

Contending **FOR**
THE **Faith**TM

Volume XXXI, 2000

Contending FOR THE Faith™

Post Office Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77389

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

“BIG COUNTRY EMMAUS COMMUNITY” MEETING TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1999, 6:30 P.M. HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST ABILENE, TEXAS

Rocky Jim Sprott

The following information describes a visit to a meeting of the *Emmaus Community* at the *Highland Church of Christ* auditorium in Abilene, Texas on December 7, 1999. Those present at that meeting on December 7, for the purpose of observing the nature and substance of the Emmaus service were **Sam Geer**, of Abilene, Texas, **Debbie Robbins** of Temple, Texas, and **Rocky and Janice Sprott** of Belton, Texas.

The circumstances leading up to this visit to the Emmaus Community Meeting are as follows: On October 5, 1999 **Michael Light**, minister of the *Bangs, Texas Church of Christ*, attended an Emmaus Community Meeting at the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. He subsequently described his visit in the *Bangs Church of Christ* bulletin, Vol. 17, Issue 40, dated October 10, 1999 and in an article in the November, 1999 issue (pages 10, 11) of *CFTF*. In his article he describes **Eddie Sharp's** role as the spiritual director, and the conduct of worship of the Emmaus Community, and some points of the sermon which Sharp preached that evening.

A copy of the above mentioned *Bangs Church of Christ* bulletin article written by Light, came to me from faithful brethren who thought I should be aware of this very dangerous and subversive religious movement.

As you can imagine my total disgust and amazement at what I read left me with the conviction that these matters were so serious that I must observe this apostasy for my-

self. Therefore, at the next appointed time for the meeting of the Emmaus Community, we four Christians took courage, restrained our revulsion for the anticipated proceedings, seated ourselves in the Highland Church of Christ auditorium, and as my wife said, prepared ourselves to be the eyes and ears of faithful Christians from our part of Texas.

I must say it was only by sheer force of will that we were able to sit through what followed. As I sat waiting for the band to finish warming up on the podium of the Highland auditorium, I could hardly refrain from shedding tears knowing how in the past many great men of God had preached words of truth, hope, and salvation from this very podium. I also questioned in my mind how the minister, members, and elders of the Highland Church of Christ could occupy this same podium in all good conscience the next evening, when a polluted worship was now about to be offered from these hallowed boards.

THE MEETING

Our group of four observers arrived at the Highland Church of Christ at 6:15 P.M. on Tuesday, December 7, 1999. The meeting took place in the main auditorium of the church. There were two large screens visible at the front of the auditorium. On both screens in bright multicolors the announcement read “Big Country Emmaus Community.” There was a rooster logo at the end of and over the word “Emmaus.” Under that were the words “De Colores.”

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

Volume XXXI, No. 1

January/2000

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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...

THAT FOR WHICH WE ARE KNOWN

With the advent of the new millennium has the religious scene changed for the better? At the stroke of midnight on December 31, 1999 did false teachers cease to be in the church of Christ? Did God alter the Bible with the coming of the New Year? The answer to these and like questions is an emphatic no (John 12:48). Therefore, the need that brought *Contending for the Faith* into existence continues to call for the paper to be on the firing line for the cause of Christ. Indeed, the following truth expressed by the apostle John is as true in 2000 as when the apostle wrote it. He declared, "And we know that the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). Being that the devil continues in the devouring business, *CFTF* must remain in the business that has characterized it for a third of a century (1 Peter 5:8; Jude 3; Titus 1:11; Romans 16: 17, 18).

SOFT SOAP JOURNALISM

A preacher recently said he wanted a religious paper he could put on his coffee table for his whole family to read. Since he receives *CFTF*, I could not help but wonder about the standard he uses to evaluate religious journals. Evidently *CFTF* does not rate "coffee table status" in his home.

What is the standard for a gospel paper? Is the Bible that standard or pattern? Does that controversial book rate "coffee table status" in one's home? Horror of horrors, some tender child might read what Elijah said, when with dripping sarcasm, he mocked the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:27). No doubt the shock of such information coming from the Bible would forever stunt the poor thing's spiritual growth.

OUR STANDARD FOR CFTF

I am a gospel preacher. I am not of the "college professor" or "the how to win friends and influence people" mentality. To learn about preaching (orally or in print) I believe in following the examples of the prophets, Jesus, the apostles and the faithful first century evangelists. It is the way that is right and cannot be wrong. It is the only pattern for gospel papers and preachers. *Contending for the Faith* will continue to follow the Bible pattern, "coffee tables," liberals, antis, hobby riders, spiritual sophisticates and professorial pundits notwithstanding. Come with us, for we will do thee good.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

EMMAUS COMMUNITY...

(Continued From Page 1)

The screen shown next read, "Welcome Big Country Emmaus Community" and also had the rooster logo.

Eddie Sharp, minister of the *University Church of Christ* and also a faculty member at *ACU*, walked in and greeted the band members prior to the service opening.

About 6:40, the meeting was opened with a woman announcing, the song "Joy To The World." A four-woman and one-man band using two guitars and a keyboard accompanied this song. On the overhead screens the words to the songs were given in Karaoke style. For the next half-hour or so, the singing continued, accompanied by the band. During this time the audience was standing and participating in the clapping, swaying, and holding hands up in the air, and occasionally exclaiming "Hallelujah". The following songs (as well as all songs during the evening) were sung in this manner.

"Clap Your Hands All Ye People"

"Firm Foundation"

"My God Reigns"

"Delight Yourself in the Lord"

"Remember Daniel in the Lions Den"

COLORED STRINGS AND CROSSES

All around the auditorium, the participants were wearing a very bright, multicolored yarn rope around their neck. In the front, hanging from the above-mentioned rope, was a small cross, which appeared to be pewter or a metal of like kind. Each person also had a name tag, worn above this cross. Attached to the back of these neckpieces, were various styles of bright, multicolored ornaments. The most prominent ornament was a cross (again bright, multicolored) which measured about 4 X 5 or 4 X 6 inches, which was hanging from a string attached to the back of the neckband. Many of the people had only this attached to the back of their neckpiece. However, there were numerous people who had multiple ornaments (some with one, two, three, or four) dangling from the back of their neckpiece. (Our impression was that these ornaments possibly denoted each particular person's participation in certain Emmaus events. This impression may or may not be accurate, but came from announcements during the meeting when something was said concerning "Agape" and that the participants of the walks (flights or journeys) remembered the gifts that were lovingly made for them. Possibly these ornaments, which were hand made, denote the event that was attended.)

After the singing, Eddie Sharp took charge of the program. He said that **Ralph Thornhill** had been scheduled to be the speaker for the evening, but due to the death of Thornhill's 11-month old grandson he was filling in for the evening, Sharp called on **Mike Hill**, a member of the Emmaus Community and minister for the *New Life Ministry* to begin our time together with a prayer. Hill prayed that we (the Emmaus Community) had come together as the body of Christ to celebrate, to worship, and enter into his presence. He prayed for the gathering indicating that it was to honor his name, and asked that it be a blessing to you as we worship, pray, and praise your name, and enter into Holy

Communion. He prayed that the group was saddened by the loss suffered by the Thornhill family, mentioning the grandparents and parents of the infant by name asking that the group be united to lift up this family as they mourn the loss of the little boy, Brady. He then asked for healing.

Sharp then announced that he would like to begin by thanking the Highland Church of Christ for use of their building and fellowship room for the past quarter, and announced that for the next quarter, the group would be meeting at *Aldersgate Methodist Church* off of Sayles.

A series of announcements followed. This is the time when the composition of the board was changing, There were outgoing members and incoming members. The outgoing board members were named and **Ken Baker** was especially thanked for his heading up the "manpower team" in the first year of operation. It was mentioned that the term on the board is a three-year term. The following board members were named as outgoing members:

Louise Grey

Jackie Rutledge

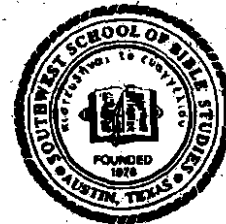
Ken Baker

Susan Brooks

Janet Hooks

Rich Doyle

(There were two or three more board members, but the names were read fast enough that it was not possible to catch all of the names, therefore, there are two or three more outgoing board members whose names are not listed here.)



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SPIRITUAL FLIGHTS

Baker Bryant made announcements about the Christmas Community Christmas flight #20. He said that at the end of 1999 and the first of 2000, there were several activities. He said that in the end of December Angela's flight of high school girls had 29 to 30 signed up and would possibly be a full flight. Then he said Angela's brother Allen's flight was to lead college kids, and would take place the 5th through the 8th of January. This flight is not full and others could sign up. Then on the 22 of January, there will be a gathering of high school and college age students, both male and female, who will meet at the First Methodist Church for games, air castles, band, praise and worship and communion. He said the January 22 meeting was being called "Challenge 2000" as the biggest challenge, the challenge for the event, is "bringing people to Christ." He indicated that there were "Agape needs" and needs for a "Prayer vigil" for these groups.

Next, Angela and her team were asked to come to the front and like the preceding prayer for a team, others were asked to come up and lay their hands on these team members in a show of support. The prayer for this team was lead by a woman, **Deanna Fields**. During her prayer for the "flight." Fields indicated that the intended effect of the "flight" was to convict people and leading them to come to know Jesus as Lord. (This meaning the people of the Emmaus Community which is made up of people from various churches.)

The offering was next. There was a prayer in which Christmas was referred to as a "celebration of the Son's birth." The collection plates were passed. All during this offering, the band led songs. The songs were:

"There's A Stirring"

"Lord I Lift Your Name On High"

"I Will Change Your Name"

During the singing of the songs, a woman sitting directly in front of us was seen to fall back into her seat (the audience was all standing during the songs), overcome with emotion. She remained there with her head resting on the seat in front of her, until the songs were concluded, at which time she left the room. Later, she returned to the auditorium.

The assembly sang songs of praise to God and thanks for salvation in Jesus, inclusive of all present who were from various churches and religious groups.

SHARP'S SERMON

After the offering, Eddie Sharp presented a talk or sermon. He began by saying that he and **Annette** had gone to the Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas and spent five to five and a half hours the proceeding day with a family from his congregation, who had a son who was being seen there for a serious condition. He said that many of the people who work at the Scottish Rite Hospital walk with a limp, and such, and know what these patients are going through. He said there was a sermon in this but he was not going to preach it as the audience could "preach it to themselves going home." His sermon was based on children in the Lord's ministry. He discussed how the people prevented children from bothering Jesus and how Jesus had wanted the chil-

dren to come to him and had let the people know the children were important. He used the scripture Matthew 18:10-11. He said that "all children had an angel who always beheld the face of the father" and unless you change and become like a little child—be born again—one cannot seek the kingdom of heaven. Sharp makes reference to his own baptism and his joy in being re-born. He continues, referring to his rebirth in obeying the gospel and being baptized, as an act, understood to be a part of the tradition of the fellowship he is a part of (*i.e.*, the Church of Christ). No reference was made to the necessity of baptism for salvation or baptism being the will of God.

(Among the persons that either prayed or spoke during the evening, most if not all made frequent references to being "led to do" this or that (*i.e.*, "led" by the Holy Spirit).

Following his lesson, Sharp prayed for the Lord's Supper. He said that it was a meal prepared for your children, refreshment for the journey, in which we remember the body and blood, which reminds us to become as children again. May we receive it with joy.

"THE COMMUNION SERVICE"

For the "communion service", Sharp called on Scott Emanus (who was dressed as a priest and who has been named as the new Emmaus "Spiritual Director" for 2000) to come up and assist him in serving "the communion." Several people, both men and women came forward to take of "the communion." Sharp and Emanus took a loaf of bread and a chalice of juice. Each person was given a piece of the bread, which they then dipped into the chalice and then took "the communion." The band members were served first and then they took their places in the band again. Next the group assembled at the front of the auditorium took "the communion", then took their places at the end of each of the isles to serve the remainder of the group. (The Highland auditorium is configured in a fan shape, with the isles coming together in a semicircle at the front of the auditorium, fashioned like spokes of a wheel coming together at the hub of the wheel.) Stationed at the end of each of the aisles, which came together at the front, were two people from the group who had just taken communion. These servers were both men and women, (the group that Eddie Sharp and Scott Emanus had just served), and they were the people who served the rest of the congregation the communion. It was served in the same fashion as they had taken the bread and juice, with one of the servers handing each person a piece of the bread, which they took over to the next server who was holding the chalice of juice. The person then dipped the bread in the juice and then took the bread and juice together.

