURELY DIVIDE US TODAY

Nowadays brethren are making a hobby of "except for sin all life is worship" and/or a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. How intelligent brethren can hold to either position and still claim to understand the Bible is beyond me.

But some who never rode such hobbies before seem determined to do so now—and then wonder why they no longer have the fellowship of those refusing to ride their hobbies with them.

BRETHREN, LET'S GET BACK TO THE BOOK!

When brethren thus contribute to dividing the spiritual body of Christ over things not clearly taught as matters of faith but are in the realm of private opinions, they violate a principle just as binding as faith, repentance, confession and baptism.

Hebrews 6:4-6 puts it this way:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Offending brethren need to climb down off their hobby-horses and get back to the book so we can go along together as before.

—Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Editor

"ALWAYS GIVE THEM A WAY OUT"

The title of this editorial was part of some unsolicited well-intended advice given to me a good while ago. The advisor was concerned that in the process of exposing the error of certain persons one might "back them into a corner." His view was that if such happened they might not have a "face-saving" way out of their error.

Of course God gives any teacher of error as well as any erring child of God "a way out" of sin—it is called *repentance, confession of sin and prayer to God for the forgiveness of one's sins*. "Saving face" has nothing to do with biblical repentance and confession of one's sins (II Samuel 12:1-14; Acts 8:21-24; Galatians 2:11-14; I Timothy 5:20; James 5:16). This is the only "way out" of a corner into which one's attempted defense of his error has backed him. If one does not believe and spread his error, there is no "false teacher's corner" into which he may be backed. Such a corner he made for himself. Let him take God's way out or stay in the corner of his own making, marked for the false teacher that he is (Romans 16:17). Indeed, **"the way of transgressors is hard"** (Proverbs 13:15). Such good intentioned advice reminds me of the adage: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Furthermore, it calls to mind the words of the wise man, **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Proverbs 14:12).

THIS WILL NOT DO

The declaration that one will not write or speak on an erroneous subject ever again does not in and of itself alone constitute repentance. How can such be the case in view of the past conduct of such characters?

1. They teach and argue for their false doctrine.
2. Such men castigate and malign brethren who oppose their error.
3. Their doctrine is pressed to the division of a congregation of God's people.
4. By their false doctrine and their defense of it they bring about the ruin of a gospel paper that many faithful brethren sacrificed and labored to keep on the side of God's truth.

Let me not mince words or beat around the proverbial bush. Frankly, I am referring to **H. A. "Buster" Dobbs**, Editor of *Firm Foundation*. With him is his ever loyal apologist **Lindell Mitchell**, preacher for the Church of Christ, 1101 W. Church Street, Livingston, Texas. Lindell is a regular writer and one of

those remaining on the so-called "Advisory Staff" of *Firm Foundation*. (Some of my brethren have had and are having a terrible time getting their names removed from the list. However, that is one problem that I did not have.) Together, Dobbs and Mitchell have propagated and defended the "except for sin, all of life is worship" error. If they desire the fellowship of faithful brethren, let them repent of their false doctrine, confess their sins to the church, retract their error in the same way they sought to spread it, apologize to those that they have wronged, ask God to forgive them and make restitution where such is possible. That is God's way out of error. It is the only way out of any sin. God expects neither more nor less of any one.

FLEETWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST

In the December 1998 issue of *Contending for the Faith*, we published the Fleetwood elders' statement wherein they rejected the false doctrine of "except for sin, all of life is worship." I was encouraged by their actions. Why it took from February till November of 1998 for the Fleetwood elders to publicly state their position, I never have known. It was in February of 1998 that **Jess Hall** preached his sermon at Fleetwood wherein he taught that "all of life is worship." This was the sermon that initiated the problems that continue to this day. On several occasions thereafter, faithful brethren of the Fleetwood congregation attempted to get the Fleetwood elders to see the error that Hall had taught. They were rebuffed and rebuked for their efforts.

In a meeting with Dobbs brethren found out that he believed and defended Hall's teaching. Then, in July of 1998 Dobbs preached a sermon at Fleetwood in which he defended the "all life is worship doctrine." Certain brethren left Fleetwood because of such teaching as well as the fact that the elders were not rebuking the real false teachers.

From August of 1998 onward more printed evidence surfaced proving Dobbs' belief that "except for sin, all of life is worship." In November of 1998 he again preached a sermon at Fleetwood in which he taught his false views. About a week later Fleetwood's preacher **Jim Dearman** preached a sermon exposing Dobbs' and Hall's doctrine. It was then that the Fleetwood elders issued their statement of non-belief in Dobbs' doctrine (See December 1998 issue of CFTF.) At the time I wondered if this was the beginning of a "turn around" by the Fleetwood elders.

WILL BRETHREN NEVER LEARN?

I was also personally encouraged to learn that the Fleetwood elders cut back their financial support of Dobbs because of his erroneous belief. Due to their long-term relationship I thought maybe, just maybe,

this would cause Dobbs and Mitchell to honestly and objectively consider their false position on worship and turn from it. This was not to be. Some time later I was saddened to learn that the Fleetwood elders were continuing to financially support Dobbs. How could this be? The doctrine Dobbs advocates divided the Fleetwood church. Dobbs was a party to the division. The elders went on public record declaring that they do not believe it. Their preacher presented an excellent sermon refuting the "except for sin, all of life is worship" doctrine. What, then did the Fleetwood elders decide to do? *In their collective wisdom they decided to financially support the chief propagator of the doctrine that split that congregation of God's people—souls for which the Fleetwood elders are responsible and of which they shall give an account to God (Hebrews 13:17). Figure that out if you can.*

When elders exercise so little concern for the truth, is it any wonder that the Lord's church runs from one mess directly into another? We should rebuke *Abilene Christian University, David Lipscomb University, Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado* and their crowd for their insipid errors. However, how can elders scripturally and consistently support (financially or otherwise) those who cause an unauthorized division of the church—a church the Lord intended for them to protect and guide in the straight and narrow truth of the gospel?

If nothing else, at least this kind of conduct goes to prove that the **Jeff Walling** and **Joe Beam** types have not cornered the market on fallacious shenanigans among the brethren. We, therefore, must not turn a blind eye to them.

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

DOCTRINE REVISTED...

At this point in our study, we've been impressed with the fact that according to what the New Testament teaches, worship for the Christian is as broad as life. Worship for us begins the moment we become Christians, and so far as I can tell, worship for us never stops unless our saving relationship with Jesus is severed. We don't click worship on when we enter this building on Sunday morning, and we don't click it off when we walk out of this building on Sunday morning. It remains on constantly. It's a way of life, not just a Sunday experience. You see, wherever you are, there is a temple, because Christians are temples of God. You're the temple of God, and wherever you are, there's a priest on the scene because you are a royal priest of God. Now wherever you have that combination—a temple where God is present and where there's a priest on the

scene — not only can worship occur, but when you have that combination, worship must occur...

The quote comes from a lesson delivered by none other than the aforementioned Lindsey Garmon at the Ayers Street congregation. It is part of the fifth lesson in the series of lessons that led to the split of that church! *It is found word for word in the introduction to the fifth lesson.* That lesson (as well as its companions) is unabashedly and unequivocally in favor of the "all life" doctrine. In fact, Garmon ridicules the use of such phrases as "time of worship," "worship assembly," or "place of worship," because, according to him, worship is something that we are always doing and from which we are never dismissed! Lindsey immediately goes on to state:

...Make the distinction. Not only can it (*i.e.*, worship can occur, HDD), but it must. Can you imagine the situation where God is in the temple and a priest is there but worship is not occurring. And thus to Christians Paul writes and says, 'I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship. That's talking about the totality of life. That can only mean that worship is to be our way of life; but as we said last week in our study, when you get that concept of worship pretty well nailed down, that it's a way of life, some other questions begin to surface.

WHY NO DOCUMENTATION?

Buster not only fails to provide Eddie with the source of his quote, he does not provide the full conclusion that was reached by that source! It causes one to wonder why. What is more, Buster neglects to provide the lead-in statements that Garmon makes in setting up his attempted argument from typology. Garmon teaches here that worship is a continual state of being. Is this Buster's view as well? *If not, then why use the quote?* The statement by Garmon that "...so far as I can tell, worship for us never stops unless our saving relationship with Jesus is severed" sounds a lot like "all life is worship, except for sin." Buster has been telling people that his position is the same as that held by Guy N.



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Woods, but are we really to conclude that Guy N. Woods would have gone along with Lindsey Garmon's position or Buster's use of the Garmon quote?

An interesting side-note to Buster's use of the Woods material should be observed at this point. In a fax to Eddie Whitten dated September 9th, 1998, Buster admitted that the practice of such private devotions as private prayer, almsgiving, and fasting did not constitute evidence that all life, except for sin, is worship. Yet, he now is trying to use the writings of Guy N. Woods on the matter of acts of benevolence, or almsgiving, as proof that the all life doctrine is true! He cannot have it both ways. In his letter to Eddie he forfeited the entire argument, and reduces his use of the Woods material to a **non sequitur** in the matter.

THE GARMON POSITION

In his earlier lessons Lindsey Garmon also taught clearly that worship is a state of being, a condition into which one enters upon becoming a Christian and from whence he is never dismissed. In his first lesson on the subject, he states: "What I believe our study will confirm over the next few Sunday mornings is that worship, as Jesus envisioned it and as Jesus taught it, begins the moment you become a Christian." He then quickly adds, "That's when worship begins, brethren. And as far as I can tell from the New Testament, you are never dismissed from it. It's never over. It never ends." Now is this the real position of Buster Dobbs? Just how much is he in agreement with Lindsey Garmon on the matter? He quotes from him (though he does not identify it as Lindsey's statement) and utilizes the ersatz argument which Lindsey posits. Just how much of Garmon's teaching does he agree with on the subject of worship?

Garmon went on to affirm in lesson one that the "worship place" is the life of the Christian. He contends that John 4:24 was promising that the time was coming when all life would be worship. He states that the passage means "...that for us as followers of Jesus the holy place is life..." He declares,

But we live in a time when the holy place is your life, everything you do. You live in the worship place. You are a temple today (I Corinthians 6). You are a priest. Every Christian is a priest. You've got a temple, and you've got a priest. Who dwells in you the temple? God's Spirit. You've got God present. You've got a priest there. And you've got a temple. You know what takes place all the time? Worship. All the time. The worship place is your life.

SAWDUST WORSHIP

Garmon later declares that the life of Jesus was one spent in constant worship, even when he performed the tasks of a carpenter back in Nazareth! Is driving nails worship? What about sweeping sawdust? But Garmon avers that because of God's omnipresence he (Garmon) is always communing with the Holy Spirit and thereby worshipping. He states that "worship never ceases. I am never dismissed from it. It does not begin and end. It just goes on all the time." What implications must follow from this view as pertains even to the matter of sin? If one act of sin destroys the continuance of worship, then worship is not a

state of being, but is dependent upon an unbroken, linear succession of faithful actions. If faithful actions, which would have to include even the most mundane event, constitute the substance of worship, then how can one hold that "all life is worship" as a state of being (which is what the phrase implies), unless he holds to some form of human perfectibility (*i.e.*, the impossibility to sin)? The Garmon doctrine is a hodge-podge of contradictions, dilemmas, and theological landmines. Why would Buster try to borrow from it?

The Garmon position leads to the conclusion that every action is a part of worship, and what is more, that every action is worship in a real and concrete sense to the same degree and in the same relationships at all times! At the risk of being thought crude, picking noses, blowing noses, changing diapers, eating the Lord's Supper, even sleeping, are all worship to the same degree and in the same relationships (period), if one adopts Garmon's position. Given the June 1999 issue of *Firm Foundation* bearing the articles of Buster and Lindell, one could very well conclude that nose-blowing is a "peace offering" of some sort or maybe even a "burnt-offering"!

HOOTENANNY WORSHIP

Garmon's doctrine implicitly holds that one is worshipping God just as acceptably when he is out fishing on the creek bank as when he is in the assembly partaking of the Lord's Supper. Garmon emphasizes what he calls the "horizontal" aspect of the assembly, which centers focus upon "one another" (as opposed to the "vertical" which centers focus upon God). Ultimately, his view implicitly destroys the assembly altogether. It becomes merely a social gathering for folks to pat each other's back, to have a high old time, or to "rap." The assembly is reduced to a hootenanny. One almost gets the impression from Garmon's diatribes against what he terms the "traditional worship" that he really holds that all life is worship except what goes on in the assembly! It is the most radical version of the "all life is worship" doctrine imaginable.

One wonders why Buster would quote from such radical material presented by Lindsey Garmon and try to use this material in such an approving way? Why did Buster not identify the source from the beginning? The name of Lindsey Garmon on the subject of worship sends up a "red flag" in the minds of brethren familiar with the events in Corpus Christi. Eddie Whitten certainly was aware of Lindsey's activities there. Lindsey has been a frequent speaker at the Nashville ("Christian") Jubilee and runs with all the big named self-styled "change agents" among our brethren. How much influence has the Garmon material wielded in the thinking of Buster Dobbs on the subject of worship?

THE TYPOLOGICAL "ARGUMENT" ANSWERED

As to the argument that Buster alludes to by the Garmon quote, it is a faulty appeal to typology. It draws upon the typological relationship between the Old Testament types of the Levitical priesthood and temple and their corresponding New Testament anti-types.

1) *One error committed in this argument is that it assumes that types and anti-types have to correspond in all*

particulars. This is simply not the case! They do not have to correspond in every point, and even more importantly, they never fully do. There are some differences. The same is true in the use of such imagery as metaphors, similes, similitudes (parables), and other figures of speech and their correlation to the specific, concrete things to which they refer. Sometimes, the differences are as important, if not more so, as the points of comparison or similarity.

2) *The argument also fails to acknowledge that there are many other images, types, metaphors, et al., which are used in the scriptures to describe Christians individually and collectively.* Each image is used to set forth some specific aspect of Christian character, conduct, and function. Christians are “kings” (Revelation 1:6; 5:10, ASV). One could just as forcefully assert on the basis of the imagery that “all life is now ruling,” and that henceforth Christians are servants to no one. Yet this would be contrary to New Testament teaching (cf., James 1:1; Romans 6:6-17). One of the great paradoxes of Christianity is how Christians are both rulers and servants. The church is called a vineyard, the vineyard of the Lord (Matthew 20:1ff.). Does it thus follow that “all life is now grape pulling,” because that inheres in the nature of such husbandry? The Christian is frequently portrayed as a soldier (Ephesians 6:10-17; I Timothy 1:18; 6:12; II Timothy 2:3; 4:7). Does it follow then that “all life” is soldiering or fighting? What about the need for being “peacemakers” at certain times (Matthew 5:9; James 3:11)? Other examples of such imagery could be elicited to show the absurdity of this approach to justify the “all life” error.

3) *The argument also presupposes that everything that the Old Testament priest did and everything that went on in the temple environs was worship.* However, there were many actions and transactions performed by the priests that were preparatory or subsequent to the worship in which they engaged, as well as other things that were purely mundane. The priests served by courses, and were not always at the temple (or its predecessor the tabernacle) “on duty.” When serving after the custom of their particular course, they still had time therein to sleep, to eat, to practice their normal hygiene, to cleanse themselves after the prescribed manner in preparation to serve in whatever role they functioned, and such like. The priests had to travel to and from the tabernacle and temple to serve in the sacrificial office, but they were no less priests because they were not worshipping through the act of travelling. The slaying of the sacrifices was also necessary to prepare for the actual offering of blood and fat to be made to the Lord! Preparations of a rather mundane nature would have been involved in the offering of drink, meal, and vegetable sacrifices as well. These things, though mundane, made the sacred sacrifices of Israel to Jehovah God possible under the Mosaic law. Furthermore, the priests had wives and reared children. Did the fact that they were priests demand the conclusion that they were worshipping God through the act of sexual intercourse in siring those children by these wives? When they carried out their fatherly and husbandly duties were they worshipping God in the process?

The tabernacle and temple required periodic repairs and daily upkeep. These tasks were commonly performed by the priests and attending Levites. Would this imply that the act of repairing these structures, and such, was worship in the same sense and in the same relationship as the actual sprinkling of the blood upon the mercy seat by the high priest?

The proposed use of the typology does not fit what the “all life is worship” folk must have it fit! For the argument to stand, they must *prove* that everything the Old Testament priest ever did in life was continually worship, which involved every minute of every day even while asleep, and so on. They must *show* that every act that took place in the environs of the Old Testament sanctuaries (at least everything approved by God under the law of Moses) was also worship to the exact same extent, to the exact same degree, in the exact same sense, and of the exact same value and significance as any other act that transpired therein! To draw any point of distinction in any of the acts of the priests or within the confines of the Old Testament structures destroys the argument.

“RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS”?

The speculative writings coming from Buster Dobbs and Lindell Mitchell on worship are cause for genuine concern. The sophistry that opines that we are to draw only “the *relevant* implications” (Buster Dobbs, *Firm Foundation*, June, 1999, page 4, emphasis his) of a thing opens the door for sundry ills to bedevil the church of the living God. Who decides what is relevant and what is not? (I was taught in hermeneutics classes some twenty plus years ago that all implications are relevant.) Who serves as the arbiter of the matter? Is it a “relevant implication” that Buster quotes approvingly from Lindsey Garmon, while leaving the source of the quote anonymous, on the matter of worship in an attempt to sway the views of Eddie Whitten and ultimately others?

When Lindell protests that he has “no intention of violating the apostolic command by fanning the flames of a foolish brawl” and protests the strife over the use of figures of speech, but then in the course of such protestations seeks to straighten out those with whom he disagrees, has he perchance found some “relevant implication” that must needs be trumpeted? How “relevant” is the discrepancy that now exists between his statement at *Southside* Lubbock, Texas in October of 1998 and his in *Firm Foundation* article of June 1999? His June article reads more like Buster than Buster’s does!

LINDELL MITCHELL’S HARANGUE ON THE AORIST— GREEK GRAMMARS ARE WRONG

INTERESTINGLY, in May of 1999 in *Firm Foundation*, Lindell authored an article attacking the punctiliar use of the aorist tense. It is one of the strangest articles in recent memory. On the basis of articles by **Frank Stagg** and **Charles R. Smith**, Lindell made several assertions that he claimed the New Testament text proved. To those unfamiliar with the current controversy over the use of the aorist tense in Romans 12:1, which is a “sugar-stick” of the “all life” folk, the article by Lindell would make no sense what-

soever. But it is evident from some of the remarks made by Lindell that he had in mind in particular my article and that of **Jim Dearman** from the December issue of *Contending for the Faith*, and, perhaps, also that of **Gary Workman**, originally carried by *Firm Foundation* itself in 1986. Workman's article was referenced extensively by Jim Dearman in his aforementioned article.

Among the assertions that Lindell made in his May, 1999 article are the following: a) "the aorist does not indicate completed action"; b) "the aorist tense neither identifies nor views action as punctiliar"; c) "the aorist does not indicate once-for-all action"; and d) "the aorist does not designate the kind of action." What is at issue is whether or not the presenting that Paul commands in Romans 12:1 is a one time action (punctiliar) or on ongoing, never-ending presenting over and over again. This latter view of the text is that on which the "all life" doctrine partially hinges in its misuse of Romans 12:1, though it alone does not establish the doctrine. A punctiliar use of the aorist would definitely provide a high hurdle for the advocates of the heresy to get over in order to get on with the work of trying to prove their speculations.

It is fascinating that Lindell did not even mention Romans 12:1 at all in his article, but takes a round-about way in trying to dismiss the controversy over it. He goes to the extreme position of denying the punctiliar use, *et al.*, of the aorist in support of a position, which, as of October of 1998, he professedly did not hold. His article in June of 1999, coming right on the heels of his May of 1999 article on the aorist, would indicate a drastic change in our brother's thinking. I wonder what arguments he may have been using prior to and up until the Lubbock Southside lectures last October relative to the "all life" view as per Romans 12:1?

LINDELL—THE GREEK SCHOLAR

After rejecting and ridiculing the argument that the primary use of the aorist is to show that the type of action in question is punctiliar, he haughtily claims,

Those who have not progressed past the level of Ray Summers, *Essentials of New Testament Greek* or Dana and Mantey's *A Manual in Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, should be hesitant to pontificate on the Greek.

But, after having professed only a slight acquaintance with the Greek grammar, he goes on with one stroke of his pen to exalt himself as the new authority on just what the Greek text really means over the evidence of the grammars, lexicons, and word studies. Surely he is aware also of the grammars of **Davis, Robertson, Machen, Wenham, Huddilston, Blass, and Burton**, not to mention the many works of **Moulton, Bruce, Metzger, and the Milligans (William and George)** on Greek syntax? Has he not consulted, concerning the aorist, with such works as *Vincent's Word Studies*, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, *Wuest's Word Studies*, *Bengel's classic commentary on the Greek New Testament*, *Bloomfield's Greek Testament with English Notes*, and *Robertson's Word Pictures*? *Alford's Greek Testament*, *Nicoll's The Expositors Greek Testa-*

ment, and *Kittel and Friedrich's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*? Has he written to the publishers of these good works, as well as a myriad of others concerning the Greek text, and informed them of their gross negligence and "abusive language" practices? Poor **R.C.H. Lenski** and **J.B. Lightfoot**, who frequently argue from the punctiliar use of the aorist, evidently did not have the insights of our brother to help them in commenting on the Greek grammar of certain texts. Otherwise, they would have known that you just can not do that!

Think of the thousands of copies of Greek grammars in print, and many others that are out of print, which did not have the benefit of Lindell's insight! The ASV translators certainly needed his insight on Jude 3, else they would not have blundered as they obviously did. Pentecostals ought to appreciate Lindell's new insight into the aorist on that passage. Those holding to the Bales heresy on divorce and remarriage probably would like to quote Lindell from now on as to the "real" significance of the two aorist tense verbs and the present tense verb used in Matthew 19:9. One of the main arguments used in establishing the linear force of the present tense verb *moichatai* is the fact of the punctiliar action of the aorist verbs rendered "shall put away" and "shall marry." I wonder if Lindell has ever been "guilty" of employing these arguments in times past? If he has, he must now repent, and stop using them. After all, we would not want him to do something which "easily leads to error and unnecessary division." "Unsuspecting brethren may be deceived, which requires embarrassing correction."

A ONCE FOR ALL OFFERING

The late **Charles B. Williams** was a Greek scholar with few equals and no superiors in his day. In his translation based on the Greek New Testament, he sought especially to emphasize the force of the verb tenses. Romans 12:1 he translates thusly,

I beg you, therefore, brothers, through these mercies God has shown to you, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted, and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

The word "dedication" is his rendering of the same verb translated "present" in the KJV. In his footnote to this word, Williams points out that the verb is an aorist infinitive and means here a "once for all offer" (p.351). Let Lindell dispute a while with Dr. Williams on the force of the Greek aorist! Williams' work is frequently cited by virtually all of our faithful brethren on I John 3:9 in refuting the "once saved always saved" folk as to the force of the present tense there. His credentials are beyond dispute. Note also that he does not render *latreia* as "worship," which Lindell does in his June, 1999 article! Williams renders it as "service."

It is indeed interesting that Lindell does not specifically deal with Romans 12:1 in his May, 1999 article in the *Firm Foundation*, even though it is obvious that he is responding to my article in December, 1999's issue of *Contending for the Faith*. Why did he not just come right out into the open and say that this is what's got his dander up against the ar-

gument on the punctiliar use of the aorist? When he penned his June article on Romans 12:1 in apparently defending the “all life” heresy, he did not even mention the aorist. Again, why? *That the aorist does not, due principally to context, always indicate punctiliar action does not negate the fact that the primary force of it, as demonstrated by the grammars themselves (Lindell notwithstanding), is still that of indicating punctiliar action.* In grammar the exceptions often help serve to verify and clarify the rule. What our brother needs to do is demonstrate conclusively that Romans 12:1 is an exception rather than jettisoning this very basic rule. *But even that will not ultimately save the “all life” heresy on Romans 12:1. Lindell admits in his June article that the word “sacrifice” is metaphorical in use. It is figurative and not literal, though it is the latter application which he desperately needs to establish the doctrine. He commits the fallacy of equivocation. This utterly refutes the “all life” doctrine as concerns Romans 12:1.* But it is amazing the lengths that some folk will go in seeking to defend a hobby or someone else promoting one.

THEOLOGY IN THE WAY OF SCHOLARSHIP

I personally am unfamiliar with Charles R. Smith. However, I do have several works by Frank Stagg, including his *New Testament Theology*, in my library. I have also read his comments on Acts 2:38, *et al.*, on baptism. That Stagg is a noted Greek scholar is freely admitted. But he contends that the preposition *eis* is retrospective and not prospective in the Greek. What say ye, Lindell? Whose theology is now getting in the way of his scholarship? On Acts 22:16 Stagg states in his *New Testament Theology* on page 220,

Out of context, this verse possibly could teach that baptism cleanses of sin. But the great stress upon repentance and faith, as well as the absence of any reference to baptism in various passages concerned with salvation (cf., Acts 3:19; 10:43; 16:31), leaves no room for the idea that water baptism cleanses one from sin.

Will Lindell now throw his support behind Baptist theology because of Stagg’s view of the text in Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16? If not, why not? Is it possible that Stagg may have penned his article on the abuse of the aorist because someone pointed out to him a passage involving the aorist tense or made an argument on such that just might otherwise undermine his Baptist theology a whit? Often theological bias overrules scholarship.

In his new grammar titled *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel P. Wallace, professor of Greek at Dallas Theological Seminary, cites the articles of Stagg and Smith as examples of committing the error of “saying too little” about the significance of the aorist tense. He calls their views “extreme”: noting that Smith’s view is even more extreme relative to the force of the aorist than Stagg’s. While it is possible to commit the error of “saying too much” about the aorist, especially as relates to its unaffected nature, the fact remains, as Wallace observes, that grammar does not take place “in a vacuum” (pp.500-501). My article of December, 1998 pointed out that the primary force of the aorist, according to the grammars, concerns the

type of action, which in its case is punctiliar. As noted earlier, this does not mean that point action is always to be understood in every case, but rather that, devoid of contextual evidence to the contrary, this is its principle — though not exclusive — function. To try and misrepresent this position by implying that I, as well as others, maintain that punctiliar action is its exclusive use, is disingenuous and erects a “strawman” to argue against. The issue is over the specific text of Romans 12:1, and Lindell’s attempted neutering of the aorist to try and make it utterly meaningless is not only extreme, it is exegetical foolishness. Given the sarcastic and bombastic tone of his article, I hope that Lindell has never been guilty of using any arguments relative to the aorist at all on any text! Such would be hypocrisy gone to seed.

EITHER CLARIFICATIONS, REPENTANCE, OR BOTH, ARE NEEDED

Is “all of life worship, except for sin”? Let Buster and Lindell tell us plainly! Let Buster explain the contradictory myriad of letters, articles, lessons, for he is on record in the matter, that he has put forth to curtail criticism. Let him explain his use of the Garmon material. Buster maintained in times past that the “all life” doctrine was false, and he opposed it in the strongest of terms. He affirmed that the Hebrew and Greek terms and their English cognates did not in any way support the doctrine. Now, it seems, both he and Lindell would have us to believe that they do. How flexible Hebrew and Greek grammar will have suddenly become that for years refuted the heresy, which now it can be used to validate in the hands of H. A. (Buster) Dobbs and Lindell Mitchell!

If Buster and Lindell do not believe that changing diapers on a baby is worship in the same sense and in the same relationship as eating the Lord’s Supper, then let them go on record by saying so. If they are contending that the Christian life is one of worship only in a *highly figurative sense*, then they need to state so clearly. Lindell has admitted that the Romans 12:1 utilizes at least three distinct figures of speech (synecdoche, paradox, and metaphor). There is also the over-arching use of typology in the text, on which the other figures are dependent. But how does one leap from the figurative language of this passage to the notion that all acts performed by Christians, excluding sinful ones, are worship in any real and concrete sense? Remember, Lindsey Garmon’s position implies that worship involves a perpetual state of being. Do Buster and Lindell concur with that position? These questions are crucial and must be addressed for the good of the brotherhood. The growing lack of confidence in the editor of *Firm Foundation* and in Lindell Mitchell warrants a clear response.

If they are actively seeking to promote the “all life” doctrine, then let them be men and admit their intentions. Let us get on with the business at hand in the matter. If they were inclined to that position, but are desirous of giving it up, then all that is required is a good dose of repentance. We shall see which way this goose will fly!

—405 Main Street
Roanoke, Texas 76262

DID GUY N. WOODS REALLY SAY THAT?

Lynn Parker

The late Guy N. Woods was highly respected as a Bible scholar. The “faith once delivered” was in good hands with him. Now, he belongs to the ages. It is always tempting and dangerous to put words in the mouth of a dead man, and to wishfully claim “he would have been on my side!” By the same token, it is hard to defend one when he never explicitly and specifically dealt with a particular question, or at least such has not yet been brought to light.

SEEKING CREDIBILITY AT ALL COSTS

We have before us a doctrine which alleges that “all of life, except for sin, is worship.” The doctrine’s proponents have cited Woods’ articles as proof that he stood where they now stand. They have reproduced, published, and distributed his articles in their quest for credibility. It is certainly true that Woods wrote,

There is not nearly as much difference between these concepts [service and worship-LP] as many today apparently believe...When, for example, a basket of food is carried to a needy family, the action is grounded in the concept of service, but it is done out of regard for our relationship to God, and to this extent involves an act of worship. Therefore, we worship God in serving others” (Guy N. Woods, *Questions And Answers*, Vol. 1, pp. 336-337, 1976).

Woods may not have gone as far as some desire to take him in this.

The advocates of this “all life, except for sin, is worship” cite at least these two passages frequently: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service” (Romans 12:1 ASV). “Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17 ASV).

WHAT ABOUT PRAYING IN YOUR SLEEP?

Their argumentation is since Christians are to present themselves as living sacrifices, and sacrifices are part of worship, it follows that all of one’s life (except for sin) is worship. Furthermore, they argue that Paul’s command, “Pray without ceasing,” proves that the Christian is engaged in a life of worship—24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. Read their own words:

Paul tells us to “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17). If prayer is worship, and if we are to pray without ceasing, then we are to worship in some sense without ceasing. It will not do for us to think that we cannot obey what Paul plainly tells us to do. If prayer is worship and we should pray unceasingly, then we should continuously worship. We must not turn unbeliever and say, “O well, we cannot always be praying and so the Bible does not mean what it says.”

We should, instead, consider what unceasing prayer may mean. Philippians 4:6 says, “in everything by prayer and

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” There is a prayer that is not supplication, thanksgiving, nor requests. Could this kind of prayer be the devotion of a heart fully consecrated to its Creator? Is it possible this is what is involved in praying without ceasing?

We may not always go about speaking or thinking words in sending to the Everlasting Throne conscious expressions of honor, thanks, and requests, but it is possible for us to live our lives with God, the judgment, and eternity always in mind. That may be the praying without ceasing. If it is, then our worship ought to be unintermittent-unfailing—(Article by Buster Dobbs, given to Eddie Whitten by Buster)



There you have it—a prayer without words, that makes all of life (except for sin) an “unintermittent” worship. So a few would have us believe that they are saying nothing different from Woods. But since the advocates of this doctrine have brought Woods’ writings into the fray, let us consider Woods’ comments on I Thessalonians 5:17.

“Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward.” It is God’s will that (1) we pray without ceasing; and that (2) we be thankful about everything (Philippians 4:1-6) To be thankful is to feel a deep sense of gratitude to God for the manifold blessings which he lavishly bestows upon us; and “to pray without ceasing,” means to engage regularly in prayer. The words “without ceasing,” translate the Greek adverb *adialeptos*, which means, “constantly,” “unceasingly.” The apostle uses this word in I Thessalonians 2:13, in the sentence, “And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing...” by which, of course, he did not mean he was engaged every moment in prayer to God (when would he have preached the gospel?), but that he regularly included the matter about which he wrote in his prayers. The disciples were “continually in the temple, blessing and praising God,” but this does not mean that they engaged in these activities twenty-four hours a day. What is meant is that they went regularly to the temple and participated in the morning and evening sacrifices, and offered their devotions at stated intervals. (Luke 24:53) (Guy N. Woods, *Questions And Answers*, Vol. 1, p. 127, 1976).

GOING THE WRONG DIRECTION ON THE WRONG TRAIN

Apparently Woods knew nothing of a “wordless prayer,” much less an ongoing prayer offered 24 hours a day (except, during moments of sin). Note again, Woods writes, “he did not mean he was engaged every moment in prayer to God (when would he have preached the gospel?)...”

Is it possible—just possible—that Woods did not have the current controversy in mind when he wrote on service and worship? Furthermore, could it be possible that Woods taught the truth, specifically that Paul is not calling for a 24-hour-a-day prayer. Perhaps then—just perhaps—Woods got off the train at an earlier station than certain contemporaries want to admit. Then too, perhaps Guy N. Woods was on a different train all the while.

—Post Office Box 39
Spring, Texas 77383

IT WAS JUST A JOKE

Jim E. Waldron

When I was a young man I heard someone tell a preacher's story that had been around for many years. The joke came about because up until the mid-fifties in this country virtually every time a preacher was invited home for dinner he was served fried chicken.

The story, as I heard it, went like this, one Sunday two preachers were invited to a home for Sunday dinner. The wife chose three young frying size roosters from her flock and prepared a platter full of southern fried chicken which she served with hot biscuits and all the trimmings.

At the close of the meal after the two preachers had put away most of the chicken, the family and guests had their attention drawn to a big dominecker (Dominique) rooster as he stood on a fence rail and crowed. One of the preachers said, "Wonder what that rooster is crowing about?" The head of the house replied, "Well, you'd crow too if you just had three sons enter the ministry."

It was just a joke then, but now it takes on serious implications. The reason I say that is because we are now being informed that all of life is worship. Just reflect on that. When those two preachers were eating that "gospel bird" they were "worshipping." This would mean, of course, that when we joked about preachers eating chicken we were committing sacrilege.

Now who would have thought such a thing in the '50s. But we are nearing the turn of the millennium so we are suppose to believe that everything we do (except sin) is worship. Does that mean eating and drinking? No! Listen to the Spirit: **"But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better, neither, if we eat not, are we the worse"** (I Corinthians 8:8).

From the time I was a young preacher I heard sectarians say everything we do is worship. And why? Because they were arguing that the playing of an instrument in worship is authorized. Let us not be drawn after foolish arguments our brothers have refuted for generations. Some things are service to him (Matthew 4:10) and some things like eating and drinking are neutral.

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15

- | | | |
|---------|---|--------------|
| 7:00 PM | "Their Love for One Another" | Carl Hecker |
| 8:00 PM | "Their Concept of the Lostness of Humanity" | B. J. Clarke |

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16

- | | | |
|----------|---|------------------|
| 9:00 AM | "God's Plan for Man's Salvation:
SAVING FAITH" | Gil Yoder |
| 10:00 AM | "They Are a Unique People" | Mark Sloan |
| 11:00 AM | "God's Plan for Man's Salvation:
CONFESSION" | Roddy Covington |
| 1:30 PM | "God's Plan for Man's Salvation:
BAPTISM" | Michael Hatcher |
| 2:30 PM | "Salvation Is One Body" | Tommy Hicks |
| 7:00 PM | "God's Plan for Man's Salvation:
REPENTANCE" | Charles Collette |
| 8:00 PM | "A People of the Book" | Foy Forehand |

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17

- | | | |
|----------|---|---------------|
| 9:00 AM | "A Life Centered in Christ" | Jason Rollo |
| 10:00 AM | "No Creed But Christ,
No Book But the Bible" | Lynn Parker |
| 1:30 PM | "They Are Not Ashamed of the Bible" | Pat McIntosh |
| 2:30 PM | "Their Concept of the Work
of the Holy Spirit" | David Brown |
| 6:00 PM | "They Are Unique in Their Worship" | Eddie Whitten |
| 7:00 PM | "A People Prepared for the
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"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ANDY"

Thomas F. Eaves Sr.

The apostle Paul declared to the Roman Christians, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"** (Romans 1:16). Peter and Paul further teach about the origin of the Bible (II Peter 1:20-21; I Corinthians 2:6-13), and Paul informed Timothy that the scripture completes the man of God and furnishes him unto every good work (II Timothy 3:17). The apostle Peter also teaches us that God has **"...granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"** (II Peter 1:3).

Evidently the writings of the inspired Peter and Paul are not sufficient for some since they have turned to *"The Gospel of the Andy Griffith Show."* The *Bel-Aire Church of Christ in Tullahoma, Tennessee* has "since early December, ...has offered a weekly Bible class BASED (emphasis mine, TFE) on life in Mayberry, NC which serves as the fictional home for the 1960s television show, *The Andy Griffith Show*, featuring sheriff Andy Taylor and his bumbling deputy, Barney Fife" (*The Tennessean*, Sunday, February 28, 1999 page 3B).

Pat Allison, the minister of the church stated, "It is not the Gospel according to Mayberry... It just so happens that this particular program provides a vehicle for the discussion of a lot of topics—honesty, truthfulness, prejudice—that are as relevant today as they were 30 years ago when these episodes were made." Several questions are in order.

1. If the Bible Class is presented, "as a part of their Wednesday night worship" (as the paper stated) and the "weekly Bible study class is based on life in Mayberry, NC," why isn't it "the gospel of Mayberry?"

2. Can we not learn of honesty and truthfulness from the inspired account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5? (Maybe this account is overbearing).

3. Is it not possible to learn about prejudice from the Lord's parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10, and his dealings with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well (John 4)?

4. Isn't it blasphemy (in action) to leave the inspired words of Jesus Christ which will judge us in the last day

(John 12:48) and turn to a secular TV program (filmed for entertainment) for guidance in our spiritual lives?

I suppose if we are interested in the Lord's church we could consult the Gospel according to Andy Griffith chapter sixteen and verse eighteen. To learn of the standard for the Christian's life we could no doubt read Barney 1:5-11. Responsibility of widows can be found in Aunt Bee 5:5-16 and duties of children to their parents are found in Little Opey 6:1-4.

To my preaching brethren I would remind them that there is a world of difference in using a secular example to illustrate a biblical principle than bringing a Bible class lesson based on a fictional TV program created for entertainment.

"Me thinks" that the element of entertainment is involved. As one member of the congregation stated, "The message is not overbearing. Its been a **FUN WAY** (Emphasis mine, TFE) to address some serious issues." (By the way, what part of the gospel is overbearing)?

It is time for God's children to forsake TV as a standard for religious activities (Matthew 15:7-9) and return to God's word as their standard for morality and worship. The worship of God's children is nowhere in the Bible referred to as, "a fun way". Worship is an awesome opportunity to draw near **"unto the throne of Grace"** (Hebrews 4:16) and to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Worship in spirit is worship from the heart (Ephesians 5:19). Worship in truth is worship according to the word of God (John 17:17), not according to the "Gospel of Andy."

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ABSOLUTE DISDAIN MANIFESTED TOWARD THE LORD'S CHURCH

Marvin L. Weir

One might think of Paducah, Kentucky as a safe haven for those who desire to do Bible things in Bible ways. Think again! Earl Gieseke, evangelist for the *Heath Church of Christ* in West Paducah sent me the following information taken from a survey sheet located in the bulletin of the Broadway Church of Christ in Paducah. The following is boldly called "Our Recreation Ministry." We have warned for a long time that most "youth ministers" are only well-paid "recreation ministers." Many are being swept into apostasy by just such foolishness as the following. Read it and weep!

As we open our Family Life Center soon, we want to provide the kind of activities in which you would like to be involved. These are the kinds of activities in which you will want to include your friends. Our goal, of course, is to encourage our members and build relationships with others so that we can help them become members of the Lord's church. In order to do this, we need to know some things which you and your friends would like to do. You can help us ascertain this by filling out the following survey. This will help us to see what kinds of things people in all age groups would like to do so we can plan our initial program of activities for the Family Life Center.

Your age group: 10-13__ 14-16__ 17-20__ 21-30__ Over 65__

Please "x" the following items if you would like to participate in the activity. Check as many as you would like. Also, if you have special talents and would like to help teach or supervise an activity as a volunteer, please mark "xx" in the item and sign your name at the end.

1. Table games (Rook, Monopoly, etc.)
2. Aerobics
3. Weight training and/or Fitness Programs
4. Craft Programs
5. Walking groups
6. Jogging
7. Ping Pong
8. Table Soccer
9. First Aid & CPR Instructional Clinics
10. Weight Training Instructional Clinics
11. Scouting Special Activities
12. Family Movies
13. Summer Day Camp for Children
14. Free Exercise Groups
15. Seminars
16. Basketball
17. Volleyball
18. Other (Please list any other activities you might be interested in).

Included in the bulletin were some interesting figures listed under the heading of *TODAY'S LIVING STONES FINANCIAL PICTURE* as of September 30, 1998. Pledges \$1,617,615; Cash received from pledges \$624,629; Un-

pledged contributions to date \$141,797; Estimated project cost: \$3,100,000.

As the apostle Paul said, so say we to brethren and elders today, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead..." (Ephesians 5:14). Can you imagine a godly elder dedicated to scripturally feeding the flock and concerned about true church growth saying, "Our goal, of course, is to encourage our members and build relationships with others so that we can help them become members of the Lord's church. In order to do this, we need to know some things which you and your friends would like to do."

Excuse me! Does God's holy word teach that we must know what other folks like to do and supply those needs before we can teach them how to become members of the Lord's church? What are such folks converted to? The answer is obviously the entertainment of their choice. The word of God did not attract them and it will not keep them. Thus, what little "preaching" is done will be sufficiently "watered down" to make it appealing to all!

Jesus taught that one who desires to be obedient to Him is to "count the cost" (Luke 14:28ff) and "deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). The above figures show that the projected cost of their "felt needs" project is \$3,100,000! Just think of the true seed that could be sown with such an amount of money! How terrible it will be for those who support such mockery of the Lord's church when he returns!