All during "the communion service", the band played and sang. The songs were:

"All In All"

"Purify My Heart"

"Thank You Lord"

"Rushing Wind"

(One of the songs specifically referred to the fire of the "Holy Spirit filling the members".)

After communion, Eddie Sharp again spoke. He indicated that the group had received the "Agape" from **Ruth**

The Fourteenth Annual SHENANDOAH LECTURES

February 18-21, 2000

WHY I AM NOT ASHAMED!

Friday, February 18

9:00 AM	Unashamed	Scott Lambert
10:00 AM	I Am Not Ashamed Of Christ Because He Is The Reigning Saviour	Richard Melson
11:00 AM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Unites The People Of God	Gary Summers
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
1:30 PM	Paul Was Not Ashamed Of Persecution Or Prison	Jim Laws
2:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Shall Endure Forever	Robert Johnson
3:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed To Preach The Whole Counsel Of God	Kenneth Ratcliff
3:30 PM	LADIES ONLY-Why I Am Not Ashamed To Stand For The Christian Home	Irene Taylor
4:30 PM	SUPPER BREAK	
7:00 PM	I Am Not Ashamed To Preach The Undenominational Nature Of The Church	Robert Taylor
8:00 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Reveals The Righteousness of God	B.J. Clarke

Saturday, February 19

9:00 AM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Is Sealed In The blood Of Christ	Gene Greer
10:00 AM	I Am Not Ashamed Of Christ Because He Is The Risen Saviour	Denny Landon
11:00 AM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Exposes Satan And His Devices	Richard Massey
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
1:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of Christ Because He Is Not Ashamed To call Us Brethren	Dan Flournoy
2:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Edifies And Builds Up The Saved	John Moore
3:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of Christ Because He Is The Perfect Saviour	Carl McCann
3:30 PM	LADIES ONLY-Jesus Bids Us Shine	Cherie Vestal
4:30 PM	SUPPER BREAK	
7:00 PM	I Am Not Ashamed To Call Sin Sin	Paul Sain
8:00 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Even Though It Is Under Constant Attack	Steven Lloyd

Sunday, February 20

9:30 AM	Overview Of The Book Of Romans	Johnny Ramsey
10:00 AM	Stand Up For Jesus	Johnny Ramsey
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
1:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed To Preach The Reality Of Heaven And Hell	Kevin Rhodes
2:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of Christ Because He Is The Good Shepherd	Bill Towry
3:30 PM	A Workman That Needeth Not To Be Ashamed	Ben Moseley
3:30 PM	LADIES ONLY-I Am Not Ashamed To Bear Burdens	Iris Ramsey
4:30 PM	SUPPER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Why I Am Not Ashamed To Preach "Revive Us Again"	Mike Vestal
8:00 PM	Why We Should Be Ashamed	Ken Hope

Monday, February 21

9:00 AM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Is The Power Of God Unto Salvation	Matt Gibson
10:00 AM	Of Who Is The Lord Ashamed	H.D. Simmons
11:00 AM	Moses Was Not Ashamed Of The Reproaches Of Christ	Michael Wyatt
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
1:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Speaks Of Our Hope	Barry Grider
2:30 PM	I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Because It Is God's Revelation & It's Provisions Are Complete	Bill Burk
3:30 PM	Esther Was Not Ashamed To Take A Stand	Tyler Young
4:30 PM	SUPPER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Joseph Was Not Ashamed Of God's Plan For Purity	Tom Wacaster
8:00 PM	Why I Am Not Ashamed Of The Church Of Christ	Eddie Parrish

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Sunday, February 27

- 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. "The Worship of the Catholic Church" Danny Douglas

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. "History of the Catholic Church, AD 1500 to the Present" Tom Wacaster
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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five acts of worship in the Christian assembly, but because his "synonymous parallelism" argument implies that all non-sinful acts are worship in the same sense, degree, and relationships, any distinction between the acts that transpire in the assembly and those outside the assembly is purely arbitrary and artificial. In other words, the argument implies in itself that changing dirty diapers is worship in the same sense, degree, and relationships as eating the Lord's Supper! Hall even tries to make a defense for calling both golf and diaper changing worship (pp. 11-12). The argument argues for an entirely new concept of the nature of New Testament worship! The mundane becomes just as sacred in the same sense, degree, and relationships as acts formerly considered sacred. Is the author of the bulletin willing to accept the logical consequences that follow from those premises? Is paying "lip service" to five acts in the assembly enough to persuade him that the doctrine bears no real dangers for the Lord's church?

KEY IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES INVOLVED

As **Terry Hightower** effectively has pointed out, the phrase "all life, except for sin, is worship" logically implies that there can be no such thing as "sinful worship." It has been defined "out of existence." When a brother wants to pluck on the banjo in the assembly for worship, there exists no grounds on which to condemn or prevent the action as "sinful," by definition it simply could not be "sinful." In fact, New Testament worship becomes unregulated. Christian Church preachers, like **Given O. Blakely**, realize this and are seeking to introduce the instrument on such a basis. **Buster Dobbs** formerly recognized this danger. One should read his statement on the difference between worship and religion on pages 84-85 in the *Annual Denton Lectures* of 1990 on the book of James. What **Dobbs** opposed then, he now defends to some extent. Is this consequential? Does it bear upon matters of faith, wherein we have no right to differ?

If a doctrine leads, when taken to its logical end, to sin, then is it not consequential? Does it not therefore involve "fatal error"? **F. LaGard Smith** writes very strongly against adultery and homosexuality. However, he abhors the fact that brethren will not fellowship his friend and mentor, **Homer Hailey**, who teaches a doctrine very similar to the **James Bales** heresy, which implies both, because the alien sinner is not amenable to God's marriage law. **Smith** does not accept the logical consequences of the doctrine, but neither do Calvinists accept the consequence that God is the author of evil (even moral evil, sin) given their view of divine sovereignty and total depravity. Cannot the logical consequences of a doctrine be used to argue against it, even if the adherents of it reject the consequences? If one says, "Well, I believe in salvation by grace only, but I also believe one ought to be baptized to obey God," then do not certain things follow? Is the teaching that salvation is by "grace only" rendered inconsequential by the truth of the latter clause? Does the truth of the latter clause mean that the matter is not a "fellowship issue"? What about any doctrine that would only imply the first clause without expressly stating it? When **Rubel Shelly** contends that we do

not "add one whit to our own salvation" is that inconsequential or consequential as concerns matters of eternal import?

MORE IMPLICATIONS OF THE "SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM" ARGUMENT

The Hall argument for "synonymous parallelism" in Matthew 4:10 also implies that one sins in not adopting the all life view because he is refraining from engaging in his every day actions as though they are acts of worship expressed to Deity. Surely, if one fails to observe the Lord's Supper in the right way, including the proper reflection on the significance of its emblems, then he sins (I Corinthians 11:25-30). What if one changes a diaper, mops the floor, or cleans up after the dog without cognitively acknowledging the act as an act of worship to give homage to Jehovah, would it not likewise follow from the position that one sins? If the doctrine implies that one sins because he does not uphold or practice it, then is not that doctrine consequential and posits itself a matter of faith? If, however, the doctrine is false, then it, at the least, seeks to bind upon the conscience of good brethren something as odious as the Judaizing heresy that Paul confronted. The all life is worship folk decry making this a test of fellowship, while speaking in the strongest of terms in denouncing those who will not brook with their error. Yet they treat it as a matter of fellowship in the very language they use to support it and attack those who will not. The Hall book is especially strident in this regard. One should carefully examine **Jess Hall's** attacks on **Jim Dearman** and **Gary Workman** and the preface by **Eric Hall**, who argues that we are commanded to worship God "all the time and in everything we do". If such is commanded, then it is obligatory, not optional. One sins by not complying with their teaching.

The essence of the hobby rider is poured over every page of the book. Pleading for liberty to pursue and promote their speculations, they offer in turn bondage to their man-made dogma. One wonders why they would even bother to plead for fellowship with those who oppose the notion that "all life, except for sin, is worship" or denounce them for refusing to fellowship them with their speculations?

But then the sage bulletin writer affirms this is really all but a "war over words," "much ado about nothing." I challenge him and those of like mind to read the Hall book from cover to cover and see if it be so! (It will be fascinating and an education in itself to see how **Dobbs** and **Mitchell** respond to the book as well. The early indications are that they are going to support it as best they can with cavil and sophistry for the time being. But the Hall book will ultimately mean as much to these men as *Spirit of Prophecy* does to the Kingites. They will be compelled to defend every whit.) Will the bulletin writer be prepared for the fall-out from such a defense? Or will he be compelled by the weight of the matter to back up and reassess his patently rash statements about it? Perhaps, he did not know that the book was already in print when he penned his article. Perhaps, there are others also who sincerely believe this is but "a war over words." They owe it to themselves and the brethren they influence to examine the matter very

During the 2nd week in October, an International Conference of UN-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGO's) convened in Seoul, South Korea to demand an end to both national sovereignty and marriage. Keynote speaker **Young Seek Choue** of South Korea called for the establishment of a "new world order for the next millennium" that would see independent nations replaced by such bodies as the European Union. At this UN-sponsored conference, **Rachel Kyte** of the World Conservation Union claimed that the Beijing Platform for Action hammered out at a previous UN session legitimized the rights of homosexuals. **Sheelagh Convey** of Seoul's Hancuk University urged that "marriage be abolished" because the family constitutes a form of violence and oppression for women and children. This conference is the first of four scheduled by the UN during the next six months. In December a meeting will be held in Chicago. In May 2000 there will be a meeting in New York (*The New American*, November 22, 1999, p. 10). *[This would be laughable if it were not so serious. Most people do not understand how powerful these NGO's are and the influence they have around the world. These groups have plenty of money as well to spend on their agendas. Do not take this lightly. There is a committed effort to a full fledge war against biblical principles. And those who think there really isn't that much to national sovereignty, ask those in Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine, and other ex-Soviet nations what they think about it.—MTM]*

Tipper Gore was out stumping at a "gay and lesbian" fundraiser for hubby **Al** this week, claiming, "All people, regardless of sexual orientation, should be able to be a part of a loving relationship in a family without fear of recrimination or discrimination." Executive director of the Human [read "Homosexual"] Rights Campaign, **Elizabeth Birch**, (no relation to John) described Gore's homosexual advocacy as "solid and deep." Excellent choice of words, Birch. (*The Federalist* email service, 7/24/99). *[This is the same woman who was concerned several years ago about the evils of rock music. I guess the evils of anti-family groups do not count. Besides, she has since capitulated regarding the evils of rock music. The musicians just might vote for her husband.—MTM]*

From December 1st through the 8th, the 1999 "Parliament of the World's Religions" will convene in Cape Town, South Africa. The document for the conference, A

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Morning Worship 9:55 a.m.	Wednesday
Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

Second Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 8-12, 2000

Call to Our Guiding Institutions, states that conferees will provide "leadership to assure that the Earth is respected, revered, and protected." The creation of a world religion will be accompanied by the destruction of supposedly unsustainable social structures. Market economies would be phased out so as to "move beyond our narrow self-interest" because "economic power should be wielded in the service of economic justice and the commonweal." "We must work toward a profound affirmation of global interdependence, moving beyond the present model of tenuously balanced power among nation-states toward a model of robust cooperation within the human family." Keynote speaker will be the **Dalai Lama** (*The New American*, December 6, 1999, p.6). *[The lineup of speakers is a who's who of liberal, modernist, new age and humanistic religious leaders as well as some interesting non-religious individuals such as Goldie Hawn and folk singer Arlo Guthrie. It is doubtful that much truth will be spoken at such an event.—MTM]*

OHIO — Despite an escalating national protest, **Duncan Toy** refuses to withdraw a controversial television commercial that invites kids to 'give us the finger.' The advertisement depicts 17 young people giving the camera the universal middle finger gesture. Finally, a young man gives the gesture again, but with a yo-yo tied to it. 'Give us the finger and we'll give you the power,' the announcer states at the end of the 30-second spot (Daywatch email news service, 12/1/99). *[It is amazing that a company would use such a tactic to sell what used to be a wholesome product for youth. And even more amazing that with a swelling tide of outrage regarding their ad campaign, they refuse to back down with those ads. This is a truly "in your face" attitude. So sad.—MTM]*

"[S]ometimes Christians on television will remind us with a wagging finger, and this is my personal favorite, 'After all, God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.' That always makes me sit bolt upright and yell back at the TV, 'He gave them kids named Cain and Abel, not Cain and Abigail.' But did you ever notice that somehow Cain found a wife (Genesis 4:17). 'Where did she come from?' we might ask. Perhaps she had different parents, which would mean Adam and Eve were not the first people. Or else she was one of Adam and Eve's 'other sons and daughters' (Genesis 5:4), in which case she was his sister and he was committing incest. It has to be one or the other. Which is it? But, after all, the whole thing is a Hebrew myth, a fiction to explain where people came from.—Syndicated gay press columnist **Paul Varnell** in an early May filing (Planet Out email news service, 7/7/99). *[Varnell demonstrates his lack of biblical belief and knowledge. Obviously God allowed man to procreate and populate the earth. After it was accomplished, he would make laws against such marriages.—MTM]*

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deception will make it so. More often, however, there is an ulterior motive to telling a lie, bringing hurt to others. Regardless of the reason for a lie, a lying tongue is one of the things that God hates (Proverbs 6:17; 12:22). Lying negates our Christianity.

Just as the tongue can be used in negative ways, it can also be a positive force. Proverbs 15:1 reads, "A soft answer turneth away wrath:..." "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). The tongue of the worthy woman held the law of kindness (Proverbs 31:26). We must watch the attitude with which we speak to others, doing so in order to encourage and lift up, never to put down and destroy. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it to stoop: but a good word

maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25). A mother uses a lullaby, not a rock or rap song, to sing her baby to sleep. This is the gentleness with which we should deal with others, living our Christianity before others.

We should open every day with a prayer that includes these words of David; "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalms 141:3). If we do so, we will be more mindful of our speech and less tempted by gossip, foul language, and lying. If we do so, we will be better able to use our tongues as a blessing for others and our Christianity, our light will be seen of all the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

—9194 Lakeside Drive
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Congregational Development...

ON COMPARISONS...

Lynn Parker

As a new year, new century, and new millennium begin, allow me to make some general observations concerning the church, followed by a single important lesson. In this great brotherhood, there are sound congregations that are numerically large, small, and medium sized. Some have a "part-time" preacher that drives in from another community each Sunday. Others are of such size and financial ability that they can fully support an evangelist. A few support more than one preacher or even an elder in their work.

Some sound preachers are really talented in the pulpit. They have all the right mannerisms and an appealing voice. But some preachers—doing the best they can—will always sound like the wail of a train whistle. Some preachers have tremendous memory and can deliver a sermon without the aid of written notes but others cannot. There are brethren who are in great demand for gospel meetings and lectureships and their names are known in several states. On the other hand, a large number of faithful preachers will labor all their years in relative obscurity in some town that is rarely mentioned in brotherhood conversations. Some men are given comparatively healthy monetary support while others in little known congregations may barely exist on a meager check.

There are a number of sound lectureships in the brotherhood. Some produce books; others do not. Several last four or five days while some are conducted over the course of a weekend. Some lectureships enlist speakers that are known far and wide over the brotherhood. Others utilize local talent from their immediate vicinity.

Stalwart schools of preaching help educate and produce dedicated proclaimers of the word. Some have large numbers in enrollment; others have but a few students each year. Some effective training programs are conducted by the local preacher who takes a man "under his wing" and has regular classes with a student body of one.

We are blessed to enjoy many sound publications produced by loyal followers of Christ. Some are quarterly, some monthly; some charge subscription fees and some are free. Some are almost "booklet" size while others cover only two pages per issue. Some are edited by older men with the wisdom of many years on the firing line and who have the gray hair to prove it! Some gospel papers are edited by younger men who also love the truth and want to see souls saved and edified.



In the local congregation are godly members with varying degrees of ability. One brother can lead the congregation's singing with a golden voice while a quiet gentleman in the corner stammers before a crowd. Yet the latter hands out tracts and invites neighbors to attend classes and worship assemblies. A good, kind sister might be known far and wide for her culinary talent and those in need of benevolence enjoy the benefits of sitting at her table. In the same congregation is a sister whose cooking "broke the dog from begging at the table," but this sister, whose skills are lacking in the kitchen, is especially good at teaching little ones and they are drawn to her side like magnets.

In each of these comparisons, we have noticed some that are more talented in some areas than others. Some are better known than others. Some hold forth the word to an audience of hundreds while others teach to an audience of one. Some preach and others sweep. Wherever they are—the metroplex or the countryside—if they are faithfully doing all they can, the best they can, with the tools and talent at their disposal, then God be thanked!

There is to be no competition between the righteous, the godly, the faithful. Remember these words of Paul:

SHAKERS

Paul Vaughn

Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill is located 25 miles southwest of Lexington, Kentucky on U.S. Highway 68. This village served as communal living quarters for the Kentucky Shakers. The original name of the village was Shawnee Run and was changed to Pleasant Hill about 1810.

The first Shakers came to Kentucky in March 1805 from New Lebanon, New York. **John Meacham, Benjamin Seth Youngs, and Issachar Bates**, three Shaker missionaries, walked from New Lebanon into Garrard County, Kentucky because they heard of some religious revivals taking place at Paint Lick, Kentucky. A few days after reaching Paint Lick they traveled to Bourbon County to visit **Barton Warren Stone** at Cane Ridge. They arrived at Cane Ridge on March 13 and began to try to convert Stone to the Shaker way of life.

HISTORY AND DOCTRINES OF SHAKERISM

The founder of the Shaker religion in America was **Ann Lee**. She was born on February 29, 1736 in Manchester, England. She was the daughter of **John Lee**, a blacksmith. Her mother's name is not known, but she had seven brothers and sisters. Because of the poverty of her family Ann Lee never had any formal education and was never able to read and write.

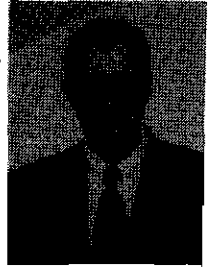
During her teenage years Lee developed a revulsion to marriage and viewed it as sin. This error in her thinking would become a core doctrine of the Shaker religion. Despite her loathing of marriage Lee did marry **Abraham Stanley**, who worked as a blacksmith. This marriage was doomed from the beginning because of Lee's inability to view marriage as ordained of God. She would at times, stay up all night praying to be released from the bondage of marriage.

In 1758 Lee met **James and Jane Wardley**, who were formerly Quakers. The Wardleys formed a religious society who, when they met, would often shake in their services, thus, they were known as "Shakers."

Ann Lee was very zealous for her religious beliefs and was put in prison in Manchester, England teaching against the lusts of the flesh. One wonders what she was teaching that got her imprisoned. While in prison Lee said that Jesus appeared to her, revealing the doctrines she would bring to America in establishing the Shaker Church. After Lee "received" her visions, she was known as "Mother Ann." In 1774 Ann Lee with eight of her disciples traveled to America arriving on August 6. She taught her Shaker doctrines until she died on September 8, 1784.

What are some of the doctrines the Shakers believed? Due to the lack of space only a few of the strange teachings

of the Shakers will be given time. They were very pragmatic about celibacy. Lee's view of marriage is the basis for this teaching. Shakers lived as brothers and sisters, never as husbands and wives. The scriptures teach that marriage is precious in the sight of God. **"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."** (Hebrews 13:4). Just as the Sadducees refused to see God's teaching about life after death, the Shakers refused to see God's teaching on marriage. Spiritualism was another one of the false views Shakers taught. During their religious services they would dance, shake, and claim to have the gifts of tongue speaking and prophesying. The Shakers also viewed Ann Lee as the "Daughter of man" as Jesus was the "Son of man." This teaching deified Ann Lee as equal or superior to Christ. Shakers did view Lee as superior to Jesus because they chose to follow her doctrines over the doctrine of Christ. Today there are only seven Shakers alive and they are ageing. The Shaker religion is passing into the abyss, may it never rise again!



SHAKERS AND THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Shakers had a deadly effect on some of those returning to New Testament Christianity. In 1804 **Robert Marshall, John Dnnlavy, Richard Mc'Nemar, Barton Stone, John Thompson, and David Purviance** signed the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*. These men were in the process of returning to the "Old Paths," pointing people back to the Bible to the pattern it had for the church. It was ten months from the signing of the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*, that Shakers first came to Bourbon County to meet with Barton Stone.

Shakers influenced Richard Mc'Nemar, John Dunlavy and several other preachers to follow their disastrous ways. It was at this time that Barton W. Stone began to labor night and day to combat the effects of the Shakers. Stone worked so hard that at times he would spit blood from his throat from all the preaching and teaching he did in defending the faith. The efforts of the Shakers were stopped, but they had taken many with them to their own destruction.

In his biography Stone said that Dunlavy after writing many articles and teachings of the Shakers died, "raving in desperation for his folly in forsaking the truth for an old woman's fables."¹ Mc'Nemar was eventually disfellowshipped by the Shakers, dying in a poverty-stricken state.

It Didn't Get There By Accident

Jodie Boren

The origin of the following statement is unknown to me, but it tells a great truth worthy of our consideration. "If you see a turtle on top of a fence post, one thing you know for sure is, it didn't get there by accident."

In the days of Jeremiah the obstinacy of the idolatrous Jews was shown in their putting God's word from their minds. In Jeremiah 44:16-17 the people answered Jeremiah, "as for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, **WE WILL NOT HEARKEN UNTO THEE. But we will do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth.**" It was not by accident that these Jews did not hearken to the word of the Lord. They chose to do it their way!

OTHERS WHO WOULD NOT LISTEN

As we come on down to when Christ was on earth, many had this mind set. When Jesus told the unnamed man in Mark 10:17-22 what to do to inherit eternal life, this person chose to ignore the Lord's words and went away sadly because he had great possessions.

Again, in John 12:42-43, we read that many believed on Jesus but did not confess him. They chose not to hear his commandments "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Stephen was stoned to death because the council chose not to hear and heed the word of God that he had been preaching to them (Acts 7).

Paul, likewise, on one occasion encountered a man by the name of Elymas who was a sorcerer. This false prophet was also called Bar-jesus. Elymas chose not to hear and obey God but would pervert the right ways of the Lord. Paul called him a child of the devil and the enemy of righteousness (Acts 13:4-12).

Again the scriptures tell us that Paul preached to Felix, the cruel procurator of Judea. In Acts 24:25 we read, Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Felix trembled, and answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee." Felix chose not to hearken to the words of Paul concerning the faith in Christ. King Agrippa had the same disposition of mind that Felix had. After Paul had preached Jesus unto him, Agrippa said unto Paul, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Almost is but to fail. Agrippa made the wrong decision (Acts 26:19-32).

There are other examples of those who made the wrong decision concerning the word of the Lord but these will suffice. So today the denominational world has the same mind set. They choose to worship God as they want—not in truth according to the word of God (John 4:24). They change God's teachings to suit themselves, violating the great principle of Deuteronomy 4:2 where God states in no uncertain terms that man shall not add to or diminish ought

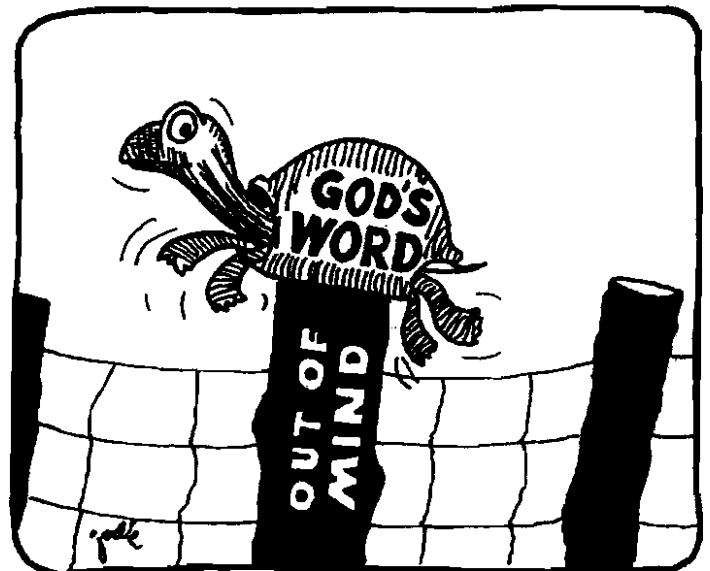
from the word commanded them. When men change God's word, Jesus tells us in Matthew 15:9, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

CHURCH MEMBERS WHO REFUSE TO LISTEN

Unfortunately, many members of the Lord's church refuse to hearken to God's word. These Christians are often those who are always present at the worship services and join enthusiastically in all the activities. They think of themselves as being faithful and are considered by their brethren to be faithful. So then, how do they fail to hearken to God's word? The answer is simple and there are many areas of the work of the church it could be applied to but we will just mention one. They are failing to carry out the great commission and in so doing are not hearkening to the words of God. Jesus said, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46)? James adds, "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin," (James 4:17). It is easy to see the faults of the aforementioned examples, but it is most difficult to look objectively at ourselves. Paul exhorts us to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Corinthians 13:5). Is not the challenge that Joshua issued to the people of God in his day applicable to us? He said, "choose you this day whom ye will serve..." (Joshua 24:15). Think about it.