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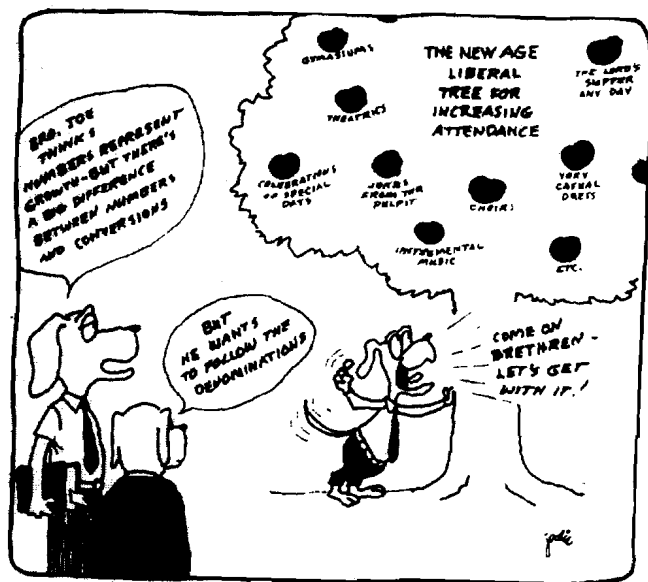
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HE'S BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE

Jodie Boren

To increase attendance at our worship services is a desirable goal, but attendance for attendance's sake is not God's way. The people must be *converted* to Christ if the church is to grow. The Lord's plan for converting mankind is really quite simple. Jesus, having established the fact that all authority in heaven and in earth had been given unto him (Matthew 28:18), gave his marching orders to his



disciples for all time in the next two verses—**“Go teach all nations...”**—**“Preach the gospel to every creature...”** (Mark 16:15). What is it that we are to teach? Jesus answers, **“All things whatsoever I have commanded you.”** When we teach others the words of Jesus, we are teaching the gospel which is God's power for salvation (Romans 1:16).

WONDERFUL RESULTS

This is what the early church did. **“They went everywhere preaching the word”** (Acts 8:4). The results were thrilling. **“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly...”** (Acts 6:7). **“...and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord”** (Acts 11:20-21). **“...and so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily”** (Acts 6:5). When the word of the Lord is proclaimed, people will be converted. No wonder we read such statements as Paul's in II Timothy 4:2; **“Preach the word...”**—or that by his mouth the Gentiles **“should hear the word of the gospel, and believe”** (Acts

15:7b). **“The word of God is quick and powerful...”** (Hebrews 4:12). The word of God witnesses—John 5:39; it instructs—II Timothy 3:16-17; it convicts—Acts 2:37 and 40; we are begotten by the word—James 1:18; we are born again by the word of God—I Peter 1:23; we are saved by the word—James 1:21 and I Corinthians 15:2; it sanctifies us—John 17:17; it cleanses us—John 15:3; it strengthens us—Acts 20:32; it leads us—Psalm 119:105; and the word (law) converts the soul—Psalm 19:7. When this seed (the word of God—Luke 8:11) is sown in good and honest hearts it will bring forth fruit (Luke 8:15).

Since we have the Lord's plan for converting the world, why then is the church not growing as it did in the first century? The answer is simple and should make us bow our heads in shame. We are not going everywhere preaching the word. Today we are preaching the same word, but our preaching and teaching is confined almost exclusively to within the four walls of our church buildings. *We are not working the plan!* Many have been Christians for years and years and have never led a single precious soul to the Lord. Yet, as Christians, we are to reproduce ourselves (John 15:8 and 16).

NUMBERS AT ALL COST

Many congregations, in an effort to increase attendance, are departing from the Lord's plan. We are seeing the celebration of Easter and Christmas; the confirmation of babies; theatrics; choirs; athletic events; very casual dress; applause for speakers; dancing in the aisles; the Lord's supper observed at times other than Sunday; and other ideas of men that are not authorized by the word of God. These things are wrong and cannot be condoned. Those who bring such things into the church are barking up the wrong tree, because only the word of God will truly convert people to Christ. The above will not produce a New Testament Christian. But when God's plan is worked, greater attendance will result and souls will be converted to Christ. These new Christians will in turn teach others (II Timothy 2:2) and the church will grow.

A failure to work God's plan for evangelizing the world is just as wrong as adding to the word of God. Most of us are standing idle in the Lord's vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16). May we lift up our **“eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest”** (John 4:35). And may we boldly proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

—2557 Campus Court
Abilene, Texas 79601



"And God Gave Them Up Unto Vile Affections..."

WINE, AUSTIN POWERS, MORALITY, A GOOD COURT RULING, VIOLENCE AND ECUMENISM

Mark McWhorter

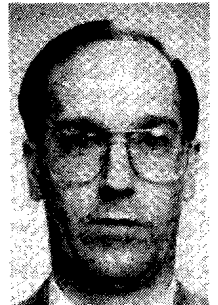
[It should be noted that the positive health effects have been shown to be from the bioflavonoids in the skin of the grape. You can get the same positive actions from drinking grape juice. And you do not get the negatives from alcohol. Besides the fact that it is a sin to drink alcohol.—Mark]

WASHINGTON, D.C. (BP)—The U.S. Senate's senior member is taking on a federal agency in an attempt to reverse its approval of labels that encourage people to learn about wine's health effects, which the government says include a lower risk of heart disease. **Sen. Strom Thurmond**, R.-S.C., introduced legislation February 22 that would rescind a decision by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to authorize two new health messages requested by the wine industry. The bottle labels, approved February 5, encourage consumers to consult either a doctor or the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans to learn about the "health effects of wine consumption." Since 1996, the dietary guidelines have included language suggesting "moderate drinking is associated with a lower risk for coronary heart disease in some individuals." While the guidelines mention the health dangers from drinking in excess, they also say many societies have used alcoholic beverages "to enhance the enjoyment of meals." The BATF's decision was "irresponsible and constitutes poor public policy," Thurmond said in a statement prepared for introduction of his three-bill package. It will "escalate the problems of alcohol abuse," he said. It is expected to open the door for other alcohol companies to apply for similar labels. While some beer breweries have chosen not to seek such labels, several liquor companies have signaled their intention to attach health labels to their products, Thurmond said. The legislation by Thurmond, who is 96 years old and was first elected to the Senate in 1954, also would increase the tax on wine and would transfer the authority on labeling alcoholic beverages from the Treasury Department, which includes the BATF, to the Department of

Health and Human Services. Revenue from the tax would fund a trust committed to the prevention and treatment of alcohol-related problems. Some religious and health organizations also criticized the BATF decision. "I wonder how the alcohol industry intends to protect itself from liability when people who use their snake oil to cure what ails them end up as hopeless alcoholics," said Barrett Duke of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "The alcohol industry is walking a thin tightrope from which the tobacco industry has already fallen. In their quest for more money, the alcohol industry may be the next to fall. May it not take too many more destroyed lives before the fall comes. "While the alcohol industry intends to promote the health benefits of low to moderate alcohol consumption, I hope that they will come clean and also warn people that their drug is addictive and that any amount can be dangerous to one's health and safety if used in connection with any activity," said Duke, whose specialties for the ERLC include alcohol issues. The ERLC advocates abstinence from alcohol. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, a Washington-based health-advocacy organization that recommends people limit their alcohol consumption to one or two drinks a day, expressed its disappointment in the action. "Some consumers may interpret 'health effect' as 'health benefit' and end up drinking more wine than they should," CSPI said in a written statement.

Alcohol, CSPI said, is the third leading cause of death in the country and can cause various forms of cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, hemorrhagic strokes and birth defects. The BATF's action came less than two weeks before it was revealed an advisory panel has recommended alcohol be designated a "known human carcinogen" in the ninth edition of the federal government's Report on Carcinogens. The news was reported in the February 17 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Alcoholic beverages already contain health and safety warning labels, an effort championed by Thurmond in the 1980s.

"Since the implementation of these warning labels, the wine industry has been determined to undermine their effectiveness," Thurmond said. "Through a vigorous lobbying and marketing campaign, the wine industry has enticed the public with the assurance that alcohol consumption is healthy." The "passive complicity of Treasury and [BATF] is unacceptable," he said. BATF officials said they modified the labels but could not reject them totally.



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Second Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 10-14, 1999

"Under existing law, [BATF] can only deny labeling statements if they are false or misleading," said **Ed Knight**, general counsel for the Department of Treasury, in a written statement. BATF decided the labels met the required standards because they make no health claims, Knight said. The wine industry will fight Thurmond's legislation, Wine Institute **President John De Luca** said, according to The New York Times. "We can argue the merits if it comes to that," De Luca said (BP—*Baptist Press*).

Austin Powers may be shagging his way around the world's cinema screens, but the international man of mystery will not be swinging in Malaysia. The spoof secret agent's latest film outing, "The Spy Who Shagged Me," has been banned by Malaysia's Censorship Board for containing too much sexual innuendo, newspapers said. "There will be no loss, socially speaking," Information **Minister Khalil Yaakob** was quoted on Sunday as telling reporters after launching a nationwide cleanliness campaign (CNN email news service, 7/12/99). *[One may not agree with all of the policies in this country, but you have to admire their willingness to stand for proper morality and conduct. Compare their actions with our own government's.—MTM]*

MASSACHUSETTS — Massachusetts's highest court struck down Boston's domestic partners policy July 8, overruling an executive order issued last year by Boston **Mayor Thomas Menino** that allowed homosexual and unmarried heterosexual partners of city employees to receive the same health benefits as married heterosexuals (*Maranatha email news service*, 7/12/99). *[Another good ruling for morality and truth.—MTM]*

A couple who wanted to sue their doctor for failing to warn them of their unborn child's birth defects lost a closely watched case before the Georgia Supreme Court. The high court ruled Tuesday that parents who said they would have aborted the pregnancy had they known their son had Down's syndrome cannot sue the doctor who advised against extensive tests for the problem (*Fulton County Daily Report* as reported in Legal News Network email service, 7/7/99). *[The Court made a very good ruling in this case.—MTM]*

"Our culture has come to celebrate violence and disrespect, while actively erasing the line between right and wrong. And now we have a generation of children who think violence is normal, respect for others passe, and moral relevance the law of the land." —**Rep. Dick Armey** as quoted in *The Federalist* email news service.

Charismatic evangelist **Rodney Howard-Browne** has begun six weeks of rallies at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Meetings will be held about four nights a

week from July 7 to Aug. 24. The outreaches also include donating food and clothing to the homeless, distributing Christian literature, street plays, mimes, and music. More than 2,000 churches have participated in year-long preparations. The controversial Howard-Browne is known for conducting services during which congregants laugh uncontrollably...Other evangelists participating in the meetings include **T. D. Jakes**, **Rinehard Bonnke**, and musician-evangelist **Carman**, **Eric Gonyon**, crusade administrator, told *Religion Today*. More than 1,000 volunteers, including Christians from every state and 21 foreign countries, began evangelizing in the streets on June 21 in conjunction with the crusade and about 7,000 people have become Christians as a result, he said. Members of many denominations, including Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists and others "are working side by side." ...The focus of all of the ministry is to "ask Christians to rise up and reach the lost with Christ. We are focusing all our attention on the lost and asking God to win souls," Gonyon said. Howard-Browne preached from John 3:16-17, saying "God doesn't want to judge New York, He wants to save New York" (*Religion Today* email news service, 7/12/99). *[These folks need to understand that you cannot preach Christ from a divided but ecumenical position. They should get back to the Bible and learn proper doctrine. That would show them that they cannot be divided on doctrine and be united with Christ.—MTM]*

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WHY TEENAGERS SHOULD NOT ENGAGE IN MODERN DANCE

Jason R. Roberts

Even though authorities have studied the modern dance, and in essence have said that it is a “sexual pressure cooker” between young people, they are not “THE AUTHORITY” when it comes to determining whether or not mixed dancing is sinful. We need to let the Bible decide that issue for us (II Peter 1:3). Perhaps the greatest passage used to show that dancing is sinful is found in Galatians 5:19-21, where the apostle Paul catalogs seventeen different sins, all of which will keep us out of heaven if we practice them. It should be noted here that when a child of God says, “I want to see a verse that says, ‘Thou shalt not dance,’” they are more than likely using this ploy as a smokescreen to circumvent the law of God in order to justify their belief that dancing is not sinful!

Paul wrote, **“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness...”** (Galatians 5:19). The last word in this verse is a word that is seldom used today. What the word meant when Paul penned it by inspiration is just as important, meaningful, and authoritative today as it was in the first century. The following definitions have been given as to the meaning of the word lasciviousness: (1) Tending to produce sensual desires (*Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary*). (2) Characterized by or expressing lust or lewdness; wanton; tending to excite lustful desires (*Webster's New World Dictionary*). **Joseph Henry Thayer**, who is revered as perhaps one of the greatest lexicographers of the Greek New Testament defined lasciviousness as, “Wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, *indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, and so on.* (Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, emphasis added, JRR). In view of the above definitions, does the type of dancing that takes place at the local prom and what is seen on television involve “indecent bodily movements” or “unchaste handling of males and females?” If it does (and I contend that it does), then those who practice it, according to the apostle Paul, will not inherit the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21)! May we never hear brethren say that dancing is nothing more than a peripheral issue. May we never hear people say that the issue of dancing has nothing to do with whether or not one will go to heaven. The issue of dancing is a matter of eternal significance, and it is high time that some members of the church awaken themselves and start viewing it that way before it is eternally too late! Furthermore, most people would agree that if a male and female were to dance in public without the accompaniment of music it would be considered a lewd and licentious act. Where did we get the idea that if we turn the lights *down* and the music *up* that these same suggestive gyrations are now automatically permissible?

SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

“If I don't dance I will not be popular.” Popularity, has not been and will never be determined by what the majority are doing. The majority of people will be lost (Matthew 7:13-14), and hell will be full of some of the most popular people imaginable. **“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil”** (Exodus 23:2). One preacher said, “It is better to be tall in the eyes of Jehovah and small in the eyes of man.”



“The dances are supervised.” While most dances are supervised, what takes place within the halls of the gymnasium may be vastly different from what takes place within the hearts of the participants. Furthermore, a chaperone cannot chaperone one's thoughts (Matthew 5:27,28). Only Jesus knows what is within the hearts of men (John 2:25), not a “qualified chaperone.” If there are chaperones present, then it is chaperoned sin!

“But I am not going to dance, I am just going to watch.” Viewing that which is sinful and approving of it is just as wrong as engaging in the act itself (Matthew 5:28; cf. Romans 1:32b). Paul commanded us to, **“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (expose) them”** (Ephesians 5:11). The only kind of “exposure” that takes place at the local prom is not a Biblical exposure of its sinfulness, but an indecent “exposure” of the same!

SOME CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

I wonder how many Bible studies will be conducted as a result of one going to his or her local prom? The truth of the matter is a child of God cannot dance and mention Jesus at the same time without feeling uncomfortable (cf., Matthew 5:16). If dancing is such a good wholesome thing in which someone should engage, then mentioning something to my dance partner about Christ would be perfectly normal.

I wonder how many prayers will be offered to God at this year's prom? Again, the hypocrisy of the child of God would be laid bare for all to see. **Marshall Keeble** said, “A dancing foot and a praying knee are not found on the same leg.”

We contend that the modern dance has nothing good to offer our young people. It is a clever device of the devil used in efforts to destroy their purity. Satan must laugh with glee knowing that he has made seducing servants in the Lord's church to assist him in accomplishing this dastardly deed.

—3950 Forest Hill Irene Road South
Memphis, Tennessee 38125

CANE RIDGE

Paul Vaughn

During the closing years of the 1700's and the first part of the 1800's a religious revival spread through the wilderness of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. In 1796 **James McGready**, a Presbyterian preacher, moved to Logan County, Kentucky. It was in Logan County, in 1797, at three Presbyterian Churches under the preaching of McGready, that these revival meetings began in Kentucky. Soon after the beginning of the meetings other Presbyterian preachers and preachers from different denominations joined McGready. These revivals were noted for extreme emotionalism. There were five outbursts of emotion witnessed during these revival meetings. They were the barking exercise, laughing and singing, falling exercise, dancing, and the jerks.

BARTON WARREN STONE

Barton W. Stone was born in Maryland near Port Tobacco on December 24, 1772. His parents were **John** and **Mary Warren Stone**. John Stone passed away in 1779. Soon after his death Mary moved the family to Pittsylvania County, Virginia.

When Stone was eighteen years old, he took the inheritance from his father's will, using it to gain an education and pursue a career in law. In 1790 he entered Guilford Academy directed by **David Caldwell**. In addition to being the director of the school Caldwell was also a Presbyterian preacher. Stone's interest in school was law, but soon changed to religion. James McGready was preaching in a revival that Stone attended which directed his mind toward spiritual things. In the spring of 1791 Stone heard **William Hodge** and joined the Presbyterian Church. He soon decided to preach. Before one could preach in the Presbyterian Church the candidate for the ministry must be licensed by the church. It is at this point that problems arose because Stone did not accept the teaching of Calvinism taught by the Presbyterian Church. Stone viewed Calvinism as a labyrinth that distressed and perplexed the mind. He was "wearied with the works and doctrines of men, and distrustful of their influence."¹ It was at this time in his life when Stone made the Bible his constant companion. In his biography Barton Stone wrote, "I honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully sought for truth, determined to buy it at the sacrifice of everything else."²

PREACHING AT CANE RIDGE AND CONCORD

Barton Stone first moved to Kentucky in 1796. He began preaching for two Presbyterian congregations at Cane Ridge in Bourbon County and Concord in Nicholas County. After two years, in 1778, the time for Stone to be ordained a Presbyterian minister came before the Transylvania Presbytery. When the day of ordination came, Stone

decided not to accept it because he believed the Westminster Confession of Faith was not in accordance with the word of God. **James Blythe** and **Robert Marshall** were in charge of the ordination service. Both men were aware of Stone's belief about the Westminster Confession of Faith. They asked Barton if he was willing to accept the Confession of Faith. Stone answered, "I do, as far as I see it consistent with the word of God."³ Blythe and Marshall agreed that his answer was sufficient. One could certainly be puzzled why Blythe and Marshall accepted Stone's reply. From Barton Stone's reply to the ordination committee it is easily seen that he is growing toward New Testament Christianity, though at this time in his life he still has a way to go.

After his ordination as the minister for the Cane Ridge and Concord Churches, Stone heard of the revival meetings taking place in Logan County, Kentucky under the preaching of James McGready. In the spring of 1801 Stone went to Logan County to see what was taking place during these revivals McGready was directing. Stone said, "The effects of this meeting through the country were like fire in dry stubble driven by a strong wind"⁴

CANE RIDGE REVIVAL

Though the camp meeting style revivals started in Logan County, there were a number of them throughout Kentucky and Southern Ohio. A large meeting was held at Mason County, Kentucky on the 22nd of May 1801, on Cabin Creek. **Richard McNemar** was an eye witness. McNemar was one of the men to sign the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*.

Barton Stone started planning the Cane Ridge Revival after he saw the events taking place in Logan County. Before the Cane Ridge meeting Stone took time off to get married. He married **Elizabeth Campbell**, the daughter of **William** and **Tabitha Campbell**. They were married on July 2nd, 1801.

The Cane Ridge Revival was the largest of all the camp meetings in Kentucky and Ohio. It was judged that there were between twenty and thirty thousand men and women gathered at Cane Ridge in August of 1801. There were "four or five preachers speaking at the same time, in different parts of the encampment, without confusion."⁵ Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian preachers all took part in the preaching. These revivals set the stage for the return to New Testament Christianity. Granted, there were a lot of things going on that would be unacceptable in the true worship of God that took place during these revivals; but they



did help to start men like Stone and others to go back to the Bible to chart their future.

Those preachers of the "Ancient Order" were just beginning to grasp correctly the word of God. We must be careful not to condemn or justify their actions because at this time in history they were growing in knowledge of the Way of Christ more perfectly. There are men today trying to justify sin by pointing to the example of the early preachers in the Restoration Movement. Their arguments

fail because most of those early preachers were reading their way out of denominationalism, not back into it!

1. Barton W. Stone, "Biography of Barton W. Stone," *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke Dickerson (Cincinnati Ohio) p. 31.
2. Ibid. p.31.
3. Ibid. p.30.
4. Ibid. p.37.
5. Ibid. p.37.

—223 West Maple Avenue
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Sermon Outlines...

THE OLD PATHS (*Jeremiah 6:16-17*)

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

A. We are living in a day when many have little concern for being sound in doctrine.

1. The Bible is replete with verses admonishing us to be sound in doctrine (Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1; I Timothy 4:6).
2. Despite these warnings, we have a host of people who:
 - a. Have little concern for sound doctrine...apathy
 - b. Refuse to put forth an effort to be sound in doctrine...spend no time in study.
 - c. Would rather do as they wish as opposed to what the Lord requires.

B. This attitude is nothing new among the people of God.

1. In the days of Jeremiah, God's people had become such as who were no longer concerned about abiding by the rule of God.
2. In the midst of this terrible era of Israelite history, God sent a prophet.
 - a. God told Jeremiah—Jeremiah 1:17
 - 1) We have many cowards today who will not say what needs to be said.
 - 2) We must speak what God has spoken and not be afraid, for if we trust in the Lord—Jeremiah 1:18-19.
 - b. Notice the message that Jeremiah proclaimed—Jeremiah 6:16-17.
 - 1) In Jeremiah's day many rejected the message of God, as do many today.
 - 2) Many are today adamantly saying, "We will not walk therein" and "we will not harken."

C. Though this message of Jeremiah was rejected, it is still nonetheless true.

1. This message of Jeremiah was sound advice for those of his day, and it is sound advice for us today.
2. Now let us look more closely at the proclamation of Jeremiah found in Jeremiah 6:16-17.

II. Discussion

A. WE ARE TO WALK IN THE OLD PATHS

1. It is a must that we keep the commandments of God!
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:40...this is not an option—it is an imperative!
 - b. Joshua 22:5...We must give diligence in keeping the commands of God!
 - c. I Kings 2:2-3 ... This is what being a **real man** (not a "sissy boy") is all about!
 - d. Matthew 19:17
 - e. I John 5:3...obedience shows our love toward God.
2. We must keep the commands of the old paths
 - a. What is the old path?
 - 1) The old path that leads to eternal life (Psalm 16:11).
 - 2) The old path of righteousness (Psalm 23:3).
 - 3) The old path of mercy and truth (Psalm 25:10).
 - 4) The old path of God's commandments (Psalm 119:35).
 - 5) The old path is good (Proverbs 2:9).
 - 6) The old paths are right (Proverb 4:11).
 - 7) The old path is the path of the just (Proverbs 4:18).



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8) The old path is the path of the Lord (Isaiah 2:3).

9) The old path is a straight path (Hebrews 12:13).

b. The old paths are not:

1) In the way of man's wants and desires.

2) In the way of the "change agents."

3) In the way of false doctrine.

B. HOW ARE WE TO WALK IN THE OLD PATHS?

1. Jeremiah says they were to "stand," "see," "ask," "walk" and "hearken."

2. We are to "stand" or stop walking on the wrong path.

a. This involves realizing that we have been going down the wrong path or the broad way—Matthew 7:13-14.

b. This involves repentance—II Corinthians 7:8-9.

3. We are to "see" or look for the old paths.

a. This involves study—II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13-16.

b. We do not see that for which we are not looking.

4. We are to "listen" or ask in the old paths.

a. In other words, we must be willing to consider wise instruction or counsel—Proverbs 11:14; 12:15; 15:22.

b. It is important to listen to the wise counsel of those with years of wisdom and knowledge— but remember Acts 17:11.

5. We must "hearken" to or obey the old paths.

a. Obedience is of the utmost importance if we want to be pleasing unto God.

b. I Samuel 15:22; Jeremiah 7:23; Matthew 7:21; Luke 8:19-21; Acts 5:29.

C. WHILE WALKING IN THE OLD PATHS WE MUST BE WATCHFUL.

1. We as God's people need to be watchful or alert that we stand in the old paths.

2. The Bible is full of warnings to this effect.

a. The Bible says we are to be watchful—Matthew 26:41; Acts 20:31; I Corinthians 16:13.

b. The Bible also says that God has placed watchmen over us—Isaiah 62:2; Ezekiel 3:17-21; Hebrews 13:17.

D. THE RESULT

1. The result of stubbornness:

a. "We will not walk therein"... "We will not hearken."

b. Will not find rest for our soul...

c. Will not escape the punishment to come...

d. The apostle Paul proclaimed ...II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

2. The result of walking in the old paths:

a. Shall find rest for your souls—Revelation 14:13.

b. Will enter into the joys of the Lord (Matthew 25:23).

c. Shall be saved (Matthew 10:22).

d. Shall receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10)

III. Conclusion

A. We must "stand," "see," "ask," "walk" and "hearken" to the old paths.

B. Are you walking in the old paths?

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One Woman's Perspective...

LOVE AND THE CHILD

Annette B. Cates

It has been said that in today's homes, everything is run by a switch except the children. This sad state of affairs is in conflict with the words from Proverbs 13:24, **"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."** This verse emphasizes the link between love and firm, timely discipline. Discipline is of two types: corrective and instructive. Children have to be guided and taught, positively and negatively. Without proper discipline, the child is as if hated by the parent, while the loved child is appropriately chastised.

LEARNING FROM THE ANIMALS

The animal world, untainted by today's psychology books and liberal sociological theory, using God-given instinct, recognizes this very principle. The cow kicks the errant calf. Geese bite their young when they get out of line. Cats slap their kittens and dogs nip their puppies when they overstep their boundaries. Notice that all of these are pain-

producing methods. There is not enough pain to injure the little one, but enough to let it know that misbehavior has negative consequences. Animal parents set limits. When their young cross the line, the parents act. Their actions reflect the words of Solomon—firm and timely discipline.

No child can develop properly without discipline. All behavior results in corresponding consequences. Discipline teaches obedience, leading to respect for all authority, from parents to teachers to the police and, ultimately, to God. Proper discipline takes more effort and patience than any other aspect of parenting. Perhaps that is the reason it seems so lacking in many of today's young families. The parents are "too busy" with what they think are the important things of life while neglecting what is truly most im-



portant, the physical and spiritual welfare of their children. Good discipline is NOT nagging, or screaming, or empty promises, and certainly, it is not physical or mental abuse of the child.

CORRECTIVE AND INSTRUCTIVE DISCIPLINE

All children are different, thus discipline has to vary from child to child, from occasion to occasion, from age to age. Some children defy the limits more readily than others. Some may dissolve into tears at a mere frown from the parent while others respond best to other forms of punishment. Some situations may carry potential danger, thus a more stern reaction on the part of the parent is necessary. For the toddler age, removing and distracting the child is usually all that is needed. For some children, time-out or the loss of privileges is sufficient. For others, spanking is best, if properly done and as a last resort. We once had a wise pediatrician who said, "Remember the three 'D's' of discipline: dangerous, destructive, and defiant." When a child does that which falls into one of these categories, the parent must act as strongly as necessary to stop that behavior. This is the "corrective" aspect of discipline.

The "instructive" part of discipline rewards good behavior with lavish praise and hugs. Often, misbehavior results from a need for attention, and the child figures any attention—even negative—is better than none. Misbehavior can also result from the child's need for the security of limits set by an adult he can trust. Any time routine activities are out-of-whack, a child needs to know that the rules have not changed, that he can still depend on his parents to be in charge and keep him safe. Further, when a child is tired and/or hungry he is more likely to act-up. Adequate sleep and a balanced diet that includes nutritious snacks can go a long way toward preventing many problems.

Instructive discipline is involved in providing "roots and wings," balancing protection and freedom. It takes a good root system for a child to develop the kind of independence he needs in order to become a mature adult. Strong roots grow in a well-cultivated environment. Just as it takes time and attention to produce a beautiful flower garden or a beautiful vegetable garden, hoeing, watering, feeding, and weeding, it takes work to develop the right environment for child-rearing. Taking time and giving attention at ages seven and ten will keep the child talking and listening at seventeen. The roots cultivated in childhood give the adult strength to weather the storms of life later on

as surely as the root system in a plant secures it in the wind and rain.

UNITY IN THE HOME NEEDED

A good home demands family unity where each child is equally loved and there is cooperation between the parents in the rearing, teaching, and disciplining of the children. A prime example of disunity is seen in Isaac and Rebekah with Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:27-34). Parents need to communicate with each other and resolve the issues away from the presence of the children. Children know when there is favoritism and each is hurt by it. They also know when their parents are divided, getting mixed signals, confusion, and insecurity. They are unable fully to trust either parent, the parents lose control, and the home is in jeopardy.

Sometimes it seems that the world is falling apart around us. We see homes that are broken in the heart if not in the courts. Children are without guidance and direction. As Christians, it is imperative that we strengthen our homes and give our children the discipline that love demands. Parenting is a wonderful, fulfilling role, for "**Children are an heritage of the Lord**" (Psalm 23:26). When we as Christians meet our responsibilities as parents, we have a positive effect on the church and on all society.

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WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTS TWO?

Noah A. Hackworth

Acts 2 has been called "the hub of the Bible." And knowing what a "hub" is we can understand why. What the "hub" is to the wheel, Acts 2 is to the Bible. The "hub" is the axis, center, core, focus, heart, middle, nucleus and pivot of a thing. In a meaningful sense the whole Bible "turns" on Acts 2. If the 47 verses of this wonderful chapter were understood by the denominational world, there would be no denominations. And if more of our own brethren would powerfully and regularly preach Acts 2, not only would their spiritual health be better, more sinners would be saved. There was a time when most gospel preachers could quote Acts 2, but now many preachers do not even read it much less quote it. J. W. Brents has well said:

The living, vital roots of Christianity were planted deep upon the day of Pentecost. Its great outstanding facts were unfolded by the Spirit of God upon that history making day. Upon this day a new era and epoch had their beginning in the annals of time. The facts of Pentecost should be planted in the heart of every Christian and into the hearts of all men, as to that matter. To forget them or even bypass them is fatal to any Christian. When we become indifferent to such essential truths we become lukewarm in promoting them. The more greatly imbued we are with them the more zeal we show in making them known to others.

ACTS 2 RECORDS THREE FACTS THAT MUST BE KNOWN

First, the establishment of the church. The church can be seen before Acts 2 in **purpose, promise, prophecy, and preparation**, but not in fact. The church for which Christ died began in fact on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover feast (Acts 2:147). If the church had been established before Pentecost, it would have been established before the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as well as under the Law of Moses and under the "**limited commission**" (Galatians 4:4; Matthew 10:5). It (the church) would also be a body without Head and Spirit (Ephesians 1:20-22).

Second, how people became Christians. If there is one thing people need to know it is how to become a Christian. This process is certainly not understood by the religious world, or by some of our own brethren. To hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:21-24), repent of sin (Luke 13:3), confess Christ as God's Son (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10), and be baptized for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38) is what God has commanded all men to do to be saved.

Third, how the church grew. It grew because the Christians preached the word all over the world just like Jesus instructed them to do (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15;

Acts 8:4; Colossians 1:23). If we are to grow, little or lot, it will be through the preaching of the word (Romans 1:16).

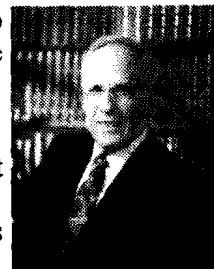
ACTS 2 IS THE DAY OF BEGINNINGS

1. The beginning of the new covenant (Hebrews 10:9-10).
2. The beginning of the church (Acts 2:47).
3. The beginning of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19).
4. The beginning of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20).
5. The beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11).
6. The beginning of baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
7. The beginning of the regeneration (Matthew 19:28).
8. The beginning of the reign of Christ as King (Acts 2:30-36).
9. The beginning of Christ's reign as High Priest (Hebrews 8:4).
10. The beginning of the preaching of the facts of the gospel, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:3).

It is difficult to imagine a wheel without spokes or hub. It is nonetheless difficult to picture the Bible without its hub, Acts 2. Brents again said:

Like a mighty ship that has broken away from its mooring and drifts helplessly upon the angry waves of the ocean, so have men broken away from his great historical landmark—the focal point of Christianity's beginning in the world. Ignorant of these bed-rock principles men become hapless victims "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).

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NOTES AND QUOTES...

Izzyal Stout, Grove, Oklahoma: "Sometimes this is a busy ole world—but I'm thankful I can be included in it, or rather, involved. I'm so thankful Russia has opened doors for the gospel to be preached. I have been reading how descendants of Japheth's descendants settled in southern Russia..."

Dale C. Flowers, Westmoreland, Tennessee: "Great things are happening in both Africa and the Philippines. Lucas Owino spent a couple of days in the area around Kisumu teaching. He baptized over 25 in the process and established a new congregation."

"In the meantime, in the Philippines, Dave (my son Dave L. Flowers) reported that there have been six more baptisms there due to follow-up and personal work."

"Incidentally (if I may brag a bit), he is using HAILEY'S HANDBOOK as a textbook in his Bible study."

"He and Irene Guevara, the Restoration Radio Network International Asian Executive Secretary, will be married June 19. He will return to America for a brief visit May 20. Dave, Wanda and I will return to the Philippines, June 11."

"After the wedding we will conduct the medical mission and the three of us will return July 7. Dave will then get his leg examined by VA to determine the proper treatment for it and make plans and raise funds for attending Florida School of Preaching in Lakeland, Florida."

"Hopefully, Irene will be cleared to come to America by December. (For some reason the US Embassy in the Philippines seems determined to prevent Filipinas married to American citizens from entering the country. They make it as difficult as possible...")

Sher Bahadur Karki, Damak, Jhapa, East Nepal: "We want to inform you about how the church of Christ was established in eastern Nepal and who came to preach God's word in eastern Nepal."

"For the first time brother Harvey H. Hasa, from Highland Park church of Christ, USA, came to eastern Nepal with brother Gun Bdr. Bk in 1989. In 1989 Sher Bdr Karki and Ms. Kaushila Karki were baptized through the brother Harvey at Tauwa, Kathmandu. In 1990 Shyam Salam, preacher of Brighter Academy church of Christ, Swami Das, the preacher of Calcutta church of Christ, and Krishna Gopal, the preacher of Kamal Pokhari church of Christ, came together to Dudamari church of Christ and preached the gospel cordially. At the same time 15 people were saved and established first church of Christ in eastern Nepal at Dudamari."

"From that time many preachers began to come and preach the holy gospel from different countries. In 1990 Charles F. Scott came from USA at Dudamari church in 1993. Allen Jacob came from

Canada and Danialsinag in India. Chura-chand Pus church of Christ sent Kamlin Pau to preach in eastern Nepal and now he has left Nepal."

"In 1997 Mike Brooks, from Highland Park church of Christ, with Dev Philip, came from USA. Mike Brooks came several times in eastern Nepal and visited whole side of Nepal Mountain hill and [taught] Tarai Nepal better way. Through the Highland Park church of Christ getting the financial support, eastern Nepal also all around in Nepal. Brother Jerry Gollfe, from American Embassy, is helping some preacher financial support, also. The preacher of Brighter Academy Shyam Salam comes every year in east Nepal. He has helped the Nepali song-books and given booklet of Life of Christ."

Wendy Kendrex, from western Australia, is also praying for our work.

"The preacher of Kakinada church of Christ (South India) Joshua Gootam is helping us different ways from 1995. Through his recommendation, Church of Christ Bible Training Center got financial support for purchasing materials for one time from Bellview church of Christ from USA. Brother Ira Rice, missionary, is sending us Basic Bible Course for the correspondence for us from USA. Brother Jaleshor Shrestha, who belongs to Houston church of Christ (USA) is trying to visit Nepal in 1999 for the gospel meeting. Preachers of Delhi church of Christ Sonny David and Francis David also helping us by sending booklets. Some students of Nepalese are studying in National Bible School, Madras, Kakinada School of Preaching, Calcutta School of Preaching and World Bible School..."

"As per the survey report made during 1995...churches of Christ were established in different locations to 95 places in Nepal...How many new churches have come up after 1998 throughout Nepal also will be made available for your record..."

"The eastern churches of Christ have together established the "Church of Christ Bible Training Center" at Damak, east Nepal, from 1997 November. Please pray for it."

(NOTE: It was my pleasure to preach in seven different places in Nepal in early March this year (1999). This was my 70th country going into all the world preaching the gospel. Much "planting" had been done before Joshua Gootam and I got there. All we did was "water." God granted us an "increase" of 20 precious souls. Nepali preachers have asked us to return this November for a city-wide campaign in Nepal's capital city of Kathmandu. IYRJR.)

Virginia W. Thomson, San Mateo, California: "I was glad you have Volume I [of your autobiography] completed and

ready for publication. Please reserve me one copy...We will be eager to hear about your efforts in keeping out error in sound congregations across the waters."

[NOTE: Virginia's mother, Jessie Cook Thomson, celebrated her 100th birthday, November 4. Lord willing, I plan to include something about her in Volume II. IYRJR.]

John Bob Cherugondi, evangelist at Munganda, Andhra Pradesh, South India, writes: "Thank God for the work in Kakinada that is being led by Joshua Gootam and brother Nehemiah, of the Kakinada School of Preaching and Correspondence Bible Course. I, too, have trained under Kakinada School of Preaching only in 1975. Thank God for all these things. They are so good to me. I thank them so much..."

Frances Jones, Louisville, Kentucky: "I enjoyed reading Pressing Toward The Mark—Volume I very much. I'm looking forward to receiving Volumes II and III."

Robert Hawkins, Murmansk, Russia: "We rejoice to report a new sister in Christ and two restorations in the month of November. Natasha obeyed the gospel after Sunday services earlier in November. She and her daughter came to the Bible lectures and then began to come to services."

"Nadezda, who also has a daughter, returned from being away in another city and stated she did not worship God since there was not a congregation of the Lord's church in that city. Brother Cliff Lyons and I talked with her at the Bible college about how worship to God is to be done whether there is a congregation or not. She realized that she had sinned and wanted forgiveness. We prayed for her forgiveness before leaving the Bible college."

"Vladimer, who was baptized a few months ago, repented of wrong doing several Wednesday nights ago."

"Slava helped the Sunday before to serve the Lord's Supper. This is encouraging for us to see our men begin to take an active role in the leadership of the worship service."

"We are averaging close to 40 each Lord's Day. Alexander [Nesterkin] and I are rotating the preaching duties and each of us continues to teach a class on Sunday morning. "Alexander and Tatyana have devoted much of their time to supervising the work of fixing up the building, which was purchased for the church. We look forward to the time when we can worship in our own building!"

"Since Cliff has returned to the States, it has been my privilege to teach in the Bible college from brother Thomas B. Warren's book, 'You Can Understand the Bible!' This excellent book presents illustrated lessons, which are very easy to understand..."

"The work with the two orphanages and the Seamen's Hospital continues."

DISAPPEARING PRINCIPLES

Eddie Whitten

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). Preachers do well to encourage people to be submissive to Biblical principles. God is sovereign in all things.



THE ROAD TO RUIN

People are not in control of the universe; they are not even in control of their individual destiny. When put in proper perspective, man is really not in control of anything of permanent quality. Some men have reached pinnacles of power, notoriety and wealth for a time but time robs them in the end. It is comical, in a sense, to observe the arrogance of men of importance in their field gradually assume the paper throne of their little world. It takes only a moment for their empires to crumble. Sickness, age, unethical conduct, greed, subversive takeovers by others, death unceremoniously renders the powerful powerless. Fortunes are lost overnight and the pomp of importance is gone in the wink of an eye. Many have traveled the road to ruin that runs by the fountain of plenty.

A hard lesson to learn is the fleeting character of time. Everyone on the planet Earth is proceeding swiftly to the bar of account. Jesus said,

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

NOTHING BUT A MEMORY

The lasting quality of one's life is his quality of life! The world has had many wealthy people. Those remembered are the ones who have contributed something worthwhile to society. Even so, they are still nothing more than a memory.

It would not be fair to say that we do not hear sermons anymore emphasizing serving others rather than being served. There are still some preachers who faithfully proclaim the need to serve rather than being served. Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The attitude swing from being a servant in the court of the Master to being served by the masses has had its fruition in the general rejection of authority at every level. Authority is the primary target of attack. Prisons are the hospitality inns for an ever-increasing populace. Schools are patrolled by armed policemen to try to control children who want to

DIRECTORY

For advertising in this section, See Masthead, Page 2.

—Alabama—

Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Tel. (205) 796-6802, 429-2026. Sunday: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

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

—California—

Seal Beach—Leisure World Church of Christ, Northwood Club House, 3 room 8, Sun: 11:00 a.m., Bible Study 10:00 a.m., Don Foslén, Evangelist.

—England—

England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 253 Coldhams Lane, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Brian Chadwick, Tel. 01144-1223-501-861. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

—Florida—

Miami—Westwood Lake Church of Christ, 10790 SW 36th Street, Miami, FL 33165, tel. (305) 554-8229. F. Matherly, Evangelist, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (904) 455-7595. Evangelist, Michael Hatcher, Sunday: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—Georgia—

Cartersville—Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1146, 1319 JFH Pkwy (US 41 NW) Cartersville, GA 30120. Tel: (770) 382-6775. E-mail: Cartersville-cofc@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

—Indiana—

Evansville—West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sunday: 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

—Michigan—

Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed: 7:00 p.m.

—Missouri—

Farmington—Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, tel. (573) 756-5925 or 3595. Evangelist, Sean Hochdorf, Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—North Carolina—

Rocky Mount—Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, tel. (919) 977-7556, Mark McDonald, Evangelist.

—Tennessee—

Crossville—Lantana Church of Christ, 7004 Lantana Rd., P.O. Box 2686, Crossville, TN 38557, (615) 788-6404. Sun.: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Jimmie B. Hill, Evangelist.

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 or Steve Ellis, Evangelist, (901) 366-6005.

Nashville area—Villages Church of Christ, 436 Belinda Parkway, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m. Fifteen minutes from downtown Nashville, Cornelius Abbott, III, Evangelist, tel. (615) 758-7406.

—Texas—

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, tel. (281) 353-2707. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. **Home of Houston College of the Bible** and the **HCB Lectures** beginning the last week in February.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

Lubbock—Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00 a.m., 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.

Portland—Church of Christ, 2009 Wildcat Dr., Portland, TX 78374, tel. (512) 643-6571, Michael Wyatt, Evangelist.

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

—Wyoming—

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 4901 Ridge Rd., Cheyenne, WY 82009. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Loran Gearhart, tel. (307) 634-3040.

shoot people. Children, rejecting the authority of parents, run their homes. But, there will be a time when men, women or children will submit to authority whether they want to or not. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). The apostle Paul told the Athenian philosophers, "...he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Jesus said the word he had spoken would judge the world in the last day (John 12:48). Mankind will find out too late that his blatant rejection of authority can only be to his eternal regret.

PUFFED-UP PREACHERS

Preachers often are victims of accolades. Some have believed all the compliments offered by appreciative hearers. Some have been convinced of their superior place. Heads swell and chests pooch out, eyes slant in unquestioned wisdom and lips smile in condescending tolerance. Those of this ilk join the ranks of the famous, powerful and wealthy in their self-sufficiency. The inspired apostle had reason to boast but he did not. Rather, he made the wonderful, relevant and penetrating statement found in our text, I Corinthians 9:27. Jesus said, "...he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:11-12). Those so intellectual and pompous should take note of the words of the Master.