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teaching to some degree and the book will help them to be on guard.

"We stress the fact that every one of the members should read it along with their Bibles. We cried while reading that book and it is hard to believe that young, intelligent men whose parents and grandparents were soldiers of the cross before them, could actually believe what they are teaching.

"They don't realize how fortunate they are to have had such dedicated Christians to follow. We pray that this special mailing of Behold The Pattern will bring unity back to the body of Christ."

(NOTE: We are grateful to brother and sister Low for helping in this regard. A couple of other books also have come to our attention which we believe will renew interest in the movement to restore Christianity to its original faith and practice. Thoroughly researched and written by Everett Donaldson, an elder of the church at Mount Sterling, Kentucky, where Raccoon John Smith used to preach, these two books, respectively, are entitled, "Raccoon John Smith—Frontiersman and Reformer" and "The Legacy of Raccoon John Smith."

The first book sells for \$10.95; the second for \$12.95. Ordered separately, add \$2.00 each for postage and handling. Ordered together, add \$3.00. Make your checks payable to me personally and send them with your orders to Ira Y. Rice, Jr., 2956 Allshore, Memphis, Tennessee 38118. Both books are well worth what they cost. Much appreciation to brother Donaldson for publishing them. IYR.Jr.]

Others who helped pay for "Special Mailings" of Goebel Music's "Behold the Pattern," included the Bradford Church of Christ, of Bradford, Tennessee, who sent \$200.00; Hugh and Frances McCarter, of Arlington, Tennessee, \$200.00; Ed Rutland, of Spring, Texas, enclosed \$20.00, saying, in part, "I hope and pray that those who receive a copy of the book will be inspired to correct their erring ways. If they will only take the time to read, it will certainly clear up some of their confusion being dealt by the hands of those who despise the truth."

Alan Eck, then minister to the church at Rush Springs, Oklahoma, enclosed \$50.00; saying it was "to help with the mailing of Behold the Pattern to elders, deacons and ministers of the churches causing divisions in the kingdom. We would also like to order two of the books to be sent to us here at Rush Springs for our library..."

Gene Hicks, treasurer for the Harlandale Church of Christ, of San Antonio, Texas, enclosed \$150.00, saying, in part, "We commend you Brother Music and Brother Rice on your decision and work to get copies of 'BEHOLD THE PATTERN' into the hands that need the book so much...Our prayer is that our Father will bring into your hands more funds than needed for the project. We at Harlandale wish to have a small part in this effort..."

Robert Bruce, Fort Worth, Texas: "All the God bless yous that have come your way, laid end on end, would reach the

throne of our Heavenly Father. Here's another: God bless you. This reminds me of the mathematical question, how many telephone poles, end on end, would it take to reach the moon? The old professor said, 'One, if it's long enough'."

(NOTE: Much appreciation to brother Bruce for the kind things he said in his letter. "As for the length of that telephone pole mentioned in your last paragraph," I replied, in part, "it would be longer than the size of the foot it would take to dam the Jordan River." IYR.Jr.]

FAITHFUL SCHOOLS NEED MORE BOOKS FOR LARGER LIBRARIES

When we learned that sister Joy Gilmore had given brother Joe's entire library as a contribution to Memphis School of Preaching, we thought, how wonderful! Just how many books were included in this gift we are uncertain, but they weighed more than 13,000 pounds!

Not just Memphis School of Preaching, but other of our faithful schools, need all the sound books they can get to fill out their own school libraries.

In addition to Memphis School of Preaching, for instance, you might consider giving such to the Southwest School of Bible Studies, in Austin, Texas; to Houston College of the Bible, in Spring, Texas; to Florida School of Preaching, in Lakeland, Florida—and while you are at it, to Four Seas College, in Singapore; to Southern Sumatra Academy in Tanjungkarang, Sumatra and to Kakinada School of Preaching, in Kakinada, India.

Those interested in contributing books and/or libraries to any of these schools, please write to us for their addresses—also for how such gifts can be made so as to qualify for tax deductions.

While overseas in December, we noted such gifts are needed particularly in Singapore as well as in Kakinada. Once given, it costs a great deal of money to ship them there; but, in the long run, how eminently worth while.—IYR, Jr.

Cecile Butler, who used to live near Wewoka, Oklahoma, some years ago moved to Oklahoma City. At the time that Andre Rezner published that scurrilously offensive article "Christmas at Matthew's House," she wrote asking for a copy, "because I was telling my son and daughter-in-law about it and they said I must be mistaken because a member of the church wouldn't write something like that..."

(NOTE: Looking it up, I sent a photocopy of the article to her, saying, in part, "Although we empathize with your son and daughter-in-law thinking you must be mistaken—that a member of the church would not write something like that—they must understand that an apostasy began forming in the church more than 30 years ago and that we have to be on our guard all the time lest we, too, be led into error..."

Explaining how great numbers of congregations and individuals, such as Rezner, had gone into liberalism, I further said, "...This did not happen overnight. It was a long, drawn-out process. Like the

frog that was placed in a pan of cold water and placed over a low flame, the water got warmer and warmer, but not all at once. By the time the frog woke up to the fact that he was in danger, he could no longer move and boiled himself to death. This is happening all over the brotherhood—right now." IYR.Jr.]

DEBATE ON BAPTISM

The Chula Vista
Church of Christ
will host a debate between

David P. Brown,
preacher for the

Spring Church of Christ
Spring, Texas

and

Gene Cook of the
Reformed Baptist Church
Chula Vista, California

**February 14-16, 18,
2000**

Proposition #1

"The Bible teaches that
water baptism is essential to
the salvation of the sinner"
(Feb. 14 & 15).

Affirm: David P. Brown
Deny: Gene Cook

Proposition #2

"The sinner is saved before
and without water baptism"
(Feb. 16 & 18).

Affirm: Gene Cook
Deny: David P. Brown

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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."

Peterborough—Church of Christ, meeting at the Manor Farm Community Centre, Eye, Peterborough. BS 10 a.m., BB 11 a.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Contact evangelist Danny Douglas; Email: D.Douglas@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel:01144-1733-315907 or Keith Sisman: K.Sisman@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel: 01144-1487-710552.

—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. (850) 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., 6p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

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

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.

The Last Word...

WHERE ARE OUR ELDERS?

Eddie Whitten

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). There is coming upon the church rapidly a growing concern. In churches of significant size there is an alarming lack of elders to oversee the flock. Back off (mentally) and take a perspective look at the number of smaller churches being started. Add to that the increasing number of larger churches (100 – 200 members) without elders and we become aware of the need for additional strong, biblically oriented elders. Without proper leadership the church is weakened. Error has a much greater opportunity to invade the flock without shepherds to guide and protect. In many cases members who are not grounded in the faith, but who are vocal and persuasive, overwhelm the others. This is a matter of utmost urgency and needs our immediate atten-

tion. If we can determine what is happening to create this problem, perhaps we can take steps to remedy the same. The following observations are humbly offered to awaken us to this challenge.

LACK OF DESIRE TO SERVE

Paul gave the qualifications for elders in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. To Timothy, Paul said, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3:1). There must be a desire on the part of an individual who is otherwise qualified to serve in the most responsible office on the face of the earth. Some evidently feel that to even express a desire to serve as an elder, he will be branded as a glory seeker, or some such thing. There is a danger in this regard, but we are speaking of one who may



The Christmas Function was mentioned. It was indicated that there were clipboards available, and there were needs to provide "Agape" and prayer for the Christmas journey in December.

Doug Royce made announcements about the New Years Eve praise service. He indicated that there would be Christian entertainment consisting of drama, music, *et al*, from 7:00 to 10:00. He said that churches were encouraging their congregations to join us, and this was an opportunity to invite people who do not have a church. He said this would be a full-blown praise and worship and communion service, with a candlelight service at midnight. It will be held at the *University Baptist Church* at Grape and Amber. There was an opportunity for people to volunteer to provide drama, skits, and music. More details were to follow in the week to come. He then expressed thanks for support.

Ben (?) then made announcements concerning the Saturday morning pancake breakfast, and the "afterglow" ladies meeting. Then followed a detailed discussion of the use of a bulletin board in the lobby for "Reunion Groups". He indicated that there were slots to fill, and there were several stacks of multicolored paper on which to sign up for different reunion times. He said you were to put your name and phone number on an appropriate color paper and put the slip in the slot on the board for the time which you wanted to attend. If you are a "guy" reunion group, you were to use blue paper, if you are a "gal" reunion group, you were to use pink paper, if you are a couple reunion group, you were to use yellow paper, to sign up for your group.

"BABE-CHICKS" AND "CHICKENS"

Next, **Eddie Sharp** returned and stated that it was time for the "Babe-Chick Introductions." If you had been on a walk, a flight, or a journey, and if you had never been to a meeting before, you were to come to the front and introduce yourself. You were to tell your name, what walk (flight or journey) you went on, and tell where you were from. All of the introductions appeared to be from "walks"

numbered 72, 74, or 75. The memberships of these participants were from the following churches.

Lutheran
 First Baptist
 New Life Ministries
 First United Methodist (Sweetwater)
 Southern Hills Church of Christ
 Highland Church of Christ
 Elm Wood West Methodist
 Beltway Park
 First United Methodist (Clyde)
 Aldersgate Methodist
 St. James Methodist
 Community Church

After these introductions of the "Babe-Chicks", **Eddie Sharp** stated that these members were no longer "Babe-Chicks" but are now "Chickens."

Following these introductions, **Sharp** announced the names of those who were willing to serve on the incoming board. They were nominated, seconded, and elected by a voice vote. The following people were elected to this new board:

Randy Reese
Booker T. Roy
Stephen Smith
Jana Cook
Sandy Martin
Gail Martin
Larry Bass

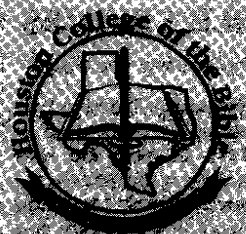
(Again, as with the list of outgoing board members, at least one, and possibly two, of the new board members names were missed as they were read so fast.)

LAY AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

Then **Sharp** said that there were people who would take over **Ralph Thornhill's** and **Eddie Sharp's** roles. He then announced that **Lynette Bridges** and **Brenda Goodwin** would be the new "Lay Directors." He said that in the past there had been two "Lay Directors" with each serving 6 months, however, he said this team was a "Moses and Aaron" team, with one comfortable doing the speaking and the other doing behind the scenes work.

The new "Spiritual Director" will be **Scott Emanus**. This role has been **Eddie Sharp's** role for the past year.

Next came reports and prayers for upcoming walks. The #76 Men's Walk is coming up in January. The team overseeing this walk was asked to come to the front. Then others were asked if they desired to come forward to show support of the team to do so, and lay hands on the team showing their support. Others in the audience were told if they wanted to show support of the team, they could raise their hands in a show of support from their seats during the prayer. **Randy Reese** was called upon to pray for this group. He prayed that the men who were serving on the walk had heard and accepted the call, and 42 pilgrims were to be on the walk. He prayed specifically for **Scott** and **Bill** and the rest of the team, and asked that the Lord provide them with the words they need to speak.



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Dye Fisher, who had been baking the bread. He said that tonight's bread was the last bread she would be baking for the group, saying that she was 88 years old. In the last few minutes of the gathering, he made mention of the "purple book", but it was not used during this evening's meeting.

The meeting was closed with a prayer, led by Sharp, in which he thanked God for the Emmaus people referring to them as a "God loving people." He prayed for the new "Lay Directors, Lynette and Brenda, and the new Spiritual Director, Scott" who will be leading the group in 2000.