Submission is to some a hateful word. In the world of plenty in which we live, why submit to anything, or anyone? We have got it made! Tragically that concept is going to cause many to spend their eternity separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), in the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Unless and until mankind, including Christians, take unto themselves the principles of love for their brethren, humility, compassion, submission to authority of the Bible, obedience and service, there will be little hope for the salvation of their souls. At this time in our history, these principles unfortunately do not prevail. May God help us to return to these principles.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

Cecil May Jr.'s Article in the Gospel Advocate "GUILT BY ASSOCIATION"

Gary L. Grizzell

The July 1999 issue of the *Gospel Advocate* included an article written by Cecil May entitled, "Guilt By Association." May tells us that, "Speakers do not sin by where they preach. They sin by what they say or do not say..." He states, "They should address the specific truths the people to whom they are speaking need to hear." Why then, if May believed what he wrote in his *Gospel Advocate* article, could he not be warned about having **F. LaGard Smith** as a speaker at Faulkner University on October 23 and 24 of last year?

May wrote, "They should address the specific truths the people to whom they are speaking need to hear." Is this what May's friend, F. LaGard Smith, has done? When Smith fellowshiped denominationalist **Pat Robertson** on the "700 Club", did he address the specific truths the people needed to hear? Did he publicly expose Robertson and his error on water baptism? How about the teaching regarding the distinctive nature of the Lord's church and the sinfulness of denominationalism? (Acts 2:38,47; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:1-6). It has been known for some time that F. LaGard Smith has spoken on lectureships/programs in association with false teachers without rebuking those false teachers and exposing their false teachings. Why would the Dean of the School of Biblical Studies at Faulkner University promote such a one in violation of II John 9-11? Is it not now sheer hypocrisy to pen what appears to be an effort to write a straight-laced article concerning the teaching of II John 9-11? This is not to say that his statement concerning correct behavior in his own speaking to denominations does not need further explanation. "My aim was to help them see the truth. I did not think the best way to go about that was to make them so angry they would never invite me back," May said in part. Faithful brethren believe the truth should be preached in love, but does May's statement reflect the way Jesus reasoned?

Yes, use good judgment, but did tact replace fact with Stephen? (Acts 7:51, 59 — "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye...And they stoned Stephen?") Did Paul concern himself inordinately about being invited back to Antioch and Iconium? (Acts 14:19). Neither does May's article explain his association with the *Gospel Advocate*. Where is his rebuke of their error?

CECIL MAY DENIES BIBLICAL TEACHING OF GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

One thing which is obviously missing from May's article is outrage against the practice of fellowshiping and promoting false teachers! (Titus 1:9-11; 3:10; Romans 16:17; II John 10-11; Ephesians 5:11; II Corinthians 6:14,17). His article denies outright the guilt by association which the New Testament teaches. *The New Testament does teach guilt by association when bidding Godspeed to false teachers and those who have been withdrawn from* (II John 9-11; I Corinthians 5:6-7; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14 — "have no company with him, that he may be ashamed"; I Timothy 5:22 — "neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure"; Romans 16:17 — "avoid them"). This is not a denial that a faithful preacher may go into the presence of denominationalists or apostate brethren, so long as he preaches the needed truth (Galatians 2:11-14, Paul's example; see also Matthew 9:12 — "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"). However, the faithful preacher must preach *to* the false teachers on the same program, not *with* false teachers on the same program! A distinction must be made on all advertisements in order to scripturally participate in such a program in view of the need to abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22). Otherwise, there will be a blurring of the lines of fellowship.

(Continued On Page 6)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr.,
Editor



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Associate Editor
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ALL COMMUNICATIONS received by Contending for the Faith and or its Editors are viewed as intended FOR PUBLICATION unless otherwise stated. Whereas we respect confidential information, so described, everything else sent to us we feel free to publish without further permission being necessary. Anything sent to us NOT for publication, please indicate this clearly when you write. Please address such letters directly to the Editor Ira Y. Rice, Jr., 2956 Allshore, Memphis, Tennessee 38118. Telephone: (901) 363-6498.

ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith has begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by Contending for the Faith. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needful. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

All advertisements must be in our hands no later than two (2) months preceding the publishing of the issue of the journal in which you desire your advertisement to appear. To avoid being charged for the following month, ads must be canceled by the first of the month. We appreciate your understanding of and cooperation with our advertising policy.

MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. COST OF SPACE FOR ADS: Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; half page, \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. CLASSIFIED ADS: \$2.00 per line per month. CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS: \$30.00 per line per year. SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES: Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

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Editorial...

2000 CANE RIDGE RESTORATION LECTURESHIP COMING UP!

Please mark your calendars for August 3-6, 2000 and join us for the 20th Annual Cane Ridge Restoration Lectureship. It is simply amazing that an annual event as important and exhilarating as the *Cane Ridge Restoration Lectureship* could exist in our midst for 20 years and most of our brotherhood not even be *aware* of its existence much less be *on hand* for its enjoyment. It was not until Vada and I saw the 19th annual event advertised recently in one of our gospel papers that our curiosity was piqued enough to do anything about it ourselves.

DORAN, WALKER HIGHLIGHT PROGRAM

But when we noted that soon-to-be-90-years-old Adron Doran, of Lexington, Kentucky, would be speaking on "Unity in the Restoration Movement"—and that Todd Walker would be conducting the gospel singing for 45 minutes each night—we could not stay away.

With speakers such as David Pharr, David Hester, Jerry Moffitt, Keith Cozort, Dub McClish, Dietland Spears and Lester Kamp also appearing on the program, what a rich experience this lectureship proved to be!

LEXINGTON IN HEART OF "RESTORATION" COUNTRY

Those of us who were born and reared among churches of Christ in other parts of the brotherhood, of course, had heard the words "Restoration Movement" practically all our lives. But, to most of us, these were just *words*—not something that we related to psychologically and emotionally. But once we were there in person, realizing that we were on the very ground where New Testament Christianity began to be restored to its pristine beauty and simplicity more than two centuries ago, *what a difference it made* in our entire outlook!

DONALDSON, ROGERS AND BALENTINE CONDUCT GUIDED TOUR OF RESTORATION SITES

Probably the highlight of the entire program was the guided tour of restoration sites within a 35-mile radius of Lexington that took place on Friday, July 30th, the second day of the lectureship.

Led by such men as Everett Donaldson, George Rogers and Scott Balentine, it took three tour buses to carry us all. Making stops at South Elkhorn, Harrodsburg and Shakertown, we were provided six-page brochures outlining the half-day excursion and tying

our information all together in a way that the books we had read could never accomplish.

SINGING IN SHAKERTOWN AUDITORIUM

When the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, called "Shakers" because of their trembling in worship, were building their auditorium in Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill, I am certain they had no prescience of the kind of singing we did at our last stop that afternoon.

It was not just our singing, but the way in which that auditorium was constructed, that brought out the song led by Lectureship Director **Bart Rogers**. But when our more than 100 Christian voices burst forth the fruit of our lips, even the Baptist preacher who explained Shakertown to us was astonished. Not only did his jaw drop (literally), but village workers from across the street and around the village came running to witness the extraordinarily beautiful harmony of our singing. The fact that *no accoustical tile* was on the ceiling to kill the sound made it *enormously more wonderful* than ever. (How I wish that brethren in general, when constructing our buildings, could understand how important this is!)

DONALDSON AUTHORS TWO BOOKS ON RACCOON JOHN SMITH

While on our bus that afternoon, I first came to know of two books on the life and legacy of Restoration Pioneer **Raccoon John Smith** our tour guide Everett Donaldson had written. Entitled *Raccoon John Smith—Frontiersman and Reformer* and *The Legacy of Raccoon John Smith*, both of these books should be read and studied by every member of our Lord's church to understand the Restoration Movement. [Selling, respectively, for \$10.95 and \$12.95 each, I have asked **David Brown** to order a generous supply of these books. They may now be ordered from Con-

tending for the Faith, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383. Please add \$3.00 for postage and handling.]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY RECOUNTS HISTORY, SPREAD OF RESTORATION MOVEMENT

While you are at it, you probably should order a copy of my autobiography, *Pressing Toward The Mark—Volume I*, as well. As Dub McClish pointed out, this book is not just a rehearsal of my early life, but contains much history of the spread of the Restoration Movement through the decades once it got started in the area where this lectureship took place. If you want it, please enclose your check for \$22.95 (which includes postage and handling) made out to **Ira Y. Rice, Jr.**, and address your order to my home address: **2956 Allshore, Memphis, Tennessee 38118**.

MAKE PLANS NOW FOR LECTURESHIP 2000

Now that Vada and I have become fully informed of the CANE RIDGE RESTORATION LECTURESHIP, we are making our own plans to be back again for their 20th Annual event, August 3-6, 2000, when that time rolls around the coming year. Hopefully, brother Doran will still be alive and able (by then aged 90) to fill us in on the Restoration Movement to which he and Mignon have devoted their long lives together. Whether or not our Lord extends his time, brethren Donaldson, Rogers and Balentine should still be on hand. It will be more than worth your while if you can manage to attend the 20th Annual Cane Ridge Restoration Lectureship in 2000. Do not let Y2K—or anything else short of Divine intervention—keep you from it. For information, please write to the North Lexington Church of Christ, 549 Parkside Drive, Lexington, Kentucky 40505. See you there.

—Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Editor

DAVIDSON-YERKES DEBATE

The Davidson-Yerkes Debate on Jehovah's Witnesses Doctrine is now available. Second Printing. Yerkes Affirmed: Annihilation for the Wicked. No Hell. Davidson Affirmed: Eternity in Hell for the Wicked. \$6.00 (postage paid). Order From: **J.L. Davidson, 13832 Bert Brown, Conroe, Texas 77302**.

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A MEDLEY OF MATTERS

In the lead article of our September 1999 issue **Daniel Denham** noted that **Lindell Mitchell** had, at the 1998 Southside Church of Christ Lectures, Lubbock, Texas, declared his disbelief in the false doctrine of "except for sin, all of life is worship." As reported to me, because of Denham's notation some were caused to wonder if this meant that the Southside Church of Christ held the false view which Denham exposed and refuted in said article. The Southside elders (**Dale Stone** and **Malcolm Young**) her preacher (**Tommy Hicks**) and the church stand diametrically opposed to the false doctrine under consideration. The elders almost took **Buster Dobbs** off of their 1998 lectures when they heard that he believed this mendacious doctrine. However, they knew that they would have to give a complete explanation for Dobbs' removal. Thus, they wisely decided to wait for more objective evidence to make itself available—and available it became.

Mitchell made his remarks in an open forum that I was conducting. Questions had been asked about the doctrine of "except for sin, all of life is worship." As I remember it, I along with several others commented on the doctrine. Mitchell was one of those who spoke. Knowing of Mitchell's relationship with Dobbs' I chose to take the opportunity to query him about the doctrine. It was in his answers to those questions and related comments that he declared himself not to believe the doctrine which he defends. This is the account of action in the 1998 Southside lectures to which Denham referred in his aforementioned article.

ANOTHER WORD OF EXPLANATION

I received the following e-mail from **Jerry C. Brewer** of 308 South Oklahoma, Elk City, Oklahoma 73644. It is dated September 30, 1999.

Brethren:

A word of explanation is in order regarding an article that I wrote which was published in the last issue of the *Firm Foundation*. As you all probably know, **Buster Dobbs** has embraced the unscriptural position that "all of Life (except sin) is worship." I vehemently deny that position. The Article was sent to **Buster** before I was aware of his new philosophy and, in fact, I had forgotten that I sent it until it appeared in the *FF*. Do not construe his publication of it as any sort of endorsement from me of his "all life is worship" heresy. My subscription to the *FF* ended in September, and I do not intend to renew it.

Jerry C. Brewer

**MACK LYON, F. LAGARD SMITH,
NEIL ANDERSON, WILLARD COLLINS,
HARDEMAN NICHOLS, JEFF JENKINS**

In our July 1999 issue of *CFTF* we exposed **Mack Lyon** and the birds of the same feather as they flocked together. Following that article **Lyon** put out a letter declaring with whom he did not associate as if that were to nullify with whom he did. Well, I don't associate with the pope—what does that prove other than the fact that I don't associate with the pope? Now would it not be rather ludicrous to declare that I did not associate with the pope while all the time I was parading around arm in arm with the College of Cardinals.

Coincidentally or not one of **Lyon's** TV sermons immediately following our July issue's publication concerned lying. We have only reported the facts—and facts do not lie. **Lyon** is in fellowship with **Steve Flatt** and company. Now he runs with open arms to embrace "no eternal punishment" **F. LaGard Smith**. Please consider the brochure on the following page sent out all over Oklahoma and surrounding states to advertise an event called "Affirming the Faith" at the Westside Church of Christ, 726 McGee, Norman, Oklahoma 73069. It was held on September 25. The advertisement has all the right words and topics for discussion until you see the speakers. They are nothing other than one false teacher (**F. LaGard Smith**) and his fellow travelers (**Willard Collins, Jeff Jenkins, Hardeman Nichols, Neil Anderson, and Mack Lyon**).

All over Nashville **Collins** laments about state of the Lord's church, yet he runs arm in arm with those (**Flatt and Company**) that give him spiritual ulcers. **Collins, Jenkins, Nichols, Anderson and Lyon** represent a state of mind that is best understood when one studies the conservative side of the Christian Church when it started to fight against the modernists among them (finally developing into the ultra modern Disciples of Christ) in the early part of this century. They were trying to straddle a barb wire fence in the name of unity. However, it should be kept in mind that many brethren would not go with either segment of the digressive apostates in the Christian Church or with the various anti factions rearing their heads at that time.

David Lipscomb and those who were greatly influenced by the Gospel Advocate of those days best represent faithful brethren of 100 years ago. The *G. A.* along with *Firm Foundation* and other papers did not

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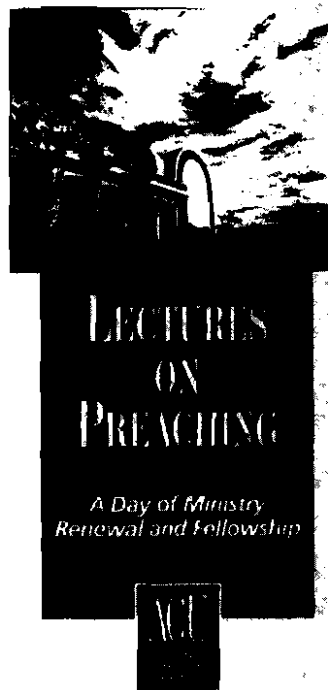
Born and raised in Texas, Henry
Childers began preaching while
in high school. He entered ACU
in 1952 and graduated in 1955.
He spent 20 years planting five
self-supporting churches in three
states. He also spent 17 years
preaching for churches in Texas
and California.
In 1982, with the help of the
elders from Western Church of
Christ where he and his wife, Sue, are members, Childers
developed a ministry to help small churches with problems
and needs they could not handle with their own resources.
Since that time, he has directed the Strong-Wing Mission
Churches Ministry which has helped more than 2,300 small
churches in all 50 states and 15 foreign countries.
Childers was the first president of Youth College and
also helped organize the Southwestern Christian Schools
in San Diego, Calif.



Perry Gathum, who graduated
from Grand-Hammond University in
1971, began preaching in 1979 as a
young Christian. He received a B.A.
degree in 1984 from Marquette State
University. While in school he would
preach and conduct gospel meetings.
During his 19-plus years of
preaching, Gathum has spoken in
all 50 states and in every continent
in the world, including 68 nations.
He has spent many of his years in ministry with churches
in Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.
Gathum has authored 16 tracts which have been widely
distributed and also translated and printed in many
different languages.
He continues to hold gospel meetings and travel around
the world spreading the gospel and distributing Bibles
and tracts.
He received the late Texas Quarterly in 1996 and has
three children.



A native of Fayetteville, Texas,
Clifford Rogers began preaching
as a college student while at ACU in
1957. He is currently in his 28th year
as published minister with the Baptist
Church of Christ in Dallas, and he
has also served in an elder for that
church for 22 years.
He has preached gospel meetings
and other special services to more
than 400 congregations in 30 states
and seven countries.
Rogers is an active member of the Henry Club. In 1989,
he was awarded the Henry Foundation Distinguished Service
Award, and in 1994 Rogers was given the Oak Cliff Service
Citizen of the Year Award. Since 1984, he has been a staff
writer for the Christian Journal.
He and his wife, Dottie (Shuter), have two sons.



September 16, 1999

College of Biblical Studies
Biblical Studies Building, Room 114

ing such "hand holding" as just discussed. Hence, I asked Gary L. Grizzell to write a review and refutation of such a false doctrine. Grizzell's article is our lead article for this issue. Please study it closely. Furthermore, I have once again called upon Daniel Denham to expose Smith's views on fellowship along with other matters connected to one of *David Lipscomb University's* (late of that bastion of sound doctrine—*Peperdine University*) newer teachers. Incidentally, is Smith's addition to the faculty of Lipscomb one of Flatt's well-published moves to turn Lipscomb around?

ABILENE "CHRISTIAN" UNIVERSITY
PRESENTS "LECTURES ON
PREACHING"—HONORS ELDERLY
PREACHERS

I suppose that some folks will seek honor wherever and whenever they can get it. I guess it was an honor for Alexander Campbell to be elected the first president of the missionary society, but in so doing he allowed himself and his reputation to be used to promote error.

go with the any of those in the Christian Church. Whether it is the Jubilee or the Lipscomb University brand of liberalism, faithful brethren today will not get caught up in either side of those in the apostasy of our day.

Why cannot people see that there is a tremendous power struggle going on in Nashville, Tennessee among the liberals? It is not a struggle having to do with what the Bible teaches. It has to do with whether the Rubel Shelly crowd or the David Lipscomb University, Gospel Advocate (The Old Flexible) 21st Century alliance will hold sway. There is not a dime's worth of difference in what Flatt and Company and Shelly and Company believes about doctrine. Yet, do you think that Lyon, Nichols and the other turtledoves will see the reality of the situation? Do not hold your breath till it happens.

The Gospel Advocate now edited by Neil Anderson (if you do not know what he looks like you can find his picture on about every page of the "Old Flexible") ran an article by Cecil May Jr. defend-

ANNOUNCING THE FAITH

On September 25, 1999 the Westside Church of Christ in Norman will be hosting a state wide seminar dealing with important doctrinal issues. The purpose of this seminar is to answer some of the questions being raised by today's religious trends and to equip people to give sound Bible answers to these questions.

It is our belief that restoration concepts are as important as they have ever been. It is obvious that we cannot evangelize today's world unless we are prepared to answer these questions. It is certain that true unity in our own brotherhood can come only through the knowledge of God's Word. It is our hope that members everywhere will want to reaffirm their knowledge and faith and will want to make a commitment to resist the popularity of questionable trends which threaten our commitment to the distinctiveness of the Lord's church. It is our desire to present "book, chapter and verse" answers to Bible questions and to do so in a positive, loving and hopeful spirit.

SCHEDULE

9:00	TRENDS TOWARD ECUMENICISM F. LaGrass Smith
10:00	THE ESSENTIALITY OF BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS F. LaGrass Smith
10:45	Short Break
11:00	INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP Willard Collins
12:00	Lunch on your own
1:00	SUBMITTING THE ROLE OF ELDERS Neil Anderson
2:00	GOING TOO FAR IN WORSHIP Hardness Nichols
3:00	THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE Neil Anderson
4:00	GENDER ISSUES F. LaGrass Smith
5:00	Dinner on your own
6:00	UNITED IN TRUTH AND LOVE Mark Lyon
8:00	LATE NIGHT WITH LAGASS Question and Answer F. LaGrass Smith

To allow such apostate institutions as ACU to honor one for preaching that which they disbelieve and repudiate is ridiculous. Faithful members of the Lord's church are not authorized by the Lord to be involved in such activities.

My, how some folks can throw a fit over some who teach false doctrine on the Holy Spirit or worship, but break their necks running to be honored by those who accept anything that comes down the pike regarding the Holy Spirit and just about anything else. It does not take a Solomon to see that "something is rotten in Denmark." I for one am not going to have anything to

do with folks who are that blind to the realities of the ACU apostasy.

Along with **Grizzell** and **Denham's** articles I strongly recommend **Eddie Whitten's**. It addresses what evidently some have forgotten in their quest to receive the accolades of mere men. Moreover, Whitten has spoken personally, frankly, candidly, and with much love to one of these ACU honorees about his appearance on the program before the fact. However and sadly, it was to no avail. *Et tu, Perry?*

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

Cecil May Jr.'s Article...

(Continued From Page One)

CECIL MAY ENDORSES F. LAGARD SMITH TO SPEAK AT FAULKNER

On October 3, 1998 Cecil May sent an email message to students at Faulkner University saying in part, "October 23 and 24 the University will present Dr. LaGard Smith in a special seminar, sponsored by the School Of Biblical Studies, entitled "Worship, Baptism and Fellowship." Sessions Friday night, 10/23, and Saturday night, 10/24, will be at 7:00 and will be held in the Rotunda auditorium. Sessions will also be held Saturday morning, and will include an opportunity for the audience to ask questions of the speaker. He is a professor at Pepperdine University Law School and the author of several popular books. His books, "The Cultural Church", "Baptism: the Believer's Wedding Ceremony", and "Who Is My Brother?" are suggestive of the material to be covered in this seminar."

At the request of a parent whose son was a student at Faulkner, I wrote May about promoting wayward brother Smith in an email dated, October 21, 1998, saying, in part,

I write to you out of great concern. It is my understanding ... that you have written an email message to those students who have email access at Faulkner University encouraging them to hear wayward brother F. LaGard Smith...Brother May, are you not aware of the fatal error brother Smith taught in his book, WHO IS MY BROTHER? with regard to baptism/fellowship?...Please do your part to correct the poor judgment of whoever is responsible at Faulkner University in even allowing this man to speak on this subject.

Additionally, at that time I emailed him a three part series opposing this error from Smith's book. I received a reply from May in an email dated October 23, 1998, saying in part,

Our use of LaGard Smith for this seminar is precisely because we believe he will speak plainly and biblically about those matters. I have read his books, and I have read the reviews of them. I have also heard him speak several times, most recently at International Bible College a few weeks ago for about four hours. He will present basically the same material here that he presented there. If the concerns I listed above are your concerns, then he is on your side, whether you think he is or not.

CECIL MAY COULD NOT BE WARNED

Although six other brethren also wrote to Cecil May at that time (including a Faulkner student), warning him of the false teaching of F. LaGard Smith, it was to no avail. In an email dated Oct. 26, 1998 I responded in part,

Brother May, ... I am in receipt of your email (dated Friday, October 23, 1998)...Smith is liberal concerning the necessity of one understanding the purpose for immersion at the time he is immersed... Brother May, do you believe as F. LaGard Smith that the question about whether to accept one who was immersed while thinking he was already saved is "a grey area," a "shadowy area," and that advocating that one must understand that baptism is for the remission of sins at the moment he is immersed is "a tougher brief to argue than we've ever before admitted" and an "enigma"?...If Smith taught the truth on the Faulkner campus on October 23 and 24, he needs to retract what he wrote in his book on baptism/fellowship (in the case of accepting ALL immersed individuals, meaning those denominationalists who did not understand the purpose of baptism while undergoing their immersions).

No answer has been forthcoming. However, May's article has now come out in the *Gospel Advocate* teaching there is no such thing as guilt by association. In nine places he used the expression "guilt by association" but never once in his article admitted that there is a type of guilt by association which causes one to be a partaker of other men's sins. Instead, he admits only that "Such preachers are guilty, convicted of error, because they preach what is not biblical."

CECIL MAY'S SCENARIO MISSES THE MARK

May described a scenario wherein a faithful speaker would be required to object to the false doctrine of certain fellow speakers on the same program. He instructs us, "Speakers do not sin by where they preach." Maybe he can tell us just when the command of Romans 16:17 to "avoid" those who have been scripturally marked comes into play. He did not tell us in his article. Is "avoiding them" equivalent to "associating with them" by speaking along side of them (without rebuking them) and thus by one's presence promoting them? May wrote, "They sin by what they say or do not say." The faithful-in-doctrine preacher in his scenario who exercised silence [by not crying out against the false doctrines of his fellow speakers], in reality sinned by what he did not say. Thus, he is inconsistent. He argues that the brother is deserving of having "questions about him

rightly raised" but that this was certainly "not guilt by association." In other words, May tells us that the sound-in-doctrine preacher may not be reproved upon the grounds of guilt by association. Evidently, the only "questions about him rightly raised" have to do with whether or not he agreed with the false doctrines of the other speakers. So, it is okay to be a coward (evidenced by silence when one ought to object to the other speakers and their doctrines on the same program), but it is not okay to hold the same false doctrines of the wolves in sheep's clothing. This is being doubleminded (James 1:8). Faithful brethren would have little trouble with the statement, "They sin by what they say or do not say," if applied correctly. If a sound-in-doctrine speaker on a program would agree to preach to the false teachers instead of preaching *with* the false teachers, it would be a correct application. May has not applied the principle correctly in his article, nor when defending F. LaGard Smith as a speaker at Faulkner University. The only conclusion that one can draw from May's synopsis is that when a preacher on a lectureship preaches a sermon of truth, while knowingly and carefully avoiding preaching against the specific error advocated by certain of his fellow speakers, he is worthy of being questioned about his silence but not on the grounds of guilt by association! May cannot see that by such a speaker's silence one implicitly endorsed these false teachers. He cannot see that this is guilt by association which the Bible forbids. The association is in the participation with the sins of the associates, either by doing the same thing or by endorsing the

compromising behavior. (Ephesians 5:11; II John 9-11). Jesus scripturally associated (in the sense that he was in the presence of and had a brief conversation) with an adulterous woman in the temple court (John 8:1-11). He did not unscripturally associate with her by being a partaker of her sins. Note that he told the woman to "Go, and sin no more." Had Jesus just said, "Go," he would have become guilty by association. How, you say? By his silence he would have given implicit endorsement of her sinful behavior. But since he added the words, "sin no more," he kept himself pure. Paul wrote, "neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22). Did Paul speak just any truth or the needed truth in his situation with Peter in Antioch [described in Galatians 2:11-14]? He preached the needed truth! If Paul had exercised dignified silence while Peter was leading Gentile Christians astray, then May might (if consistent) describe Paul as one only deserving of having "questions about him rightly raised" but that this was certainly "not guilt by association." However, if Paul had not rebuked Peter to his face before them all, he would have been a partaker of Peter's sin. Giving verbal or nonverbal endorsement of a false teacher constitutes guilt by association (Ephesians 5:11; II John 9-11). After bidding Godspeed to a false teacher, simply writing an article and pretending to be an angel of light will not suffice (II Corinthians 11:14-15).

—2128 Crystal Court
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501

Fellowship, The Digressives, and F. LaGard Smith

Daniel Denham

F. LaGard Smith is a man with great ability and acumen. He has written some outstanding works on the New Age Movement, abortion, and homosexuality, works that should be in every Christian's library. However, LaGard Smith seems just as prone to write something that woefully misses the mark on other subjects. His book *The Cultural Church* advocated a hermeneutic that combines both objective truth and subjective feeling. Another book titled *Baptism: The Believer's Wedding Ceremony* held the door open for the possibility of salvation for some at the Judgment without the necessity of baptism. The book that is now before me is his work titled *Who Is My Brother?* Last year (1998) I penned a large review, which was published in the Bellview lectureship book *Christian Fellowship* edited by Michael Hatcher, of the many speculative positions taken and statements made by Smith. The material also serves as a more thorough response to these matters from a biblical basis.

THE BASIC THESIS

The basic thesis of the book lies in Smith's contention that there are "five levels of fellowship." The book is a

well-crafted attempt to justify certain forms of cooperation and participation with the sects, forms in which LaGard Smith has long been engaged, while maintaining some form of reservation (mostly mental) as to their standing relative to salvation, *et al.*

Smith tries to shatter the meaning of "fellowship" into five separate but sometimes overlapping parts. The entire process involves a contrived and strained approach to conform the biblical text to the thesis. His mishandling of II John 9-11 and other passages which address the matters of the limitations and the withdrawal of fellowship provide illumination into his thinking. It seems that these passages, according to LaGard, apply only to entities that reject the very essence of Christianity by denying the deity of Christ, *et al.*, or who are involved in moral evils such as adultery, homosexuality, and such, though he clearly excludes those who *teach or practice* the notion that the marriage law of Christ applies only to the Christian. He even seeks to limit the term



"false teacher" to these categories. His approach to II John 9-11 is as predictable as it is interesting. He takes basically the same road as **Carroll Osburn** in his *The Peaceable Kingdom*. One would almost gather from these brethren that there really are no false teachers around today. They have "defined" them out of existence.

LaGard's participation in support of the "Ashton-under-Hill Free Church" in jolly old England, and his work with such individuals as **D. James Kennedy** and **Pat Robertson** give his position away. He practices open fellowship, despite what he may write about **Max Lucado** and **Rubel Shelly** and his concerns about those who are trying to open the doors of the kingdom to the "pious unimersed."

THE ENDORSEMENTS

The material in Smith's book on fellowship was endorsed by such ultra-liberal "change agents" as **Jim Woodruff** and **Jeff Walling**, and was prepared with the participation and aid of the equally liberal faculty, *et al.*, of the Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, Texas. Such endorsements and help do not exactly occasion a belief in the objectivity of the material, nor, especially, in its biblical reliability.

Woodruff, Walling, and Sunset's faculty have long been fellow-travelers with **Max Lucado** and **Rubel Shelly**, as *Contending for the Faith* and many other faithful publications have long documented. That Smith should believe that the endorsements of these change agents would lend credibility to the soundness of his thesis and confidence in its conclusions belies a naivete that he has toward genuinely conservative brethren.

LAGARD'S BROTHERHOOD CONNECTIONS

LaGard Smith evidently came out of the old anti-movement of the late 40s and 50s. His loyalty to and friendship with Homer Hailey is seen in his book. He is appalled at the current ostracizing of Hailey by so many brethren over Hailey's book on divorce and remarriage. Smith seems almost personally insulted that brethren would not tolerate the view of his mentor. He seems equally oblivious to the contradiction between his defense of Hailey and his own opposition to adultery and homosexuality. It is as though it is the practice of these evils that is to be avoided at all cost, but not any teaching that may lead to or encourage them! He appears almost sympathetic as well with the anti-movement and its purposes at times, but now has adopted a position which places his former compatriots a considerable distance from his current locus. Like **Leroy Garrett**, **Carl Ketcherside**, **Harold Hazelip**, and others, LaGard has moved decidedly to the left in many of his views. It is amazing how many leaders of the current liberal movement had their start in the ranks of the anti brethren. One reason is that both positions ultimately rest on a lack of proper respect for divine authority. The liberal looses what God has bound, because he considers, for all practical purposes, an objective standard an anathema. The anti binds his opinion as the equal of what God has bound, and thus binds where God has loosed. In both camps there is the practical tendency toward the suspicion

that human reason alone can be equal to God's law. The flip-flop from the one camp into the other therefore is relatively easy.

LaGard has also long been a professor of law at Pepperdine University and appeared with Rubel Shelly and others of like mind on the Pepperdine Lectures. LaGard was recently hired by that "conservative" stalwart **Steve Flatt**, who has been in reality a Rubel Shelly wannabe among the liberals, to work with David Lipscomb University, a locale which brings LaGard into a whole new sphere of associates, be they aging modernists or yuppie post-modernists.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

The most important portion of Smith's book on fellowship is not really his discussion of his "five levels" theory, and even less the pathetic and sad spectacle created in his open letter to Max Lucado to plead with Max not to pursue his "open fellowship" course (the letter is pathetic and sad in that in the prior sections on the levels of fellowship LaGard wound up booking passage in Lucado's boat). It is the introduction which gives away the specific destination that F. LaGard Smith wished to arrive at beforehand. The remainder of the book for all its bluster, flowery speech, and heart-tugging histrionics is actually anti-climatic to the introduction. The introduction prepares the mind of the unthinking and unreflecting on a more visceral level to receive his amazing observations on fellowship. After all, no one wants to be mean-spirited and associated with the "knuckleheads" (as two liberals some years ago called conservative brethren) who would not want to open up fellowship on a wider scale. His approach is both enlightening and irritating to those who are aware of both Restoration and recent history concerning the work of digressives. It establishes the tone and tenor of the book, and gives insight as to just where Smith is ultimately headed—much closer to Lucado's position than he would admit.

While praising our "noble commitment to doctrinal purity" (Page 7), he sets forth a diatribe against what he terms its "unwelcomed side-effect of producing an unhealthy addiction to infighting and division." The implication of such a position is that somehow the commitment to doctrinal purity is itself flawed. If we did not have such a commitment, then we would not have "a pervasive party spirit."

He went on to excoriate what he termed "acrimonious brotherhood papers" and individuals who drew "such exclusive lines of fellowship" as to cause all this infighting and division. It would seem that, according to LaGard Smith, the digressives were not at all to blame for the dividing of churches and the promotion of schisms in the body of Christ! It is the mean, old "acrimonious brotherhood papers" and these brethren, who are so narrow-minded as to draw exclusive lines of fellowship, who are to blame. But who are they? Our brother does not say! We can only guess as to which papers and what brethren he has in mind. Evidently not Jim Woodruff and his efforts to restructure the church, which even **James D. Bales** opposed in one of his last and best books *The Church In Transition To What?*,

which specifically answered Woodruff's book (*The Church In Transition*) advocating the agenda of current change agency. It evidently does not refer to Jeff Walling who is in full fellowship with the sects. Neither do LaGard's remarks refer to Sunset School of Preaching and its game of footsies with Crossroadism and the Boston Movement Cult!

SMITH THE ACCUSER

He accuses those who draw "such exclusive lines of fellowship that so-called 'erring brothers' on the other side of those lines might not even be regarded as genuine brothers at all." He states that this is the reason for the title of the book, *Who Is My Brother?* The charge is a red herring. It confuses the concept of fellowship with fraternity. Simply because one may be a brother in Christ does not demand that fellowship be extended to him. One must be, as best as can be discerned, a faithful brother in Christ (*cf.*, II Thessalonians 3:6; II John 9-11; *et al.*). The very fact that one can be an "erring" child of God (James 5:19-20) implies that there is the possibility of one being an "erring brother." This is not a "so-called" condition. It is a real possibility, according to the word of God!

While boasting that he will ask and answer the "hard questions" which pertain to fellowship, Smith explains how the first part of his book was written to respond to brethren who were calling for "a wider fellowship with all who have faith in Christ, whether or not they have been biblically baptized." But on pages 11 and 12 he sings a different tune. He suggests that the claim to be "the only Christians" may arise from fear or conceit. He states, "As we enter this study of Christian fellowship, we need to check our motives." He worries that "our interest in the bounds of fellowship is tainted by the fear that others may be more acceptable to God than we might wish" or "the fear that says our own acceptance with God depends upon everyone else's being wrong." He suggests that we might be guilty in our practice of fellowship of the same "ego" problem that belonged to the "horror spun out from Hitler's fantasy of a superior Aryan race" or, perhaps, like that of the Ku Klux Klan and their "lynching blacks so that 'poor white trash' could claim superiority to *at least someone*."

While it may be the case that one could base his personal beliefs on unfounded fears or personal conceit, it does not follow from this that such must always be the case when one makes certain claims relative to his identity, whether physical or spiritual. For example, it is a simple fact that I am Daniel Denham. That is a statement of fact supported by a number of evidences, both literary and biological. I may be proud of my heritage, but that does not alter the fact itself! The specters of Nazism and the KKK raised by Smith do not alter the reality that God himself in his own word has declared who is and who is not a child of God according to the New Birth! The foregoing systems involved false claims at the outset. The truth of the latter rests upon biblical revelation. If the Bible teaches what one must do in order to become a child of God, and it does, then one can know whether or not he is a child of God on that basis. If the Bible teaches that there is only one way in which one becomes a Christian, and it does, then one can know that only

those who have availed themselves of that way are *the only Christians*. This is not ego; it is simply a fact! This section of Smith's book smacks of the liberal, post-modernistic nonsense that unless one knows everything about the doctrine of Christ, then he cannot with certainty know anything. *But if that be true, then why did our LaGard Smith bother even to write a book about an area of thought of which he must confessedly admit he knows nothing of any certitude?* When Christians in the First Century A.D. taught the facts concerning their spiritual identity, were they acting like the Nazis and the KKK? If they could teach the truth of the matter then, and not be guilty of such, then why cannot members of the church of Christ today who believe, teach, and practice the same thing do likewise and not sin? Unless Smith seeks to intimate more about the identity of the church of Christ today as he views it than he is willing to state openly!

BRIGHT OR BLURRED LINES

He poetically speaks of the need to "speak boldly where there are bright lines" which highlight some of the borders or parameters of fellowship and to "proceed with deliberate, prayerful caution where the lines are more blurred, knowing that the areas painted gray also come from a divine palette." The statement implies that somehow God failed to provide enough bright colors and richness of texture to make full and proper discernments relative to whom we should fellowship or not fellowship, as the case may be. Somehow the divine arm was jiggled and the lines were blurred. Or, perhaps, the holy eye was momentarily dis-



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tracted and got out of the lines laid down in eternity. The fact is that the blurring of lines takes place in the rhetoric and sophistry of uninspired men, not in the bright and vivid hues painted by the inspired penmen of God. This talk of "gray areas" hearkens to the worn-out, thread-bare jargon of moral relativism. It is something one would expect from a New Ager. It sounds flowery, but expresses an odious doctrine.

How are we to determine what is a "bright line" as opposed to a "blurred" one or even a "grey" one? Will it be Smith who holds the key in making that determination? Is the mechanical instrument in worship, for instance, in a "grey area"? Jeff Walling would probably say so. How

about LaGard Smith? When LaGard tries to refute infant baptism, is he saying that he has found a "bright line" matter? Or is it just "an orthodoxy defined by" his "own particular doctrinal standing" (page 12)? When he vehemently opposes homosexuality, is he saying that the fact of the sinfulness of homosexual behavior is a "bright line"? If so, then what is the determining factor that makes it so? Is adultery a "bright line" or "grey area"? Is the plan of salvation a "bright line" or a blurred one? These are some of the real "hard questions" which LaGard should address, but does not in his book.

—Post Office Box 737
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ACU INVITES BAPTIST TO SPEAK

Royce Williamson

Abilene Christian University continues its plummet to the bottom of ecumenism by inviting professor **Ron Sider** from the *Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary*, and current president of *Evangelicals for Social Action*, to speak on "Christian attitudes towards [the] poor." On April 22-23, 1999 Sider spoke on the topics "Do Evangelicals Care What the Bible Says About the Poor?" and "Poverty in America: Since Everything Else Has Failed, Why not Try a Holistic Biblical Approach?" And lest anyone should say that it is just the Bible department that has gone astray, notice the other departments that sponsored this man to come in and teach them — Political Science, Sociology, Biology, and Journalism departments.

NOT SURPRISED AT ACU'S ANTICS

Having been a gospel preacher for some ten years, and in Abilene for more than a year now, having carefully watched the activities of ACU, and having listened to some past and some current students, the above action does not surprise me. Is it disheartening? Absolutely! But it really does not surprise me.

In the A&E section of the Sunday, December 6, 1998 issue of the *Abilene Reporter-News*, an article entitled "Swing, Swing, Swing!" was published. ACU student-led swing dance classes was the focus. In this article we learned that a growing number of ACU students are learning "how to jump, jive an' wail." At the time that the article

appeared in the Abilene newspaper, *The Optimist* (ACU's school newspaper), had reported that the group had grown to almost 100 students. The question was asked, "What does the ACU administration say about all this dancing?" Indeed, what does the administration have to say? To all sincere Christians who are seriously concerned about the moral bankruptcy that is occurring in our world today, it is more than just a "good question," it is one that demands an answer. Considering the nature of modern dance, and what the Bible clearly teaches on the subjects of reveling [carousing (*Vine's*),] and lasciviousness [indecent body movements; unchaste handling of males and females (*Thayer's*)], as found in Galatians 5:19-21 and I Peter 4:3, we need a clear, definitive statement from the ACU administration. Add to this the fact that some sincere (though I am afraid horribly misguided) parents are sending their children to ACU to receive a "Christian" education. Will **Dr. Royce Money, et al.**, tell us where they will stand (or should we say, "To what tune they will dance?")? Listen to the school's official policy. "According to a spokesperson, 'ACU and its organizations do not sponsor dances on or off campus, although individual students are free to make their own choice concerning the art of dance.'" Notice how this "spokesperson" went unnamed. Well, so would I if I had made such a pathetic statement on school policy. The old school policies toward dancing, and going to places that offered it, would have called for serious punishment, if not dismissal. Not so anymore. Students are now being "allowed to go to dance halls like the Grand Ole Oplin [Oplin being a community outside Abilene] where alcohol is not served." The "lead instructor" a female sophomore, said that all she wants to do is "empower them to dance." She should have said, "empower them to sin."

FOLLOWING THE BAPTIST PATTERN

It makes one wonder if ACU will soon endorse dancing, as did the Baptists at Baylor University. After all, if you can define an immoral and provocative activity so inno-

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cently as the "art of dancing," what will the next move be? If indeed modern dancing, such as Swing Dancing, is nothing more than a form of "art," then surely nobody will object to art. Now that the Baptists have become "art lovers," and are jumping, jiving, and wailing, why not ACU? This once godly institution now seems to see precious little wrong with wanting to be like the denominations around them (1 Samuel 8:5). They will follow hard after the denominational schools in other areas. It is only consistent that they do it with this issue as well. So why should ACU not invite Baptist academicians to come and teach them as well?

This is just one more proof that ACU cares little about the Truth. Quite honestly, they care little or nothing about the spiritual well-being of the students entrusted to them. Otherwise they would have upheld the once high standard set many years before the current administration. We once would have heard a clear, distinctive, and definitive sound of correction coming from ACU hill. **WE HEARD NOTHING OF THE SORT!** What we heard was weak and cowardly compromise.

As earlier stated, I have been listening to some past and present students of ACU. Some of these same students are amazed at the least, and in reality, astonished and ashamed of some of the things that are being taught and promoted by this institution. One current student informed me that other students had told him of their loss of faith since they came to ACU for a "Christian education." I personally know of several students and ex-students who have left the faith, and are involved in denominational worship, all as a result of ACU's lack of distinctiveness as a "Christian" university. One class I attended with a former student was a real eye-opener. The professor was assigning what he considered to be "great sermons" to be read and studied by the students for an upcoming exam. Not a single one of them was by a faithful brother in Christ. I did not recognize even one name as a member of the Lord's body, and a couple of

these "great sermons" to be studied and absorbed were by women.