Attendance at this meeting is estimated (by this group of four observers) to be about 400 to 500 people.

ADDENDUM

We are appalled at what we observed at this meeting of the Emmaus Community. We are sickened in our hearts to realize that a once proud and powerful citadel of the truth, the Highland Church of Christ, has now succumbed to the temporizing spirit of the times and allowed the worship of God to be openly desecrated, and the property of the church used for the furtherance of error. We sat not wanting to believe that in fact a well known and popular pulpit preacher for the University Church of Christ and a teacher in the Bible department of *Abilene Christian University* was today and for the past year ministering to the Emmaus Community and working hand in hand to promote many unscriptural practices such as the use of instruments, Tues-

day communion, women leading in prayer and song, faith only salvation, and a denominational attitude toward the nature of the church. Not once did we hear the gospel proclaimed and sinners called to repentance, or the abandonment of scriptural authority condemned. Instead from the lips of one highly praised for his work as a pulpit preacher and teacher at the University Church of Christ, and a teacher of young Christians at *Abilene Christian University*, came words of acknowledgement of this community of believers as the body of Christ and of their work and worship as being acceptable before God.

Let us all be warned by this sad circumstance and take up the challenge which Satan has thrown before us and quit ourselves as men, do our duty and defend the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

Truly it must be said that "evil men and imposters will go on from bad to worse deceivers and deceived" but let every man and woman of God who loves their Lord and the church for which he died, stand firm and as Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 1:13-14, "Follow the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth which has been instructed to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us."

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8:00 pm.....My Responsibilities To The ChurchRobert Taylor

Saturday, March 18

9:00 am.....The Church Is The One Body Of ChristToney Smith
10:00 am.....The Church Has The Right FounderRobert Taylor
11:00 am.....The Church Has The Right Date/Place Of OriginMichael Light
Noon.....Lunch (Provided By Cullendale)
1:30 pm.....The Church Has The Right CreedB.J. Clarke
2:30 pm.....The Church Has The Right Name.....James Boyd
3:30 pm.....The Church Has The Right Form Of Worship.....B.J. Clarke
4:30 pm.....The Church Has The Right Form Of Organization.....Lennie Reagan

Sunday, March 19

9:00 am.....Ask For The Old Paths.....Terry Phillips
10:00 am.....The Church Has The Right Plan Of Salvation.....Lennie Reagan
11:30 am.....Lunch (Provided By Cullendale)
1:30 pm.....Congregational Singing
2:15 pm.....The Church Has The Right Destiny.....Jerry Berley
3:15 pm.....How To Identify The Church In The Bible.....Rod Halliburton

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The Parable of The Ten Virgins

Tom Moore

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Parable

1. This parable finds its setting during the week leading up to the death of Jesus on the cross.
2. Matthew 23:37-39...Jesus, in great sadness leaves the temple for the last time.
3. As Jesus leaves this impressive structure and looks back, notice what is said...Matthew 24:2.
4. Jesus and his disciples then go up to the mount of Olives, which had an impressive view of the temple, and the Lord's disciples ask two questions: When will the temple be destroyed, and when will you come to destroy the world?
5. Jesus answers these questions one at a time:
 - a. The temple destruction (Matthew 24:4-34)
 - b. The final destruction (Matthew 24:35-51)
6. To develop these points even more, Jesus proclaims three parables in Matthew 25.
 - a. The Ten Virgins (vs. 1-13)
 - b. The Talents (vs. 14-30)
 - c. The Sheep and the Goats (vs. 31-46)

B. Virgins and the Bridegroom

1. The weddings in the ancient east were almost always at night, involving ten maidens. The bridegroom would go to the house of the bride to escort her with pomp and gladness either to his home or another place for a period of feasting.
2. The ten virgins would have their lamps burning awaiting the wedding party at some point along the way, and they would then join the procession to the feast. Many times the bridegroom would tarry at the home of the bride, and it would be late before he went to the place of celebration.
3. The virgins were to remain alert with their lamps burning, no matter what time or how late the bridegroom and his company came by. If the virgins went to sleep, or did not have sufficient oil in their lamps to keep them burning, or if they were gone for some reason when the bridegroom came, they would miss out on the festivities, and would bring embarrassment to themselves.

II. DISCUSSION

A. The Parable

1. Matthew 25:1-13
2. The "virgins" represent those in the kingdom, or the church. The coming of the bridegroom represents the Second Coming of Christ. The "lamps" represent the faith of Christians. The "extra oil" symbolizes good works that accompany our faith.
3. Jesus proclaims this parable to teach us the urgent need to always be prepared for his Second Coming.

B. We MUST BE PREPARED because just having our name of the church role is no guarantee of heaven.

1. There are one of two directories that Christians usually put their stock in, the church directory and/or the Lamb's Book of Life.
2. Consider some biblical examples of those who were in "church directories," but not in the Lamb's Book of Life:

a. The Parable of the Sower (2/3 were lost).

b. The Parable of the Talents (1/3 were lost).

c. The parable of the Ten Virgins (1/2 were lost).

3. The five foolish virgins were not lost because they were evil, mean, or unconcerned – but because they were unprepared and lacked foresight.
4. It is not just those who are in the church who will be saved, but those who are prepared and in the church.

C. We MUST BE PREPARED because no one can do it for us.

1. The five foolish virgins sought the "oil" (good works) of the five wise virgins (v. 8).
 - a. Character and obedience are not transferable.
 - b. The five foolish virgins needed to bring their own oil.
 - c. Romans 14:12
2. Therefore, we must be PREPARED:
 - a. Outwardly – "by having our lamps".
 - 1) Obedience is an outward form or preparation.
 - 2) Romans 6:17-18
 - 3) One example of "outward preparation" is faithfully attending worship services.
 - b. Inwardly – "by having oil in our lamps".
 - 1) To have faith without obedience is like having a lamp without oil.
 - 2) II Peter 1:5-9
3. It is obvious that many Christians are allowing their lamps to go out.
4. In the day of Judgment we will be without excuse.

D. We MUST BE PREPARED because of the Second Coming of Christ.

1. The fact of Christ's Second Coming
 - a. Acts 1:9-11
 - b. II Thessalonians 1:7-9
2. The Second Coming will reveal our true character.
 - a. In the parable of the Ten Virgins they all appeared to be alike until the bridegroom came.
 - b. In the church we may all appear to be alike, but when Christ comes again we will see that there are many hypocrites in the church.
 - 1) Romans 2:16
 - 2) I Corinthians 4:5
3. There will be no second chance.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Surely, it was a lot of trouble for the virgins to dress for the wedding feast, have their lamps with them, and keep oil in their lamps – BUT the celebration was worth it all.
- B. Likewise, it takes a lot of effort and time to serve the Lord today, but when He comes again – the eternal celebration of joy in heaven will be well worth it!



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Is The "All Life Is Worship" Controversy Only A War Over Words?

Daniel Denham

A writer in a recent church bulletin decided to weigh in on the current discussion on the "all life is worship" doctrine. He opined that the entire matter is but a "war over words" and does not rise to a fellowship matter. He contended that the defense of the doctrine does not involve "fatal error" providing one does not seek by it to change the public worship assembly by introducing new "acts" of worship therein, *et.al.* Some comments and observations are in order relative to such remarks.

THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY

Most readers of *Contending for the Faith* will recall that the current controversy erupted over the teaching of **H.A. (Buster) Dobbs** on this matter. Dobbs has contended in various editorials and letters that "all life, except for sin, is worship." An interesting development of late is the circulation by Dobbs and **Lindell Mitchell** of an unsigned and undated joint statement in which they seem at the beginning of the statement to deny they have ever believed or taught the doctrine. Yet they go on to try to defend by implication the very thing that they seemed to deny explicitly. *The statement's stated purpose is for the use and study of all "concerned and interested" brethren, though incongruously Dobbs and Mitchell do not wish it to be published!* The author of the bulletin article ascribes to Dobbs what the editor of *Firm Foundation* now claims he has never taught! Perhaps, on that basis alone the bulletin writer should rethink some of his pronouncements on the matter. If there is a war over words, then who has created

it? Evidently the bulletin writer seems to be convinced that Dobbs indeed is teaching the "all life is worship" doctrine in some sense! Could it be a case of willful and deliberate equivocation by Dobbs and Mitchell that has helped create the current situation?

Further, is it really just "a war over words"? Or might there be greater issues involved that the author of the bulletin simply fails to see, or, if he sees them, simply ignores? It is interesting that the article came out just shortly after the advent of a book defending the all life doctrine by **Jess Hall, Jr.** In the preface to that book, **Eric Hall**, son of the book's author, states expressly that Dobbs did teach at Fleetwood that "in some sense, all life is worship." He also implies by his reference to Dobbs that he (Dobbs) was in agreement with the position that Jess Hall had taken on the matter. Dobbs taught it according to the Hall book, but now Dobbs says that he has never taught it! This is contradictory testimony. Dobbs and Hall need to get together and decide which story they will stick with on the matter.



THE JESS HALL BOOK

Jess Hall contends in his book that Matthew 4:10 is a case of "synonymous parallelism" (pp. 57ff.) and that therefore the verbs *proskuneo* (rendered "worship" in the KJV and ASV) and *latreuo* (rendered here as "service" in the KJV and ASV) refer to the same thing. A clear implication of the argument is that these words thus must mean "worship" in the same sense, to the same degree, and in the same relationships. Lindell Mitchell in a recent letter to me, however, has stated that *proskuneo* and *latreia*, the noun form of *latreuo*, do not refer to worship in the same sense, degree, and relationships. He even states that "everyone knows" that! Again, the stories do not mesh. In his correspondence with **Eddie Whitten**, which I mentioned in my *CFTF* article of September 1999, Dobbs made the same basic argument as that of Hall on Matthew 4:10. He even contended that mopping the floor and cleaning up after the dog is worship. Yet Dobbs says that he has never taught the "all life, except for sin, is worship" doctrine.

Hall earlier by implication teaches in his book that playing golf and changing dirty diapers on the baby is worship. It is worship in the sense of *latreuo* (Matthew 4:10) and *latreia* (Romans 12:1), and by virtue of his "synonymous parallelism" argument on Matthew 4:10, it is worship also in the sense of *proskuneo* (Matthew 4:10; John 4:23-24). I wonder if the bulletin writer has ever thought about the implications of such a position. Hall pays "lip service" to the

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carefully before offering comfort and solace to those promoting the "all life" doctrine.

Do not get angry, if you believe this is but "a war over words," when some dear brother states that he decided that it was scriptural for him to go to the lake and fish rather than attend the assembly Sunday morning. After all, he can say that he was still worshipping, just not "as intensely" as being in the assembly! The groundwork for that day has been laid. The doctrine involves in itself the dissolution of both the assembly and the local congregation as a viable organization.

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS AND QUERIES

Is it but "a war over words" when the modernist equivocates on the word "inspiration" concerning the origin of the scriptures? Is it only "a war over words" when the "Jehovah Witnesses" use the word "spirit" in the way that they do? Is it just "a war over words" when the Crossroads-Boston Movement folk speak of "total commitment"? Is it but "a war over words" when Rubel Shelly says that we do not add "one whit to our own salvation"? Do words mean things? Are they of any importance? Or are we slipping

and sliding down the slippery slope of post-modern thinking?

When confronting false doctrine, words will be at the very heart of the issue(s) involved. Before anyone simply writes off a dispute as simply a dispute over semantics, he needs to consider the full implications of the various positions. Contrary to the view of the editor of *Firm Foundation*, all implications are relevant and need to be considered. The notion of drawing only "the relevant implications" is logically false on its face.

When a doctrine, if believed and obeyed, would keep us from doing what God would have us to do or would encourage us to engage in what God would not have us to do, then "fatal error" is involved. It must therefore be opposed. We must be always for the truth and the right and against error and wrong (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; Psalms 119:104).

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Current Events That Concern Christians...

POWERBEADS, AND GAY RIGHTS, CONTROVERSIAL COMMERCIALS, AND TIPPER GORE

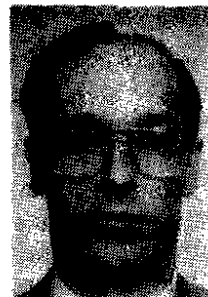
Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Powerbeads have replaced crystals and amulets as the dominant fetish among the superstitious. Powerbeads are sold everywhere from fashionable department stores to low-rent street vendors. Some folks believe this little dash of Buddhism can increase wealth and brainpower. Supposedly the color of the powerbeads determines their magic powers. For example, a rose quartz attracts, turquoise delivers healing, and mother of pearl sucks in the shekels (*World*, November 6, 1999, p. 27). *[It is amazing that people will believe such rubbish but deny the word of our God. Satan truly has great pleasure in such ignorance. —MTM]*

"Nobody on this earth has the right to tell anyone that their love for another human being is morally wrong. I will never forget how it made me shudder to hear **Pat Buchanan** say that he stood with **George Bush** against the immoral idea that gay and lesbian couples should have the same standing in law as married men and women. Who is Pat Buchanan to pronounce anyone's love invalid? How can he deny the profound love felt by one human being for another? ...Unfortunately, however, as long as people like **Newt Gingrich** and Pat Buchanan continue in public life,

the fight to codify gay marriages will be a tough battle to win."—**Barbara Streisand** to the *Advocate*, August 17 (Planet Out email news service, 11/2/99). *[Streisand needs to read the Bible. The Bible gives those judgments, not man. —MTM]*

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said that the administration was "deeply dissatisfied" with the need to accept any linkage between abortion and foreign aid — calling it illogical, unwise, and wrong to hold the U.S. obligation to the United Nations "hostage to an extremist agenda on international family planning" (*The Washington Times*, November 29-December 5, 1999, p. 18). *[No, Madam Secretary, to believe that the killing of innocent children is something to be glossed over is illogical, unwise and wrong. To have our governmental representatives publicly castigating those who believe in the sanctity of life is an embarrassment. Rather than leading the world in virtue, we are leading them into destruction. —MTM]*



SOME MATTERS OF THE TONGUE

Annette B. Cates

Each of us has within ourselves a very powerful tool that has tremendous impact on our influence and relationships with others. We have the choice to control that tool in order to achieve the greatest amount of good, or to let it go uncontrolled and leave a trail of destruction behind us. In his epistle, James describes the tongue as a little member that boasts great things, it can be as a fire or as a deadly poison, capable of being a restless evil. He goes on to say that it can also be used as a blessing and as sweet water, but it cannot be both good and evil at the same time (James 3:2-12). Whatever way we may use our tongue, the effect is long-lasting. Lies destroy trust. Foul language sullies beauty. Harsh words, sharply spoken, cut like a sword (Proverbs 12:18). Sometimes we say things, use the wrong words, demonstrate the wrong attitudes that we do not really mean, but the damage is the same. Conversely, our soft words can soothe a broken heart. A sincere compliment can lift the spirit and brighten the day. Wisely chosen words can dispel anger and bring peace. Truth spoken in love can save a soul. Yes, we have this powerful tool at our disposal. Let us look now at some ways we can use, or misuse, the tongue.

GOSSIP

It is easy for innocent conversation to turn into gossip. It seems to be a part of human nature to enjoy knowing something no one else knows, but that is no fun if no one else knows that we know things no one else knows; so, of course, we have to tell, sometimes embellishing whatever "facts" we have in order to feel even more important! Often, we think that it is not gossip if what we are telling is true. However, even truth, if told with the wrong motive, can become a part of a destructive cycle of gossip. Solomon said, "A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13). He also said, "For lack of wood the fire goeth out; and where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth" (Proverbs 26:20). As Christians, preachers, and preachers' wives, we are often confided in by others. It is wonderful to know that others feel safe in placing such

trust in us, and we must never betray that confidence. We have to be discerning when it comes to the things we hear. We cannot participate in bad-mouthing others, passing along criticisms that may or may not be warranted. We should ask ourselves, "Would I want to face the person involved with what I have just told? What if this person were my loved one? Would I tell what I have heard?" We can do our part in shutting down the gossip mill by 1) not starting a tale, 2) not listening to a tale, and 3) not passing a tale along to someone else. How much more pleasant and peaceful life would be if each of us stopped gossip as soon as it came to us!



Gossip is not confined to talk about individuals. Great damage is done to the church by those who would tell their non-Christian friends of disagreements, turmoil, or other negative aspects of events within the local congregation. We should never air our dirty laundry in public whether it involves family or the church. It is no one else's business if the preacher leaves or a group splits off. There are those in the world who take delight in any troubles the church of Christ might have, never mind that they no doubt have the same problems and worse. The church in God's design is perfect, but the people who enter her doors are human and capable of human errors. Gossip in any form negates our Christianity.

One would not think it necessary to remind Christians of the sins of the tongue related to profanity, gutter language, and dirty or crude jokes. However, our society is marked more and more by just such talk, influencing us and our speech. Books, movies, television programs, and popular music are full of filth. The more this language is heard, the more it seems to be accepted. My father was not a Christian, but one thing he stressed was clean language. He taught me that there are hundreds of thousands of words in the English language and surely I was smart enough to be able to express myself without resorting to filth to do so. He would be horrified by what has become commonplace. How sadly God must look upon today's society and its language! Woe to us if we adopt the language of Ashdod, negating our Christianity.

LYING

Lying is another aspect of abuse of the tongue that seems to be accepted today. Even if the lie is not outright, words can be so twisted that meaning and intent are unclear and deceptive. Sometimes a lie is excused because it is a "white lie" and situational ethics would call for its use. It is reminiscent of the childhood ploy of crossing one's fingers behind the back to make a lie "ok." But, a lie is not "ok," and no amount of word-twisting and finger-crossing and

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Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; (3) (doing) nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself (Philippians 2:2-3).

For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith... (16) Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits (Romans 12:3,16).

A crown of righteousness awaits the faithful bare-footed peasant preacher from a third-world country just as it does the best known in America. The brother who has the front page article in a well-known publication is no better than the brother whose journalistic efforts reach only a few hundred. One who for years works his heart out in a town of 500 and with a congregation of 15 precious souls but is never invited to speak at a lectureship shall still hear the sweet commendation of his Lord one day. He does a good work. The carpenter who lovingly repairs the widow's house and the debater who publicly defends God's truth are vitally important to God's work. The sister who teaches a ladies' Bible class and the one who takes that truth home and imparts it to little children are both performing worthwhile efforts in heaven's sight.

There are no unimportant tasks in the kingdom of our God, no men or women to be elevated above others, no point in comparisons regarding who is most useful, most accomplished. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Col. 3:25; Luke 20:21) and neither should we be (James 2:1). *Among the faithful members of God's family, there is no substantial versus insignificant, no major versus minor, no chief versus Indian.* If it is right, wholesome, and beneficial to the cause, then do it to the best of your ability (Colossians 3:23) knowing that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister" (Hebrews 6:10) and in the words of Jesus, "inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, (even) these least, ye did it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

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There will always be those who feed on the church to gain followers as the Shakers did in the beginning of the Restoration Movement. Sadly there will be some like Dunlavy and M'Nemar who will leave the truth for a lie.

ENDNOTES

1. Barton W. Stone, "Biography of Barton W. Stone," The Cane Ridge Reader. Ed Hoke Dickerson (Cincinnati, Ohio) P. 63

—223 West Maple Avenue
Lancaster, Kentucky 40444

Biblical Questions and Answers...

"WILL JESUS REIGN IN JERUSALEM?"

Noah A. Hackworth

It is the notion of a great percentage of the religious world that Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth [Jerusalem] and reign for a thousand years. In fact, coming out of Yosemite National Park, on highway 140, on the north side of the road on the way to Merced, there is a large sign that reads, "Christ is Coming and will Reign on Earth." The sign is printed with large, black, emboldened letters on a background of white. You cannot miss it; it has been there for more than twenty-five years. This sign was authorized and posted by the Christadelphians, a group of people [premillennialists] who are dedicated to this proposition. But there are several problems which would have to be solved before Christ could do what people say he is going to do; things that would have to be addressed before he could reign in Jerusalem or anywhere else on this earth.

A RETURN TO EARTH

There is not a place in scripture that teaches the return of Christ to this literal earth for a reign of a thousand years, or even one year for that matter. The Lord said,

And I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I am come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are (John 17:11).

This passage teaches that Christ will be in this world, on this earth, "no more." He will not be "known after the flesh" anymore (II Corinthians 5:16). He finished the work given him to do (John 19:30). This point is a major "rupture" in the premillennial theory.

ISRAEL'S EARTHLY THRONE IS EXTINCT

According to Jeremiah 22:24-30. Israel's earthly throne became extinct in Coniah. The Lord said,

As I live saith the Lord... Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not. O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

GENEALOGICAL RECORDS ARE GONE

No hope can be placed in a fleshly return of Christ to Jerusalem or the Jews "to their homeland." Jewish genealogies are gone, lost; their tribes and inheritance cannot be restored. The apostle Paul said, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do" (I Timothy 1:4). "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9).



CHRIST IS NOW REIGNING

In the first gospel sermon ever preached on this earth, the, Apostle Peter said,

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed for this, which ye. now see and hear (Acts 2:33).

Even as Peter spoke Christ was seated at God's right hand and therefore reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords. Christ is presented here as King in act and in fact. A literal return to earth accompanied by a literal reign would mean that Christ is not now reigning, a fact affirmed by Peter, an inspired preacher of the gospel.

A KING ON HIS THRONE NOW

Daniel, Stephen, Peter, and an Angel all affirmed that Christ is King on his throne in heaven right now (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Luke 1:31-33; I Peter 3:22). Folks, it is not going to happen! Christ is not returning to this earth [His footstool] to reign in the city of Jerusalem. If you are "betting the ranch on it," better call off the bet before you lose. This earth will be "burned up" (II Peter 3:10). Jerusalem will be burned to the ground.

—4400 West Tulare Avenue
Visalia, California 93277

NOTES AND QUOTES...

It is wonderful to us that many across the years have helped on our "Special Mailings" to individuals and families in churches where disciples are being led away from the truth. The apostle Paul forwarned the Ephesian elders, in Acts 20:29-31, that things would happen this way. Many hundreds—probably thousands—have been saved for the truth of the gospel by these mailings..

Limitations of available space, of course, will not allow naming them all; but some who have helped include Bruce R. Curd and the church where he preaches in North Carolina, who sent \$150.00.

Virginia F. McCoy, of Zanesville, Ohio, sent \$120.00, saying, "Thank you for reporting the good results they are having. Also for printing Albert F. Thompson's letter...I aim to order 100 of Gary L. Grizzell's 'Respect for the Authority of the Bible.' It is the best tract I have read lately."

Russell & Grace Thompson, of Mesa, Arizona, sent \$10.00, saying, "Enclosed is our check to help in your 'Special Mailings.' God bless your great work for the Lord." Clarence E. Hall, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, enclosed \$10.00, saying, "May your work in these Special Mailings be fruitful." LaGard May, of Houston, Texas, sent \$100.00, saying, "Appreciate your good work."

J. M. Boothe, of Carthage, Texas, enclosed \$40.00, saying, "It is always good news to hear church members at Madison are turning from false teaching. No doubt God is happy." Hazel Powell, of Cincinnati, Ohio, enclosed \$3.00 for "Special Mailings," saying, "Wish it could be more. God bless the good being done through this effort. People need to know." Enclosing \$10.00, Harold and Sarah Smith, of Lynchburg, Tennessee, wrote, "Keep the good work up. This is all we can spare this month. We do want to help what we can."

Ms. Jessie B. Crow, of Burnet, Texas, enclosed \$40.00 "to help with your mailings. We appreciate your good work in this effort. God speed to you!" Mr. & Mrs. James A. Green, of McDonough, Georgia, enclosed \$50.00, saying, "We hope you get funds you need to send these Special Mailings. You do a good work."

Kingston Church of Christ, of Greenville, Texas, sent \$1,000. Mr. & Mrs. Ellis Browne, of Loraine, Texas, enclosed \$15.00, saying, "Just a note of appreciation to you for your firm stand against false teachers. May the Lord bless you and give you many more years to 'contend for the faith'."

Altamont Church of Christ, of Altamont, Tennessee, \$300.00. Handley Church of Christ, of Fort Worth, Texas, \$500.00. Robert Villines, of Springfield, Tennessee, sent \$1,000.00 several times. (He also sent \$1,000.00 for the Kakinada Printing Press, and is "ready unto every good work.")

Geralene Bearden, of Jonesboro, Arkansas, enclosed \$50.00, saying, "I appreciate the work you are doing to combat false teaching. Here's a little for that effort."