THE "OPTIMIST"

The "Optimist"—now there is a misnomer if ever there was one. From a spiritual standpoint there is nothing about which to be optimistic. If all you care about is a secular education, and you do not care what your children will hear religiously. If you do not care if they come home wanting to attend one of the denominations in your hometown, then send them to ACU, and you will not be disappointed. To give another example of why I say that the *Optimist* is a misnomer and that ACU is in blatant digression is in order, and it is also well-documented. During this school year the *Optimist* ran a story in its Religion section by a student which encouraged "church shopping" even though she admitted that it could be a discouraging process. She stated:

The Lord has placed numerous churches and denominations in this fine city. He has a place that needs someone just like you, with your talents and abilities. Get involved, participate in a church and make it part of your college experience.

Obviously this student believes that the Lord placed the denominations here, and that they are good "church" options from which we may choose. Clearly, she believes that the Lord is pleased for them to be in existence. "Just find your niche, denominational or not," is what is clearly being advanced. In this same article was a section of "Tips for Finding the Right Church" that gave some "great" advice. Pardon the sarcasm, but this is what the school allows in its newspaper. "Determine what is important to you in a service—preaching, music, location, atmosphere, etc." What happened to the truth. Even "location" and "atmosphere" had their place on the list of "important" things to look for. Another tip went like this, "Does your understanding of doctrinal truth line up with the church's philosophy? Ask the pastor if you aren't sure." Considering the article by this student, one must come to the conclusion that what is meant by "the church's philosophy" is "that individual church's" beliefs. Therefore, what this student means is, "Find a [emphasis mine-RW] church" (denominational or not) that agrees with your idea of truth. And if there are any questions as to how your thinking lines up with theirs, "ask the pastor."

(Continued on Page 14)

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SWING, SWING, SWING



Randal Senter catches Windy Gunter. Both are ACU seniors. Gunter rented her dress at Grape Expectations for \$15 for Friday night's dance at the Windsor.

Photos by
Amanda Reiter

Ambitious ACU students take to learn how to dance the new

By GREG JAKLEWICZ
Entertainment Editor

Kevin Wellborn admits that the first time he tried to swing dance, "I didn't know what I was doing."

"But I'm gradually getting into it."

The Abilene High graduate, who looks more suited for a mosh pit, is just one of a growing group of Abilene Christian University students catching the current dance rage. Whether it's to the music of Big Bad Voodoo Daddy or inspired by TV commercials for Gap khakis and Haggard slacks, dancers across the country, and now even Abilene, are getting into the swing of things.

A group of ACU students in mid-October began meeting on Tuesday nights at Patty Harper Dance Studio to learn how to jump, jive and wail. They're a persistent bunch.

A small group of students first gathered in the lobby of Gardner women's dormitory to try out the new steps. They were asked to leave, recalls sophomore Amie Edwards of Houston. She has become the lead instructor thanks to two years of ballroom dancing experience. Next stop was Will Hair Park where students danced outdoors to music from a jambox, illuminated by vehicle lights.

Finally they got into the dance studio. After a story appeared last month in the campus newspaper, *The Optimist*, the group of 30 to 50 grew to almost 100.

It's definitely a learn-as-you-go deal. Students who know a little teach stu-



ACU freshmen
Ground cat
omore Mar
on his back.

NG!

upon themselves
old-fashioned way

who most often know nothing. He says it's better that students be inexperienced - it's easier to correct. Edwards concentrates on the basic. She encourages the students to m out rather than just watch. is a lot of shyness, she said, but e makes presentable. ne of the dorkiest guys I know ncing my socks off now," she Now I want to teach them more, like how to mambo or merengue."



in Zach es soph- Robledo ton of room. But they are fun to know," she said. Edwards said she can teach formal ug, like they did it during the ny Goodman and Glenn Miller big 3 era, or "sloppy steps," which are e prevalent at dances and, she ed with a grin, a lot more fun. s for the dress, it is OK to wear ki pants, though many students e purchased dresses, wide ties and s from the '40s and '50s from sec-hand shops to wear to dances. hat does the ACU administration about all this dancing? eording to a university kespersion, "ACU and its organiza-s do not sponsor dances on or off upus, although individual students use see SWING, 3B

Swing

Continued from 1B

are free to make their own choice concerning the art of dance."

With the recent popularity of cuntry dancing, students have been "allowed" to go to dance halls like the Grand Ole Oplin, where alcohol is not served.

Students say they are interested in swing dancing for several reasons. First of all, it's popular everywhere - why not here, too? Secondly, it's a "good social thing," said Dallas freshman Zach Ground. You know, the ol' boy-meets-girl thing.

And thirdly, Wellborn added with a straight face, it's good exercise.

"It feels good. It gets the blood all going," he said.

Swing dances in Abilene have been few, causing some students to take road trips to Dallas or Austin where swing is king in selected Deep Ellum or Sixth Street venues. Because 1990s swing isn't truly defined, swingers share space with punk and rockabilly fans.

"It's soooo cool," said Edwards, who is eager to get past final exams and go home for the holidays and find a really poppin' New Year's Eve party.

But first there was Friday night's dance at the stately Windsor Ballroom, organized by a group of students. For Barrett Koczur, sophomore from Rochester, Mich., and Jason Northrup, freshman from Richardson, it was a way to cut loose before finals. They've been swinging since the semester started.

The parents of one student drove in from San Antonio to check out the action. They enthusiastically approved the students' initiative.

Zoot suits and stylish dresses were common. Edwards directed an hour's worth of lessons before the dance officially began. Everyone seemed to be having quite a time, and Windsor residents certainly had to be curious. It has been years since swing music was heard in the ballroom.

"Swing's pretty popular, so we thought, 'Let's get it together,'" said sophomore Dan Bircher of Woodside, Va..

A sophomore psychology major, Edward is just as enthusiastic about teaching as she is swinging the night away.

"That's what I want to do - empower them to dance!"

Those "Blossoming" Universities

On page 3 in the October 1999 *Christian Chronicle* Glover Shipp wrote:

Our colleges are blossoming in many ways, for which we are thankful. However, only a modest percentage of our high school graduates across the nation enrolls in a Christian college or university. Yes, it is more expensive, but can parents and students afford the high price of the humanistic studies and the immoral tone found on so many state campuses? The fruits of implanted secular ideas may not come to bear for many years. By then parents may not like what they see in their college-educated children. It is unlikely by then that their thinking can be changed.

Notice that Shipp asked, "...can parents and students afford the high price of the humanistic studies and the immoral tone found on so many state campuses?" Well now, just take an embarrassed look at the picture and article appearing to the left of this column. What was that Shipp said about "The fruits of implanted secular ideas may not come to bear for many years"? Since "a picture is worth a thousand words" it looks like the fruit has already fallen off the tree at that bastion of Christian morals and modesty on the hill—ACU. Indeed, "our colleges are blossoming in many ways," for which I am *not* thankful. Secularism is one of the flowers blooming all over the campuses of our "Christian" universities and colleges.

WHAT PRICE BIBLICAL MORALS AND MODESTY?

Maybe those recent ACU preacher honorees will want to dust off some of their old sermons on dancing and modesty. Does anyone think that President Royce Money or Randy Becton would ask any of those honorees to preach those old "knuckle headed" sermons in chapel?

Indeed, Shipp's closing statement in the previous quotation regarding secular universities also describes ACU and her sister universities. Shipp wrote, "It is unlikely by then (now—DPB) that their thinking can be changed."

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

[Used with permission from the Abilene Reporter-News]

IT IS NOT GOING TO GET BETTER

With the century coming to a close, and the great digression of this once—faithful institution now boldly going where no Christian should even think about going, it makes you wonder what the year 2000 and beyond will bring. The 90's have seen a Methodist preacher being appointed as "Editor in Chief" of the school's newspaper in (1992). It has seen men like **Andre Resner** writing "Christmas at Matthew's House," and **Steve Weathers** writing "Bad Dreams" without any serious correction from Money *et al.*, Add to these departures, **James Dobson** speaking at ACU's Moody Coliseum in October of 1995. Candidly, room does not permit us to discuss everything available because we could fill a book with all the problems at ACU. Now, to close out this sad decade and century, they invited a Baptist to instruct them on a subject that they should have known the answers to anyway. Here we have it, people who are supposed to be Christians inviting a Baptist to teach them about Christianity. Even if they do not now know the answers to the questions on how to treat the poor, they can get them from a far better source than a Baptist. Or at least I think they can. It is called the B-I-B-L-E.

THE ACU BUG

As Christians, let us not be worried over the Y2K bug in our computers, but rather the Y2K bug facing the church with institutions like ACU deprogramming young minds of the simple truths of God found in his inspired word, and re-programming them with denominationalism.

I sat back for quite some time to observe the school's activities so as not to be accused of jumping to conclusions. But the truth is, evidence abounds of the digression that is taking place at this institution. And like the prophet of God who could not sit by idly, I too am weary of holding it back, neither can I stay it. I, too, have a fire in my bones (Jeremiah 20:9). People need to hear the truth. We lovingly warn parents of college age children, "Be warned of the error of ACU." We lovingly, but forcefully, admonish and rebuke the administration at ACU, "**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap**" (Galatians 6:7). We plead again with ACU and its leadership to return to the old paths when the students were taught correctly and disciplined in love.

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More OXPECKERS Are Needed!

Jodie Boren

In Africa ticks infest many of the animals. If allowed to multiply and go unchecked, the ticks will literally suck the life blood from the host animal causing its death. God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, created a bird to help the animals. This bird is the OXPECKER or tickbird. This bird has a unique way of "combing" through the animal's fur with its beak to find the ticks. In eliminating the ticks, the life of the animal is saved.

Today the church of our Lord is infested with "ticks" of change agents, false teachers, and the ungodly. Christ loves the church and desires that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27). God works through faithful Christians **"to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Philippians 2:13). More OXPECKERS are needed in his service because of this infestation of false teachers, the ungodly, and those who would change the church to conform to this world (read Romans 12:1-2).

SCRIPTURAL PURGING

Just as the OXPECKER purges the animal of ticks, we are instructed to purge the church of the aforementioned. Paul wrote the brethren at Corinth concerning the brother who was committing fornication with his father's wife (I Corinthians 5:1). He told them in vs. 5 and 6 that a little leaven will destroy the whole body. Therefore, they should purge themselves of the man. In verse 13, Paul told them in no uncertain terms to put that wicked person away—or, in keeping with our illustration, get rid of the "tick."

For those who blaspheme the doctrine of Christ by teaching things that are contrary to it and thereby causing envy, strife, unkind words, evil suspicion, and such. Paul wrote, **"from such withdraw thyself"** (I Timothy 6:1-5). Paul was telling Timothy that he needed to be a tick picker. Again in II Timothy 3:1-5, Paul says he should *turn away* from them that are wicked—who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. In turning away, the church is purged from such wicked persons.

In writing to Titus, Paul tells him to admonish a factious man who causes division. If he does not repent after the second admonition **REJECT HIM** (Titus 3:10)!

To the church at Pergamos, in Revelation 2:12-17, Jesus commended them for holding fast his name and not denying his faith, but he warned them that they must repent for tolerating the false doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes which **HE HATED!** We are not to have fellowship with those that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ but, rather, *mark them and avoid them* (Romans 16:17). The Lord hates false doctrine. To mark those who are change agents and false teachers, names must be called or how else can they be known and avoided?

The apostle Paul did not hesitate to identify false teachers. In II Timothy 2:16-18 he wrote. **"But shun profane and vain babblings...of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus: who concerning the faith have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already."** In II Timothy 4:10, Paul writes that Demas had forsaken him having loved this present world.

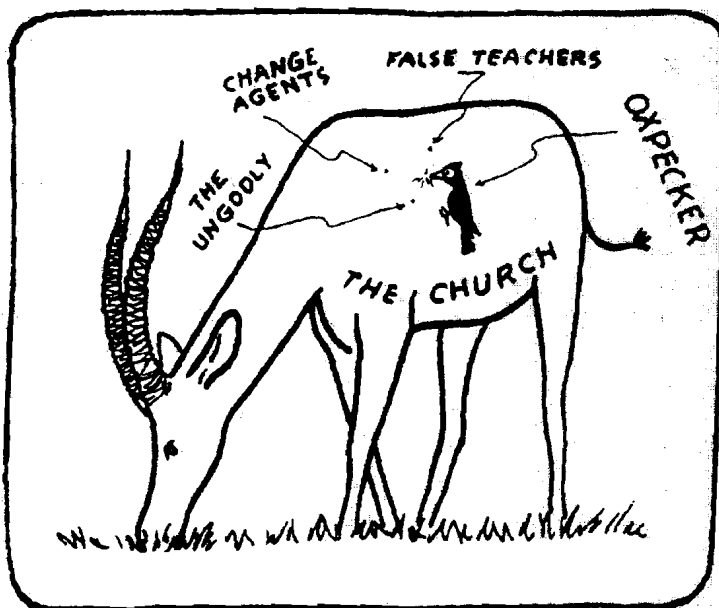


A SOLEMN OBLIGATION

None of us are righteous except through Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:21), but the principle of Ezekiel 3:17-21 is certainly applicable to us today. Therefore, we have a solemn obligation to warn each other of the enemy, and the enemy includes those from within. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus, **"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"** (Acts 20:30). The church sorely needs OXPECKERS—or watchmen—because of the apostasy that is taking place.

As the Oxpecker "combs" through the fur of the animal in search of ticks, as watchmen, we are to **"try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"** (I John 4:1). The yardstick by which we try the spirits is found in I Peter 4:11 where Peter writes, **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."**

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SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERY

Paul Vaughn

In 1803 the United States of America was a fledgling country. **Thomas Jefferson**, the third president, negotiated the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 million. With the signing of the treaty on April 30th the United States more than doubled its territory. The Shawnee war chief, **Tecumseh**, was living in a village on the White River near modern day Anderson, Indiana. **William Henry Harrison** was the governor of the Indiana Territory, which included the current states of Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. It was estimated the civilized population of the Indiana Territory was 5000 people.

It was in 1803 that **Barton Warren Stone**, **Robert Marshall**, **John Dunlavy**, **Richard McNemar**, and **John Thompson** formed the Springfield Presbytery. All five men refused to abide by the Westminster Confession of Faith because it was made up of man-made doctrines not found in the Bible.

SECTARIAN ATTITUDES

The Cane Ridge revival in 1801 was the zenith of the camp meeting style revivals in Kentucky and Ohio. During the Cane Ridge meeting four or five preachers would speak at the same time in different parts of the cane break around Cane Ridge Presbyterian Church. Preachers from the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterian churches spoke during the meeting. Shortly after the Cane Ridge revival attitudes of sectarianism began among the Presbyterians to drive a wedge among those who participated in the camp meetings. The Presbyterian Church through the Washington Presbytery charged **Richard McNemar**, an associate of Stone, with heresy. There was no action taken against McNemar at that time and he was allowed to continue preaching. McNemar, Marshall, Dunlavy, Thompson, Purviance, and Stone were teaching that God loves all people and sent Jesus to die for their sins. All sinners were capable of understanding the New Testament and obeying God's word. This type of preaching was completely different from the Westminster Confession of faith and the Calvinistic dogma taught by the Presbyterian Church. Barton Stone and his associates had let that book (Westminster Confession of Faith) gather dust for a number of years while they had concentrated on studying and teaching the Bible.

After the Washington Presbytery failed to close the rift between them and those teaching against human creeds and doctrines, the Synod of Kentucky was established in 1802. It held a meeting in September 1803, suspended McNemar from their membership for Arminianism. Stone, Marshall, Dunlavy, and Thompson, seeing that what happened to McNemar would be their fate, withdrew from the

jurisdiction of the Synod. The Synod was not pleased with the action of the four. It immediately issued a bull of suspension, declaring their pulpits vacant. **David Purviance** was in the same mind-set as the five, but he was not an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church. He was a candidate for the ministry at that time.



To say that these were trying times for Stone and his colleagues would be an understatement. In his biography Stone said, *"Thus to the cause of truth I sacrificed the friendship of two large congregations and an abundant salary for the support of myself and family."*¹ This is the attitude that every gospel preacher should manifest, but there are too many of the opposing nature, concerned more about position and salary than truth.

A NEW PRESBYTERY

In the fall of 1803 those who withdrew from the Synod of Kentucky formed the Springfield Presbytery. One can see the power of tradition in the actions of these five men. They had been fighting for freedom to go to the Bible and teach only the Bible. They were willing to lose all the benefits their position offered in the Synod of Kentucky, but they were still desiring to be part of the Presbyterian Church. It would be less than a year before they came to the conclusion that the Presbyterian Church was not the New Testament church built by Jesus.

After forming the Springfield Presbytery, Marshall, Stone, and Thompson published an apology, a defense renouncing the jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky. Stone's part of the apology contains some of the fundamental principles of the Restoration Movement. He charges that creeds of men cause division taking the standard of authority from God's word and putting it in the creed. Note! The restoration principle of doing away with creeds of men, looking to the scriptures only for authority for what we teach and practice, was in Stone's argument.

Through the subtilty of the enemy, the Christian Church has long been divided into many different sects and parties. Each has a creed, confession of faith, or brief statement of doctrines, as a bond of union among its members, or rather a separating wall between itself and other societies. This is generally called the standard of such a church. If the word standard has its true and usual signification, it imports that such a book is the pillar which supports it; the foundation on which it stands; or the rule by which it is formed, or regulated, both as doctrine and practice. This sets aside the word of God....²

As the Law of Moses was the "middle wall of partition" (Ephesians 2:14) between the Jew and the Gentile,

creeds of men are the dividing line between the sons of God and the sons of the devil.

Stone and his companions learned how hateful man can become when you stand-up for God's word against their man-made doctrines and traditions. Stone was still making his journey back to the Bible, but the Synod of Kentucky let the Westminster Confession of Faith keep them from

seeing the truth. The same is true today. Creeds of men are still blinding the eye to God's word.

1. Barton W. Stone, "Biography of Barton W. Stone," The Cane Ridge Reader, ed. Hoke Dickerson (Cincinnati, Ohio) p.50.
2. Ibid p. 231

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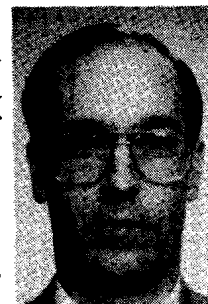
Mark McWhorter

Carolyn Maloney (D.-N.Y.) believes that population control (*i.e.* abortion, free condoms, and other assorted immoral items) is necessary to "stop hunger and preserve our world's resources" (*Human Events*, May 7, 1999, p. 4). [*Liberals are so concerned for the earth. They have more passion for dirt than they do for human life.—MTM*]

"The monogamy concept is drilled into gay male heads too increasingly by the sex-and-relationship police in our own 'community'—causing many gay men to believe they should want and be good at it. It's only when we meet Mr. Right (or, more likely, Mr. Close Enough) and attempt to settle down that we realize that, hey, this monogamy stuff doesn't come easy and that a commitment takes work. Most men in relationships, gay or straight, sooner or later stray. When we make sexual exclusivity the test of a male animal's love and devotion, we set ourselves up for disappointment." —Author **Dan Savage** writing in *OUT* magazine, June issue (as quoted in *Planet Out* email news service, 8/5/99). [*At least this person is honest about believing that man is nothing but an animal and that monogamy takes work. But he is dead wrong on the point of monogamy being disappointing. It is completely the other way around. I know many more who have been disappointed by not living the way God instructed than have by living it. And their biggest disappointment will be in eternity.—MTM*]

Harvard Law School has hired **Steven Wise**, whose book is called *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals*, to teach animal rights law. "Over the past 50 years, science has shown that some animals—chimps, in particular—have extraordinary mental capacities." "If they have a human-like intelligence, shouldn't that entitle them to human-type rights?" stated Wise. Harvard Law's assistant dean for academic affairs compared the new fight for animal rights to the fight for equal rights of blacks (*Human Events*, July 9, 1999, p.24). [*So now one of the most prestigious law schools has decided that animals should have human rights. Truly there is ignorance in high places.—MTM*]

SOUTH AFRICA—Christian private schools in South Africa have lost a legal battle for the right to spank their pupils after a judge threw out their argument that corporal punishment was justified in the Bible. In a test case in June, a fundamentalist Christian organization, *Christian Education South Africa* (CESA), took South Africa's Minister of Education to court in a bid to overturn legislation banning corporal punishment in the classroom (Maranatha email news service, 8/10/99). [*Be prepared to fight this battle in the U.S. if liberals get their way. As the United States bind themselves to U.N. treaties we will be subjected to just such anti-Biblical regulations. The Treaty for the Rights of Children has wording that could be interpreted in this manner.—MTM*]



The following statistics are from *The Council on Families in America*, 1995 and *Theodora Ooms*, 1998.

- * In 1970, 72% of adults were married. In 1996, that number was 60%.

- * Less than 50% of Americans include "being married" as part of their definition of family values.

- * The percentage of adults divorced was 3% in 1970. In 1996, it was 10%.

- * In 1970, there was one unmarried-couple household for every 100 married couple households. In 1999, it is seven for every 100.

- * Unwed parenthood has now become nearly equal with divorce as a generator of fatherless homes.

- * The rate of child poverty is five times higher for children living with single mothers than for children in intact families.

- * The percentage of children who live with only one parent has more than doubled since 1976 (*Christian Chronicle*, July 1999, p. 24). [*Sad statistics indeed. Many need teaching from God's word on what a true family should be. And we must demonstrate it through the church.—MTM*]

—420 Chula Vista Mountain Road
Pell City, Alabama 35125

"Were The Apostles Baptized With Fire?"

Noah A. Hackworth

In our attempts to answer questions we must remember there is no such thing as an "infallible mortal." All of us are capable of mistakes, and we sometimes make them, especially in our attempts to correctly interpret the scripture. There are many passages we cannot afford to misinterpret, e.g., Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, *et al.*, but on the other hand, our eternal welfare does not hang in the balance of a correct interpretation of "Were the apostles baptized with fire?"

Were the apostles baptized with fire? I suggest the answer to this question hinges on a correct interpretation of Matthew 3:1-11. John the Baptist stood on the banks of the Jordan river in the wilderness of Judea and preached the nearness of the kingdom of heaven. The residents of Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about Jordan went out to him and were consequently baptized, confessing their sins. Matthew records the following information.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance:

and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with 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 with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.



Is it not a matter of fact that John addressed a mixed audience on this occasion? The answer is obviously yes. Some were righteous but some were not! Though the word "you" is second person plural, and must be present with the speaker, it seems clear that the ones who were to be baptized with fire were not the ones who were to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Though the word "and" certainly appears in the phrase, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire", there is a difference in the spiritual condition of the audience. The word "and" is many times used as a coordinate conjunction coupling together two phrases of equal weight, Acts 2:38 for example. Repent and be baptized are joined by the conjunction "and." Consequently whatever repentance is "for" (unto), be baptized is "for" (unto). The spiritual condition of the audience to which Acts 2:38 is addressed is the same (they all had to obey the same thing) but the condition of the audience addressed by John differs, being magnified by the expression "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:11). Who are the "wheat?" Who are the "chaff?" The wheat is the antithesis of the chaff. What was to be done to the wheat differed from what was to be done to the chaff. The wheat was to be gathered into the garner, but the chaff was to be burned up.

If it be suggested that the apostles of Christ were baptized with fire on the day of Pentecost, thus fulfilling the injunction issued by John in Matthew 3, let it be remembered that it is not said that the apostles were baptized with fire. What is said is that the cloven tongues that appeared unto them, and sat upon each one of them were only "like as of fire." The latter statement is a simile which is a formal comparison of two objects by the use of like, as so, and so on. (Lockhart, *Principles of Interpretation*). It is extremely difficult to imagine the apostles walking about the streets of Jerusalem engulfed by fire.

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IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

Annette B. Cates

"Image is everything!" "First impressions are the lasting impressions." We have all heard these statements, and usually the reference is about a superficial degree of image. However, it is not only what happens on the outside that counts, but also that which is within. Our lives do have an effect on everyone around us. Most important for those who are Christians, our lives impact the church by forming the impressions that the world has of it. Relatively few non-Christians just walk in the door of the church building seeking to find the Truth to save their souls. We become the only "Bible" some people ever see. Thus, it behooves us to present an image that really is everything and to give others the impressions they need to lead them to eternal life. How can we project such an image? Where is our influence seen? What are our responsibilities?

First, all of us are to be faithful Christians (Acts 2:42). We have to see that the gospel is faithfully presented and not allow it to be corrupted by false doctrine. The Bereans set the example for us to follow in knowing whether the things preached from our pulpits are true (Acts 17:11). Our generation of Americans must surely be one of the most gullible ever. "We" turn on the television and accept whatever we hear. "We" pick up the popular newspapers and magazines and accept whatever we read. "We" visit the various "churches" and never question what is taught, never open the Bible to determine the validity of what we have heard. This attitude is spilling over into congregations of the Lord's church. "If it sounds good, if it feels good, if it does not hurt any feelings, then it must be truth" seems to be the basis on which some build their spiritual lives. We have a responsibility to study God's word and be ready to defend it (II Timothy 2:15; 3:16; Philippians 1:17).

Second, we have a responsibility to be faithful in attendance. Not only is this a necessity for our own soul's salvation (Acts 11:26; 20:7; Hebrews 10:25), it speaks to the world of the importance of the church in our lives. What impression does the community get when there are few cars in the parking lot of the church at meeting times? What impression does a visitor we have invited get when we are not present? Does the world see a vibrant, active congregation or one that is plagued by apathy? Are we entering and leaving the building with joy over our opportunity to worship the Lord in his appointed way (John 4:23, 24)? Do we have the Bible in hand, showing to anyone who would notice that we emphasize God's word? Yes, we promote the image of the church when we are active in our attendance.

Third, we are to be a people of service to others (Colossians 3:17; Galatians 6:10; James 1:27). Our service to others becomes a cycle of blessings (II Corinthians 9:12-14). When we do for others, God and the church get the glory.

Helping hands tell the world that we Christians live what we teach. Ours is not an empty religion, one of outward show without any substance. It has been said that people do not care what we know until they know how much we care. Through our service, our caring shows and avenues of teaching open up, spreading our influence.

Fourth, we are to be ready to teach others (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47; I Peter 3:15). The Christians of the first century daily taught and preached Jesus (Acts 5:42; 8:4). Can we do less? How can the word spread in the 20 and 21 centuries, if not by us? Our mobile society has every opportunity to reach the far corners of the world. Communication systems are greater than ever before in the history of the world. Are we using these advantages to proclaim the gospel to a lost world?

Fifth, we are to be a friendly, moral, and ethical people. The world sees us in our business dealings. They know if we are a people who can be trusted (Romans 12:17). They know if they find it a pleasure to work with us. We may not otherwise have an opportunity to exhibit our Christianity to them. They may never need our service; we may not have the opportunity overtly to teach them. We can, however, show ourselves to be a friendly people (Proverbs 18:24), thus opening doors that otherwise might never be opened to the gospel.

Just as these are positive impressions that give the church a good image in the community, there are ways that the church can be hurt (Acts 28:22). The church is hurt when the gospel is so watered down that it loses its distinctiveness (II Timothy 4:2,3; I Peter 4:11; Galatians 1:6-9). It is hurt when its members are more interested in the world than in things spiritual (Titus 2:11, 12; James 4:4; I John 2:15). It is hurt when opportunities to do good unto others go unheeded (Titus 3:1). It is hurt when we do not speak up to teach and to defend the gospel. It is hurt when we conduct ourselves in such a way that our light cannot shine (Matthew 5:16). We do all in our power to present a positive image and not a negative one before the world.

We live in an age when religion in general and the church specifically is under attack. It is up to us to love the church (Ephesians 5:25) and to be "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10) and to live in such a way that the world will perceive its unique power to change lives and destinies.



—9194 Lakeside Drive
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38654

AM I A GOD AT HAND AND NOT AFAR OFF?

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

- A. In the 13th year of Josiah, Jeremiah was called to his prophetic office.
 1. His preaching was done during the early Babylonian period, through the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.), and into the captivity.
 2. The work of this great prophet was God's last effort to bring Judah to repentance, and thus avert the coming calamities of destruction and captivity.
- B. Jeremiah had been denouncing the sins of the sons and grandsons of Josiah (Jeremiah 22).
 1. Josiah had been a righteous king on the throne of Judah, whose death was mourned by Jeremiah (II Chronicles 35:25), but his sons were wicked men who ruled by force and corruption.
 2. In chapter 23 we find Jeremiah setting forth a series of prophecies and condemnations against the civil and religious leaders of God's people.
 3. In this chapter God places the blame on the:
 - a. Pastors (Jeremiah 23:1-2).
 - b. Prophets and priests (Jeremiah 23:9-16).
 - c. Concerning these false prophets, the Lord said ... (Jeremiah 23:21).
- C. It was in this time of great apostasy that the Lord said ... (Jeremiah 23:23-24).
 1. Did the false prophets think that God would not be aware of their evil doings?
 2. Notice God said: "I found" (vs. 11), "I have seen" (vs. 13-14), "I have heard" (vs. 25).
 3. God is saying, "I know what you have done, I know what you are doing, because I am a God at hand and not afar off, and your evil doings will not go unpunished."
 4. God is announcing that there is nothing that happens in this world that escapes his attention.
- D. From this proclamation of God we learn many valuable truths—two of these are:
 1. God is omnipresent
 2. God has interest and knowledge of all that occurs on the earth and in our lives, whether it be good or bad.

II. Discussion

A. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF OMNIPRESENCE?

1. **Augustus Hopkins Strong**, in his book *Systematic Theology*, states "...that God, in the totality of his essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication of division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts."
2. Simply put, omnipresent means "that God is everywhere at the same time—there is no place he is not—and as a result there is not one thing that goes on that God is not aware of."

B. THE FACT OF GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

1. Psalm 139:1-10
2. Proverbs 15:3
3. Acts 17:22-23

C. THE EFFECT OF THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD

1. It should be a deterrent to sin.
 - a. Knowing that God sees all, knows all, and is in every place—should this not cause us to want to speak better, act better, and think better?
 - b. Job said concerning God ... (Job 23:15).
 - c. Again, remember... (Proverbs 15:3).
2. It should give us great encouragement.
 - a. Genesis 28:15
 - 1) If God would not leave Jacob, would it not follow that God will not leave or forsake his faithful followers today?
 - 2) Should this not be a great encouragement to us today?
 - b. Psalm 34:15-22
 - c. Psalm 115:9-12
 - d. Psalm 120:1
 - 1) There's the divine presence of the Lord in our lives, thus:
 - 2) Psalm 121:1-ff.
 - e. Because of the omnipresence of God we know Isaiah 25:4 is true.
 - f. Matthew 6:25-3ff.
 - 1) God knows our every need. How?
 - 2) By his omnipresence. Should this not be a great encouragement to us?
 - g. Matthew 28:20
3. The omnipresence should encourage us to believe in the providence of God
 - a. I do not know all I would like to know about the providence of God—but I know it exists (e.g., Joseph and Esther).
 - b. I know God can work things out providentially because he is omnipresent.
4. The fact of the omnipresence of God should put fear into the hearts of the wicked.
 - a. They cannot flee his presence.
 - 1) Adam and Eve tried (Genesis 3).
 - 2) Jonah tried (Jonah 1:3).
 - 3) Revelation 6:16-17
 - b. There will be no secret place to form ungodly plans—no hidden place to practice wickedness that God will not see.
 - c. This should put fear into the hearts of the wicked!



III. Conclusion

- A. To the ungodly the omnipresence and watchful eye of the Almighty should bring about horror.
- B. To the faithful child of God the omnipresence and watchful eye of God brings encouragement and motivation.

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THE TRAGEDY OF A TRUTHLESS GENERATION

Jason R. Roberts

THE CRISIS

In August, thousands of teenagers enrolled as freshmen in hundreds of universities across our land. Upon their enrollment, they can be sure that their archenemy, Satan, enrolled as well (*cf.* I Peter 5:8). Being away from the guidance of their parents, their faith will be challenged like it has never been before. It is estimated that by the time our teenagers leave home for college, 70% of them have already *shipwrecked their own faith*. We are fooling ourselves if we think that the universities which they will be attending (yes, even some of our "Christian" universities) will help them get their spiritual oars back in the water. As an alumnus of a "Christian" college, I can say with a degree of certainty that if a teenager's faith is weak prior to his arriving at college, then, in many instances, it will not be strengthened from what is being taught to him from some of our "Christian" colleges. However, if his faith has been strengthened from a Godly home, and reinforced by sound, scriptural, gospel preaching from his local congregation—prior to his leaving home, then the university can be a great instrument by which his faith can be solidified. At least then, if he hears some strange and uncertain sounds, he will not be **"tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men,"** but he will be able **"to give an answer"** concerning the hope that is within him (Ephesians 4:14; I Peter 3:15).

In the opening sentence of Allan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, he states these haunting words, "There is one thing that a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative." It would be interesting for our "Christian" colleges each year to poll the in-coming freshman class concerning matters such as salvation, the church, denominationalism, truth, and the like. Would they be embarrassed or proud to release the results?

THE CAUSE

The tragedy that is facing us is that parents are raising a generation of children who know not the Lord (Judges 2:10). Thus, when they leave the home, they have no foundation upon which their faith can be anchored. We complain over the fact that our government has taken God out of our children's schools—and the result is just what we deserve—godless schools. However, the real problem is parents leaving God out of their homes—and thus, the tragic result is exactly what they deserve—godless homes. How many parents have thrown up their hands and said, "What in the world happened to my child? Why did he leave the church? We brought him every time the doors were open!" Statistically speaking, many of them left the

church when they were still at home under the "guidance" of mom and dad. For some parents, a glimpse in the mirror will answer the question as to why Johnny is no longer interested in the church. The local church is to *supplement* the spiritual development of our children, but it is never to be a *substitute* for their spiritual growth. It takes a godly home, and a godly church to build that which will endure **"unto everlasting life"** (John 6:27). Since homes make up the church; it naturally follows that if the homes are strong, the church will be as well.



THE CURE

Let me suggest three avenues which will assist us in rearing a generation of children that know the Lord. *First, truth must be personally taught.* In other words, the truth of God's word must be seen personally in the life of the parents. If it is not, the children will see no significant value in truth. If the mind of Christ is not in the minds of parents—should we be surprised if the same mind-set is not found in our children (Philippians 2:5)?

Second, truth must be taught properly. Truth is always consistent. However, it is not always lived and taught consistently. When Paul instructed Timothy concerning this matter, he told him, **"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"** (II Timothy 2:2, emphasis added). Notice the emphasis given on teaching *the same thing* that Timothy had heard. It is possible to mishandle the word of God (II Corinthians 4:2), to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4), and to shipwreck the faith of others by what one teaches (I Timothy 1:19). Those who improperly teach the truth will receive their reward (James 3:1).

Third, truth must be perpetually taught. The teaching of God's precious truth must never come to a standstill. The old saying, "We are only one generation away from apostasy," is a statement substantiated in holy scripture.

Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might

set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Psalm 78:1-7).

We can leave our children riches and all the temporal treasures of this world, but if we fail to leave them a legacy of truth, righteousness and a good name—in the final analysis what have we really left them? Likewise, what will they leave the succeeding generations to come?

—3950 Forest Hill-Irene Road South
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The Last Word...

GOOD WORKS AND SOUND DOCTRINE

Eddie Whitten



"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:7-8).

According to the American Standard Version of the Bible, the term "sound doctrine," or some variation of it, is found four times in the short book of Titus. The term, "good works," is found five times. "Good works" is almost invariably associated with "sound doctrine." They go together. "Good works" are "good" only because the are couched in "sound doctrine."

There are many ways in which good things are accomplished. Benevolence toward our brethren and alien sinners is a good work and should be done because the Bible tells us to do it (Galatians 6:10; James 1:27). There is nothing wrong in helping people in their needs. Jesus graphically taught this principle in Matthew 25:34-46. Preaching the gospel is a good work because the Bible tells us to do it (Mark 16:15; II Timothy 4:2). Sowing the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11) is a good work in that some of the seed will fall into honest and good hearts (Luke 8:15) and bring forth fruit. Jesus said he came to "seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). We need to do the same. Encouraging and edifying the saints is a good work because the Bible tells us to do it (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 10:24-25). The strength we receive when we faithfully attend Bible classes and worship services fortifies our faith. It gives us greater resolve to help and encourage others. Beyond these basic functions of the church, we must be very careful that the so-called "good works" we claim do not go beyond, or fall short of, the "sound doctrine" that should support them.

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Tender hearts and gentle feelings toward others often turn on us. Good intentions lead sometimes into the quicksand of evil. We cannot flirt with "unfruitful works of darkness" and hold to "sound doctrine" at the same time. Someone has said, "There is no such thing as guilt by association." Inspiration says, **"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them"** (Romans 16:17). Paul seemed to think there is guilt by association. Again, Paul wrote, **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Ephesians 5:11). It is not even a passive thing we do in withdrawing fellowship; the one(s) from which fellowship is withdrawn should know about it, and why! Their souls are at stake! We cannot walk in the light and fellowship those who walk in darkness (I John 1:6-7) because they are not in fellowship with God. Paul makes it emphatic that we cannot have fellowship with the disorderly (those who live out of harmony with the gospel) stating that it is a command that we withdraw ourselves from such a brother (II Thessalonians 3:6). Paul told the Thessalonians to **"Abstain from all appearance of evil"** (I Thessalonians 5:22).

Those who were trying to hinder God's good work wanted Nehemiah to come down to the plain of Ono to meet with them (Neh. 6:1-2). Nehemiah made reply that is a ringing example for all faithful brethren today when invited into the halls of shame of the shameless. He said, **"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"** (Nehemiah 6:3). Two things stand out in Nehemiah's noble answer: (1) He was doing a "great work." Faithful brethren are doing "great works" by standing firm in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. The accolades and influence of liberalism should not be allowed to hinder the good works of faithful preachers! (2) Not one minute of

time that could be used in doing good works should be sacrificed to give credence to workers of error. Good works are not found among workers of "unsound doctrine."

There are causes and effects involved in things that are hurting the church. None of the causes are viable, yet are present: (1) Ignorance of the liberalism that is devouring the sanctity and integrity of the church. Somehow the knowledge of liberalism's graphic impact on the church has escaped them. It is inconceivable that knowledge is so lacking regarding the unsound doctrines that are consuming us. (2) Minimizing the seriousness and gravity of liberalism. Friendship, toleration, not being judgmental, misdirected love, and so on, are attitudes that result in fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. (3) Assurance from the liberals that they are dedicated to the cause of the Lord. Embracing denominationalism, tolerating mechanical instrumental music in worship, believing the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, upholding moderate social drinking are some of the false doctrines defended by the liberals. The effects of fellowshiping liberalism are tragic. (1) The liberals use the presence of faithful brethren to give credence to their efforts. (2) The names of the faithful are held in suspicion and doubt from henceforth. (3) Weak and uninformed brethren who have confidence in them are misled into believing the faithful brethren condone the error of the liberals. (4) Scriptures are violated that condemn such fellowship.

Is it too much to ask that consideration be given to preserving the sanctity of the word of God and the singularity of the church of our Lord? Showing ourselves an example of good works requires that we **"come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you..."** (II Corinthians 6:17).

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

“TEACHER QUILTS LIPSCOMB OVER MUSIC DEBATE”

J. E. Choate

The Nashville Tennessean headlined that a Lipscomb Bible faculty member had reluctantly resigned because Lipscomb University disapproves of the use of instrumental music in church worship. **President Stephen F. Flatt** defended the school's position in that church leaders considered instrumental music in church worship as unbiblical. The president stated that the school expected its faculty to belong to traditional Churches of Christ. [Does this include *Woodmont Hills Family of God*, and *Otter Creek* churches?] He also added “Our identity for the last 108 years has included acapella.”

Ray Waddle, religious editor of the *Tennessean* also wrote that five members of Goodpasture Christian School left **Doug Varnado's** church rather than face the risk of dismissal. There is in reality no debate now raging in Lipscomb University over the use of the organ in worship, nor does it have the status of an adopted policy. If Steve Flatt had learned first-hand the history and traditions of the school he would be better informed.

The faith among members of traditional churches of Christ is that Paul in his Ephesian and Colossian letters makes it clear that music from the heart [vocal] in singing hymns and spiritual songs is the biblical model in both precept and example. Lipscomb wrote in the *Gospel Advocate* 126 years ago that the same reason for using the organ in church worship would also justify prayer beads, holy water, animal sacrifices, and such, in worship.

Scripture is not silent on the matter, and neither was **David Lipscomb**. He wrote extensively in the *Gospel Advocate* over some thirty years on the subject of church music. David Lipscomb believed that instrumental music was wrong and sinful. As a matter of historical record, **John W. McGarvey** initiated discussions of the organ in worship

123 years ago. Indeed a music debate raged in the Christian Church for over forty years (1850-1890).

NOT AT ALL A MATTER OF CHURCH TRADITION AND SCHOOL POLICY

I obtained copies of the original *Nashville Bible School* corporate charter (1903), and the conveyance deed (1904) with details of the conditions whereby Lipscomb transferred the ownership of his farm to the *NBS* for the operation of a school where the Bible would be taught daily along with all other fields of useful knowledge to serve the churches of Christ and for the general public benefit.

Stephen F. Flatt made great ceremony of the covenant that he was making with Lipscomb University on the day of his inauguration. I say now to Steve that he can only honor the solemn words of his covenant by honoring and enforcing the spirit and the letter of the *NBS* corporate charter and the Lipscomb land deed. This is a mandate, a binding contract which is enforced by the civil arm of Tennessee statutory law. [You say you mean to “turn things around” at Lipscomb. Your good instincts are not serving you well in these days of trials and tribulations.]

And I could not think of anything which would be more damaging to the public image of the churches of Christ and the school than prolonged litigations with David Lipscomb's blood heirs. And I would say to the Lipscomb Board of Directors that in order to be appointed to your position that you had to distinguish yourself in public opinion. The “buck stops” with you in the final decision making with respect to the spirit and the letter of the two founding documents.

In the light of stern reality, I would say all this posturing about Doug Varnado being forced out of the school will talk itself out in a few more days. Doug Varnado support is

(Continued On Page 5)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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**Ira Y. Rice, Jr.,
Editor**



**David P. Brown,
Associate Editor
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Contending for the Faith has begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

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Editorial...

A TIME TO EDIT, AND A TIME TO REFRAIN FROM EDITING...

When he was old, Solomon wrote, that for every purpose under heaven there is a season:

A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose;
A time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time of war, and a time of peace.

—Ecclesiastes 3:2-8

HOW IT ALL BEGAN 30 YEARS

When January came, in 1970, having already published three books over the previous four years, *Axe on the Root—Volumes I, II and III*, calling upon wayward brethren and churches to come back to the restoration plea, it clearly was a time to begin publishing and editing a new paper devoted to the same purpose.