Eusebio M. Lacuata, of Cerritos, California, wrote, "To help in counteracting the evil effects upon churches of Christ of those false and divisive doctrines of men, I am enclosing herewith a check for \$50.00. May God always give you and all others the strength and courage to oppose error and to stand for the truth."

Clyde P. Lacquement, of Emmett, Idaho, \$100.00. Mrs. W. H. Speir, of Chelsea, Oklahoma, enclosed \$25.00, "for Special Mailings to Churches of Christ. I'm glad they are doing a lot of good..."

Mrs. Lois Murner, of Tuscomb, Alabama, enclosed \$10.00, saying, "I think what you brethren are doing with the 'Special Mailings' is very good. I cannot send much money...but I will send \$10.00 a month as long as I can. You are to be commended for your good work and very informative paper." Howard Fulmer, of Barsow, California, sent \$100.00, saying, "Keep up the good work."

The Donald B. Van Blarcoms, of Brentwood, Tennessee, sent numerous checks for \$200.00 each.

Mr. & Mrs. Wm. F. Gouger, of Richardson, Texas, enclosed \$500.00, saying, "Thanks." Church of Christ, of Voca, Texas, sent \$500.00. Church of Christ, of Buffalo, Oklahoma, sent \$250.00

A couple of letters of unusual significance and interest came from Paul Harper, the son of E. R. Harper. Enclosing \$500.00 in a letter to the elders, he said, in part, "In the struggle my late father, E. R. Harper, had, I know that brother Rice always stood shoulder to shoulder with him for the truth..."

"The church I now attend is still sound, but, as you know, that can change—almost overnight. It is getting harder and harder to find a sound church where one can worship here in California. But I guess that holds the same almost anywhere today.

"Pat Boone and I went to the same church when we were in New York City, and then again when we both ended up here in L.A. We went to the Hollywood Church of Christ for years. Then he stopped coming!!!

"A couple of years later (I was never invited), he started having 'sing-ins,' 'love-ins,' worship and baptizing in his swimming pool at his home in Beverly Hills. I was not there, but as I understand it, his wife Shirley started, with the help of the Holy Spirit guiding her, to explain to him the real work and meaning of Christ's LOVE for all of mankind.

"The 'message' Shirley taught him was a lot different from the message he was taught as a child in Sunday school in Nashville, Tennessee by sister Youree, who happened to be my sister Ann's

mother-in-law. Before she passed away, I would have liked to know what sister Youree thought of what Pat did and is still doing.

"Pat and the guys he hooked up with (I hate to call them gentlemen) have a huge complex in Van Nuys. They have a large "church" building and about three city blocks all together in one location and then three-quarters of a mile away they have another "church" building. Both settings are filled to overflowing every Sunday morning. I KNOW!!!, because my church—225 members—is right in the middle between the two on the same street.

"Every now and then I see Pat at some type of an entertainment function and he is always very cordial and pleasant. However, he still doesn't invite me to any of this 'doings'...I know he and my late father had it round and round on the issues in many letters that they corresponded through.

"Please keep up the good fight for the truth, and I hope my donation will help some..."

In his second letter, enclosing another \$100.00, he wrote my overseeing elders, saying, "I just got home and found a letter from bother Rice about your 'Special Mailings' concerning the 'Nashville Christian Jubilee' by Woodmont Hills church. I wish I could send more, but the enclosed check is about the best I can do at this time.

"I 'blame' the financial condition I am in on my late father. Till the day he died I always told him if he had been just a little smarter and had been a little luckier, I could have been the son of a multi-millionaire. Instead, he just preached most of his life and all of mine. So, all I got from him was total Christian love all of my life, and that, as they say, 'aint too bad.'

"I know if he were still alive he would be fighting and standing with you for the truth. My late father, E. R. Harper, never bowed his knee to error no matter what it cost him, and in the commodities of this world it cost him a great deal. But, as with you, the truth of Christ was all that was important to him..."

(NOTE: What a wonderful pair of letters! And how we appreciate brother Paul Harper's generous contributions to our work of contending earnestly for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints! What he said is exactly right. His father and I stood "shoulder to shoulder" for the truth as long as he lived. Were he alive today, he and I would still be standing and fighting "shoulder to shoulder" for the truth against all error. IYR Jr.)

Cecil & Alfretha Low, of Las Cruces, New Mexico, working with the Sojourner Program, under the oversight of the Bursleson, Texas congregation, contributed \$100.00 to our "Special Mailings" program and bought a case (16 books) of brother Goebel Music's monumental "Behold The Pattern," donating one book to each small congregation they worked with to encourage them.

"They are delighted to receive the book," they wrote. "Even though they have not been affected with such horrible teachings, they are aware of the false

WHAT IS RIGHT WITH OUR YOUTH?

Jason R. Roberts

Much of our preaching and writing is directed toward what is wrong with our youth. Often we are quick to point out their mistakes, and in doing so, we sometimes fail to praise their achievements. We want to reverse that order here and focus on what is right with our youth.

GODLY YOUNG PEOPLE

The wise man Solomon had some praiseworthy things to say regarding youth. Even though his sentiments were specifically written to admonish young people to manifest these virtuous qualities in their lives, they still remind us that many of our young people are exhibiting these same qualities on a day to day basis.

Solomon reminds today's youth to live a life of rejoicing. **"Rejoice, O young man in the days of thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.."** (Ecclesiastes 11:9). It is God's intent for young people to be happy—to live to the fullest—within the framework of righteousness. Youth is a time to be happy, a time to discover, a time to "launch out into the deep" and to Carpe Diem (seize the day)! It is a time to learn, a time to laugh, a time to live. And it is encouraging to see so many of our young people doing this very thing—living the abundant life that God wants them to live—physically and spiritually speaking (cf., John 10:10).

Solomon wrote, **"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance..."** (Proverbs 15:13). Again, he said, **"A merry heart doeth good like medicine..."** (Proverbs 17:22). Young people have so much for which to rejoice: (1) They have their names written in the book of life (Philippians 4:3-4). (2) They have the privilege of prayer. Paul connected rejoicing and prayer together (Romans 12:12). (3) They have the presence of God. Providentially speaking, the Lord is with them every step of the way. It is interesting that when the apostle Paul wrote, **"Rejoice in the Lord..."** (Philippians 4:4), he gave a strong incentive to do so in the very next verse **".... the Lord is at hand"** (near) (v.5).

Young people can rejoice even when the world stands against them. This is vividly seen as David's agonizing heart turns to great joy and confidence in God,

How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? forever" how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation (Psalm 13:1-5, emp. added).

Solomon reminds today's youth to live a life of remembrance. **"Remember now thy creator in the days of thy**

youth..." (Ecclesiastes 12:1). There are several things worthy of consideration from Solomon's admonition. *First*, there is urgency of remembering our Creator. **"Remember NOW thy creator . . ."** (emp. added). Remembering one's Creator earlier in life will help one remember his Creator when the twilight years come—yes, even when the curtain of his or her life is about to be drawn to a close (v.2-7). We have young people who are not ashamed to remember their creator when they are at school, when they are on the job, when they start dating, and when they get married. Thank God for their dedication to remember the one from whom all blessings flow! *Second*, part of remembering one's creator while young includes remembering the precious Book their creator left them. Upon his leaving home for college, a loving mother wrote in the inside cover of her son's Bible, "This book will keep you from sin. And sin will keep you from this book." Someone has well said, that if we will carry this book (the Bible) when we are young, it will carry us when we get older. Congregations consisting of dedicated, faithful, older members are living testimony to this truth. Thank God for our young people and their dedication to study, to learn and to live the greatest message from the grandest of all books written!

Remembering God in one's youth, will allow God to remember them throughout the entirety of their lives. **"But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations"** (Psalm 102:12, emp. added). **"A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance"** (Psalm 112:5-6, emp. added).

In a sad world, we need young people to rejoice. In a forgetful world, we need young people to remember. We thank God for our youth. Let us rejoice with them and always remember them.

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have a real, scriptural desire, but who will not let that desire be known because of possible misinterpretation of his motive. It is not wrong for a qualified man to let his desire to serve as an elder be known!

The problem we face is the evident absence of desire on the part of men who would be qualified otherwise. There are various causes for the lack of desire to serve. Among those causes could be his knowledge of: (1) the awesome responsibility of the office, (2) the treatment many have suffered at the hands (and mouth) of chronic dissenters, (3) the lack of cooperation on the part of members to accept the challenges he, as an elder, would place before them, and (5) the lack of "followship" of the congregation. There could be others you can add to this list.

THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD

It is probable that lack of the knowledge of the word of God is the main culprit in the shortage of strong, qualified elders. That is a shameful indictment of the spiritual condition of our brethren today. It is alarming to know of the frightful ignorance of the majority of our brethren of the Bible. Most (and, I mean, most) of our brethren do not even know the books of the New Testament much less the books of the Old Testament. In addition, most have not the faintest idea of the content of the books of the New Testament. The reason, of course, is that the Bible is not the focus of attention at home. Sports Afield, *Life Magazine*, Golf, Novels, TV, *US News and World Report*, and whatever else, occupies our time and attention and the word of God goes to the back of the class.

This heinous condition has robbed the church of the proper attitude that is needed for work. It has bankrupted the church of its zeal and enthusiasm for service. It has stripped its members of a sense of responsibility for attendance except for Sunday morning to take the communion. It has supplanted the need for evangelism on the part of the church with the desire for "smooth sayings and fair speeches."

Unless and until we, somehow, someday, sometime, rekindle some kind of spark of interest to "**study to show thyself approved unto God**" (II Timothy 2:15), we are going to continue the downward spiral of Bible knowledge sufficient to qualify men to serve as elders in the Lord's church.

PREACHERS NEED TO ENCOURAGE AND TRAIN MEN

Preachers need to own up to their part in the diminishing number of men qualified, or without the desire, to serve as elders. Preachers must work harder and harder to preach the "whole counsel of God" and emphasize the need for good elders. It would seem that pure common sense would encourage preachers to seek out men and help them become elders. When preachers have elders to work with, it lightens the load they have to bear themselves. Also, it relieves the preacher of assuming the role of "Pastor" which he cannot wear and be scriptural. It brings the congregation into conformity with the scriptural pattern (Titus 1:5).

Some preachers detest the very thought of serving under elders because elders are known to make changes in the pulpit. Some preachers cannot work under elder's authority. Preachers of this sort contribute to the problem rather than trying to resolve it.

CONCLUSION

Liberalism and Modernism are ravaging the congregations of the church of our Lord. More and more small congregations are starting up; many without elders. The elders of many larger congregations are caving in to eloquent and persuasive preachers. Strong, qualified men in leadership capacities is the major need to keep the church from plunging even deeper into the tragic apostasy into which it is headed. Let us encourage and train more elders, and hurry!

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CHURCH AUTONOMY AND WITHDRAWAL OF FELLOWSHIP

Gary L. Grizzell

In the May 1999 issue of the *Firm Foundation*, Randy Reagan, wrote an article entitled "Withdrawing Fellowship." His first paragraph reads: "Under discussion in some places is whether one congregation may authoritatively withdraw fellowship from another congregation. Godly men are seeking to know the truth on this matter."

Thus, the writer sets the stage for his discussion of whether one church may with God's approval withdraw from another church. Note one of his rationalizations for arguing that it is unscriptural for one church to withdraw from another: "Romans 16:17 tells us to 'mark' those who cause dissension among the brethren. There is no indication that this involved a congregation, but indicts individuals." (Randy Reagan, FF, May 1999, p.16).

Perhaps Reagan could tell us if it would be scriptural for one church to mark (thus, withdraw) from another church if all those individuals in that congregation were guilty of what Paul condemned? Does Reagan believe Jesus who taught that both the corrupt leaders and their followers will fall into the same ditch of apostasy? "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:13-14).

F. LAGARD SMITH ON CHURCH AUTONOMY AND WITHDRAWAL OF FELLOWSHIP

F. LaGard Smith also upholds the false doctrine that one church cannot scripturally withdraw from another and taught such in his book entitled, *WHO IS MY BROTHER?* It's refutation is herein offered to hopefully shed some light on the subject for those who are studying the matter.

No book which sets out to discuss the subject of fellowship would be without at least a slight addressing of the

question: May one church withdraw fellowship from a sister congregation? Smith seems to push all the buttons, and he has not omitted pushing this one.