Occasional books could not appear fast enough to keep up with the myriad departures from the faith cropping up at that time in every direction. A monthly periodical seemed what the situation called for.

HOW NAME WAS CHOSEN

In light of what Jude had written “that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), *Contending for the Faith* seemed exactly the right title for such a publication. Therefore, as from January, 1970, I started publishing this paper under that title, assuming the editorship, and continuing as such, it soon will be, for the past 30 years.

TRANSFERS OF PUBLISHING

Although, from the beginning, I personally was the original publisher of *Contending for the Faith*, in 1974 publishing was transferred to the **Shades Mountain Church of Christ**, in Birmingham, Alabama. In December, 1978, a further transfer was made to the **Bellview church**, in Pensacola, Florida; and in January, 1995, to **Kenneth Cohn and David Brown**

of Spring, Texas, with a view to continuing the paper after my departure.

NAMING BROWN ASSOCIATE EDITOR

That seemed a good time, also, to name an Associate Editor, who could later become Editor, when I either died, became ill, or was too old to function.

David P. Brown, minister to the church at Spring, Texas, was chosen. He and I have been working together in our respective capacities ever since.

Meanwhile, having researched and worked on my autobiography, intermittently, for more than a dozen years, when I saw there would not be time enough to finish it without some relief from editorial duties, I asked brother Brown to accept more and more of my work, as Editor, letting me concentrate on my biographical writing.

As many readers know, my life has been too full and complex to condense into a single volume. I did finish getting Volume I (544 pages, 182 photos) into print by late '98. Since then, I have been working on Volume II; but, once again, editing *Contending for the Faith*, missionary work, and other factors have made it impossible to finish this year.

TIME TO TRANSFER EDITORSHIP

Feeling that I just *must*, if at all possible, complete all three of the volumes envisioned, it is increasingly clear that the time has come for me to transfer the full Editorship of *Contending for the Faith* to brother Brown so that I may finish writing and publishing Volumes II and III of *Pressing Toward the Mark*. At age 82, how much more time is left for me, otherwise, to complete this writing? Also, what more propitious time could there be for me to transfer my three-decades-long Editorship than the first day, of the first year, of the first decade, of the first century, of the new millennium—January 1, 2000?

MY TIME AS EDITOR FULFILLED

For 30 years it has seemed to be the *time* for me to edit this paper. As from this coming January 1st, however, I purpose to cease from being the Editor, with brother Brown taking over my editorial duties in full.

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Not that you shall have heard the last from Ira Y. Rice, Jr. Brother Brown and I have talked it over; and he wants me to continue on at least in the capacity of *Editor Emeritus*, with Vada and me helping on the proof-reading of each issue, with his and my counseling together on editorial problems, and my continuing to make occasional suggestions for improvement.

With Volume I of my autobiography, *Pressing Toward the Mark*, already in print; being more than halfway through writing Volume II, and with Volume III to come, my publishing presence, Lord willing, will continue to be very much in evidence. Also, I shall continue to be involved with missionary work. However, this appears to be as good a time as any to announce the Editorial transition of *Contending for the Faith*.

SAME KIND OF JOURNAL TO CONTINUE

The paper will continue to be the kind of militant, doctrinal journal it always has been. The only difference I foresee is that, as from January 1st, A.D. 2000, David P. Brown will have the full responsibility as Editor. As John said of Jesus, "he must increase and I must decrease."

Thanks to everyone who has backed and supported my editorial efforts all these years. I trust that you will continue such loyalty toward brother Brown, as Editor, when *his* time comes, as *mine* did, almost 30 years ago.

—Ira Y. Rice, Jr., *Editor*

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THE WORK GOES ON

There is no way this side of eternity to measure the good that **Ira Y. Rice, Jr.** has done in his efforts to preach the gospel to every creature. Moreover, the work Rice has done in his three volumes of *Axe on the Root* and especially on the pages of *Contending for the Faith* has been as much a part of his work to save souls as anything he ever did in taking the gospel to an unbelieving world. Furthermore, the countless thousands of dollars he has raised to support faithful works is amazing. Indeed, he has accomplished this work because he would not quit or take no for an answer. Of a truth, at 82 years of age he continues to work as hard as he possibly can to accomplish the greatest amount of good in the time he has left. In late November he leaves for a preaching tour that will take him to Nepal, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

BY HIS SIDE

I must comment on **Vada Rice's** great contribution to the work of her husband. She is little in stature but great in faith, courage and works. Through "thick and thin" she has stood by her husband in his work. She has been his critic, advisor, supporter, faithful spouse and mother to their five children. Much of her work has been "keeping the home fires burning" while her husband was away. I know that so much of what brother Rice was and is able to accomplish is because of sister Rice's patience in well doing. Proverbs 31 is the best description that I can think of to describe sister Rice's faithful service to the Lord as she has walked by brother Ira's side.

ON THE FIRING LINE

Since **Kenneth Cohn** and I became associated with *CFTF* we have been determined to keep the paper on the gospel firing line against error and for the truth. Brother Cohn has handled the business matters and as associate editor I have worked closely with brother Rice in preparing and editing each month's paper. As brother Rice said in this month's editorial, over the past two years or so most of the work of editing the paper has fallen to me.

I am glad that I could be connected with *CFTF* during this period of time because it has allowed brother Rice time to work on his autobiography. It also served as another transition stepping-stone as I became accustomed to editing the paper. Moreover, I concur with brother Rice when he wrote of our association in his editorial, saying that we have worked together very well.

EVANGELIZING THROUGH DEFENDING THE FAITH

All of my preaching life (from my late teens to this point) I have heard some brethren express the false idea that taking the gospel to the alien sinner is somehow more important than keeping the church (the saved of all the earth) faithful. Where does the Bible teach that defending the faith and exposing false teachers and their doctrines is any more or less important than preaching the gospel to the lost? *The truth of the matter is that the Bible places both on the same level of importance.* In this matter the apostles of Christ left us the correct example. At the same time the apostles were laboring to "preach the gospel to every creature" they were very busy with exposing error in the lives of church members, exposing false teachers and their doctrines, and exhorting the brethren to remain faithful. It is nothing less than a ploy of the devil to get otherwise faithful brethren to think that defending the faith against heresy is somehow of less importance than teaching the gospel to the alien.

I ask you, how far does anyone go into the Bible before reading something that pertains to false teachers, their pernicious doctrines and the need of God's people to beware of teachers of error? How much Bible does one read before one comes across admonitions that pertain to the importance of constant and regular examination of one's life? How much of the Bible does one read before one is made aware of God's rebuke of sin and exhortation of people to remain faithful? Indeed, try to find any place in the divine volume that does not explicitly or implicitly deal with the defense of God's will and his condemnation of those who teach and live contrary to it. Truly, most of what we have in the New Testament was originally given in the process of the sacred writers exposing error, rebuking unrighteous living and exhorting the saints to be faithful.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GOSPEL PAPER

No paper should exist that will not present the truth according to the way it is set out in the New Testament. As Editor of *CFTF* I pledge myself to deal with truth and error, the faithful and the unfaithful according to the inspired blueprint. To the best of my ability I will show no respect of persons regarding the editing of this paper. I shall do my best to be a friend to and, therefore, ready unto every good work. On the other hand, I do not intend to be quiet about papers, schools, persons young and old alike or whatever when they

involve themselves in error. It is whether they are faithful that concerns me.

There is no way that we can fully express our appreciation to our faithful readers. All we ask is that you continue to subscribe to *CFTF* and do all you can to get others to subscribe to and thereby benefit from the material found in this paper. Let the message go forth

that we covet the support and prayers of all those who love the gospel and hate its corruption. Our goal is to be well pleasing to God. All else and others pale into insignificance (Matthew 6:33). Will you help us contend for the faith (Jude 3)?

—David P. Brown, *Associate Editor*

Teacher Quits Lipscomb...

(Continued From Page 1)

coming from a very small element among the faculty and students who have no awareness of the founder's documents.

A generation ago, **Dr. Harris Dark**, an anti-institutional advocate, differed with the administration and board at the time. He decided to do what a Christian gentleman should do which was to leave the school without stirring up personal hard feelings and causing damage to the school. My feelings about the Varnado brouhaha is that he should have done the class thing, what **Don Meyers** failed to do, just leave the school.

And just who is this Community church pundit, **Ron Cook**? It is Cook who says the young people of this generation will have installed the organ in the churches of Christ for the next generation. One Community member said the showdown between Varnado and Lipscomb was regrettable. How so? The matter was resolved when the board applied the rule of the charter and land deed which stipulated that any board member or faculty who could not abide should leave the school or be forced out.

PRAXIS AND NEXUS

I have in mind here that the parts of a thing are the sum of its whole and are inseparable. It is the perpetrator of an act and the guilt shared by his accomplice. I am talking about changing paradigms and shifting parameters. I point this out to say that Doug Varnado's leaving solved no problems, but opened a Pandora's box for the Lipscomb board and Steve Flatt. It is at this position that the "theater of the absurd" kicks in. I do not understand how President Flatt can single out Doug Varnado and the Community church without zeroing in on such churches as Otter Creek and the Woodmont Family. What about the idea that the unbaptized "good" Christian is just as well off as the baptized? How could it be that Christ is always a good husband to his bride the year around, but the bride need only to be home only half the year. Ambiguous and entertaining "lawyer rhetoric" and court room rationales will not solve this thing at Lipscomb. Could it be that Dr. Smith has got "lawyer" language mixed up with a sort of scholastic theology. University students are not "idiots" as they too wake up and face another day. The good instincts and intuitions of Flatt and Smith are a "blanket far too short to cover the bed."

Now if the Lipscomb faculty and student friends want to exercise themselves over the Varnado matter, they should try going to their president for him to explain the difference in firing one "guitar" brother, and bring onto the faculty an

"organ" defender as his co-teacher. Slice it in any direction, the logic is the same. They can e-mail and resolute until the "cows come home," but the spirit and legal intent of David Lipscomb remain staring them in the face.

SCRUTINIZING THE NBS CORPORATE CHARTER AND LAND DEED

The following is the essence of both the charter and the conveyance of land deed:

(1) That all properties conveyed to the Nashville Bible School which includes Lipscomb's farm "shall be used for maintaining a school in which, in addition to other branches of learning, the Bible as the recorded will of God and the only standard of faith and practice in religion excluding all human systems and opinions, and all innovations, and devices of men from the service and worship of God, shall be taught in the school."

(2) The wording of the deed conveying the title of the property to the NBS is explicit and definitive. One of the conditions in the land deed is a direct warning: "All directors of said corporation or trustees of the school and faculty shall be members of the Church of Christ, in full sympathy with the teachings above set forth and desirous to carry them out." The warning is that any board member or faculty who cannot accept the conditions as set forth in the deed shall either remove himself from the school or be dismissed.

No specific mention is made of organized missionary societies, conventions and instruments of music. However, the pages of the Advocate are abundantly replete with fifty years of Lipscomb's beliefs and thinking on these, and multiple other Bible subjects.

Our brethren with their many degrees from prestigious colleges and universities may be forced to learn that such does not entitle them to a place on the Lipscomb faculty. The founder's document will not go away, but the chances

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are good they may. Some have already left, or are leaving. There just might be a blanket application somewhere for Lipscomb's liberal Bible faculty.

AND FINALLY

It would be well for incumbent Lipscomb faculty to keep in mind that the school has more than a century of tradition which can not be easily dismissed. And in the words of a retired Lipscomb faculty colleague with whom I now agree:

Whoever thought that the day would come when we would speak of the Woodmont Hills Family of God [this church is loaded with Lipscomb faculty and administration] who have done far more damage to the churches and Lipscomb than this "breakaway" renegade church could ever do?

And what about this one? Steve Flatt praised **Jeff Walling** at a youth gathering in Smyrna, Tennessee to the high heavens after *Jubilee '98*, when Jeff Walling extended the invitation. A woman led the singing accompanied by two singing choral groups, and instrumental music. Steve Flatt and the Madison elders [a Madison elder is also a Lipscomb board member] to date have not made a single statement criticizing *Jubilee*.

I would advise the board members not to rest in the aura of their personal success, but to rise to the challenge of

their accepted responsibilities and to make sure that everybody on the general Lipscomb staff honor the man who is putting bread on their tables today.

THE FLATT AND SMITH DUET

But the most ludicrous thing of all is that Steve Flatt and **F. Lagard Smith** co-jointly teach the University Bible class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is a double-barreled shared teaching task wherein two days of chapel and two days of daily chapel are telescoped into one chapel and one Bible class. I have deemed daily chapel for several years to have been generally wasted five days of the week on the Lipscomb calendar.

In Dr. Smith's book *Who Is My Brother?* he tells in circuitous rhetorics that he has worshiped with a Free Church in England which uses the organ regularly in worship. I am greatly puzzled about Dr. Smith's analogy about "common law" marriage before the formal marriage ceremony with the unbaptized Christian. I remember the "good old days" at Lipscomb when **Athens Clay Pullias** was running a tight ship according to the *letter of the law*. I am thinking so now after eleven years of the administration of the incumbent Lipscomb President-Emeritus.

—3714 1/2 Belmont Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

A DISTURBING TREND

Russell M. Kline

Recently, I read a newspaper article on the Internet that I found fascinating. It appeared in the Religion section of the *Nashville Tennessean* (<http://www.tennessean.com>) on Sunday, August 29, 1999, under the headline: "Minister's Church Uses Instruments, School Unhappy." It describes a scenario in which **Doug Varnado**, a preacher for the *Community Church of Christ* in Hendersonville, Tennessee, was forced to resign from the faculty of *David Lipscomb University* because the church where he preaches has begun the practice of using mechanical instruments of music in its Sunday worship services.

Yes, that is right. There is a church of Christ (?) in central Tennessee that once worshipped God in song, without the use of mechanical instruments of music, but now it has begun to incorporate recorded instrumental music into its worship services. Clearly, this is in violation of the teaching of the New Testament (*cf.*, Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15; *et al.*), but that is not the disturbing part. Anyone who is familiar with the *Community Church of Christ* knows that the leadership of that congregation has been guiding them farther and farther away from biblical doctrine and practice for the **past nine years**.

DISTURBING STATEMENTS

I was disturbed by statements made to the newspaper by **Steve Flatt**, president of *David Lipscomb University*, in an effort to explain the action taken by the school. He said:

If Community church is going to be an instrumental congregation, that's not in accord with our policy...Our identity for the last 108 years has included a capella...It still characterizes who we are, and Doug understood that. I don't know where Community Church of Christ is going—it's not my business. I don't run that congregation.

Essentially, he argued that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is not part of the church of Christ's *tradition*—at least not for "the last 108 years."

I am not one who is given to asking "foolish and unlearned questions" that "do gender strifes" (II Timothy 2:23), so please do not think ill of me for asking: Why won't the president of *David Lipscomb University* assume the position that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is without any authority from the Bible? After all, this is a basic principle of New Testament Christianity. Everything that we teach and everything that we practice concerning religion is to be said and done **ONLY** with the explicit authority of God's word (Colos-

sians 3:17). The fact that the New Testament gives us no direct statement, approved example, or implication to authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship ought to tell us something. Couple that fact with passages like Ephesians 5:19, which explicitly specifies that we are to "sing" when we worship God making melody in our heart to the Lord and there is a compelling case against the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, while viewing only a fraction of the mountain of evidence that exists to support such a conclusion.

A PECULIARITY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Thankfully, the writer of the newspaper article did go on to say that "Instruments are considered unbiblical. Church leaders find no evidence of their use in worship in the New Testament. For generations it has been a fiercely-defended, and debated mark of identity for Churches of Christ." Obviously, the writer of the article believes that the "instrumental music issue" is just a peculiarity of churches of Christ, based upon our "tradition"—and I would expect that from one who is not a member of the Lord's church.

But I do not expect that kind of reasoning from Steve Flatt, a member of the body of Christ for many years. Notice that he makes no attempt to argue that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is sinful. He says only that it is "not in accord with our policy." That is the same view that is held by the *Community Church of Christ*, whose elders have declared that "the music question...is not a 'salvation' issue." It is just another example of how far away from the New Testament some in the churches of Christ have gone in the twentieth century. Some of us have stopped affirming that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is sinful and have begun to say that it is not in keeping with our "restoration heritage."

Let me make one thing perfectly clear: in the Lord's church, we do not teach or practice anything simply because of "tradition!" The things that we preach and teach in our worship services and Bible classes, and the things that we do in our worship services and everyday lives, are said and done only with the approval of almighty God. When we worship God, we sing, without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music, not because we like it that way, and not because that is the way that we have always done it but because it is what the New Testament teaches us to do. Yet, this simple concept seems to be beyond the grasp of the most intelligent minds of the modern

"religious" world. If David Lipscomb University is going to ask Doug Varnado to resign from its faculty, let it be because he is a false teacher, and not because he opted to go against policy!

RON COOK'S STATEMENT

But, even that is not the most disturbing part. The **REALLY** disturbing part—the part that prompted me to write about this in the first place, was a statement made by **Ron Cook**, a member of the *Community Church of Christ*, who predicted that the "music issue" in churches of Christ will fade away once the present generation of youth in the church reaches maturity and begins to assume roles of leadership. He said, "Instrumental music is already a part of youth events that happen at churches...teenagers love Christian music. Music is a fact of life. It's inevitable." That statement is a peek into the heart and soul of the movement to guide churches of Christ away from the teachings of the New Testament. Liberals in the Lord's church are very interested in molding the minds of young people in the church. Those of us who still respect the authority of the Bible had better become interested in passing on that respect to the next generation or this disturbing trend will continue, and Cook's unsettling prediction will come to pass. I hope that you will remember this, and think seriously about it the next time you are given an opportunity to work with the young people of your congregation.

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RUBEL AND BILLY

Wayne Coats

Not since the days when **Jessie B. Ferguson** came to Nashville, Tennessee and led the church into apostasy, has there been such a disgraceful and ridiculous apostate effort as is being promoted by **Rubel Shelly** and his shepherds.

I am referring to an announcement which was contained in "Lovelines" which is "The weekly newsletter of the Family of God at Woodmont Hills," and which newsletter was sent to me by a friend.

The heading of the article under consideration is—"Billy Graham Crusade," June 1-4, 2000 Adelphia Coliseum.

I beg and plead with the reader to ponder the following comments carefully and prayerfully. The article in the bulletin states, "Woodmont Hills supports the decision of **Dr. Graham** and his ministry team to be in Nashville."

For one, I am not at all surprised that Shelly and his crowd will support a Baptist preacher such as Billy Graham. It is a fact with the force of a demonstration that Shelly will ridicule and laugh at the faithful congregations. This is too evident for honest people to deny. The records (tapes) are available and prove the assertion.

It is sickening to reflect upon the fact that Nashville has been the scene of so many courageous battles by our dear old brethren down through the years as they battled the Baptist Preachers in defense of the ancient order of things. Now comes one who claims to represent Christ, but betrays that for which gallant soldiers have suffered so much.

The Woodmont piece informs its readers that, "...our church family...will be enthusiastic participants." That means all of those Lipscomb professors who are a part of

the "church family" will be, "enthusiastic participants." Is this true or false?

In an issue of the *Plumblin* it was noted that **Dan Dagar** and his wife had joined the Community Church in Hendersonville, but they left and joined Shelly's church. It would be most interesting to hear Dan babble why he left the Community Church to join Rubel's Church. It would make as much sense for those far-out liberals to join in with the atheists of Nashville—but of course the liberals never make any sense.

Rubel continued, "...the uniqueness of this event stands to make it effective in reaching many who don't know Christ." It is perverse beyond description to prattle that Billy Graham will tell people how they can know Jesus Christ. Baptist preachers and Baptist doctrine keep people blinded to a saving knowledge of Christ. One must know the truth in order to be free from sin (John 8:32). I emphatically deny that Billy and Rubel teach the truth which sets men free.

"Billy Graham presents Jesus Christ as mankind's only hope for eternal life." This is but another case of Shelly's foolishness. If Billy and Rubel presented Christ, hope, and eternal life, they would present what the Bible teaches instead of sectarian and cultic theology.

Rubel avers, "If it is right to link arms with other believers to oppose pornography and drugs, surely it cannot be wrong to join with them to preach Christ crucified," What Shelly needs to do is rename the "if" and tell people what the Bible teaches, but this is expecting too much of Rubel. Jesus did not link arms with the religious racketeers of his day, nor did the apostles. People used to have enough sense to respect the word of God above and beyond the clatter of false teachers. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17). "Touch not, taste not, handle not: which all are to perish with the using; after the commandments and doctrines of men" (Colossians 2:21-22). The preceding passages mean nothing to the Shelly crowd.

Shelly speaks of linking arms with "other believers." Of course he has reference to the Billy Graham brand of Baptists. Billy Graham believes and teaches that little babies are born totally depraved. Will Rubel link arms with the Baptist preacher on this false doctrine? **John R. Graves** who was a noted Baptist preacher said, "Total depravity is a doctrine which Baptists believe the Bible teaches..." Graves also said, "We, as Baptists, teach that repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ secure par-

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don." Will Shelly and his family link arms with Billy on that statement of Baptist doctrine?

Graves further stated, "Baptists believe that when they are saved, they are eternally saved." Of course Billy babbles these points of Baptist doctrine, and Rubel and his clones will try to act like they are enthusiastic participants with Billy in these false doctrines.

The main sugar-stick of Billy Graham is to whoop-it-up about the direct, supernatural, illuminating, work of the Holy Spirit in conversion. In this Shelly will link arms and try to keep a straight face while another to be an Adventist, another to be a mormon, still other to whatever (stripe and ilk Ruble's word) they choose to be.

"We will be working closely with the campaign effort to advise and teach those who mark, "Church of Christ." My sincere judgment would be that with all the splutter from Shelly about name-dropping, a person would have to be some sort of fool to mark, "Church of Christ." Yes, I do wonder how much sarcasm Shelly can exude toward one of those mockers.

"With the blessing of our shepherds, Rubel Shelly is serving as a General Committee member on behalf of this outreach effort." "Our Shepherds" will bless Billy and the Baptists, and some of the Shepherds will run back to the Lipscomb campus and bless the students and others who feel a need to be blessed. While these blessings are taking

place, a whole bevy of brothers in Nashville will continue nursing their affliction with lockjaw.

"Several of our shepherds wrote letters of invitation to Dr. Graham to encourage him to come to our city." Again I am not surprised at anything "our shepherds" might support. It does bother me no little to reflect upon the fact that brethren have been so obstinate, blind and persistent in their efforts to hobnob with the Shelly Crew.

For several years I have stood opposed to Rubel Shelly and the other liberals in Nashville. And, I have tried my best to warn brethren. While I was opposing and exposing Shelly-Flatt, and their notorious Jubilee, Abilene, Harding, Freed-Hardeman and Lipscomb Universities were helping to support the ungodly outfit. When Lipscomb wheeled opened the University Auditorium on campus for Shelly and his gang to meet in, I tried to get some of the board members to hear my plea, but to no avail.

When Neil Anderson and the *Gospel Advocate* were lauding the Jubilee and purchasing booth space, I tried to get Neil to turn the Advocate around. My reward has been an increase in cold stare, and enemies. I truly believe it will be better for me to fall straight rather than to stand crooked.

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Friday, January 14

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10:00 "The Bible and Giving"Al Macias
11:00 "The Bible and Sin"Tommy Hicks
12:00 LUNCH BREAK
1:30 "The Bible and Salvation"Tommy Hicks
2:30-4:00 QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION
[Garland Elkins & Ira Y. Rice, Jr.]
4:00-4:45 CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.....
5:00-6:30 DINNER BREAK.....
6:30 "The Bible and Singing"Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
7:30 "The Bible and Prayer"Garland Elkins

Saturday, January 15

9:00 "The Bible and The Christian Father" Jesse Whitlock
10:00 "The Bible and The Christian Mother" ..Al Macias
11:00 "The Bible and Divorce"David Brown
12:00 LUNCH BREAK
1:30 "The Bible and Worship"David Brown
2:30-4:00 QUESTION and ANSWER SESSION
[David Brown & Joseph Meador]

4:00-4:45 CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

5:00-6:30 DINNER BREAK

6:30 "The Bible and Science"Joseph Meador
7:30 "The Bible and The Judgment"Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Sunday, January 16

9:30 "The Bible and The Prophecy"Jesse Whitlock
10:30 "The Bible and Fellowship"Joseph Meador
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"A MESS" AT THE HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

Michael Light

The advertisement in the center of the article is a copy of the "Out Front" column of the front page of the Religion section of the *Abilene Reporter News* (Saturday, October 2, 1999). One of our members brought his paper to me on Sunday asking if I had seen the announcement (I had overlooked it). I went to Abilene and attended the meeting at the *Highland Church of Christ*.

I arrived at the building at 6:15 p.m. and really had no idea what to expect. I have had some experience with the "Walk to Emmaus" and knew it was an attempt to "connect" with the Spirit (during a retreat). It originated within the Methodist church.

FOUR WOMEN SINGERS AND A BAND

I feared that the Highland congregation might play taped instrumental music during the service. I was wrong. They did not play taped music. They had the real thing—a band and four women singers. They sang and played a variety of instruments for the duration of the service. I walked into the auditorium and right into a concert. These women also led the singing (with the mechanical instruments) during the "service part" of the gathering.

They showed the Emmaus instructional video as advertised. The thrust of the video was consistent with what I had been told by those who had gone on the "walks," namely, that on these retreats *the Spirit reveals himself in a variety of ways* and guides (directly) those who seek his presence. The video is basically a collection of "testimonials," geared to convince the audience that something (the Holy Spirit) is missing and this "walk" can get you connected with the Holy Spirit. After the video the all-girl band played and led the audience in more songs. All the songs were sung as the audience stood and swayed with hands in the air (in true Pentecostal fashion). Only the fact that I had not eaten since breakfast kept me from getting physically ill during all this vain worship (Matthew 15:7-9). During this segment of song a collection was taken.

EDDIE SHARP'S HERESY

I was sure by this time that I could not be surprised by anything else, but I was sadly mistaken. **Eddie Sharp** (*ACU instructor* and *pulpit minister* for the *University Church of Christ congregation* in Abilene) approached the

stage. He read (after stating that the Spirit had been stirred) the "liturgy." I do not know what other word to use for it. He asked the audience to get out their "purple book" (an Emmaus creed book, or some such thing). He read certain sections or passages from the "purple book" (not the scriptures) and the audience repeated the lines. In other readings he read a certain part, they finished by reading the rest and saying "amen." It reminded me of the Catholic "liturgy."

Sharp then led them in a confessional prayer. The whole assembly confessed their sins (collectively) and asked to be forgiven. It was a written prayer that the audience had memorized and was recited with little feeling. It reminded me of the vain repetitions mentioned in Matthew 6.

SHARP MOCKS THE LORD'S CHURCH

After a few more songs, Sharp took the stage again and presented the message of the hour. He began by belittling the church. In fact, his introductory comment was that as a church of Christ preacher, he was not used to preaching to a crowd where everyone was invited. This was a blatant attempt to paint the church in a negative light. [I am sure Jesus was impressed with this impudent man running down and making light of his bride, the body he heads and for which he died (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:23-25)]. Since when has not the Lord's church "invited" everyone to come and study God's word? This is a lie. Indeed, it is a disgraceful attempt to taint the reputation of members who have labored for years in evangelistic efforts. What about the sacrifice and tireless work by faithful brethren of years gone by to build up the Highland Church as well as the ACU where Sharp teaches. We can only conclude that the University Church sanctions Sharp's beliefs and conduct.

Other snide comments were made at the expense of the church as well. Sharp went on to laud the "Emmaus Movement" (He clearly holds it in much higher regard than the Lord's church). He plainly and specifically taught that it does not matter where you worship or what tradition of faith you're in, just serve Jesus. He said we are to follow the light of Jesus wherever it leads us. If it leads us to stay in our current church, fine. However, if the Spirit leads us to change churches then we should do it.

OUT FRONT

WALK TO EMMAUS

The Big Country Emmaus will have a community gathering at Highland Church of Christ, 425 Highland on Tuesday.

The meeting, which is open to anyone interested in

exploring Walk to Emmaus, will begin at 6:30 p.m. A 14-minute video will be shown that describes what the Walk to Emmaus is about.

The remainder of the meeting will include singing, preaching, and communion.

The Bible does not give us a smorgasbord of churches from which to choose. Ephesians 4:4ff makes it clear there is only one body. In Matthew 16:13-18, Jesus promised to build one church (singular). Eddie Sharp needs to put away his "purple book," and study, believe and obey his Bible.

You cannot go to heaven and not be a member of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). Sharp and his ACU buddies can scream and holler ecumenicalism and denominationalism as often and loudly as they like, but it is still a damnable doctrine that will cost them their souls (John 14:6; Matthew 7:21-23). There are no denominational churches sanctioned by the Bible.

SHARP TEACHES HIS FALSE DOCTRINE AT ACU

Perhaps the saddest phrase of the entire speech came during Sharp's introduction when he informed the audience that he had delivered the material we were about to hear to his class at ACU earlier in the day. What a crying shame. Imagine teaching our youth that they are part of a denomination that is nothing more than a man-made body with no regard for Bible authority. We send our children to a "Christian" school to be prepared to fight against the doctrines of Satan, yet Satan has infiltrated the very classrooms built by Christians to combat him. Unsuspecting youth are turned over to these men and women who are bent on turning the church into a denomination.

It is high time many of us awakened to what is happening in schools like ACU. Refusing to see error and listen to warnings will only allow those who have no love for the church to do more harm to the students in such schools.

SUPPING WITH SATAN

After the "Sermon from Hell" (my title, not his ML), Sharp announced that we were about to have *communion* (the Lord's Supper). Yes, that is right, it was Tuesday night (I stress again, these people do not care what the Bible says about the Lord's Supper or anything else. They will do whatever they desire). Sharp was kind enough to mention that he realized many people were not accustomed to observing the Lord's Supper on any other day but Sunday. He suggested if any in the audience did not feel comfortable observing the Supper, they could refrain from it. (That was mighty nice of him).

He then discussed the manner in which it would be taken (I do not know why it mattered at this juncture). He said that it would be taken by "inction." That is how he spelled it. He then stated that he really thought the "Emmausians" just made it (inction) up. He said that "inction" was taking the piece of bread and dipping it into the juice then (after

the bread soaked up the juice) it was to be taken all at once. I know, Jesus and the apostles partook of the emblems separately (Matthew 26) as did the early church (I Corinthians 11), but our brethren at Highland and Eddie Sharp are not impressed with that. They would rather please their denominational harlots and do what feels good to them than stay true to God's way (James 4:4).

The communion itself was also very Catholic in its order. Sharp took a large piece of bread (a loaf). (I could not tell whether it was leavened or unleavened. Again I know it does not matter to them one way or the other.) He stood down front (with his Emmaus cross around his neck) and broke off small pieces and gave it to the laity (people) as they passed by. He said something to them. It looked just like a Catholic priest blessing the Sacrament. That person with his bread would then pass from him to another man who held a large goblet of juice. They would then dip the bread into the juice and take it. This fiasco concluded the service, and the crowd went out to the foyer where the "host" congregation (Highland) had prepared quite a spread of snacks.

Overall it was a sickening and sad night. I could not help but think of the changes in that congregation since it's formation in 1948—how it used to be "Herald of Truth" but that has long since passed. Over 25 years ago Lynn Anderson declared from Highland's pulpit that the church of Christ was a big sick denomination. He emphasized "big," "sick" and "denomination." While the Lord's church is not a denomination, the Highland church and churches such as Highland are. Highland should stand as a warning to us all. We must contend for the faith (Jude 3), and mark them which cause divisions among us (Romans 16:17, 18).

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- 9:30 A.M. "The New Testament Prediction of the Apostasy" Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:30 A.M. "The Difference in the 1st Century Church and the Catholic Church?" Noah Hackworth
4:00 P.M. "History of the Apostasy and the Catholic Church, AD 150-700" Paul Vaughn
5:00 P.M. "History of the Catholic Church, AD 700-1500" Tracey Dugger
6:00 P.M. "History of the Catholic Church, AD 1500 to the Present" Tom Wacaster

Monday, February 28

- 9:00 A.M. "Standard of Authority for the Catholic Church and For the Lord's Church" Kenneth Ratcliff
10:00 A.M. "False Miracles of the Catholic Church" Roddy Covington
*10:00 A.M. "The Role of a Christian Woman" Tonne Williamson
11:00 A.M. "The Intolerance of Roman Catholicism" Eddie Whitten
1:30 P.M. "The Confessional and Its Abuses" Jessie Whitlock
2:30 P.M. "The Seven Sacraments" Gary Summers
3:30 P.M. "The Worship of the Catholic Church" Danny Douglas
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Review of Campbell-Purcell Debate" Tyler Young
8:00 P.M. "Catholic Forgeries and Propaganda: Errors in the Versions of Scriptures" B. J. Clarke

Tuesday, February 29

- 9:00 A.M. "The Organization of the Catholic Church" Johnnie Scaggs
10:00 A.M. "The Apocrypha: Is It Part of the Bible?" David Watson
*10:00 A.M. "New Testament Examples for Christian Women" Tonne Williamson
11:00 A.M. "Maryolatry" Daniel Denham
1:30 P.M. "The Catholic Doctrine of the 10 Commandments and Their View of the Old Testament" Barry Grider
2:30 P.M. "The All Sufficiency of the Scriptures and Its Conflict With Catholic Doctrine" David Baker
3:30 P.M. "The Syllabus of Errors of Pius the 9th" Jerry Murrell
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Review of the Conley-Luther-Narvaez Debate" Darrel Conley
8:00 P.M. "Was Peter the First Pope?" Tom Hicks

Wednesday, March 1

- 9:00 A.M. "The Catholic Doctrine of Original Sin" Roelf Ruffner
10:00 A.M. "Priests, Bishops, Monks, Nuns, Synods and Councils of the Catholic Church" Marvin Weir
11:00 A.M. "The Scandals of Catholic History" Michael Light
1:30 P.M. "The Dogmatism of the Catholic Church" Billy Bland
2:30 P.M. "The Celebration of Mass and the Doctrine Of Transubstantiation" Randy Mabe
3:30 P.M. "Catholic Holidays, Rosary, Relics, Praying to the Saint" Royce Williamson
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Review of the Stevens - Bevers Debate" Lynn Parker
8:00 P.M. "The Catholic Doctrine Of Purgatory Versus What the Bible Teaches" Michael Hatcher
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“THE CURSE OF MEROZ”

Daniel Denham

In Judges 5:23 Deborah, the woman judge of ancient Israel, and Barak the son of Abinoam pronounce a curse upon the inhabitants of the city of Meroz. They declare: **“Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”**



After Israel had settled into Canaan, and after the days of Joshua and the elders who outlived him, Israel entered into the “Dark Ages” of her history. The people forgot God and turned to serve idols. Immorality abounded in the land. God brought upon the nation foreign enemies who would afflict them, as chastisement for their sins. When the people would turn back to God and cry out for deliverance, He then would raise up “saviors,” viz., the judges, who would defeat their enemies and would judge the nation. A period of faithfulness and dedication to the Lord would then attend Israel.

On one occasion the king of Hazor, Jabin, afflicted the people, and threatened the very existence of the nation. His army under his general, Sisera, supported by 900 chariots of iron, was sent forth in a military campaign intent on crushing Israel once and for all. God raised up Deborah and Barak to deliver his people. Sisera’s army was routed near Mt. Tabor, and the Canaanite general himself was slain by a woman named Jael, as he lay in her tent after having fled the scene of his army’s demise. The record of this is found in Judges 4. The record states: **“And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan”** (Judges 4:24).

Deborah and Barak had defeated the Canaanite army with the aid of 10,000 men called from Zebulun and Naphtali, which lay in the northern territory of Israel. The text of Judges 5:23 implies that the men of the city of Meroz, which was not far from the historic battlefield, refused to aid their brethren in this war against Jabin. Perhaps, they feared reprisals by the Canaanite king should the Israelite effort fail. They failed themselves to trust the Lord. Thus, Meroz is cursed by inspiration. Like the city of Chorazin, which rejected Christ, Meroz’s only remembrance in the word of God is one of condemnation. The city itself is no more. It was swept away, undoubtedly, in an exercise of divine anger, because of the cowardice and treason of its inhabitants. The curse of Meroz provides striking lessons to us today, just as it was in the history of the Hebrews (*cf.*, Romans 15:4). Let us examine a few of these.

THE SIN OF NEUTRALITY

The curse of Meroz reminds us of the sinfulness of “neutrality” in matters of right and wrong, truth and error.

Meroz failed to come to the help of the Lord in this great battle against Jabin. By refusing to fight on Jehovah’s side, they implicitly cast their lot and their fortune with the enemies of God. Jesus warns, **“He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth”** (Luke 11:23).

There have always been those who are squeamish in the confronting of false doctrine or in opposing sin. Some preachers today are so “mealy-mouthed” when it comes to dealing with error. These hirelings pose a greater threat to the long-range stability and strength of the Lord’s church than do open and brazen false teachers. The former class “greases the skids,” as G. K. Wallace once put it, for the false teachers to “slide right in unopposed.” How often have we seen a weak-kneed preacher followed in the pulpit of a congregation by a flaming false teacher? The Lord commands us to contend earnestly for the faith, which has been once and for all delivered by the saints” (Jude 3). To fail to oppose error is as cursed before God as to endorse and embrace it!

THE NEED FOR FAITH

God’s people need to trust in God for their salvation. The lack of faith was the undoing of Meroz. They feared Jabin more than Jehovah! Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). The army of God **“stands by faith”** (Romans 11:20). It is unbelief which is **“the sin which doth so easily beset us”** (Hebrews 12:1). The need to be vigilant, steadfast, and faithful will ever attend us in this life (*cf.*, I Corinthians 15:58; 16:13; Revelation 2:10). Fellowship with the great “I Am” requires our walking in agreement with his word (Amos 3:3; I John 1:4-7).

Men must learn that God means what he says. The Bible, verified by sufficient evidence, provides sufficient evidence, in turn, to inculcate faith in the heart of the one who will read it with a view to eternity (Romans 10:17).

THE DANGER OF SIN

Sin brings grave results. Meroz was destroyed because of sin. Its inhabitants were put to the sword. Its buildings were left in ruins. Sin brings terrible consequences.

Sin separates man from God’s fellowship (Isaiah 59:1-2). It brings unwanted and destructive “fruits” to one’s life (Galatians 6:7-8). It causes man to **“fall short of the glory of God”** (Romans 6:23). It brings spiritual death and destruction (Romans 5:12; 6:23). Unrepented of and uncorrected, sin will ultimately consign one to the Devil’s hell, which is **“the second death”** (Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:11-15). Sin is dangerous, despicable, and diabolical. May God help us to come to see “the exceeding sinfulness of sin.”

Meroz is gone. Its exact location is disputed today, so complete was its desolation. Its inhabitants are now awaiting the final judgment. The tragedy that has unfolded was one that they could have prevented. All they needed to do was obey the call to come to the help of the Lord “against the mighty.” Let us learn the precious lessons embodied in the curse of Meroz. The only way to be truly “happy in Jesus...is to trust and obey.”

—405 Main Street
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DOES GOD HATE SINNERS?

Jodie Boren

When the subject of homosexuality is discussed and it is pointed out that it is a sin and an abomination to God worthy of death (Leviticus 20:13), invariably someone will say, "Yes, but while we hate the sin, we must love the sinner." This may be politically correct, but is it the way God thinks about it? Does God hate the sin, but love the sinner? Let us consider this.

TWO KINDS OF SINNERS

Are there not two kinds of sinners—those who sin willfully and those who sin ignorantly? The great apostle Paul sinned in ignorance (I Timothy 1:13) and considered himself chief of sinners (verse 15). Before his conversion to Christ, he truly believed he was doing that which was right (Acts 23:1). On the other hand, some of the chief rulers believed on Jesus, but did not confess him and continued willfully in their sins loving **"the praise of men more than the praise of God"** (John 12:42-43). If we sin willfully as did these unnamed rulers, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26).

Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Now, therefore, whether one sins willfully or in ignorance, he is lost unless he repents and obeys the gospel (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Only the precious blood of Jesus can wash away our sins, as we see in the example of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16. (See also I Peter 1:18-19.)

God hates sin and commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Does John 3:16 not teach us that **"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?"** Does this not prove that God hates sin, but loves the sinner? But remember, we need to examine other scriptures that are pertinent to the subject. Remember, also, that there are two kinds of sinners—those who sin in ignorance and those who sin willfully.

THERE IS A SINNER GOD HATES

While there is, in one sense, the love that God has for all men, *there are scriptures that teach that God hates the sinner, i.e., those that continue willfully in sin and are unrepentant.* In Psalms 5:4-5, it very plainly states that God **"hates all workers of iniquity."** God hates the sin of homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13) and if one continues willfully and unrepentantly in this abominable iniquity (or in any other sin or sins) God hates him!

Notice another passage found in Proverbs 6:16-19. Here, it is stated, that there are *six things the Lord hates*,

yea, seven are an abomination to him! These are: a proud person; a liar; a murderer; a person with wicked imagination; one who is always looking for mischief; a false witness; and one that soweth discord among brethren. In language we cannot misunderstand, God says he hates the sinner!



POLITICALLY CORRECT OR FAITHFUL

It may be politically correct to love the homosexual who practices this repugnant and sinful lifestyle who knowingly rejects God's teaching against it (Romans 1:21-32; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Leviticus 20:13)—but it is not *biblically* correct. God hates *both* the sin *and* the willful, unrepentant sinner.

God wants all men to be saved (II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:4; Luke 19:10, *et. al*), but demands love and obedience before his saving grace can be appropriated into our lives. This obedience to the word of God involves repentance and unless one repents of whatever sin he is wilfully continuing in, he will perish (Luke 13:3).

It was sin that caused Jesus to have to suffer and die on the cross that man might be redeemed. It is inconceivable to me, to think that God would hate sins that made this sacrifice necessary and not the person who willfully and unrepentantly commits and continues in these sins. May we have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5) as we consider this matter.

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CHASING BUTTERFLIES

Annette B. Cates

When our children were young we, like many parents, spent countless hours supporting their various sports activities, cheering for them as they played football and baseball and ran track. Naturally, we developed an interest in all of the children on their teams. One little boy stands out in my mind. He was probably a first grader who played outfield on the Little League ball team. Let me correct that: he filled an outfield position. He was on the team, but he was much too busy chasing butterflies to be of much value when he was needed. I have thought about some ways that we chase butterflies in a spiritual sense, and as a result, we are not as effective as Christians as we should be.

IN ALL THINGS WATCH

The Bible teaches us to be vigilant, aware of our surroundings, and to act with conviction. Not only are we to be concerned for our own spiritual good, we have a responsibility to do so for the welfare of others (Ezekiel 33:1-11). Paul wrote, **"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith..."** (I Corinthians 16:13) and **"But watch thou in all things..."** (II Timothy 4:5). Why are we troubled by indifference and lack of conviction? Why are we distracted by the world around us? Is it because we are like the little ball player, too young or too immature in the faith, or are we, like the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14-22), just taking the easy way, drifting blissfully along to destruction?

We cannot always be **"new babes in Christ."** We understand the importance of maturity in the physical realm, expecting our children to attain proper growth and development. I have no doubt that the little butterfly-chasing ball player eventually stopped chasing butterflies and began to play real ball. He could have gone on to play for a major league team for all I know. The problem arises when Christians willfully choose to remain immature.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Certainly, there is a time for learning the first principles, but from there we must continue to grow spiritually, actively participating in the work of the local congregation and reaching out to serve and to teach others.

Most of the religious world around us is chasing butterflies. If you ask your neighbor if he believes in God or is a Christian, he will respond that, of course, he does and is. But, if you observe him on Sunday mornings, he never leaves home heading to a church building for any kind of

"worship." You cannot tell by his language, or appearance, or behavior that he has any system of moral standards. Denominations list hundreds and thousands on their church rolls, but relatively few ever attend their services on Sunday morning, much less at other times. Many have discontinued meeting except for Sunday mornings. Sadly, this commentary is extending more and more to those who claim some allegiance to the church for which Christ died. These are people who have never grown up spiritually, who are just wearing the uniform but not really contributing any effort to the "team."

THE KINGDOM MUST COME FIRST

If we are not going to spend our lives chasing butterflies, we must put the kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33). As we make our decisions, we must be aware of the implications of our actions. "What impact am I having on the church?" "If I do this, or that, will I reflect positively or negatively?" We must use our abilities to the glory of God. We cannot just SAY that we are Christians; we must LIVE Christianity. When we do so, there will be no question as to where we will be when the church meets for Bible study and worship. There will be no question regarding our conduct. **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him"** (I John 2:15).

If we are not going to spend our lives chasing butterflies, we must be willing to be of service to others. Someone has well said that "God has no hands but our hands." Sometimes, it is dirty work and certainly not glamorous. We do it behind the scenes, without notice or attention or payback. We do it out of love for God, for the church, for others. **"Not with eye service, as men pleasers: but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men"** (Ephesians 6:6-7). When we depart from the church building and go out to serve, we are doing far more than just warming the pew and wearing the uniform.

If we are not going to spend our lives chasing butterflies, we must do all we can to spread the borders of the kingdom—locally, nationally, and internationally—to **"all nations"** and to **"every creature"** (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..."** (Romans 1:16). In order for the world to learn the gospel, there must be Christians willing to teach it. There must be Christians willing to send others to teach where they themselves cannot go. We teach by letting the



light of Christianity shine through the influence of our lives (Matthew 5:16). We teach by taking opportunities to talk one-on-one with our family, friends, and acquaintances about the gospel, studying the Bible with them. We teach by inviting them to worship with us. We teach by the support and encouragement we give to missionaries and their families. In Jesus' day, and every age thereafter, the fields were and are white unto harvest (John 4:35). When we make the effort to reach a lost world with the gospel, we are strengthening the church.

Are we just chasing butterflies, or are we actively living the Christian life? Are we watchful for the well-being of our souls and the souls of others? Are we busy in the Kingdom?

Do our lives make a difference? Are we absorbing the real "meat" of God's word, or are we still on "milk"? Are we allowing the world to distract us from the spiritual things? Let us put away any butterflies that may be hindering us and fully commit our lives to the service of God.

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Restoration Reflections...

A NEW NAME

Paul Vaughn

The name by which the children of God call themselves is particularly important. It must be a name that glorifies God and honors the authority of Jesus as the head of the church. **"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"** (Colossians 3:17). Denominational names by their very creation cause division, sectarianism, and confusion. Therefore, they do not glorify God and his son, and are not acceptable for faithful followers of Christ to wear.

In the study of the Restoration Movement the early preachers and restorers did not come to the conclusion about the importance of a name immediately in their study. Usually they tried to hang on to a sectarian name with which they were most acquainted.

REPUBLICAN METHODIST

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1780 in America. **Thomas Coke** and **Francis Asbury** were elected superintendents and **James O'Kelly** was elected an elder. O'Kelly served as an elder in Southern Virginia. In 1792 the cornerstone of the White House was laid, Kentucky was admitted as a state, the first mint was established at Philadelphia, and a struggle in the Methodist Episcopal Church between O'Kelly and Asbury reached a climax. O'Kelly, supported by a small number of preachers, withdrew from the conference over Asbury assuming too much power and the episcopal form of church government.

James O'Kelly, and those who withdrew from the domination of Asbury, formed the Republican Methodist Church on December 25, 1793. They had no desire to return to New Testament Christianity; at this time they were only forming a split in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Nine months after the forming of the Republican Methodist, O'Kelly and his group met in a general meeting on August 4, 1794 in Surrey County, Virginia and decided to call themselves "Christians." This major step back to the Bible was suggested by **Rice Haggard**. Haggard was an ordained minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

When the question of a name came up in the meeting, Haggard arose, holding the New Testament in his hand, and said, "Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. By it we are told that the Disciples were called Christians, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply."¹ What a tremendous statement of faith, pointing people back to the Bible. It was not until 1801, the year of the Cane Ridge Revival, that O'Kelly's group changed their name from Republican Methodist to Christian Church.



James O'Kelly was not committed to the restoration of New Testament Christianity, as those in Kentucky and West Virginia. He refused to believe and accept immersion as the only form of baptism. The group that O'Kelly started ended up merging with the Congregational Church which merged with the Evangelical and Reform Church, which formed the "United Church of Christ" in 1957.

PRESBYTERIAN

Barton W. Stone and his collaborators formed the Springfield Presbytery in protest to the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky and the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1803. It took less than a year before those who formed the Springfield Presbytery to come to the conclusion that this name of separation was a name that was sectarian. In a meeting on June 28th, 1804 **Robert Marshall**, **John Dunlavy**, **Richard McNemar**, **Barton W. Stone**, **John Thompson**, and **David Purviance** signed the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery. **Rice Haggard**, who had shortly before moved to Burksville, Kentucky, was in the meeting. Upon the death of the Springfield Presbytery, Haggard suggested, as he did with O'Kelly, that the name the followers of Christ should wear is Christian. In his biography Stone said, "With the man-made creeds we threw it overboard (Springfield Presbytery), and took the name Christian, the name given to the

CONCLUSION

The faithful servant of God will wear a name approved by divine authority. The early restorers did not come to this conclusion overnight. They first began to see the error in the doctrines of men that had been taught. Slowly they read themselves out of denominational error and the names of division they wore. **"And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch"** (Acts 11:26). What a glorious name to wear because it was given by God and honors Jesus as the head of the church!

The church Jesus purchased with his blood at Calvary would never carelessly, indifferently, or thoughtlessly wear a name that gives honor to men or their teaching. Rice Haggard and Barton Stone understood the importance of a name when they cast off the names, Methodist and Presbyterian, names that cause division, for the one given by God,

"Christian," a marvelous name for disciples to wear. It brings unity where sectarian names cause division. It honors the Lord where denominational names honor men or their teaching. To wear it to the exclusion of all denominational names means one is speaking **"as the oracles of God"** (I Peter 4:11). "Christian" was a new name for Haggard and Stone to wear to the rejection of a denominational name, but it is as old as the New Testament.

1. Pressley Barrett, ed. *The Centennial of Religious Journalism*, Christian Publishing, (Dayton, Ohio) 1908, p. 264.

2. Barton W. Stone, "Biography of Barton W. Stone," Cane Ridge Reader, ed. Hoke Dickerson (Cincinnati, Ohio) 1847, P. 50.

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Biblical Questions and Answers...

WHAT ARE THE THINGS FOR WHICH JESUS DID NOT DIE?

Noah A. Hackworth

Not far from the ancient city of Jerusalem, almost two thousand years ago, Jesus died for the sins of the world (John 3:16). He who was both a Lamb (John 1:29) and a Lion (Revelation 5:5) tasted of death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). To some it may seem inconsistent if not contradictory to refer to Jesus as both a Lamb and a Lion, but in reality the characteristics of a Lamb and a Lion represent a "perfect balance" in the life of Jesus. As the death of Jesus is further contemplated, it must be realized that there are a number of things for which he did *not* die. Even though this may come as a shock to the "religious system" of many, it nevertheless is true. Consider the following:

1. Jesus did not die to promote love to the exclusion of truth. As one author said:

The 'Lamb-Lion' never made either of the two basic mistakes to which men seem so prone: [1] He never emphasized love to the exclusion (or even the diminution) of truth (He always spoke the truth in love, Ephesians 4:15) and [2] He never emphasized truth to the exclusion of love (He always spoke the truth in love). With him, it was never either truth to the exclusion of love or love to the exclusion of truth. Jesus would have failed in his mission if he had failed in regard either to truth or to love.

2. Jesus did not die so that we could all believe whatever we choose to believe. Naaman, the great captain of the Syrian army, became angry and went away in a rage when he learned that he could not choose which river to plunge himself into to heal his leprosy (II Kings 5:1-14). He retained his disease until he went to the river of God's choice.

3. *Jesus did not die so that we could all "do that which is right in our own eyes"* (cf., Judges 17:6). In Israel's past history there was a time when people did this in the absence of an "authoritative figure" to instruct them. They lived to suffer the consequences of their sins (Hosea 13:11).

4. *Jesus did not die so that we could all belong to the church of our choice.* There are those who do not think church membership is important, but the Lord thought otherwise. He built his own church (Matthew 16:18) and invited all men to become members of it (Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 2:47). God's choice is what counts.

5. *Jesus did not die to give birth to a divided religious world.* Such a concept has no foundation in scripture; it is contrary to his mission into the world. Jesus' death must not become the foundation for denominationalism (Ephesians 4:4-5).

6. *Jesus did not die to give brethren the liberty to continually "feud, fuss, and fight" among themselves.* This observation does not mean that (a) we ought not contend for the truth (this we must do), or that (b) we should not call one another to "account" for personal actions when needed, or (c) that we should not be willing to face the consequences of what we do, because there are brethren who need to be "withstood to the face" (cf., Galatians 2:11). However, brethren who continue to **"bite and devour one another"** should take heed that **"ye be not consumed one of another"** (Galatians 5:15).

Yes, our Lord died but not "for" any of the previously mentioned things. To think that he did indicates a tremendous misunderstanding and/or a gross ignorance of the real reasons why he died. To think on these things is of great importance.

—4400 W. Tulare Avenue
Visalia, California 93277



N.O.W., NUDE DANCERS, CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND THE BLACK FAMILY

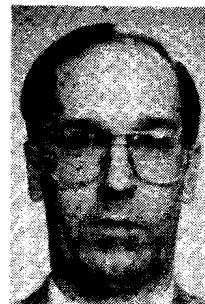
Mark McWhorter

A Lesbian Rights Summit, sponsored by the National Organization for Women, was held in Washington, D.C. in April. Representative **Tammy Baldwin**, Wisconsin Democrat, the first openly homosexual woman elected to Congress, spoke. **Patricia Ireland**, NOW leader who has a husband in Florida and a female 'partner' in Washington, DC, recently told the *Washington Blade* that NOW has more lesbian members than any other homosexual rights organization (*The Washington Times*, May 3, 1999, page 4). *[This seals the fact that NOW does not speak for all women. It is a radical fringe group bent on changing America's view of homosexuality.—MTM]*

In order to be in compliance with the U.S. Alien Certification Program the State of Florida's Bureau of Workforce Program Support recently ran an ad in the Palm Beach Post seeking nude dancers. It seems a local dance joint had a hiring problem and was threatening to import foreign dancers. The state is required to seek local applicants before foreign workers can be brought in to fill jobs (*Insight*, May 17, 1999, page 44). *[Law gone amuck.—MTM]*

A Texas church holds a service when it excommunicates a member for immorality. Members of Colleyville Presbyterian Church who fail to confess when confronted by the elders with evidence of immorality, such as involvement in adultery, homosexuality, or pornography, are excommunicated during a solemn ceremony, the *Dallas Morning News* said. During the church's last excommunication service, which involved a man accused of adultery, 220 members listened to pastor **Dale Smith's** sermon titled "The Nature, Warrant, and Necessity of Biblical Church Discipline." Neither the accused adulterer, who had moved away, nor his wife and children were present. The wife said she is wounded by her husband's adultery but is relieved that the church upheld God's law. A person can be brought back into communion by repenting, which involves confessing and agreeing to change. "The church has abandoned its historical stance, which declared that

right is right and wrong is wrong," Smith, 50, said. "A large reason is the moral relativity that marks the church today." Four men have been excommunicated in Smith's 23 years as the church's pastor, he said. "But I can assure you it is done in the context of love" (*Religion Today* email news service, 8/11/99). *[If they have the willpower to abide by biblical principle regarding fellowship, why cannot our own brethren? Of course, they need to abide by the truth in all matters, but they are demonstrating proper action here.—MTM]*



Only 40 percent of black children live in two-parent households. The illegitimacy rate among blacks stands close to 70 percent. Even during slavery, most black children lived in biological two-parent families. One study of 19th-century slave families (**Herbert Gutman**, "The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925") found that in up to three-fourths of the families, all the children had the same mother and father. In New York City in 1925, 85 percent of kin-related black households were two-parent families. In fact, "Five in six children under the age of 6 lived with both parents." Both during slavery and as late as 1920, a black teen-age girl raising a child without a man was rare among blacks. Gutman also found in analyzing data on black families in Harlem between 1905 and 1925 that only 3 percent of all families "were headed by a woman under 30." This is from an article by black columnist **Walter Williams** (*The Washington Times*, May 31-June 6, 1999, page 33). *[This would indicate that much of the family destruction in the black community is not a left-over from the Civil War as popularly claimed. Williams and others have tried to point out that much of the destruction of the black home life is a leaving of proper morality. This is not to claim that there is not some truth to what slavery did in this regard. But it is over-estimated.—MTM]*

A record 5.9 million adults were either behind bars, on parole or on probation last year, according to a Justice Department report. The figure means that one in every 34 adult Americans was under police supervision, and represents an increase of over 160,000 from 1997. Of the 5.9 million, 1.8 million were incarcerated, while 4.1 million were either paroled or on probation (*Law News Network* email service, 8/23/99). *[America needs strong biblical preaching. As man gets further from God, he will wax worse and worse.—MTM]*

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WHO SHOULD TEACH OUR CHILDREN?

Danny L. Box

[NOTE: The Bible class program is a wonderful tool for evangelism and edification if utilized properly. One foundational, absolutely essential component to the success of Bible classes is having qualified teachers. Far from being just another "warm body" to shove into a classroom, Danny Box has, in the following article, set forth Bible qualifications and attributes that absolutely must mark our Bible class teachers.—Lynn Parker]

Christians have a grave responsibility to bring their children up **"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."** Most of us recognize this responsibility and do our best to fulfill God's command. But what about our local congregations? Are our Bible School teachers doing their best to teach our children? Do they want to teach, or were they coerced into it? Do they have as their primary concern our children's spiritual growth, or are they just trying to kill time until the worship service starts? Is the teacher actually qualified to teach, not with a Ph.D. from higher education, but because he or she is a faithful child of God? As we think about our children and their formative years, we need to ask, who should teach our children? Let us look at who should be teaching our children.

The teacher should be one that is faithful in attendance. The Lord commanded us not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25). How can one be an effective teacher when he only attends one, or at most, two services a week? Our children are looking to their teachers for guidance. When they see them "forsaking the assembly," they get the idea that it is okay to come to church only when one desires. Also, how can teachers teach effectively about attending the services when they themselves do not bother to attend the greater portion of the services? Paul told us that faithful brethren were to teach others (II Timothy 2:2). This rules out someone that has been given a class for the purpose of trying to get him to be faithful!

The teacher should be a diligent student of the Bible. All of us are to be diligent students of God's word (II Timothy 2:15). But the teacher has an even greater responsibility. As a teacher one is imparting God's word to others. If someone is taught error God will not hold the teacher guiltless. But if we take God's word and rightly divide it, then what we teach will be pleasing to the Lord. It will strengthen and encourage our young people and may save their souls.

The teacher should set a good example. Paul told the young man Timothy to be an example of the believers, **"In word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"** (I Timothy 4:12). This entreaty applies to all of us today, but I believe it applies even more to those who teach

God's word. A teacher must be an example in speech, life, love, attitude, and faith. Anyone following a worldly lifestyle should not be teaching our children!

The teacher should love the souls of children. Many teachers never give any thought to the groundwork they are laying. Children begin to accumulate information in their classes that form the basis of their faith. If teachers love the souls of children, they will teach them about Jesus, and tell them about the gospel, the Lord's church, what they must do to be saved, and about all the blessings of living a Christian life. However, if they have little interest in the souls of children, they will continue to baby-sit.

Finally, the teacher must love the Lord. If we have teachers that love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37), then all of the other things will fall into place. If teachers love the Lord, they will want the children to know about him. They will be like the prophets of old and not be able to contain themselves when talking about the precious savior.

Our children are the future of the church. We must have people teaching them that will help assure that the church will be strong and sound in the days to come!

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ART THOU HE WHO TROUBLETH ISRAEL?

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

A. In about the year 874 BC, during the period of the Divided Kingdom, Ahab became the seventh king in disunited Israel.

1. Concerning his reign ... I Kings 16:30-33.
2. It was during this wicked reign of Ahab that we first see the entrance of Elijah in the pages of holy writ. ... I Kings 17:1.
3. As I Kings 18 opens we see that the drought, started by God through the mouth of Elijah, has now been handcuffing Israel for three years.
 - a. I Kings 18:1 ... During this time Ahab had instructed Obadiah (the governor of Ahab's house) to go and search for water and a place where livestock may graze.
 - b. I Kings 18:7-17 ... Imagine that, Ahab is blaming Elijah for this drought! Did not Elijah simply proclaim the wishes of God? Why is he to blame?
 - c. Consider Elijah's reply ... I Kings 18:18.

B. This would not be the last time when those truly responsible for bringing trouble on themselves and others would blame someone else.

1. This would not be the last time one would be called a "trouble-maker" because he simply proclaimed the word of God in its truth and simplicity. (Compare: Jeremiah 38:2-6; Amos 7:10-13; Acts 16:16-24; 17:2-6.)
2. Elijah, Jeremiah, Amos and Paul (faithful men of God) were all called "trouble-makers" for proclaiming the word of God.

C. As many in former years were called "trouble-makers" for speaking the word of God, so are many today accusing the faithful of being "trouble-makers."

D. In this sermon let us point out those who are really troubling the church today.

II. Discussion

A. THOSE WHO ARE IGNORANT OF GOD'S WORD ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. The biblically ignorant are troubling the church because:

a. Ephesians 4:11-21

- 1) When we lack biblical knowledge we are: tossed about by every wind of doctrine (verse 14), not growing in Christ (verse 15), failing to edify the body of Christ (verse 16), walking as the heathen (verse 17), blinded in heart (verse 18), unable to be touched spiritually (verse 19), unaware of the truth in Christ (verse 20-21).

- 2) This is why we have teaching, and this is why we are to study—for the perfecting and edifying of the church (verse 12)!

b. Hosea 4:6

2. Thus, to keep from troubling the church we must follow the teaching of II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13; Ephe-

sians 3:4; Deuteronomy 17:19; Isaiah 34:16; John. 5:39 and Acts 17:11.

B. COWARDLY CHRISTIANS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. Cowardice has always done great damage to the Lord's cause and his people (e.g. ten spies, Numbers 13:33; the followers of Gideon, Judges 7:3; Saul feared the people, I Samuel 15:20-24; Israel before Goliath, I Samuel 17:24; the children of Ephraim battle, Psalms 78:9).

2. Today we have many that do not stand for right and truth because they are afraid of persecution, what someone might say or think, of hurting someone's feelings, not being popular.

3. To keep from troubling the church we must be brave and courageous (Deuteronomy 31:6; Ezra 10:4; Matthew 10:28; II Corinthians 16:13).

C. LUKEWARM CHRISTIANS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. Lukewarm Christians do much harm to the church because they:

- a. Put forth little effort for the cause of Christ.
- b. Have little concern for the purity of the church.
- c. Discourage others in the church by weak attendance, poor giving, or a lack of effort.

2. Notice how God views luke-warmness or half-heartedness ... Revelation 3:15-16; II Kings 13:14-19

3. We must give Christianity our all ... Mark 12:30.

D. WEAK PARENTS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. Many parents are troubling the church because they are not teaching and demanding enough of their children; and, as a result, many of our young people are weakened and many are falling away from the church.

2. Parents have the obligation to: teach (Deuteronomy 6:5-9), train (Proverbs 22:6), provide for (II Corinthians 12:14), love them (Titus 2:4), discipline them (Proverbs 19:18), and provide a good influence (II Timothy 1:5).

3. When parents fail in their duties then it will be true of us what was true of those in the time of the Judges (Judges 2:1).

E. FALSE TEACHERS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. False teachers are doing great damage to the church. These false teachers lead men astray (Jeremiah 50:6), teach the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9), speak lies (I Timothy 4:2), do not consent to wholesome words (I Timothy 6:3), destroy homes (Titus 1:11), bring in false doctrines secretly (II Peter 2:1), are insensitive (Isaiah 56:10-11), scatter God's people (Jeremiah 23:2), and prey on God's people instead of feeding them (Ezekiel 34:2-3).



2. Faithful teachers of God's word must: not conceal it (Psalms 40:10), preach in love (Ephesians 4:15), preach the truth on all subjects, keeping proper balance (Acts 20:20, 27), teach to please God—not men (Galatians 1:10), be persistent (II Timothy 4:2), be sincere (II Timothy 1:12), contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3), and be students of his word (I Timothy 4:13).

A. What is our relation in the church?

1. Are we a force in the church, or a weak link?
2. Are we strengthening the church or injurious to the church?

B. "Art thou he who troubleth spiritual Israel?"

—Post Office Box 235

Port Lavaca, Texas 77979-0235

III. Conclusion

EVANGELISM ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN MURMANSK, RUSSIA

Cliff Lyons

Murmansk, Russia is a city located over 200 miles above the Arctic Circle. It has a population of nearly half a million people, making it the largest city in the world above the Arctic Circle. This part of Russia is often referred to as the Kola Peninsula (Kolsky Poluostrov).

One is not in Murmansk long until he is introduced to the public transportation system, especially the trolley-buses. It is an economical way to travel. However, the trolleys are usually crowded, yea "packed like sardines" at times. If one happens to be standing close to someone who has been drinking vodka or who has not recently bathed, he may want to limit his breathing for a while! Murmansk is a city made up of many highrise buildings. The ground floor is sometimes used for business purposes, with living quarters (flats) located on the upper stories. Many of these buildings do not have elevators.

People here face constant darkness for two months during the winter and a never-setting sun for another two months during the summer. Murmansk was leveled to rubble during World War II, but its resilient people endured the war and later rebuilt the city. Like most large cities in the world, most of the people do not take time to study the Bible and learn God's truth. They choose rather to follow tradition and/or their personal feelings. Most who are religious minded are highly influenced by the Russian Orthodox Church.

RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN MURMANSK

In October, 1992 six men, with a group from Southern Christian university, came to Murmansk. Four of them were **Jim Dearman**, **Larry Calendine**, **Terry Gunnells**, and **Ken Newlin**. I do not know the names of the other two. Later, in December, **Billy Bland**, **Joel Wheeler** and **Tim Wilkes** came preaching and surveying the possibilities for evangelism in Murmansk and the Kola Peninsula. In January of 1993 Larry Calendine and Ken Newlin returned to preach the gospel of Christ. It was at this time that Alexander Nesterkin, who is now preaching the gospel of Christ in Murmansk, was baptized into Christ. Chris Calendine, Larry's son, came to Murmansk teaching and preaching in June of 1993.

Later, in September of 1993, 13 preachers and elders journeyed to Murmansk to do evangelistic work and to consider future evangelistic plans for the Murmansk region. Below are the names of these brethren: **Glen Alexander**, **Billy Bland**, **Paul Brantley**, **Johnny Burkhart**, **Curtis Cates**, **Elmer Gathright**, **Bob Hawkins**, **Paul Hooten**, **Cliff Lyons**, **Harold Mangrum**, **Ira Y. Rice, Jr.**, **Don Ruhl** and **Joel Wheeler**. Billy Bland and *Memphis School of Preaching* worked hard to make this evangelistic effort possible. It was a new experience for most of us, travelling to "RUSSIA" to preach and teach the gospel of Christ. Upon our arrival we learned that the local brethren were not publicly meeting regularly. There were perhaps six brethren who began meeting with us at that time. Others were baptized while we were in Murmansk. We visited several of the public schools and taught Bible lessons on various subjects, especially on Christian Evidences. We could hardly believe that we were allowed go into Russian public schools and teach the Bible, but we did and still do on a more limited basis. Also, we preached during the evenings at a public meeting hall. We preached for about 45 minutes, then answered questions for about an hour. As I recall we usually had between 40 and 50 present for the Bible lessons. The people were friendly, but ignorant of God's truth. Atheistic Communism had/taken its toll! One problem stood out to all of us — we did not know the Russian language. Thus, we used translators to help us communicate the gospel of Christ to precious lost souls. There was the need for U.S. preachers to learn the Russian language and for us to help train Russian men to preach the gospel of Christ. Several of us saw the need for one, two or more full time men in the Murmansk work. Bob Hawkins was immediately interested in being one of those men. He returned to the states, resigned his work with the church in Hamilton, Montana, quickly raised his support and was back in Murmansk by late December, 1993. (*To be continued*)

—U.S.A.

415 Belmont

Muskogee, Oklahoma 74403

Russia

cliff@lyons.murmansk.ru

HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE

Jason R. Roberts

When the Duke of Wellington returned from America to his homeland he was questioned as to what impressed him the most about American life? His reply is somewhat startling, "I was amazed at how well the parents obeyed their children."

While the above illustration certainly does not represent the mind-set of all young people, unfortunately, it does reflect, in some measure, not only a prevailing attitude of disobedience in the hearts of our youth, but also a permissive attitude of apathy in the hearts of parents for allowing such rebellion to occur. In Ephesians 6:1-3 the Apostle Paul reminds today's youth of the paramount importance of obeying their parents, and the wonderful blessings that such obedience will bring to their lives.

A COMMAND TO OBEY

The command to obey one's parents is serious. **"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right"** (Ephesians 6:1, emphasis added JRR). The Holy Spirit could have chosen the following words: **"Children, obey your parents."** By doing so, the divine mandate for children to obey their parents would have been settled. Why was it necessary for him to add the phrase **"...for this is right?"** An observation: It is possible that the Holy Spirit anticipated a common reaction which all parents have heard from their children when they are asked to do or not to do something—and that is "Why?" The answer given—"Because I said so." Paul says, **"for this is right."** Evidently the Holy Spirit knew that most children would question the authority and wisdom behind having to obey their parents. Perhaps this is why he intensifies the command for them to obey their parents by driving the divine peg **"for this is right;"** leaving no room for us to question the validity of doing so.

Writing to the church at Colossae, Paul is quite descriptive in the degree to which children are to obey. **"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord"** (Colossians 3:20, emphasis added). The only time children are not required to obey their parents is when they ask them (or forbid them) to do something contrary to the will of God (*cf.*, Acts 5:28).

The Proverb writer said that, **"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child"** (Proverbs 22:15). And certainly children, at times, will think that obeying their parents is foolish. The reason why it appears foolish in their eyes is because they, at times, are foolish, and therefore are unable to see the great wisdom behind their parents' demands and decisions.

The seriousness of obeying one's parents is graphically seen in both the Old and New Testaments. Under the law of Moses a stubborn and rebellious son was taken by his par-

ents, delivered to the elders of the city and stoned to death by all the people (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). If the Law of Moses were still in effect today, we would no doubt see a mass population decrease of young people from the earth! The disobedient children who think they can persistently live in rebellion to their parents and escape the judgment of God are sorely mistaken.

The New Testament, which will one day judge us (John 12:48; Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10), though it does not endorse the stoning of rebellious young people, it does teach that such rebellion is a sure-fire guarantee of death. The apostle Paul catalogs children who are disobedient to their parents with some of the vilest sinners imaginable (Romans 1:18-31). And he says that **"...they which commit such things are worthy of death"** (Romans 1:32)! Jesus is the **"author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"** (Hebrews 5:9). What about those who do not obey their parents? The spiritual condition and ultimate destiny of a disobedient child is extremely serious, and therefore a matter not to be taken lightly.

A PROMISE TO ENJOY

The blessed promise divinely granted to the obedient child is twofold. First, there is the promise of peace. **"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"** (Ephesians 6:2-3, emphasis added). Peace of mind is something for which every child's heart longs. Unfortunately, living in a strife-torn world compounds the problem of their seeking and attaining the peace God wants them to have. Rebellious children, whether they realize it or not, are hurting themselves by living in disobedience. And by doing so, they decisively tip the scales in the favor of unhappiness and strife. Paul says that one of the ways in which children can make their lives more peaceful is to honor their father and mother. Parents are worthy of such honor and respect from their children. Their lives will be happier as a result of them honoring their parents all the days of their lives.

Second, there is the promise of prosperity. **"That it might be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"** (Ephesians 6:3 emphasis added). The words "live long" are only found once in the New Testament. It denotes a well-lived life; a life of abundance and prosperity—within the realm of emotional and spiritual satisfaction. Paul is not talking about the *quantity* of one's life upon earth. Rather, he speaks of the *quality* of one's life. Many obedient children die early. And many rebellious



children live with their rebellion long into their adulthood—some even to their own graves.

Obedient children will no doubt bring honor to God, harmony within the home, and happiness to their lives. On the other hand, disobedient children will certainly bring dishonor to God, division within the home, and destruction to their lives here, and if not repented of, such disobedience will bring eternal destruction to their lives hereafter. May God help all of our young people to love and to obey their parents—giving honor to whom honor is due.

—3950 Forest Hill Irene Road South
Memphis, Tennessee 38125

The Last Word...

FACING THE FUTURE

Eddie Whitten

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). No one can foretell the future with unerring accuracy. Most of us are carried about with winds of doctrine about which we are obviously unaware. It is a sad commentary when the whims of men become the criteria of our religious convictions. It has always been the case with mankind to be led by the vocal ranting of hobby-riders. The art of investigation has languished upon the beds of ignorance and indifference in every aspect of life. Letting someone else tell us what we are to believe and practice has been an all-too-common fact of life throughout the ages. Empires have arisen and fallen because of the ability of avaricious leaders to capture the loyalty of uninformed and trusting followers. Sadly, such trusting and uninformed loyalty is not limited to the political arena. The church of our Lord is burdened with the same unfortunate plague.



SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS

The apostle Paul knew that men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away men after them (Acts 20:29-30). History records the accuracy of Paul's words. The basis of "perverse things" can emanate only from the fertile wisdom and desire of men. The surprising nature of this fact is that those supposedly possessing such wisdom have not, and evidently cannot, see how foolish and unwise such desires are. Paul exposes the foolishness of the wisdom of men in the opening sentences of I Corinthians (1:18ff). It is to be dutifully noted that in all cases of the wisdom of men receiving rebuke from the penmen of the Bible, it is because such so-called wisdom has been arrayed against the word of God. The wisdom of men as the criteria for religion has failed and will fail every time.

The realm of denominationalism continues to grow. Men continually contrive religious dogmas and gather to

DIRECTORY

For advertising in this section, See Masthead, Page 2.

—Alabama—

Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Tel. (205) 796-6802, 429-2026. Sunday: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

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

—California—

Seal Beach—Leisure World Church of Christ, Northwood Club House, 3 room 8, Sun: 11:00 a.m., Bible Study 10:00 a.m., Don Foslien, Evangelist.

—England—

England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 253 Coldhams Lane, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Brian Chadwick, Tel. 01144-1223-501-861. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

—Florida—

Miami—Westwood Lake Church of Christ, 10790 SW 36th Street, Miami, FL 33165, tel. (305) 554-8229. F. Matherly, Evangelist, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (904) 455-7595. Evangelist, Michael Hatcher, Sunday: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—Georgia—

Cartersville—Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1146, 1319 JFH Pkwy (US 41 NW) Cartersville, GA 30120. Tel: (770) 382-6775. E-mail: Cartersville-cofc@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

—Indiana—

Evansville—West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sunday: 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

—Michigan—

Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed: 7:00 p.m.

—Missouri—

Farmington—Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, tel. (573) 756-5925 or 3595. Evangelist, Sean Hochdorf, Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—North Carolina—

Rocky Mount—Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, tel. (919) 977-7556, Mark McDonald, Evangelist.

—Tennessee—

Crossville—Lantana Church of Christ, 7004 Lantana Rd., P.O. Box 2686, Crossville, TN 38557, (615) 788-6404. Sun.: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Jimmie B. Hill, Evangelist.

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 or Steve Ellis, Evangelist, (901) 366-6005.

Nashville area—Villages Church of Christ, 436 Belinda Parkway, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m. Fifteen minutes from downtown Nashville, Cornelius Abbott, III, Evangelist, tel. (615) 758-7406.

—Texas—

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, tel. (281) 353-2707. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. **Home of Houston College of the Bible and the HCB Lectures** beginning the last week in February.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

Lubbock—Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00 a.m., 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.

Portland—Church of Christ, 2009 Wildcat Dr., Portland, TX 78374, tel. (512) 643-6571, Michael Wyatt, Evangelist.

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

—Wyoming—

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 4901 Ridge Rd., Cheyenne, WY 82009. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Loran Gearhart, tel. (307) 634-3040.

themselves those who are uninformed and ignorant of God's word. We often think about renowned men who established the better known denominations such as **Martin Luther, John Wesley, John Smyth, Mary Baker Eddy, et al.**, but there are many more. There are advocates of hobbies among our own brethren who are on the same course of digression. The change agents are proliferating. They are openly advocating the idea of denominational identity for the church of Christ. Others are pursuing personal beliefs under the guise of infallible wisdom that will eventually result in the same end. The belief that mechanical instrumental music in worship is only an option, has already become a matter of contention. So will the teaching that the Holy Spirit directly operates upon the heart of men separate and apart from the word of God. The doctrine that all we do in life is worship except when we sin, or sacrifice connotes worship in every case, is another nonsensical product of the self-acclaimed super intelligence of unapproachable, impeccable knowledge. Unquestioned, indisputable knowledge on the part of a man, or men, should be immediately questioned and disputed.

THE DEVIL'S SPAWN

Factions, sects, denominations, schisms spawn from the false premise of thinking on a level of which others are not capable. One who reaches the level of not being able to be taught is in desperate need of teaching. Only Deity and the inspired writers of the scriptures are outside the scope of learning. Yet, every sect and denomination has developed from such selfish and egotistic persuasion.

What has all this to do with anything? It has everything to do with everything! Paul wrote the churches of Galatia regarding his past. He admitted he had made a mistake. He believed he should destroy the new philosophy, Christianity. After his conversion, he "**buffeted his body**" to make sure he did not go beyond the scriptures in what he preached (I Corinthians 9:27). He preached only "**Christ and him crucified**" (I Corinthians 2:2). He suffered horribly for the cause he preached. Still, he said he had not ac-

complished his goal. He did say that it was not his purpose to dwell on his past life. His future was before him, not behind him. He said,

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).

There is not a whole lot we can do about what we have already done. For those things we have done that are sinful, we can repent. Many have done that. For those things we have taught that are the products of human wisdom and contrary to God's wisdom, we can repent. Many have done that. Many have not. Those who have not have left their first love and some have even gone to the extreme of forming denominations all of which are out of harmony with the gospel. Some will continue to do even that.

The church has faced many crises through the years. It will continue to face many more. We can all rest assured of the victory the faithful will win (I Corinthians 15:51-58; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 17:14). The sad fact of the future we face is the number of precious souls which will be lost as a consequence of following the wisdom of men out of ignorance of the scriptures and indifference toward the inevitable eternity that awaits all of us.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

ARE THESE REALLY OUR BRETHREN AS F. LAGARD SMITH SAYS?

Danny Douglas

For two or three years when I would periodically attend their services, I would slip into a side pew and worship pretty much in my own personal world. Little by little what I observed drew me more and more into what true worship ought to be, (F. LaGard Smith, p. 102, *Who Is My Brother? : Facing A Crisis Of Identity And Fellowship*, Cotswald Publishing, 1997).

These words by **F. LaGard Smith** describe the *Ashton-under-Hill Free Church* in a village near the Cotswald mountains about one hour south of Birmingham, England.

Smith implies that these religious folk just might be our brethren. Among other things he describes them as "British believers" overseen by "godly elders" (p. 101). Not only this, but he also insinuates that they have something that we are missing. He states:

In fact, here was a group of people who had never heard of the "churches of Christ," yet they were very much like us. If they differed from us in any major respect apart from any particular doctrinal understanding, it was in what I sensed to be a much more profound worship experience (p. 101).

Never in my own experience has the phrase "Christians, but not the only Christians" so precisely fit as in the case of some of the believers at Ashton (p. 104).

With each passing day, I have a growing appreciation for the fact that there is such a thing as faith fellowship with those who believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. Although this fellowship clearly falls short of "in Christ" fellowship, it rises higher than the "universal fellowship" which I have with the family of man... (p. 105).

FIRSTHAND OBSERVATION

Now, I realize that good brethren have already reviewed these writings by the former Pepperdine instructor and recently hired Lipscomb faculty member. However, brethren **Graham Moulton**, **Keith Sisman** and myself were

able to make a more in-depth research into the validity of the claims made by Smith above. On June 14, 1999, we observed firsthand (courteously and without participation) a Monday evening service of *Ashton-under-Hill Free Church*. The following information is factual and well-documented, so that the reader may ascertain for himself whether or not *Ashton-under-Hill Free Church* is actually involved in "what true worship ought to be," and are "very much like us," as Smith contends. As sad as it is to have to reveal these facts, here they are.

As the 7:30 p.m. service began, the local preacher, **Charles Archer**, introduced missionaries who were visiting that week for the purpose of "evangelizing" the community. Afterwards, the congregation was led in singing to the accompaniment of a folk guitar. Then, the visiting missionaries were asked to come to the front of the assembly and give testimonials regarding their conversion experience. The first one was presented by Scott, a college-age young man from Florida who testified that he was saved at 5 years old. (The need to be saved at age 5 certainly concurs with the Calvinistic teaching which would come out later.) Next, a young couple was asked to come to the front and testify, with the husband going first and then his wife presenting her testimony before the group. Following this the group sang with the piano being played.

The longest period of time was taken up by **David (Light?)**—hopefully this is the correct spelling). His message was basically on the need to evangelize. He emphasized that people are going to go to hell if they do not trust in Jesus Christ. (One wonders if the hell he warned about is eternal, or simply a state of annihilation as Smith teaches.) Although he stressed the need to be saved, he never mentioned the plan of salvation. He never mentioned baptism, no not even one time.

(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Editor



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Associate Editor
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ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith was begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by *Contending for the Faith*. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needed. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

All advertisements must be in our hands no later than two (2) months preceding the publishing of the issue of the journal in which you desire your advertisement to appear. To avoid being charged for the following month, ads must be canceled by the first of the month. We appreciate your understanding of and cooperation with our advertising policy.

MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. **COST OF SPACE FOR ADS:** Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; half page, \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. **CLASSIFIED ADS:** \$2.00 per line per month. **CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS:** \$30.00 per line per year. **SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES:** Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

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Associate Editorial...

THE END

With the end of December 1999 comes the end of a millennium, a century, a decade, a year, a month, a week, a day, an hour, a minute and a second. Indeed, we are on all sides hemmed in by time. Time—created by God. Time—“the stuff life is made of.” Time—“so little of it.” Time—fleeting and uncertain. Time—the probation period provided by God for man to prove his love or hatred of God.

There is time and a half, over time, time bill, time bomb, time capsule, time card, time chart, time clock, time-consuming, time draft, time exposure, time frame, time-honored, time immemorial, timekeeper, time killer, time lag, time-lapse, time loan, time lock, timepleaser, time out of mind, and... “Whoa,” you say! “Time out!” “Give me some time to catch my breath.” “I need time to think about this.” You do? Well don’t take too much time to do it. As **Yosemite** (Why, there is “time” even in his name!) **Sam** says, “Times a-wastin!”

“SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY”

I trust that the previous words have served to remind us of how wedded to time fleshly finite man is. Let us, therefore, take to heart and practice the words of our Lord when he stated, “**Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof**” (Matthew 6:34). Indeed, as he earlier said, “**Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature**” (Matthew 6:27)? What is his point? Live each day in service to God and tomorrow (if it comes) will take care of itself. No one can live more than a day at a time anyway. Why take thought about things beyond our control? And, time is one of those things? For, after all, he who spoke time into existence will at some point in our future bring it to an end—time will be no more (I Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 10:5, 6). Therefore, “**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil**” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; also see Matthew 6:33). In this way we can redeem the time, recognizing that the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). Indeed, with the song writer we conclude, “Take Time to be Holy.”

—David P. Brown, Associate Editor

NEW PAPER TO BEGIN

I want to take this occasion to announce the beginning of *The Gospel Journal*. The first issue of the paper will appear in January 2000. Her editor, **Dub McClish**, is no stranger to the brotherhood. He is a faithful and able gospel preacher who, since the annual Denton lectureship's inception, has directed it and edited the many fine Denton lecture books. The associate editor is **Tim Nichols**. He has preached for the church in Keyser, West Virginia since 1983. Tim is a faithful young man with much talent. Together they should make an excellent team.

The paper will operate under a governing board composed of **Curtis Cates, Michael Hatcher, Tommy Hicks, Joseph Meador and Kenneth Ratcliff**. It is a non-profit corporation. *Contending for the Faith* recognizes the sincerity, faithfulness and dedication of the men behind this venture. We wish for them the best in their effort to teach the gospel.—Associate Editor

F. LaGard Smith

(Continued From Page 1)

One example of error was when the speaker taught that we are chosen by God before we were ever born. This clear-cut example of Calvinism was a real "wresting" of I Peter 2:9. He said:

God chose us. God chose little ole David Light to be in his family. That is amazing. God looks at me from eternity in the past as it were. He looks down through eternity in the future and he says, "There's gonna' be a person called David Light. He's gonna be born. He's gonna live this kind of life." And God says, "I am gonna' choose him to be in my family." Right from way before I am ever even born. God says, "I'm gonna' choose him." And God chooses me to be part of his family. What a great privilege that is for us. God has chosen me. And it says there I have not chosen God. God has chosen me.

After the speech, Charles Archer opened the service to a lengthy session of spontaneous prayers. He led the first one, in praise of the things that had happened that evening. Evidently he agreed with the events and teachings mentioned above.

Women led about half of the prayers that evening. One obvious theme in the prayers was the plea for the Holy Spirit to come upon them and take control.

FACE TO FACE MEETING

After the service had ended, Moulton and I went to the front to speak with the local preacher. He stated that baptism comes after salvation and not before, according to his view. We pointed out Mark 16:16 and other scriptures to him, and he indicated that he was aware of these scriptures.

In this village congregation we observed within the space of about an hour: Instrumental music, unscriptural woman's role, testimonials, Calvinism, and Pentecostalism. All this notwithstanding, F. LaGard Smith maintains: "So I find myself among faithful, God-fearing, worshipful believers who have taught me much about the dynamics of worship, and yet their response to Christian birth is mixed at best" (p. 105). Moreover, he asserts that theirs is a "much more profound worship experience." How could any sec-

tarian "worship experience" even come close to worship that is "in spirit and in truth" by the Lord's people?

Furthermore, Smith states on page 101: "And on one occasion I was present at a baptism which was done with such emphasis and thoughtfulness that it put our all-too-perfunctory baptisms to shame." (Webster says that "perfunctory" means: "done carelessly, done merely to discharge a duty without interest in the process or result; careless...") How can the baptism of a sincere soul into Christ by faithful brethren ever be "perfunctory" at all? Was the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch into Christ "all-too-perfunctory"?

Moreover, the "plan of salvation," according to literature distributed at *Ashton-under-Hill*, is the "sinner's prayer." Here is a photocopied excerpt from a booklet entitled "The Missing Peace" by a **Mike Hencher**:

What's Involved?

Jesus warned those who wished to follow Him that He claims first place in a person's life.

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me". (Luke 9 v 23)

The step of salvation is a simple but solemn one. Read carefully the following prayer to see if you are really ready to take this saving step

*"Lord Jesus Christ, I need you.
I admit that I have sinned against you
and cannot save myself.
I am truly sorry for my sins.
With your help, I am willing to turn
from everything I know to be wrong
and follow you.
I believe that you died on Calvary's
cross taking my punishment.
Thank you for dying for me.
I accept your free gift of eternal life.
Right here and now I invite you
to come into my life, please forgive all
my sin and be my Saviour, Lord and Friend.
Thank you dear Lord, for answering my
prayer and coming into my life.
Make me the kind of person you want me
to be".*

AMEN.

Can you honestly say that to GOD?
Will you sincerely pray that now?

This perverted "gospel" is a far cry from the plan of salvation revealed in the Book of Acts!

No doubt, the discovery of a congregation of the Lord's people existent in a location formerly unknown to the brotherhood would thrill the heart of every devout child of God. However, to trifle with the idea that this could possibly be the case with a religious group not abiding in the doctrine of Christ, as sincere as they may be, is to undermine the importance of the "whole counsel of God."

A DOCTRINAL CRISIS

Therefore, the crisis involved here is not one of "identity and fellowship," but a matter of adherence to the teaching laid down by our Lord and his apostles in the Sacred Volume. The apostle John declares: **"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"** (II John 9).

In the New Testament we read of how much fellowship God allows us to have with darkness. **"...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"** (I John 1:5). Yet, Pentecostalism, Calvinism, Denominationalism and any other unscriptural "ism" is darkness. It is not a matter of big "F" or little "f" fellowship, or the difference between "faith fellowship" and "in Christ" fellowship. Inspiration declares: **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Ephesians 5:11). The only fellowship which the scripture allows is between those who are in the light with Christ: **"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" (I John 1:7).

Why hold up those in religious error as more spiritual than God's faithful? One cannot be truly spiritual apart from the word of God, which is the "sword of the Spirit." Only when one aligns himself with faithful brethren and the New Testament pattern will he be able to convert the lost religious world to the truth of the gospel. Let us never compromise with those in error, but out of love for their precious souls and for God do all that we can to convert them to the Savior. Let us pray fervently for our brethren who have strayed into the wilderness of human error that they repent.

Jesus Christ loves his church and gave himself up for her. He is the head and savior of his beautiful bride, the church. Jesus Christ built his church, and only his church. The church is his body, and there is only **"one body"** (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23-27; Matthew 16:18). All the saved in all the world are in that body (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23). Let us never disparage her, but ever exalt her. The son of God went up on Calvary and bought the church with **"His own blood"** (Acts 20:28). May we all, with all of our might, live for her, lead souls to her, build her up, protect her, fight for her, keep her pure, give our all to her, and if need be—die for her! Nothing could bring us closer to the heart of God.

—9 Speedwell Close
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United Kingdom

Biblical Questions and Answers...

ALCOHOL OR NOT

Noah Hackworth

July 31, 1999

Harl D. Mansur, Jr., M.D.
Ophthalmology
P.O. Box 8106
Wichita Falls, Texas 76307-8106

Brother Hackworth,

Your article page 21, Volume XXX, No. 7 July 1999, "Contending for the Faith", 1st column, 1st paragraph line 17 has TWO words that messed up the whole credibility of what you wrote.

There is no evidence Christ's miracle produced grape juice. G. juice was not a drink of the time. Wine was then and is aged g. juice would become foul tasting wine but this refreshment served at the wedding feast was better than the first "go 'round". When Timothy said take wine for the sake of your stomach—he most positively was not referring to grape juice. It is a known and irrefutable fact wine is of benefit medicinally and is frequently prescribed to cardiac patients and geriatric patients and is of benefit to us all.

Your two words (in parenthesis) is going to put a guilt feeling on some old people - unnecessarily.

There is no way you can prove it was grape juice. It says wine. Why do you want to alter the scripture?

Regards

(Signed)

Harl Mansur, Jr., M.D.

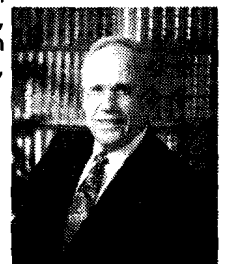
Wine was furnished for a wedding festival and furnished by my Lord It is not wrong, not a sin to have wine on such an occasion now either. Overindulgence in food, drink, sleep, work is a sin. (Signed) H.

AN OPEN LETTER RESPONSE TO

Dr. Harl Mansur, Jr., M.D.

Dr. Mansur:

Since you addressed me as "brother," I am assuming that you are a "brother in Christ" In any case, in the article you referred to in "Contending for the Faith, Vol. XXX, No. 7, July/1999, page 21, mention was made of the miracle at Cana, the turning of water into wine. Following the word "wine," in parenthesis I put "grape juice." My article really had nothing to do with whether the "wine" [grape juice] in John 2, was an intoxicant, but I obviously violated your conscience to the extent that you took issue with what I said, and in your letter you were determined to offset the parenthetical expression. Dr. Mansur, you expressed your strong opinion on the subject, but in reality that is exactly what it was—your opinion, and it was not convincing. You



stated [1] “that there is no evidence Christ’s miracle produced grape juice,” and [2] “there is no way you can prove it was grape juice. It says wine.” It seems clear to me, Doctor, that you are a “frequent user” of wine; I can only hope that you are never “under the influence” when you are treating a patient. I am appalled, Dr. Mansur, that a professional gentleman [brother] of your stature would publicly recommend the use of alcohol, medicinally or socially, knowing of its contribution to moral decadence especially discernible in the form of broken homes, wasted lives, and even suicide. I encourage you to rethink your position.

Several years ago in a California city, two fine Christians were killed by a motorist who was under the influence of alcohol. This couple were former Stockton, California residents. The brother, a gospel preacher, had ministered to a local church during that time. He and his good wife were involved in the work of the Lord in Africa, but had returned to the states for reports and visits. On that fatal evening they had just concluded a visit with some fellow church members, and were headed away from their residence when their lives were taken from this earth by a person who was in a drunken stupor. Just before he killed these two Christians, this same person ran over and killed a small child a few blocks away, literally dragging him under the car for some distance. Little did the preacher and his wife know that they would survive the 12,000 miles journey to and from Africa, only to be killed by an intoxicated derelict who should have been in jail instead of behind the wheel of a car.

It is true that this tragedy was effected by a man who was intoxicated; he had too much to drink; he had imbibed more than one drink, but of course one cannot become intoxicated without having that “first drink,” and whoever heard of one becoming an alcoholic without taking that first drink? One thing is clear: this accident would not have happened without the influence of alcohol. It is absurd for Christians to think that “a social drink,” even in a “controlled environment” cannot lead to the loss of self-control. Authorities testify that “the social drink” and “intoxication” are not oceans apart. In fact, the difference between the two is only “a matter of time and degree.” Social drinking among Christians has become a problem, and justification of the practice has, in part, been sought by the claim that Jesus turned water into intoxicating wine in Cana of Galilee. Jesus, it is said, endorsed intoxicants by his actions in Cana. Therefore, Christians can moderately engage in the use of alcoholic beverages. This is apparently your position, Dr. Mansur, and it is most unfortunate for you.

TEXT STATED AND ANALYZED

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. Now there were six waterpots set there after the Jews’

manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory and his disciples believed on him (John 2:1-11—ASV, 1901).

The first of the signs of Jesus took place in Cana of Galilee, and contrary to the thinking of some the most important thing was the manifestation of his glory, not the water that had become wine (v. 11). When the supply of wine ran out (v. 3), Jesus ordered the servants to fill the waterpots with water, which they did right up to the brim, possibly avoiding any argument as whether there was wine already in the waterpots. Whether all the water in each of the waterpots became wine or if the water became wine only as it was drawn out, is difficult to determine. Possibly it was the former, but it is not necessary for us to know this because the purpose of Jesus was served in either case. He turned the water to wine (v. 9). The ruler of the feast then proceeded to describe what usually happens at such a festive occasion (v. 10). The good wine is served first, then that which is worse is served after men have “drunk freely” (v. 10). It is not stated that the guests at this feast “drunk freely,” but that is usually what happens upon such occasions.

Did Jesus turn water into intoxicating wine? If indeed he did it (1) would not be harsh to interpret the phrase “and when men have drunk freely” or “when men have well drunk” to mean intoxication, and (2) it would have made possible what the Holy Spirit said not to do, namely, to become drunk with wine (1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:20; Ephesians 5:18). But we do not believe (1) that the phrase “well drunk” or “drunk freely” has to mean “intoxication,” or (2) that the expression refers to the guests at Cana. Actually, those who hold to the view that it is permissible for the Christian to drink intoxicants must prove, and this includes you, Dr. Mansur, that the word “wine” in John 2 was intoxicating. **A.T. Robertson** says:

(Hotan methusthosin, when men have drunk freely). Indefinite temporal clause with hotan and first aorist passive subjunctive of methusko. The verb does not mean that these guests are now drunk, but that this is a common custom to put the worst (ton elasso, the less, the inferior) wine last. It is real wine that is here meant by oinos here. Unlike the Baptist Jesus mingled in the social life of the time, was even abused for it [Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:34]. But this fact does not mean that today Jesus would approve the modern liquor trade with its damnable influences. The law of love expounded by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8 to 10 and in Romans 14 and 15 teaches modern Christians to be willing gladly to give up what they see causes so many to stumble into sin.”¹

Henry Alford says,

We may be sure that the Lord would not have sanctioned nor ministered to, actual drunkenness. Only those who can conceive this, will find any difficulty here; and they will find difficulties every where.²

WINE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Young's Analytical Concordance lists seven words in the Old Testament which translate the word wine. They are *chemer, chamar, yayin, yeqeb, mimsak, sobe, enab, asis, shekar, shemarim, and tirosh*.³ This family of words is found approximately 196 times in the Old Testament. *Yayin* is used at least 130 times, while *tirosh* is used 38 times. Dr. Young shows that *shekar, yayin, and tirosh* are used more than the others, and *yayin* is used more than any other Old Testament word. It means "wine, what is pressed out, grapejuice."⁴ *Tirosh* is defined, according to Dr. James Strong, as "must or fresh grape juice as just squeezed out by implication (rarely) fermented. Wine:—(new, sweet) wines."⁵ The word wine in the Old Testament is admittedly used to denote an alcoholic beverage or intoxication. "And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent" (Genesis 9:21—ASV, 1901). But in other instances the juice of the grape is called wine before it is pressed out; Isaiah 16:10 for example: "...[No] treader shall tread out wine in the presses: I have made the vintage shout to cease" (Isaiah 16:10—ASV, 1901). Therefore, whether wine is to be considered as an intoxicant depends upon the context.

WINE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

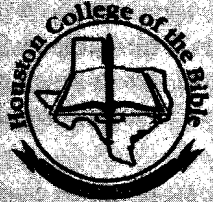
Dr. Young describes *oinos* to mean "Wine, grape juice."⁶ "...*Oinos* is used in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) to translate the generic Hebrew word *yayin* which means the juice of grapes at various stages (wine or must; fresh, new or old). But *oinos* is also used to translate the Hebrew *tirosh*, which definitely means fresh juice of the grapes, must or new wine (non-alcoholic). *Oinos* which is used for wine 28 of the 29 times wine is found in the New Testament is defined as: wine, must, grape or new wine."⁷

There are those among us who think the "wine" of John 2 was more than grape juice: "Also, the opinion of the ruler of the feast that the wine Jesus made was superior in quality to that they had drunk earlier, supports the conclusion that it was not merely pure grape juice."⁸ On the other hand there is sufficient evidence to believe the "pure juice or blood of the grape" is the "wine" in John 2 because (1) one cannot imagine the son of God providing intoxicating wine to the guests at Cana knowing that it would create the possibility of drunkenness; (2) and because the Greek word "*oinos*" is a general term. It can be and is used in the scripture to indicate "that which is not intoxicating," the simple "blood or juice of the grape (*cf.*, Isaiah 16:10; Joel 2:24). Albert Barnes declared:

The wine referred to here was doubtless such as was commonly drunk in Palestine. That was the pure juice of the grape. It was not brandied wine, nor drugged wine, nor wine compounded of various substances, such as we drink in this land. The common wine drunk in Palestine was that which was the simple juice of the grape. We use the word wine now to denote the kind of liquid which passes under that name in this country—always containing a considerable portion of alcohol—not only the alcohol produced by fermentation, but alcohol added to keep it or make it stronger. But we have no right to take that sense of the word, and go with it to the interpretation of the Scriptures. We should endeavor to place ourselves in the exact circumstances of those times, ascertain precisely what the idea the word would convey to those who used it then, and apply that sense to the word in the interpretation of the Bible; and there is not the slightest evidence that the word so used would have conveyed any idea but that of the pure juice of the grape, not the slightest circumstance mentioned in this account that would not be fully met by such a supposition. No man should adduce this instance in favor of drinking wine unless he can prove that the wine made in the 'waterpots' of Cana was just like the wine which he proposes to drink.

The burden of proving that Jesus did make intoxicating wine is with those who make the accusations. They are the ones who say the wine was intoxicating. John does not say so! It is a prejudiced and unscholarly determination that says the Greek word *oinos* (the word used here) must always mean intoxicating wine wherever the word is used. In fact, New Testament and classical usage show that the word may mean a number of things. Mayer shows that *oinos* is even used of the vine itself (*cf.*, Revelation 6:6) rather than the juice. In classical Greek, usage may be cited to show *oinos* designating the grape itself, the juice still within the grape, the fresh pressed juice, and unintoxicating drinks. A corresponding word in the Hebrew language is *yayin*. When Hebrew scholars translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language (known as the Septuagint), they used the Greek word *oinos* to express the meaning of their word *yayin*. The word *oinos* is used in the Septuagint as a generic term for wine—fresh, cooked, fermented juices alike. (*cf.*, Numbers 6:4; Judges 13:4; where 'wine' is used for the grape itself)...

Aristotle, Pliny and Nicander speak of *oinos* that does not intoxicate. Classical writing could be cited to show that the ancients knew of five ways of keeping grape juice from fermentation, and they called such preserved juice *oinos*. No one should use this instance to justify drinking today unless he can prove absolutely the wine Jesus made is just like the wine they propose to drink!¹⁰



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What, then, does this information mean? It means (1) that the word "wine" in both the Old and New Testaments is used to indicate that which intoxicates as well as that which does not; (2) that the context must determine the meaning, and (3) it means that by definition and context the word wine in John 2 does not require "an intoxicant" as its meaning.

THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL DRINKING

The exact time and circumstance under which "social drinking" first became a problem in the church are unknown. Prior to 1960, there were no faithful gospel preachers who were publicly preaching that "social drinking" is either a freedom, an expedient, or acceptable. Since then, however, some preachers have begun and continue to affirm that the consumption of alcohol as a beverage is permissible for the Christian. Note the following quote:

Christ's disciple does not abstain from alcoholic beverages because of scriptural injunction. Nowhere does the Bible say that is morally wrong to drink an alcoholic beverage. It does teach that it is a sin to drink to excess or to become intoxicated.¹¹

The author of this statement is saying that (1) alcohol is not explicitly condemned in the Bible, and (2) unless it is, it may be consumed as a beverage by the Christian. But as I recall, anything that proves too much proves nothing, so let us see if this approach proves too much. A. Social drinking, unless it is explicitly condemned by the scripture, is permissible for the Christian. B. Social drinking is not explicitly condemned by the scripture. C. Therefore, social drinking is permissible for the Christian. This is valid reasoning according to the author of the statement quoted above. But, there is something wrong! The major premise is false. The assertion that a thing has to be explicitly condemned by the Bible before it is wrong is false. This does not follow. Consider this: A. The use of cocaine, unless it is explicitly condemned in the Bible, is permissible for the Christian. B. Cocaine is not explicitly condemned by the scripture. C. Therefore, cocaine is permissible for the Christian. Again, A. Marijuana, unless it is explicitly condemned in the Bible, may be smoked by the Christian. B. Marijuana is not explicitly condemned in the Bible. C. Therefore, marijuana may be smoked by the Christian. Finally, A. Gambling, unless it is explicitly condemned by the Bible, may be engaged in by the Christian. B. Gambling is not explicitly condemned in the Bible. C. Therefore, gambling may be engaged in by the Christian. In every one of the above arrangements, the major premise is incorrect. Therefore, the conclusion is incorrect in every case. To affirm that a thing has to be explicitly condemned in the Bible before it is wrong opens the gates for the introduction of every kind of evil imaginable (cf., Galatians 5:21). Paul the apostle ends his discussion of the works of the flesh with the phrase "and such like." The "such like" of this passage 15 is tremendously important; it covers a lot of territory. The apostle says those who practice the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God, and this includes everything that could be classified under the "such like."

ABUSE OF MATTHEW 11:18-19; LUKE 7:33-34

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners (Matthew 11:18-19—ASV, 1901)!

For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a demon. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners (Luke 7:33-34—ASV, 1901)!

These texts have been offered as "proof" that Jesus drank intoxicating wine. They prove no such thing! Are we justified in assuming that "winebibber" in these texts means that Jesus was accustomed to drinking wines which were intoxicating? Such a conclusion requires a large imagination. How is the word "winebibber" to be translated in these passages? The Greek word for wine is "*oinopotes*," and is translated "winebibber" (*Berry's Greek Interlinear*);¹² "A drinker, a winebibber, given to wine" (*Thayer*);¹³ "Wine-drinker" (*Arndt and Gingrich*);¹⁴ "A wine-drinker" (*Robinson*);¹⁵ "A wine-drinker" (*Vine*);¹⁶ "Wine-bibber" (*The Expositor's Greek New Testament*);¹⁷ "Wine-drinker" (*Young's Analytical Concordance*).¹⁸ Not one of these scholars mentions the type of wine intended by the word "wine-bibber" in either Matthew 11 or Luke 7. It is not possible therefore to conclude that Jesus was a drinker of intoxicating wine.

Neither eating nor drinking translates *mete esthion mete pinon*. *Bloomfield's Greek New Testament* says,

Mete esthion mete pinon is an hyperbolic expression, well characterizing the ascetic austerity of John. By the force of the opposition, *esthion kai pinon* must denote the contrary, namely, the living like other men.¹⁹

Of Jesus, Albert Barnes says,

Jesus undoubtedly lived according to the general customs of the people of his time. He did not affect singularity; he did not separate himself as a Nazarite; he did not practice severe austerities. He ate that which was common and drank that which was common. As wine was a common article of beverage among the people, he drank it. It was the pure juice of the grape, and for anything that can be proved, it was without fermentation. In regard to the kind of wine which was used, see notes on Jn. ii. 10. No one should plead the example, at any rate, in favour of making use of the wines that are commonly used in this country—wines, many of which are manufactured here, and without a particle of the pure juice of the grape, and most of which are mixed with noxious drugs to give them colour and flavour.²⁰

CONCLUSION

Dr. Mansur, you said we have no evidence to prove that the wine of John 2 was grape juice, and yet we have submitted enough proof to warrant the thinking that the "wine" of John 2 was likely nothing but the pure juice or blood of the grape, and that it was not intoxicating. What will this mean to you? Perhaps nothing. But it should prove that you need to stay away from the use of wine on a social basis, and also remember that because some physicians say wine is good for medicinal purposes, does not make it so.

Doctors do not legislate morals, the Bible does. Do Christians who drink have any influence over non-Christian who do not? Would a gospel preacher who drinks socially really be effective in his work? Will social drinking make an elder or deacon more effective? Will Christians who drink on a social basis be proper examples for our young people? Doctor Mansur, can you honestly answer these questions in the affirmative? Wouldn't it be far better for a man of your stature to discourage social drinking rather than trying to defend it? And remember, some doctors say that smoking marijuana will relieve certain physical symptoms. Are you ready to endorse that?

—4400 W. Tulare Avenue
Visalia, California 93277

ENDNOTES

- 1 A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 5, pp. 36-37.
- 2 Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 707.
- 3 *Young Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, p. 1058.
- 4 Young, loc. Cit.

- 5 Strong's Concordance to the Bible, p. 124.
- 6 Young, loc. cit.
- 7 Jim Waldron, *Living Soberly, Righteously and Godly*, Third Annual Lectureship, East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, Knoxville, TN: April 7-9, 1977, pp. 17-18.
- 8 Burton Coffman, *Commentary' on John*, pp. 61-61, quoted in W.D. Jeffcoat, *The Bible and Social Drinking*, p. 36.
- 9 Albert Barnes, *Barnes on the New Testament*, Luke-John, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954, pp. 193-194.
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Restoration Reflections...

RICE HAGGARD A FRONTIER PREACHER

Paul Vaughn

There are many soldiers of the cross whose service for Christ is distinguished beyond measure. Yet there are also numerous faithful Christians who do immense labor for the Lord that very little is known about their work. They go the second mile to speak the truth in love, their heart is set to defend the gospel message, they spend untold hours in helping the needy or those suffering with broken hearts and their accomplishments fade into antiquity without notoriety. Their only aim is to serve God and point people to Heaven.

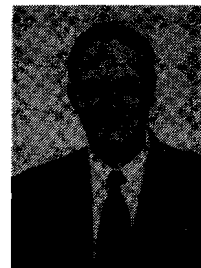
Rice Haggard is one of those individuals whose service to God is little known. Yet, his influence is felt even today because he pointed people to the Bible, encouraging them to wear the name Christian to the exclusion of all man made, sectarian names.

FRONTIER PREACHER

America in the 1600's was mostly wilderness. There are very few records of the average individual. If a diary was not kept, or a biography not written, at best information is sparse. Rice Haggard was born in 1769 in Norfolk County, Virginia, the son of **Edmond Haggard**. There is very little information about his mother at this time. She was of Welsh decent and her maiden name was Rice. Haggard had five brothers and two sisters. His brother, David, later became a preacher in Kentucky.

In 1739 the Methodist Movement came to America. Methodism did not start out as a church in the new country,

but as a society. By 1787, the Methodist societies developed into Methodist churches. It was in 1787 at the age of eighteen that Rice Haggard joined the Methodist Church. Haggard was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1791 at the age of twenty-two. He was given a circuit to ride which included Kentucky County, Virginia. Haggard had a huge circuit to cover because in 1792 Kentucky County, Virginia was admitted to the United States as fifteenth state. Haggard married **Nancy Grimes Wiles**, the widow of **Samuel Wiles**. She was the daughter of **William Grimes** who served as an officer under George Washington. It is interesting to note that **Nathanael Haggard**, the uncle of Rice, moved his family to Kentucky settling in Clark County in the decade following the Revolutionary War.



SURREY COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Surrey County, Virginia was a very important place for Rice Haggard. The Republican Methodists had been formed on December 25, 1793 by **James O'Kelly**, in which Haggard was a part. In a meeting of the Republican Methodists on August 24, 1794 Rice Haggard stood up "with a copy of the New Testament in his hand and said, 'Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of the faith and practice, and by it we are told that the that the disciples were called Christians and I move that henceforth and forever the fol-

lowers of Christ be known as Christians simply.”¹ Ten years latter on June 28, 1804, Haggard made the same statement to **Barton Stone** and the Springfield Presbytery. After the meeting with Stone, Haggard published a book, tract (it was thirty-one pages) on the name “Christian.”

There is some controversy as to where Haggard got the idea to use the name Christian. **Adron Doran**, in a study of Rice Haggard, noticed that “significant similarity between what Haggard wrote in his pamphlet and “An Essay on The Name,” written by **Benjamin Grosvenor**, in 1728, and published in London.”² There was a group of Presbyterians that called Haggard’s attention to a sermon written by **Samuel Davies**, a Presbyterian preacher on the name “Christian,” called:

The Sacred Import of The Christian Name.” They were implying that Haggard had used Davies’ material. Haggard was delighted to “learn that this famous preacher had advocated the same idea that possessed his own mind so thoroughly. Yet he was disappointed to find that Mr. Davis held the notion only as a theory; it was good exhortation to his congregation but he showed not the slightest notion of putting it into practice.”³

How much of the material of Davis and Grosvenor used in his writing, if any, only Haggard and God knows. One thing that stands out is that Haggard not only taught it, he also practiced it.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, KENTUCKY

In 1798 **John Adams** was President of the United States and the Northwest Fur Company completed the Sault Sainte Marie canal in Canada. It was also the year David Haggard, Rice’s brother, moved to Cumberland County Kentucky. It is interesting to note that David Haggard used the name “Christian” to identify himself and the church in

1800. In order to be able to perform marriages in Kentucky one must be licensed and bonded. “**David Haggard** produced satisfactory proof of his being in regular communion with the society called the Christian Church of which he was a member.”⁴ David Haggard produced this proof in August 1800. This was ten months before the Cane Ridge Revival. Rice Haggard moved to Haggard’s Branch in Cumberland County, Kentucky about 1802 or 1803. His move to Kentucky put him in the right place to influence Barton Stone to use the name Christian to the exclusion of sectarian names in June of 1804.

After Rice Haggard moved to Kentucky he moved back to Virginia. He then moved back to Kentucky to ultimately settle in Burkesville, Cumberland County. He worked along with Stone to teach New Testament Christianity until 1819 when he went to Champaign, Ohio on an evangelist trip and personal business. It was on this trip that he took sick and died at the age of fifty. It is believed that he was buried in Xenia, Ohio. As in his life, his death leaves a great many questions unanswered.

The power of an influence is seen in the life of Rice Haggard. He was willing to stand up for God’s word encouraging people to be Christians and nothing else. There is a need today for men like Rice Haggard.

—223 West Maple Avenue
Lancaster, Kentucky 40444

ENDNOTES

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- 2 Adron Doran, Rice Haggard, Triumph and Tragedy, Edited Paul Vaughn (Jackson) 1995, p.175.
- 3 Colby, p.29
- 4 Colby, p. 34

EVANGELISM ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN MURMANSK, RUSSIA

Cliff Lyons

It is encouraging to know that the church of Christ exists in Murmansk, Russia. On the other hand it is sad that the church is so small in a city of half a million people. However, souls must be won one at a time as we teach and preach the gospel of Christ. This is not an easy task in Murmansk, but we will keep on uprooting the evil plants of atheism, superstition and false religions as we proclaim the pure gospel of Christ to lost souls here. A few precious souls in Murmansk now live in hope of heaven. They hope to hear on that great judgment day, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

THE GOOD WORK OF BOB HAWKINS

In an earlier article we noted that the work in Murmansk had its beginning in 1992 - 93. **Bob Hawkins** moved here the middle of December 1993. Bob received his invitation from School #15 which had signed a contract with Mem-

phis School of Preaching. He taught Bible history in this school for about two and one-half years. This is where he met Ilya, an English teacher and my translator, who was later converted. Bob did a good work in those early days helping edify babes in Christ and reach out to a few more lost souls. He also taught in schools 51 and 57. Just over a year ago Bob married a fine Russian sister, **Elena**, who has two children, **Zhenya** (now in college) and **Kirill**. Elena is an English teacher and has made good progress in her Christian growth. They are a happy family and Bob contin-

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ues to do a good work here. The Coldwater Church of Christ in Coldwater, Mississippi oversees Bob's work.

CURTIS CATES — LOOKING AHEAD

In September of 1993 **Curtis Cates**, director of the *Memphis School of Preaching* approached me while we were here in Murmansk about the possibility of beginning an extension of the MSOP here. It sounded like a good idea to me and others. The need for training Russian preachers was obvious to all of us. In July of 1994 **Ron Cosby** and I traveled to Murmansk to help with the work for about three weeks. **Lenny Reagan** was also here at that time. The three of us helped form the document to get the Murmansk Church of Christ registered with the Russian government. However, since then the new religious law has made much of what we accomplished null and void. Then in January 1995 Paul Hooten and I came to Murmansk to help with the work.

Ira Y. Rice, Jr. was also in Murmansk about this time. He is now 82 years young, but still helping to expand the borders of the kingdom! I stayed for two months to see if I could handle the cold winter months. It was March when I returned to Muskogee, Oklahoma and resigned from my work with the Eastside Church of Christ. The Eastside congregation kindly continued my support while I raised funds for the Russian work. I love the dear brethren at Eastside. They help support the work in Murmansk.

SOUTHAVEN CHURCH OF CHRIST OVERSEES LYONS' WORK

As I began to raise my support, **Billy Bland** told me that the Southaven Church Christ might want to talk with me. I soon met **Bill Pierce** and **Coleman Simpson**, elders of the great *Southaven Church of Christ*, Southaven, Mississippi. **Larry Everson** has since this time become one of the elders. They were interested in the Russian work and willingly became my "overseeing" congregation. They have contributed time, effort, advice, money, etc., to help with the work here. I wish every missionary could have an overseeing congregation like the church at Southaven.

B.J. Clarke is the fine and able gospel preacher there. I am personally indebted to **Bill Bryant**, who was at the time one of the preachers at Southaven. He spent many hours

keeping our supporters informed. I deeply appreciate these good brethren and the church at Southaven. My travels for five months took me to numerous congregations in several states. Honestly, it was not an easy time for me (raising support), but generally brethren were kind and generous and by September 1 had raised my support, had my suitcases packed and visa in hand.

LEAVING MUSKOGEE AND HEADED FOR MURMANSK, RUSSIA

By September 1995 I was in Murmansk working with my friend, Bob Hawkins and the *Murmansk Church of Christ*. I had left my dear wife, **Marty**, in Muskogee.

My plans were to stay for about three months at a time (the longest period of time has been five months). In fact, all of my visas, except for one, have been for three months. There have been a few times when I would have my airline tickets, but no visa until late the day before departing for Russia early the next morning. God has blessed us and somehow it has always worked out for me to return again and again for four years now. Marty is now coming with me. It was not easy being away from each other for three months at a time. Thus, we are now happy to be together in our Lord's work here. Earlier, when our boys were young, we spent five years doing mission work in New Zealand. It was a hard work too, but the work here is more difficult, especially because of the language barrier.

ALEXANDER NESTERKIN TO MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

When I came to Murmansk, Russia **Alexander Nesterkin** and his family went to Memphis, Tennessee where he enrolled in the Memphis School of Preaching for two years. Alexander completed his studies and returned to Murmansk during the summer of 1997. He had about 3000 clock hours of Bible study at MSOP and is an able gospel preacher. He and his wife, **Tatyana**, are also doctors. They have two children. It is good to know that should Bob and I be refused visas to stay and work in Murmansk, Alexander would be here to carry on with the work.

—U.S.A.

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FELLOWSHIP WITH THE DENOMINATIONS

Marvin L. Weir

Apostate brethren who have no respect for God's word have been busy for years sowing denominational seed and praying for a fruitful harvest. Before **Randy Mayeux** left the *Preston Road Church of Christ* and began his own church he is on record as saying:

I have never understood – I mean there are people who literally believe among us that a person is better off not believing in Christ at all as they are believing in Christ but never being immersed. I don't know about you, but I hope Billy Graham gets some response when he preaches behind the iron curtain. I really do.

Now almost ten years later **Rubel Shelly** is promoting a *Billy Graham Crusade* in the September 29, 1999 edition of *Lovelines* (his weekly newsletter). The "Crusade" is planned for June 1-4, 2000 in Nashville, Tennessee. Shelly says:

This crusade has the potential to be a **significant event in the spiritual life of many people** in our city ... Woodmont Hills supports the decision of Dr. Graham and his ministry team to be in Nashville. Even though traditional revivals and crusade events are no longer believed to be the best way to **reach people with the message of Christ**, the uniqueness of this event stands to make it **effective in reaching many who don't know Christ** ... It is important for the members of our church family to understand **why we will be enthusiastic participants**. Billy Graham presents Jesus Christ as mankind's only hope for eternal life ... If it is right to link arms with other believers to oppose pornography and drugs, surely it cannot be wrong to join with them to **preach Christ crucified** ... The Graham Crusade will challenge the church in Nashville to reap a harvest of souls to God's glory ... The invitation to be given each evening will be for persons to make a decision to **accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord**. Respondents will then make a self-designating choice to be counseled **about the meaning of their decision by people from several different groups**. We will be working closely with the campaign effort to advise and teach those who mark "Church of Christ" ... With the blessing of our shepherds, Rubel Shelly is serving as a General Committee Member on behalf of this outreach effort. Several of our shepherds wrote **letters of invitation to Dr. Graham to encourage him to come to our city**. Training sessions for crusade workers will be hosted on our property. And we ask all of you to **pray for the success of this effort to exalt Jesus Christ** in our great city (emph. mine, MLW).

I am bold to say that **Billy Graham** has **never reached people with the "message of Christ."** Our Lord did not die for the Baptist Church or for Baptist doctrine (or any denomination or their doctrines)! Did you notice that Shelly said the Graham crusade will "challenge the church in Nashville to reap a harvest of souls?" All the denominations in Nashville have suddenly become "the church." "Several different groups" will counsel folks who respond.

I wonder why? It is because they do not all believe the same thing – that is why!

The November 17, 1999 volume of *Lovelines* is just as nauseating to those who truly love the Lord. Shelly says:

Over the past decade, **Woodmont Hills has enjoyed participating in Community Thanksgiving Services with other churches in our neighborhood**. Last year it was our turn to be the host church. **This year we will be guests – along with Brookhaven Cumberland Presbyterian, Cofers Chapel Free Will Baptist, First Christian, and other churches in Oak Hill – of Glen Leven Presbyterian Church ...** So plan to be present at 6:30 p.m. on November 23 at **Glen Leven Presbyterian Church ...** The evening worship experience will include readings, music, and prayers. **Rubel Shelly has been invited to present the Thanksgiving message (emph. mine, MLW).**

Christ is the head of his church which he purchased with his blood (Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 20:28). The Lord emphatically taught, **"Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up"** (Matthew 15:13). Instead of being the author of denominations, Christ is opposed to them. The inspired words of Paul are a deathblow to man-made churches. In I Corinthians 1:10, 12, 13 Paul writes:

Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment ... Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. **Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? (ASV-1901)**

The Rubel Shellys and Max Lucados may fellowship the denominations, but a follower of Christ will **"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them"** (Ephesians 5:11). Nothing promotes ignorance of God's word quicker than ceasing to study it!

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- 9:30 A.M. "The New Testament Prediction of the Apostasy" Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:30 A.M. "The Difference in the 1st Century Church and the Catholic Church?" Noah Hackworth
4:00 P.M. "History of the Apostasy and the Catholic Church, AD 150-700" Paul Vaughn
5:00 P.M. "History of the Catholic Church, AD 700-1500" Tracey Dugger
6:00 P.M. "History of the Catholic Church, AD 1500 to the Present" Tom Wacaster

Monday, February 28

- 9:00 A.M. "Standard of Authority for the Catholic Church and For the Lord's Church" Kenneth Ratcliff
10:00 A.M. "False Miracles of the Catholic Church" Roddy Covington
*10:00 A.M. "The Role of a Christian Woman" Tonne Williamson
11:00 A.M. "The Intolerance of Roman Catholicism" Eddie Whitten
1:30 P.M. "The Confessional and Its Abuses" Jessie Whitlock
2:30 P.M. "The Seven Sacraments" Gary Summers
3:30 P.M. "The Worship of the Catholic Church" Danny Douglas
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Review of Campbell-Purcell Debate" Tyler Young
8:00 P.M. "Catholic Forgeries and Propaganda: Errors in the Versions of Scriptures" B. J. Clarke

Tuesday, February 29

- 9:00 A.M. "The Organization of the Catholic Church" Johnnie Scaggs
10:00 A.M. "The Apocrypha: Is It Part of the Bible?" David Watson
*10:00 A.M. "New Testament Examples for Christian Women" Tonne Williamson
11:00 A.M. "Maryolatry" Daniel Denham
1:30 P.M. "The Catholic Doctrine of the 10 Commandments and Their View of the Old Testament" Barry Grider
2:30 P.M. "The All Sufficiency of the Scriptures and Its Conflict With Catholic Doctrine" David Baker
3:30 P.M. "The Syllabus of Errors of Pius the 9th" Jerry Murrell
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Review of the Conley-Luther-Narvaez Debate" Darrel Conley
8:00 P.M. "Was Peter the First Pope?" Tom Hicks

Wednesday, March 1

- 9:00 A.M. "The Catholic Doctrine of Original Sin" Roelf Ruffner
10:00 A.M. "Priests, Bishops, Monks, Nuns, Synods and Councils of the Catholic Church" Marvin Weir
11:00 A.M. "The Scandals of Catholic History" Michael Light
1:30 P.M. "The Dogmatism of the Catholic Church" Billy Bland
2:30 P.M. "The Celebration of Mass and the Doctrine Of Transubstantiation" Randy Mabe
3:30 P.M. "Catholic Holidays, Rosary, Relics, Praying to the Saint" Royce Williamson
DINNER BREAK
7:00 P.M. "Review of the Stevens - Bevers Debate" Lynn Parker
8:00 P.M. "The Catholic Doctrine Of Purgatory Versus What the Bible Teaches" Michael Hatcher

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THE WARFARE OF DISTRACTION

Jeff Sweeten

Waging war has long been a colorful pursuit, laced with innovation and intrigue. From Nimrod to the Nazis, from ancient Assyria to modern Somalia, nearly every conceivable method of conquest has been attempted in some form or another. One of the more formidable challenges to the primitive militia was the walled city. From ancient China to Medieval Europe, the fortified citadel challenged the resourcefulness of many a field general.

A DIRTY AND TRICKY BUSINESS

One Lombard Lord of eleventh century Europe found a primitive method of biological warfare to be especially effective. The rise in the catapult's popularity, and its evolution as an ordinance delivery system (enabling the launching of rather large projectiles), dramatically changed the tactics of the city siege. Instead of submitting to unavoidable and massive losses while scaling guarded walls, an army would encircle a fortified city and, in the midst of hot, tar-balls of fire, would also heave the ripe carcasses of cows or horses into the city square. They popped on impact, of course, and made for a messy clean up. However, the limited knowledge of germs in that era worked to the benefit of the invading hostiles. The decaying carcasses soon became a contaminated, infectious, polluted pestilence that ended up a debilitating plague. Within a short while, the locals were sick and dying, and ready to concede the city, which was usually burnt to the ground for obvious reasons. *War is a dirty business.*

Genghis Khan was one of the most innovative in city sieging. A bloodthirsty Mongol whose joy in life was to "clasp his enemies wife and daughter to his breast," he lived to pillage, rape and murder. Early in his conquest of China, he encountered a seemingly invincible walled city. To his own army's surprise, he agreed not to sack the belligerent citizens if they would give him, as a gift, all of their cats and swallows. That sounded better than peasant shish kebab, so hundreds of avian/feline offerings were caged and delivered to the mighty Khan. Having received them, General Genghis instructed each of his men to acquire one animal, tie a cotton ball to the tail of his personal pet, light the cotton ball and turn it loose just outside the city's walls. Of course, the panicked creatures immediately fled to their former homes, lighting small fires throughout a city of thatched roofs and backyards brimming with bonsai. As

the population scurried about putting out little fires, Genghis Khan and his army scaled the deserted walls, opened the city gates, finished the incineration, and killed all the inhabitants. *When you are dealing with a liar, war is a tricky business, too.*

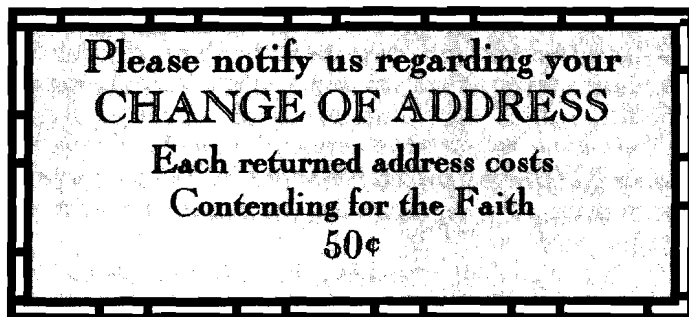
OUR WARRING ADVERSARY

Combine all the rot and filth on earth and add Genghis Khan, and you still do not have Satan's equal. The devil is a sorry piece of reality whose very essence is evil and he is at war; and war is a dirty, tricky business. We are told about **"the wiles of the devil"** (Ephesians 6:11) and warned not to be **"ignorant of his devices"** (II Corinthians 2:11). He **"is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44). Sometimes he is bold and **"as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (I Peter 5:8). Sometimes he is full of subtlety and all mischief, an enemy of righteousness that perverts the right ways of the Lord (Acts 13:10). Satan is a warring adversary and his greatest fear is time. The lost are of little concern to him; he has conquered them. It is the soul of the saint he seeks. In the walled city we call the church (Revelation 21:14-19), Satan's attacks are the most vile and vicious. His arsenal includes false doctrines, discouragement and division, but his most effective siege machine today seems to be distraction.

We are a busy society, always on the run, never a minute to spare. We involve ourselves so deeply in hustling here and there, putting out little fires, that we ultimately squeeze God out of our lives. We have the kid's soccer practice and the band concert, the football game and PTO meetings. We have our house repairs and our social clubs and our favorite television shows. And while our busy days define our fast-paced society, we forget to pray, study or meditate on God's word. We reserve those few moments of "free time" (another one of Satan's misnomers) for ourselves and spend "quality time" (instead of sufficient time) with our children. Satan has effectively filled our every waking moment with something to do, activities that are not intrinsically wrong, but enterprises that do not include God. Our jobs (James 4:13-15), our recreation (I Corinthians 10:7), even our family (Matthew 10:37) are put first and somewhere, lost in the whirlwind of commotion, we squeeze in an assembly with the saints, maybe two. Then, we puzzle over the stagnation of our dying churches and the rapidly declining moral fiber in our crumbling society.

Time is a precious commodity. Satan will steal it minute by minute if we let him, doing things that are not so much wrong as they are intrusive because they fill our day with anything and everything but God and his service. And, while we put out the little fires, the big one awaits. **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ..."** (Matthew 6:33).

—500 North Pearl Street
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V-chips, Child Abuse, and Abortion Machines

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Though 72% of parents of children age 2 to 17 would buy a television with a V-chip to block sexy and violent shows, the figure drops to 58% if the addition increases the cost of the set by \$25 (**Henry J. Kaiser** Family Foundation survey as reported in *Insight*, June 7, 1999, p. 34). *[Evidently, one can only go so far with convictions. The dollar is more important to many than morality.—MTM]*

ARKANSAS—Murder charges have been brought under a new Arkansas law in an unborn child's death that resulted from an attack on her mother, who was nine months pregnant. Prosecutors charged three brothers with capital murder under the state's Fetal Protection Law in the August 26 death of the child, according to the media reports. It is the first test of the measure, which was enacted this year (Maranatha email news service, 9/7/99). *[This is only Biblical. The Old Law was very specific about such cases. Perhaps Arkansas will help other States see the light.—MTM]*

Sociologists **Pal R. Amato** of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and **Alan Booth** of Pennsylvania State University coauthored a study of almost 1000 people over a 15 year period. In only one-third of divorces is there a high level of interpersonal conflict, the researchers found. In the majority of marriages that end in divorce, Amato said "parents do not hate each other. Many are bored, and their marriages could be salvaged" (*AFA Journal*, July, 1998, p. 8). *[Marriage is for a lifetime. Life can be monotonous at times. It is up to each parent to keep the spice of life in it for the other. Make sure they know you love them.—MTM]*

In *It Takes a Village*, **Mrs. Clinton** states, "I cannot say enough in support of home visits" by government social workers. "Keeping children healthy in body and mind is the family's and the village's first obligation," and in those "terrible times when no adequate parenting is available...the village itself must act in place of parents. It accepts those responsibilities in all our names through the authority we vest in government...." **Dr. C. Henry Kempe** is given very favorable mention in Mrs. Clinton's book. Dr. Kempe was co-author of the ground-breaking 1968 book *The Battered Child*, which inaugurated the contemporary "war on child abuse." To understand fully what Mrs. Clinton is saying in her book, read a few statements by one of her heroes, Dr. Kempe. "It seems incomprehensible that we have compulsory education, with truancy laws to enforce attendance and, I might add, imprisonment of parents who deny their child an education, and yet we do not establish similar safeguards for the child's very survival between birth and age 6."

Where the state is supreme, the particular problem is easily managed; in a dictatorship each child belongs to the state and

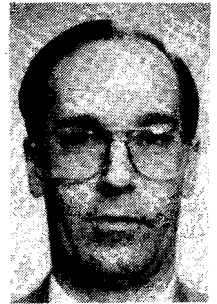
you may not damage state property. The really first-rate attention paid to the health of all children in less free societies makes you wonder whether one of our cherished democratic freedoms is the right to maim our own children.

Kempe considered the home in the following way, "...all too often the child is a prisoner in its dungeon. It is a dungeon of constant anger, dislike, aggression, or even hatred." According to Kempe, "those of us who are qualified to assess and correct the problems that produce child abuse and 'failure to thrive' should have the authority to intervene effectively for the good of the suffering child" ("Beware the Child Protectors" by **William Norman Grigg**, *The New American*, August 30, 1999, pp. 14-15). *[The Clintons are intent on believing that they and their "elite" co-horts have the answers to the world's problems. Only through their philosophy and centralized control can they make the world a utopia. Americans need to wake up. The answers are in the Lord's Book. We have much work to do. If we do not take our political responsibilities seriously, we may be in the predicament that the Soviet and Chinese people have been in for 70 years. Do we care about what our grandchildren will have to do to worship God in 30 years? Unless we act now they may be able to empathize first hand with the 1st century Christians.—MTM]*

Dr. Brian Finkel, Phoenix, Arizona's proudest abortionist, for this comment: "This is my abortion machine, where I do the Lord's work. I heal the sick with it. From the time I start the operation, it takes three minutes. With prep, about 10 minutes." (quoted in the *Federalist*, 7/24/99). *[God's wrath must be kindled greatly by such statements. This man would have the world believe that it is God's will that he kill innocent children. And he would have us believe that a pregnant woman is ill simply by being pregnant.—MTM]*

Middle-aged and elderly women members of the *Bible Truth Church of God* were duped into drug smuggling by their bishop, a British court was told Monday. **Bishop Donald Burris** — who the court heard was considered the mastermind behind the scheme but had not been arrested — asked the women to carry the bottles home through customs as a favor. When arrested, police collected shampoo bottles stuffed with cocaine worth almost \$100,000 (Maranatha email news service, 8/26/99). *[Wolves in sheep's clothing shall lead them astray. This wolf was not even in proper sheep's clothing [he was a false teacher to begin with]. —MTM]*

—420 Chula Vista Mountain Road
Pell City, Alabama 35125



SOME GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

Daniel Denham

The inspired Record reads in Proverbs 15:8: **"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is His delight."** Solomon thus shows that there are acts of devotion that God will not accept. He says, **"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination,"** i.e. **"a detestable thing."** *The right act void of the right attitude or performed from the wrong basis in life is despised by Jehovah.*

Solomon also extols the prayers of the "upright" or righteous. God delights in the prayers of his faithful children. He has always been pleased by the best that his people do.

Prayer is pictured as a sacrifice to God, one that is well-pleasing to him and one that is **"of a sweet-smelling savor."** Revelation 5:8 so describes the prayers of the saints wafting up, as it were, to the nostrils of God and pleasing him with their sweet aroma and sincere ambiance. Prayer, thus, is a great privilege and blessing to the people of God.

Prayer is one of our greatest needs in life. Unfortunately, it is too often neglected. We do not work at learning to pray as we should. The early disciples besought Christ, **"Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples to pray"** (Luke 11:1). Luke 18:1 admonishes that **"men ought always to pray and not to faint."** God's people must be a people who pray frequently and fervently to him (Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:17). Let us therefore consider some basic guidelines for acceptable prayer.

PROPER REVERENCE

We must avoid a flippant, familiar approach to the throne of our Creator. Acceptable prayer begins from a realization of the greatness, majesty, and dignity of God and the appropriate respect due him. The worshipper must not succumb to the modern folly of viewing the most high as a giant "bell-hop," whose purpose is to do man's bidding. A sense of awe should attend us as we approach the heavenly throne.

Observe the address made to God by the saints in Acts 4:24, **"Lord, Thou art God, who hast made heaven, and**

earth, and the sea, and all that in them is." The Model Prayer in Matthew 6 begins, **"Our Father who art in Heaven hallowed be Thy name"** (Matthew 6:9). Addressing the father as "Big Daddy in the sky" or even "Dear Dad" may sound "quaint" to the ears of irreverent modern men, but it smacks of insolence and rebellion. A careful reading of all prayers recorded in the Bible stresses the need for reverence.



ADORATION AND HONOR

The Christian is to worship God **"in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24). Worship, as expressed in the verb *proskuneo*, involves the expression of homage, adoration, and honor through specific acts. This is imminently the case with prayer.

Our prayers should go beyond respect and reverence. They, being acts of worship, should also extend to God the homage, adoration, and honor due him. Hebrews 13:15 commands: **"By Him (Christ) therefore let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."** Such praise is portrayed as a sacrifice to God. Worship, including prayer, involves a specific form or outlet for praise to be

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THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

- A. When one thinks about parables, one usually thinks of the parables of our Lord.
 - 1. But there are also parables in the Old Testament.
 - 2. One of these is found Isaiah 5:1-7.
- B. This parable, "The Parable of the Vineyard," discusses Israel's lack of faithfulness—their unwillingness to bear fruit.
- C. Isaiah 5:1-7.
 - 1. The prophet Isaiah is singing a song that the "Beloved" (God) would sing about his "vineyard" (his people).
 - 2. This parable closely resembles the parable in Matthew 21:33-45.

II. Discussion

- A. THE POSITION OF GOD'S PEOPLE (v. 1).
 - 1. God placed his vineyard in a "very fruitful hill."
 - a. Care was displayed in the placement of the vineyard.
 - b. A "very fruitful hill" was illustrative of the many natural advantages which the land of Canaan, the Promise Land, provided the people of God.
 - c. Israel had a special position in the sight of God (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18-19).
 - 2. Today we hold a special position in the sight of God (I Peter 2:9; Galatians 4:7; Revelation 1:6).
- B. THE PROVISION AND PROTECTION FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (vs. 1-2)
 - 1. The Lord provided Israel with abundant provision.
 - a. "a fruitful hill"....planted the best vines.
 - b. God had given them everything they needed to produce fruit.
 - 2. The also provided Israel with protection.
 - a. The Lord provided them a "fence" for protection and a "tower" for warning.
 - b. This is seen time and time again—no enemy could stand against them.
 - 3. Today the Lord provides us with:
 - a. Provisions (II Peter 1:3; II Corinthians 1:3-4; II Timothy 3:16-17).
 - b. Protection (I Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:13-17).
- C. THE PRESERVATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE
 - 1. Gathered the stones out of the vineyard.
 - a. Stones were used to mar the land (II Kings 3:19).
 - b. When the stones were removed the land was easier to work.
 - c. The stones that God cast out of the vineyard were the idolatrous nations.
 - 2. Today, God have removed obstacles that we might bear fruit: the old law (Hebrews 10:4-10), Satan (Revelations 20:1-3); sin (Romans 6:3-11).
- D. THE PERVERSENESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE
 - 1. With all the care God gave his people, he expected to see good fruit, but instead he saw "wild grapes."
 - a. Talk about a lack of appreciation!
 - b. "Wild grapes" to the Hebrews were offensive and putrid.

- 2. In Isaiah 5:3, Judah is called upon to consider their situation very carefully.

- a. We need to consider our situation with the Lord very carefully today as well.
- b. II Corinthians 13:5.

- 3. In Isaiah 5:4, Judah is asked two questions:

- a. They are challenged to name even one thing that God had left undone.
 - 1) The point is that could not have been any better to them.
 - 2) Notice Micah 6:3.
 - 3) Judah had everything, yet they became a bunch of "wild grapes".
- b. The second question is, if I have given you everything, then why are you producing wild grapes?
 - 1) Notice some of the specimens of their wild grapes: Greed (Isaiah 5:8-10), Disregard for the word and work of God (Isaiah 5:11-16), Daring defiance of God (Isaiah 5:18-19), Hypocrisy (Isaiah 5:20), Political self-conceit (Isaiah 5:21), Misdirected power (Isaiah 5:22-23).
 - 2) The soul purpose of a vineyard is to produce fruit, which had not been done!

- 4. What us today? Are we ignoring all that God has given us?

E. THE PUNISHMENT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

- 1. The good vine had become a wild vine and distasteful to the owner, and must be discarded (Isaiah 5:5-6)—God took away his help and protection.
- 2. Why was Israel punished?
 - a. Isaiah 5:7.
 - b. Notice the play on words in this parable:
 - 1) "Grapes"—"wild grapes" (v. 4).
 - 2) "Judgment" (justice - ASV)—"oppression" (v. 7).
 - 3) "Righteousness"—"a cry" of wrong (v. 7).
- 3. This was the Lord's only vineyard, the object of his faithful and unceasing care.
 - a. In everything that God expected to find, he found just the opposite.
 - b. Thus, God's people deserved to be punished.
- 4. Today we deserve punishment if we do not bear good fruit (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 6:8).

III. Conclusion

- A. The whole point to this parable is that we must bear fruit to be pleasing unto God (Matthew 3:8; John 15:1-7).
- B. Notice the conditions of bearing fruit: Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 13:23; John 12:24; John 15:2, 5.



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given and for the dispositions of homage, and such, to be expressed thereby. To confuse this means of praise with what transpires in simple mundane living is to denigrate the importance of true worship and to elevate the secular above its proper status. Most certainly, the every-day Christian life is a life of service to God and involves the need for proper regard for God (*cf.*, Hebrews 12:28-29), but it does not follow from this that every non-sinful act of that life is therefore worship in its proper and concrete sense. Neither does it follow that it is required of the Christian to undertake all the events of daily life as though they were consciously being done to Jehovah God.

Prayer, however, is of a different sort. It requires by its very nature the need for conscious concentration upon the object, who is God.

RESPECT FOR THE AUTHORITY OF GOD AND CHRIST

This point naturally flows from the preceding, especially the importance of reverence. If we have the proper reverence, then we will be able to comply with the terms expressed in this point. The matter of authority is paramount in importance to the acceptability of any act of worship. Worship must be offered not only "**in spirit**" but also "**in truth**." This means that it must fully accord with the teaching of God's word, which is truth (John 17:17).

Proper respect for God's authority will cause us to pray "**according to his will**." We will be careful to submit our own desires to conformity with his desires for us. Instead of praying for "our will to be done," we will follow the example of Christ himself and manifest the attitude that he showed in Gethsemane. John declares,

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him (I John 5:14-15).

James warns that when we put our desires first we "**ask amiss**" (James 4:3).

Proper respect for divine authority will help guard our hearts from seeking things that God has not promised and with being content with what he has promised. Our prayers will conform to the examples found in Holy Writ. The one praying will be mindful that he lives under the Gospel Age

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and is amenable to the New Testament pattern. He will then frame his prayers accordingly.

Further, he will recognize that prayer is directed to the Father "in the name of" Jesus Christ. The phrase "**in the name of**" means "**by the authority of**" (Acts 4:7-12; Colossians 3:17). Jesus teaches that we are to "**ask the Father in My (Christ's) name**" (John 16:23ff.). Prayer must be properly addressed to the father. Those who contend that they may address it to Jesus do err and violate the express teaching of the Lord himself. The Holy Spirit is just as omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent as God the father and God the son, yet the "praying to Jesus" brethren have not taken up praying to the Holy Spirit! They recognize that there is no authority for it. The same is true for praying to Jesus. The two positions stand or fall together.

Let us be careful how we conceive, address, and word our prayers. Prayer is an act of worship. It shows our heartfelt adoration for God. It also verbally expresses our sincere trust in him to provide for our needs, which he already knows quite well (Matthew 6:32-33). It expresses our confidence that God will provide for his people. It then in turn produces a positive influence upon us physically, spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally. It is not only for help in our physical wellbeing, but our spiritual wellbeing especially.

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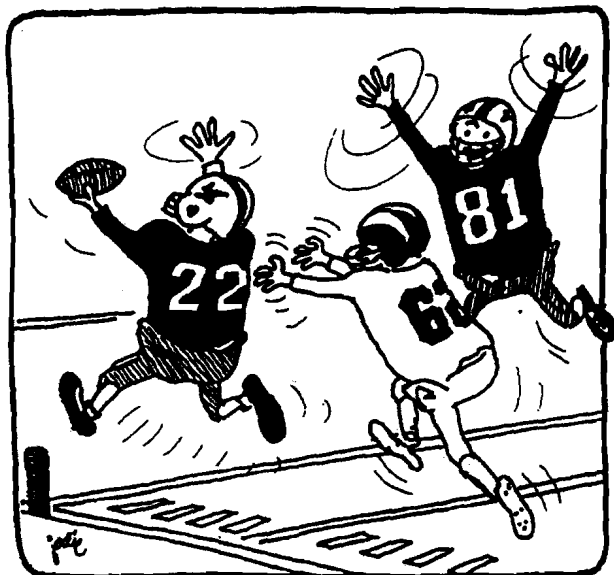
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IT'S NOT A TOUCH DOWN UNTIL THE REFEREE SAYS IT IS!

Jodie Boren



With seconds left in the big game the star running back broke loose and scampered 35 yards for what appeared to be the winning TD. He and his teammates and their fans went wild. The victory celebration had begun! But—WAIT! A flag had been thrown. The moment of great joy was replaced with a sickening inconsolability. The right guard had been guilty of holding. The play was called back and the team penalized. Because of this infraction, the game was lost.

THE "GAME" OF LIFE

The "game" of life is much more important than any football game. A crown of righteousness awaits the faithful but damnation is in store for the disobedient. The "game" of life, like football, must be played according to the rules. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote: **"And if a man also strive for the masteries, yet he is not crowned, EXCEPT HE STRIVE LAW-FULLY"** (II Timothy 2:5). Paul is here alluding to the Grecian games. Just as one had to conform to the rules of those games, so must one conform his life to the laws of Christ.

The Bible makes it clear that we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is the gift of God. We can not earn salvation. However, all men will not be saved. Jesus says in Matthew 7:13-14 that the great majority of people will be lost. Yet, in Titus 2:11 we see that the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. We are forced to conclude, therefore, that there is something man must do to appropriate this saving grace to himself. After hearing the gospel, one's initial response is to believe (Hebrews 11:6); repent (Luke 13:3); confess (Romans 10:9-10); and be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). One comes forth from the waters of baptism a new creature in



Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

WE MUST STRIVE LAWFULLY

In this new and wonderful relationship with Christ, one must strive lawfully, for Jesus is the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey him (Hebrews 5:9). Since Christ is our law giver, we must be obedient to his laws. He says in Luke 6:46, **"Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"** Again, he says in Matthew 7:21, **"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."**

These passages not only imply a law but emphatically teach that we must all be obedient to those commandments or law. This has always been true with God and his people. This great principle is worded in such a way, in Deuteronomy 30:15-16a, that no one can possibly misunderstand the import of what God is saying.

See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments...

INFRACTIONS DEMAND PENALTIES

When man deviates from God's law, the wrath of God and retribution is certain! In the Old Testament there are several examples worth noting. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2); Cain (Genesis 4); Uzzah (II Samuel 6:6-7); King Saul (I Samuel 15:1-31) *et al.* In the New Testament we have the examples of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) and Herod (Acts 12:21-23). Since apostolic days, God does not deal with man in such a direct or swift manner, but rest assured that there will be an accounting. Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:10 that all will stand before the judgement seat of Christ and give an account of the things done in the body whether good or bad. Revelations 20:12-15 corroborates this.

The "change agents" are today perverting God's word and are convincing many that there is no law or pattern and, therefore, God can be worshipped as we please. Nevertheless, the truth remains that just as it is against the rules in football to "hold," which infraction demands a penalty, anyone who adds to God's laws or takes away from them (Deuteronomy 4:2) will receive the retribution of God at the judgment day.

May we all be obedient to our Lord with a faith that worketh by love as we live "the game of life."

—2557 Campus Court
Abilene, Texas 79601

DESTINATIONS

Annette B. Cates

Perhaps it shows my age, but as I make my daily commute to and from work I enjoy listening to a radio station that features "moldy oldies"—music of the "forties" and "fifties." One of the songs I often hear is "Sentimental Journey" sung by **Doris Day**. She has her bags packed and has made her reservation. She has spent each dime she could afford. She wonders why she ever chose to roam away from home and sees the trip as setting her heart at ease. She describes her excitement as a child's wild anticipation and can hardly wait to hear "all aboard." Each time I hear this song, I am reminded of the joyful anticipation that can accompany travel. It may be a trip back "home" to be with family and old friends, or it may be a long-awaited and well-deserved vacation. I am further reminded that each phase of life is a journey, and our ultimate destination is heaven. It behooves us to be making our preparations and securing our reservations every day that we live. **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"** (Colossians 3:1, 2).

MAKING A WRONG TURN

On any journey it is possible to take the wrong turn, maybe heading north when we think we are going south. Maps are not always as clear as they should be. Detours and construction can have highways rerouted. It is easy to become confused when we are in unfamiliar territory. For our spiritual journey, however, we have the perfect road map, God's word. Sometimes we hear a friend attempt to justify the many denominations in existence today by saying that we are all heading to the same place; we are just taking different roads to get there. God's road map is explicit, however, consistently showing us that there is only one way and that way must be followed if we are to reach our destination (Matthew 15:9; John 4:24, 8:12, 10:16, 14:6; Ephesians 4:4-6, *et al.*). It is possible, too, that we can start down the right road, but take a turn that will lead us away from where we should be heading. It takes courage to return to the correct route. In his poem *"The Road Not Taken,"* **Robert Frost** expressed how easily this can be in his words "way leads on to way." We cannot allow stubbornness or ignorance to keep us from making the turn-around (Luke 15). Just as there is no shame in stopping to ask for directions (typical male attitudes notwithstanding), when we realize that we are on the wrong road spiritually, we must do whatever is necessary to get back onto the right path. The prodigal son's family started him out on the way he should go, but he lost his way. Recognizing that his life was no way to live, humbled, he undertook the journey back home and was met by his father's open arms (Luke

15:11-32). No doubt, every step of the way he wondered why he had ever chosen to roam. Not to turn back can lead to eternal destruction (II Peter 2:20-22).

SETBACKS AND TROUBLES

Earthly journeys can be marred by disappointments. Sightseeing may be hindered by inclement weather. Families can get "cabin fever" from spending hours in the confines of an automobile as seemingly endless miles pass by. Car trouble, hotel or airline reservations gone awry, even physical illness can detract from the excitement of a long-awaited respite from routine. Sometimes we might pack a "vacation" so full of activities that we need to get back home and to "work" in order to get some "rest!" Life, too, is not without setbacks and troubles of varying degrees. It has been said that into every life some rain must fall. Some of our "roadblocks" can be avoided. Slowing the pace, verifying the route we are on, taking time to stop and enjoy life's beauty, and counting the blessings with which we have been showered will go a long way toward making life's journey the pleasant trip it should be. Other difficulties are beyond our control. We need the strength we get from faith in God to help us through such trials. Spiritual preparation is a necessity for handling the ups and downs of life and setting our heart at ease as well as securing the heavenly destination.

ANTICIPATING THE DESTINATION

Our daily lives should be filled with great anticipation of the final destination. I can sense Paul's joy when I read I Corinthians 15 and Philippians 1:20-23. Our song sounds as if the singer has been preparing for her journey home for weeks. Perhaps she checked and rechecked to make certain that everything was in readiness. She may have looked at her reservations over and over to be certain they were just right. Going home was so important to her that she put everything she could materially into doing so. It became easy to forego some "things" in order to make her trip. As we daily anticipate our destination, setting our affections on things that are above, we focus not on laying our treasures on this earth, but in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). This old world with its imperfections becomes pretty meaningless when we seek **"first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"** (Matthew 6:33). As we read the closing verse of I Corinthians 15, we realize that heaven is the culmination of a life that has been spent in preparation, **"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"** (I Corinthians 15:58).



Are we making our preparations, anticipating that final journey home? Perhaps, we have roamed, lost our way, and need to turn back to the right road. Perhaps, we have allowed the problems of life to discourage us. Perhaps, our life's emphasis has been on the world, success, material-

ism and not on those things above. Let us tap into the sense of excitement that Paul expressed, and live so that we will hear God's "all aboard."

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DEBATE ON BAPTISM

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Notes and Quotes...

Donald Thornton, Hong Kong, China:
"Four people obeyed [the gospel] in
China and two people obeyed in Hong
Kong [during March]. The ones in Hong
Kong were with us for a long time before
they decided to obey the gospel. They
are Juanita Cubilla and Rosalina Bani-
aga..."

"I can not tell you the names of those
who were baptized in China because the
brethren there asked me not to do it. Be-
cause of this reason, it is better not to
make any news of this known because
we have been told that for church publi-
cations in America the [Chinese] govern-
ment gathers information about such
activities."

"The ones baptized had been taught
for a month and were eager to obey. We
would go to them at different times dur-
ing the week, mainly at night. Except for
the warnings of the members there and
by people in Hong Kong, everything
seems so peaceful in China that we
would think everything is normal. The
brethren in the worship services close
the doors tightly; speaking and singing
are done softly. When we leave from the
worship, we try to go out one by one.
Still it does not seem as serious as that
except for the apprehension we some-
times see in the members' eyes."

"Early in the month, we rented a flat in
China to use as one of the places to teach
and worship. We returned to Hong Kong
thinking it was a done deal. Then the fol-
lowing Monday we were told by the
agent that it was not available. We went
back to China to see the agent. We were
told we could rent it again; so we re-
turned to Hong Kong thinking all was
well. After our return, once again we
were told the agreement was off. So we
returned again to look for another flat."

"After two days in China we seemed
to have found a good, quiet place in the
same building. We still do not know what
the consequences might be. The neigh-
bors are pleasant."

"We are receiving over 2,000 letters
[each month] from China and the number
is increasing daily. So we reply in simpli-
fied Chinese. We mail merge and print
envelopes. We were told by the brethren
in China all was done correctly, but when
it was brought to the post office in China
they told us that the name had to be last,
not first, so they refused to accept the
letters. So we did it again and all seems
to have gone well now..."

"One of the brothers had gone more
than 1,000 miles from where we are in
China. He did not think he would be able
to come back, but on Sunday he returned
to where we meet. We were all over-
joyed."

"The work by the English correspon-
dence courses continues to be produc-

tive. When we receive the mail and grade
their lessons, we find that most stu-
dents, when they get to the lessons on
"God's Salvation" or "The Church," will
request baptism or the desire to find the
church in their area."

"Africa and India seem to be where
the church will be of great influence as
the church matures in both areas. It is so
wonderful how the poor, humble people
turn to the truth. It is amazing how phys-
ical prosperity changes the attitudes of so
many people."

"We have had good attendance in
Yuen Long regardless of the turnover due
to change of employers by many of the
members. Normally about 50 will attend
each Sunday from 9:20 a.m. to 12:20
noon. We then go to China and the ladies
return for a class in the afternoon. The
contribution each week is around
\$1,800 HK dollars, which is about
\$232.00 US dollars."

"Our daily activity is to work on the
Chinese contacts in the morning and the
English contacts in the afternoon. We
usually spend three days a week 'over
the border.' We are planning classes
there on Saturday and Monday. We hope
to add nightly activities there. We are al-
ways there on the first day of the week."

"Now we are working with two con-
gregations. Sunday morning up to
12:20, we are in Yuen Long, then quickly
by bus and train to get to the border and
then to the other congregation. Nor-
mally, we need to leave by 8 or 9 in the
morning and return home around 7 at
night."

"More and more people from China
are visiting Hong Kong; so, at certain
hours, the border is very crowded. We
seemed to wait for a long time until Si Ka
Ming told me that we could cross quickly
because of his disability by a special
channel for people over 60 or disabled
people. My wife had been telling me for
two years that I should apply for the spe-
cial card for the elderly. I went to the of-
fice and got the card. Sure enough, next
time I went to the border it took only a
very few minutes to cross to the Hong
Kong side, whereas before it could be a
long wait. Not only that, I could take my
wife with me. However, for the China
side, I need to be 70 before any special
treatment is given. Even then it is not
easy to obtain the advantage."

[NOTE: When novices to the China
work report that all is open and easy
there now, I just smile, knowing they will
learn better "after a while." If they work
with the government-run, so-called
"three self churches," yes, it is fairly
easy. However, those churches are
forced to have inter-denominational fel-
lowship. If brethren remain true to the
book, suddenly it gets hard, witness the
foregoing report. IYR Jr.]

WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN?

Danny Box

[We stir the sandbox, color the pictures, show the filmstrip but do we teach the Bible? Impressionable minds need to be most impressed with certain Bible fundamentals that will guide them safely through the temptations and trials of life. Attacks on one's faith will be just around the corner at any given time. It would be a tragedy to let our young people leave the "home congregation" without thoroughly grounding them in the truths concerning God, salvation, the church and its scripturally authorized worship. Able and faithful preacher for the East Pointe congregation in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Danny Box clearly defines some points our young people must know. Give careful reading. —Lynn Parker]



We have the entreaty to **"train up a child in the way he should go..."** (Proverbs 22:6) and also to bring our children up **"In the nurture and admonition of the Lord"** (Ephesians 6:4). To do this, there are some things that our children must be taught, at home and in our assemblies. Let us examine those things that should be included in our teaching.

We should teach our children about God. We should teach our children that God is the creator of all things (Genesis 1, 2). We should also teach them that he is the Father of all men (John 8:41). We should teach them about his love (I John 4:16-20; John 3:16) and about his mercy (I Peter 1:3). We should let them know that God is all powerful (Genesis 1:31), all knowing (Psalms 139:1-6), every where present (Psalms 139:7-10). Yes, we should teach our children about the one true God.

We should teach our children about Christ. We should teach them that he was the only begotten son of God (John 3:16), he was with God in the beginning (John 1:14), that he left his home in heaven and was made flesh and lived among men (John 1:14). We should teach them that the purpose for his coming was to **"Seek and save the lost"** (Luke 19:10) and that he is **"not willing that any should perish"** (II Peter 3:9). We should teach them about his temptations (Matthew 4:1-11) and about the way he handled his temptations (Hebrews 4:15). We should teach them about his death on the cross, his burial and his resurrection on the third day. This is the gospel or "good news" that is the whole basis for Christianity (I Corinthians 15:1-4). We must teach them that it is only by the blood of Christ and our coming into contact with that blood that we can be cleansed from our sins (Hebrews 9:12-22). We also must teach them that to receive our crown of life we must walk in his steps (I Peter 3:21). Yes, we must teach our children about Christ!

We must teach our children the plan of salvation. Many people put this off until their children reach the age of accountability (and sometimes even longer). But we should start at an early age letting our young people know that God expects us to obey the plan that he has put into place if we expect to be saved. We must teach them that they have to hear the truth of God's word (Romans 10:17) and once they have heard it, they must believe it (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6). Then we must teach our children about repentance, "a change of heart, that leads to a change of action" in our lives" (Luke 13:3). We must teach the importance of the good confession (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9,10). Finally, we must stress the importance of baptism for the remission sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21). We begin laying the ground work at an early age so that when our children reach that "age of accountability" they will not put off doing what the Lord would have them do. If we wait until junior is asking for the car keys to try to teach him what he must do to be saved, we have waited too long!

We must teach our children about the church. We must teach them there is only one church (Ephesians 4:4) and that it was built by the Lord (Matthew 16:18), and purchased by his blood (Ephesians 5:25). We need to teach them that the church is the body of Christ and the body is the church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18). We must also teach them that the church is also the kingdom of our Lord (Matthew 16:19; Colossians 1:13; II Peter 1:11). Moreover, we must also teach them that to be saved, one must be a member of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-28). Yes, we must teach our children about the church of our Lord.

We must teach our children about the worship. We must teach our children the importance of assembling ourselves together to worship God (Hebrews 10:25; Psalms 122:1). We must teach them that the worship must be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40) and that it is not a time for playing, but for reverence and respect. We must teach them that proper worship is composed of accapella singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); giving of our means (I Corinthians 16:1,2; II Corinthians 9:7); preaching and teaching the truth of God's word (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7); partaking of the Lord's supper on each first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1; Acts 20:7); and offering up public prayers (Acts 2:42). We must teach our children not to add anything to this worship nor take anything away from it, or else it will be vain worship and not pleasing to God.

There are so many other things that we must teach our children; the inerrancy of the scriptures (II Timothy 3:16,17); the way we should live (Titus 2:12; Revelation 2:10); the work of the church (Mark 16:16; I Thessalonians 5:11; Ephesians 6:10); the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-10) and things such as this. But one thing we must remember, **WE MUST TEACH OUR CHILDREN!**

—10985 Country Haven
Cottondale, Alabama 35453

IF JESUS SELECTED MY MATE

Jason R. Roberts

The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 24) is perhaps one of the most touching and sweetest love stories ever recorded when it come to selecting the right mate for marriage.

If Jesus would come to this earth today and line up all of the women who have ever lived, and had to select one of them to be his companion for life, I am confident that he would select the right person. For Jesus said, with reference to his heavenly father, **"for I do always those things that please him"** (John 8:29). And choosing the right mate for marriage has everything to do with whether or not one will be pleasing to God. Since nothing is in the Bible by accident, the principles set forth in this remarkable story for one's selection of a marriage companion are as timely as today's newspaper. We will note three of them here for your consideration:

First, if Jesus selected my mate—he would select someone who was spiritually related to me (24:1-4). Notice that in Abraham's selection of a wife for Isaac that not just any wife was suitable—she had to be a particularly kind of person—specifically one who was from Abraham's kindred, from his people (v.4). If God was concerned about Abraham finding the right person to marry Isaac, then we should not be surprised to find God expressing the same amount of concern in our selection of the right person for marriage (cf., Romans 15:4). This is why it is extremely important for young people to date Christians—because *"every date is a prospective mate."* And most people marry someone that they have dated for a while. If a young person enjoys dating non-Christians, then he or she will more than likely marry a non-Christian. If a young person enjoys dating Christians, then he or she will more than likely marry a Christian. It should be noted that I have never heard of a Christian couple who looked back over their life together and regretted the day they said, "I do." **Robert Taylor**, in his book *Christ In The Home*, accurately stated,

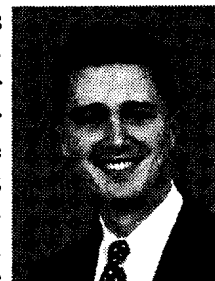
Dating within a Christless framework grows into a marriage at a Christless altar, blossoms into a Christless honeymoon, and continues in a Christless home. That lifestyle is a basic cause for unhappy marriages, unsuccessful homes, untrained children, and ultimately broken homes (54).

Second, if Jesus selected my mate—he would select someone who was morally separated for me. Both Isaac and Rebekah were morally separated for each other. We have ever reason to believe that Isaac—through his Godly parents and by his godly life—that he was morally pure before he married. We know of a certainty that Rebekah was—**"...and the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her..."** (24:16). Isaac and Rebekah had kept themselves pure before mar-

riage. One of the strongest temptations Satan will hurl in the direction of teenagers is the temptation to sacrifice their purity—to commit fornication. Our young people are being fed a devilish lie that remaining pure before marriage is not only an impossibility but that it is taboo and absurd to the generation in which they live. We are hearing more and more talk about how that abstinence does not work. On the contrary, abstinence works every time its practiced. It has a 100% success rate every time its tried! What some of our young people fail to realize, is the serious consequences attached to committing the sin of fornication. *First, fornication will hurt them internally.* Paul wrote, **"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body"** (I Corinthians 6:18, emp. added). It will effect them emotionally. In addition to the emotional consequence, they risk the chance of harming their bodies physically via contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Second, fornication will hurt them externally. They risk the chance of not only breaking the hearts of their parents, but also the hearts of the parents of the person who was sexually involved with them. In addition to that, they also risk the possibility of bringing a child into this world—for which they are not prepared to raise. *Third, fornication will hurt them eternally.* Paul wrote, **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God"** (I Corinthians 6:9-10). A moment of pleasure between two teenagers will bring *internal* consequences, *external* consequences, and if not repented of, will bring *eternal* consequences. Someone once said that, *"the best defense against temptation is a good pair of Nike tennis shoes."* This is consistent with Paul's admonition to **"Flee Fornication..."** (I Corinthians 6:18).

Third, if Jesus selected my mate—He would select someone who was faithfully committed with me (24:67). When Isaac and Rebekah finally meet the text says, **"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved her..."** (24:67, emp. added). Isaac loved her—not her and someone else—but her alone. He was loyal to her, and no doubt treated her with a great amount of respect and honor—placing her on a pedestal as it were—remaining faithfully committed to her. When Isaac and Rebekah said, "I do," they did. And when they did they were done! When Isaac and Rebekah joined hands together, they also joined hand together with someone else—that being God.



"...What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6b).

Truly, the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah was a **"marriage made in heaven."** Our young people can have the same marriage one day. The precious principles surrounding the events which led to the wonderful union of Isaac and Rebekah are well-worth imitating today.

*—3950 Forest Hill Irene Road, South
Memphis, Tennessee 38125*

The Last Word...

Y2K, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). The year 2000! An astounding thought to see a new century. It is really the last year of the 20th century since the century began with the year 1, not 0. Most people are not going to see it that way. They say this is the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. Whatever! It is of no consequence except for some possible computer glitches. There are some things that are of great significance as we enter the new year, be it a new millennium or not.

First, our desire should be that everyone could be saved. We know this is not going to be the case, but it should be our desire. Paul expressed this desire regarding Israel. He knew they had zeal, but their zeal was misdirected. Misdirected zeal leads to eternal banishment from the face of the Lord (Matthew 7:21-23). Zeal that reaps the desired reward must be a directed zeal. The only direction recognized by God is his word (John 12:48). It is no secret that men, in general, do not regard the Bible as a sacred guide anymore. It is lamentable that the Baptist convention of Texas has just voted that women are not to be submissive to their husbands. Does the Baptist convention supercede the Bible? The Bible clearly teaches that women are to be in submission to their own husbands (Ephesians 5:22). The Baptists say they are not to be! Truly, the Bible is not the guide of the Baptist convention of Texas. If we are going to be judged by the Jesus (Acts. 17:31), and his word (John 12:48), it would seem that it would be wise to be guided by his word. It is not just the Baptists that are going to answer to the Lord in judgment, it is all that disobey his word (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). It will be a sad day.

Second, our desire should be that all of God's children could be unified. We have the corner on truth! We believe the church is the one church spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23; 5:23). The church is the body of Christ as these verses attest. Yet, we have many divisions among us.



DIRECTORY

For advertising in this section, See Masthead, Page 2.

—Alabama—

Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Tel. (205) 796-6802, 429-2026. Sunday: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

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

—California—

Seal Beach—Leisure World Church of Christ, Northwood Club House, 3 room 8, Sun: 11:00 a.m., Bible Study 10:00 a.m., Don Foslien, Evangelist.

—England—

England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 253 Coldhams Lane, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Brian Chadwick, Tel. 01144-1223-501-861. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

—Florida—

Miami—Westwood Lake Church of Christ, 10790 SW 36th Street, Miami, FL 33165, tel. (305) 554-8229. F. Matherly, Evangelist, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (904) 455-7595. Evangelist, Michael Hatcher, Sunday: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—Georgia—

Cartersville—Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1146, 1319 JFH Pkwy (US 41 NW) Cartersville, GA 30120. Tel: (770) 382-6775. E-mail: Cartersville-cofc@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

—Indiana—

Evansville—West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sunday: 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed.: 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

—Michigan—

Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed: 7:00 p.m.

—Missouri—

Farmington—Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, tel. (573) 756-5925 or 3595. Evangelist, Sean Hochdorf, Sunday: 10:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m.

—North Carolina—

Rocky Mount—Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, tel. (919) 977-7556, Mark McDonald, Evangelist.

—Tennessee—

Crossville—Lantana Church of Christ, 7004 Lantana Rd., P.O. Box 2686, Crossville, TN 38557, (615) 788-6404. Sun.: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Jimmie B. Hill, Evangelist.

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 or Steve Ellis, Evangelist, (901) 366-6005.

Nashville area—Villages Church of Christ, 436 Belinda Parkway, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed.: 7:00 p.m. Fifteen minutes from downtown Nashville, Cornelius Abbott, III, Evangelist, tel. (615) 758-7406.

—Texas—

Beeville—Adams Street Church of Christ, 1701 N. Adams St., (POB 1148) Beeville, TX 78104. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:20 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed: 7:00 p.m. Tel. (361) 358-4428 or Jesse Whitlock, Evangelist, (361) 358-5760.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, tel. (281) 353-2707. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. **Home of Houston College of the Bible and the HCB Lectures** beginning the last week in February.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

Lubbock—Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00 a.m., 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.

Portland—Church of Christ, 2009 Wildcat Dr., Portland, TX 78374, tel. (512) 643-6571, Michael Wyatt, Evangelist.

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

—Wyoming—

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 4901 Ridge Rd., Cheyenne, WY 82009. Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Loran Gearhart, tel. (307) 634-3040.

What is the problem? Is it because everybody is so dumb they cannot see what the Bible teaches? Or, is it because some are seemingly so smart, they cannot accept what the Bible plainly teaches? It perhaps could be a combination of both. Some of the doctrines that divide us are:

(1) *Unity in Diversity*. This doctrine teaches unity can embrace contradictory doctrines. The term is contradictory. Many want us to join hands with man-made religious bodies even though the Bible says we are not to have fellowship with those whose zeal is not according to righteousness (Romans 10:3). It seems that academia is responsible for such apostasy since this is the teaching that is coming from our so-called Christian Universities. This doctrine has many, many "fingers."

(2) *All Life is Worship Except for Sin*. This doctrine teaches that mundane things in life are worship just as much as taking the Lord's Supper, or prayer, or giving, or singing or preaching on the Lord's Day. Jesus said those who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The idea of being of service to God and to our fellow men is forfeited to the philosophy of all we do is worship. It denigrates the cooperate worship to the mundane. It does not lift up the mundane to the sacred and holy. This doctrine is divisive, not unifying.

(3) *The Holy Spirit is Afoot Operating On the Hearts of Men Directly*. Some things that are part of our life are really none of our business! Men live within the confines of time and nature. God does not. The Bible is the word of God and has all the information and instruction we need, or need to know, to live righteously on earth and to go to heaven (II Peter 1:3; II Timothy 3:16-17). Yet, there is the teaching that tries to tell us how the Holy Spirit helps us separate from the word. Is there a need for us to know how God takes care of God's business? Isaiah 55:8-9 indicates there is not.

The intellectuals propagating these doctrines are following the same road that all those who started thousands of denominations have trod. Unless all Christians who have lived before the enlightenment of those who espouse these divisive doctrines are lost in eternal torment, it would seem these doctrines are not needed for our salvation either.

What does Y2K mean? It means we need to study our Bibles more. It means we must try to understand what the will of the Lord is. It means we should be more concerned about the souls of the lost than promoting uncertain sounds of intellectuals who would "draw away men after their own lusts." It means we need to be more concerned about truth than trivia. It means we need to preach the revealed word that is able to save the lost and keep the saved saved. It means we need to get off our intellectual high horses and kneel before the cross of Christ.

Yes, Y2K poses some problems but they are not with the calendar. The problems we face are within our own control. The problem is if we do not control ourselves and submit our will to the will of the father, Y2K is the least of our problems!

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