F. LaGard Smith wrote:

Ever since the restorationist controversy over the missionary society, we have talked a good line about congregational autonomy. 'No synods, conventions or other organizational hierarchy for us, thank you very much!' But that hasn't stopped the brotherhood police from making congregations toe whatever line they happen to have drawn, at the risk of certain censure and castigation if they do not. Let one congregation step out of line and you can be sure that there are plenty of others who are ready to 'withdraw fellowship' from it. As if congregations can withdraw from each other. As if congregations were ever tied together in the first place. It's one thing to have doctrinal enclaves of close-family 'conscience fellowship' (where we ourselves may be compelled to withdraw). It's another thing altogether to shun some congregation in the same way the Corinthians were to shun the man who had his father's wife. Lest we forget, only God can remove lampstands! (Revelation 2:5-6). (*WHO IS MY BROTHER?* chapter entitled, "Congregational Fellowship: Immediate Family" pages 170-171).

MY COMMENTS: Smith slams the concept of one congregation withdrawing from another. Of course, I am aware that some among us who are generally known to be sound in the faith may agree with Smith on this one, but this would only indicate more study is needed on their part as well. Smith appears to sincerely argue for the concept of biblical church autonomy. He is against extremes in this matter. Those who know and love the truth on this subject (as well as all other Bible subjects) are in agreement that extremes on the autonomy subject are to be avoided. However, one must first know what the New Testament teaches about church autonomy before he can determine the ex-

(Continued On Page 4)

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EDITORIAL...

THE SPROUTS AND TREES OF LIBERALISM

The book, *Voices of Concern*, was published in 1966. It is composed of essays by seventeen writers. They criticize what they call "Church of Christism." All of the writers did not hesitate to declare their educational sophistication, deep analytical thinking, future oriented perspective, anti-coercion approach to religion, thirst for knowledge and freedom from dogma. Moreover, since such thinking does not instantaneously appear, this would imply that the views presented therein were not new. However, these writers point out that those guilty of "Church of Christism" are uneducated, legalistic, backward, out dated, bigoted, authoritarian, superior and exclusive in their narrow-mindedness. Notice how they *purr* over themselves and *snarl* at their lesser brethren.

These writers are quick to inform us that they have grown beyond doctrine and argumentation. They have had some sort of religious experience. Thereby they confirmed their positions set out in "*Voices*" to be from God. This spiritual growth and development gave them what they could not find in "Church of Christism"—inner peace and oneness with God. By this "better felt than told" experience (whatever it is); the writers certified their beliefs to be Godly. Their personal "witness for Christ" was all they needed. "Sharing Christ," not teaching and defending the gospel was their goal and practice.

They tell us if one manifests this sweet spirit of peace and tranquility he is a brother in Christ. It is unloving, unkind, uncaring, harsh, rude, mean spirited, arrogant and hateful to insist that all things be measured by the absolute objective standard of truth (the Bible). To do such is "Church of Christism." To these "*Voices*" this doctrinal mentality must be left far behind if one is to mature spiritually.

WHAT THOSE "VOICES" REALLY MEANT

Today the children of those "*Voices*" are many. They are the fruit of those sprouts now grown into trees. They openly fellowship denominations and the multitudes love to have it so. The "pious unimmersed" are acceptable to them. They despise the New Testament distinctives that make the Lord's church different from the denominations.

In his book *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), Adolph Hitler set out exactly what he intended to do and did in Germany. As Hitler did in his book, the writers of *Voices of Concern* did for the church of Christ, but the church would not listen. Those "*Voices*" now control or have great influence in the schools of higher educa-

tion (and certain preacher training schools) operated by members of the church of Christ. Most of the numerically larger churches are dominated in their thinking and practices by the sentiments expressed in "Voices." Others are tainted by their false doctrines. Swiftly they are ceasing to be the Lord's church. However, to this day some do not know such a book as

"Voices of Concern" ever existed. In their willful ignorance they are blind to what certain lying men in cunning craftiness intended to do, told us they would do and did in and to the church of Christ in the last 50 years of the 20th Century. Is it nothing to all you that pass by?

—David P. Brown, Editor-in-Chief

NOW 91, BYRON BEASLEY HAS PREACHED GOSPEL 51 YEARS

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Senior Editor

[It always amazes—sometimes amuses—us when some of our readers think it takes courage to express approval of Contending for the Faith. But we are always happy when they do—especially if they are old-time preachers of the gospel whom we view worthy of great respect.]

"I write this paper with the full realization that I shall incur the wrath of many people that love me, and would love me to the end of my life, if I would keep my mouth shut, and, as they say, 'TEND TO MY OWN BUSINESS'."

Such was the way brother Byron Beasley, of Lometa, Texas, began his letter to us of January 17, 2000.]

"I am an old preacher," he continued. "August 28th I will be 92 years of age. I have preached the gospel 51 years."

I have always enjoyed *Contending for the Faith*. I have not preached on a regular basis for nearly a year now. I have told the brethren here I will fill-in at night when brother Boyd is not feeling well. I love you and sister Vada for the work you have done through the years. I am well aware of the fact that God has said I must not be a "BUSY BODY IN OTHER MEN'S MATTERS." He linked that along with MURDERERS, THIEVES and EVIL DOERS (I Peter 4:15). However, I deny the charge that I am being a busy body in other men's matters in writing to this paper. It is primarily directed to my family and the host of loved ones of mine that are still in what we were taught as children.

I have no animosity in my heart toward anyone who differs with me in religious matters. I hate FALSE DOCTRINE because it is going to take so many wonderful people to a devil's hell. That is the reason for the writing of this paper.

It's commendable to be LOYAL to one's early-year teachers, and especially to one's parents. (And they did the very best that they knew to do. They were taught religious ERROR and passed it on to their children.)

My brothers and sisters and I were taught by a wonderful mother. She knew only Baptist Doctrine. That is what she was taught as a child. So she taught it to us. We all became Baptists, every single one of us. They VOTED to see if they would take us. We passed; but the preacher asked a strange question: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD FOR CHRIST'S SAKE HATH PARDONED YOUR SINS? I said yes. And all my brothers and sisters said the same thing. We didn't know any better."

We didn't know much about the Bible either, or we would have known better than that. Romans 6:17,18 says,

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then [after obedience, BB] made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

I have heard they do not use that confession any more. But they use Acts 8:37. (My dear loved ones, the closer ERROR gets to the TRUTH the more dangerous it becomes. It has a chance to lead more people into FALSE DOCTRINE.)

The Baptist church teaches that baptism is not essential to your salvation. Oh yes, it is essential to your getting into the Baptist church. (Let's look at this a moment. It takes more to get into the Baptist church than it does to get into Christ, his church, his body.) The Bible teaches that we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27), where salvation is (II Timothy 2:10).

You have to go to the Baptist Manual to learn anything about the Baptist Church. It is not in the Bible. Friends, I know that this is pretty CAUSTIC—and I don't intend to deliberately hurt anyone's feelings—but we have to face the TRUTH. We are going to face the LORD JESUS CHRIST in the Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10; also Matthew 7:21-23; 24-27).

Some say, "Why don't you shut up and let people alone?" I want you to read Ezekiel 33:1-9. See what God is going to do to us if we don't make a reasonable effort to save those that are lost.

That is not altogether the reason that I want to save my brothers and sister and those that are near and dear to me according to the flesh. I want to save those that I have become close to as friends through the years, and strangers that I meet along this way of life.

These churches that you cannot read about in the Bible—Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Mormon, Pentecostal, Christian, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Nazarene, Jehovah's Witnesses they all come under the heading of Matthew 15:9. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Hell is so TERRIBLE, but we can have hope in the church that Jesus said he would build (Matthew 15:18), His church was built in the life time of some of those that stood there (Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1).

Paul, said in Romans 16:16, Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. And if you come up with that ole "They're all churches of Christ," I'll read I Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." [That "ALL CHURCHES" is referring to the same church in different towns. We cannot have HOPE in religious error.]

Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If we don't depend on the word of God, we are lost anyway. The plan of salvation is:

Faith (John 8:24; 20:30,32)

Repent (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30,31)

Confess (Matthew 16:16; Acts 8:37)

Baptism (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3; Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:19, 20)

All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). We are baptized into Christ. Visit the churches of Christ and ask questions. You will receive answers.

—3809 Wind Valley
Memphis, Tennessee 38125

CHURCH AUTONOMY...

(Continued From Page 1)

tremes to avoid. Smith does not sufficiently understand the subject of autonomy. Misunderstanding a facet of the autonomy issue has led Smith to bind where God has not bound, i.e. his binding of his opinion that the faithful church has no New Testament authority to publicly withdraw from an apostate church.

THE CHURCH MAY NOT FELLOWSHIP ERROR

Since the church has no authority to fellowship error, wherever that error is found or whoever (no matter how many) is spreading it, one church may withdraw from another church. Consider the following passages which relate to withdrawing from an individual or a congregation. Quotes from Smith's book are intertwined below.

The church at Ephesus was told to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:11). Whoops, Smith says of Ephesians 5:11, "...in this passage Paul is clearly not talking about false teachers" (p.199, chapter entitled, "False Teachers or False Teaching"). Implication means little to Smith on the Ephesians 5:11 passage. He argued that Paul was talking about fruitless deeds, not fruitless teaching. Now we are hair-splitting, are we not? Is the act of teaching a false doctrine a fruitless deed? The implicit teaching, brother Smith! Is it also not the case that sinful behavior (immorality) is the result (fruit) of cherished false doctrine?

Consider Romans 16:17-18: "I beseech you, brethren" means all members, not just the elders, deacons, teachers, song leaders, and preachers, but all members of the local congregation. They are told to take heed; "mark" take note, notice, take a picture (figuratively speaking); "them," not him, but them (plural), "which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine." The false teachers (and those who uphold the hands of a false teachers have no authority to do so, II John 10-11). "Avoid them" steer clear of them, do not socialize with them, do not give them your approval; "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." Here is their motive exposed, the love of self "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The gullible and naive are deceived by their smooth speech and pious appearance. Smith comments on Romans, Romans 16:17-18 on page 199 of his book where he downplays the teaching aspect.

Once again we look in vain for an inspired imperative to shun as false teachers those with whom we happen to disagree on some doctrinal matter. As before, we are con-

fronted here with a character problem. The person Paul is describing is not just teaching something, but doing something.

Then in contrasting Ephesians 5:11 and Romans 16:17-18 with II John 9-11 he stated, "At last we are no longer talking about behavior, but teaching." (p. 200).

Note II Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren." The withdrawal from the unfaithful Christian is a command of God. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" is our authority for withdrawing fellowship. Paul wrote, "that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." "Every" here means one or more Christians. If "every" means "every" in Romans 1:16. Hebrews 2:9, I Peter 3:15, II Timothy 2:19 and Ephesians 5:33, it does not mean another thing in II Thessalonians 3:6.

Next, what of II John 9-11? The doctrine of Christ refers to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), the truth (John 8:32), the faith (Jude 3). To bid God speed (success in the effort attempted) to those who have refused to abide in the doctrine of Christ (false teachers) is to be a partaker of their evil deeds!

We must withdraw our fellowship from those who are no longer walking in the light of God's word (I John 1:3-7). These have stepped out of fellowship with God, the common denominator of all those who walk in the light. If God withdraws his fellowship from those of his children who choose to begin walking in darkness, we must honor his withdrawal. The way we know God has dishonored their behavior is by his word. We are to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). Just as the church leadership can determine by God's word that one individual Christian is walking disorderly, they can also determine when a congregation of 100 is walking disorderly (II Thessalonians 3:6; II John 9-11). Smith stated, "Lest we forget, only God can remove lampstands!" (Revelation 2:5.6). Yes, and when God does remove that candlestick God's faithful congregations should honor God's position on the matter! However, Smith implies that we should continue to fellowship them since we have no right, according to him, for one church to withdraw from an apostate church. Perhaps Smith would like to tell us if the faithful church at Smyrna was to continue fellowshiping the church at Ephesus, in the case that Ephesus did not repent as Jesus told them to do? (To the Reader: Randy Reagan also made this candlestick argument in his article in the May, 1999 issue of the FF. p.16). Suppose that a preacher is a false teacher who

teaches that mechanical instruments of music may be used during worship to accompany the congregation's singing. The leadership upholds him in his error. Thus, they are part-takers of his error (II John 10-11). Most of the other members insist (even after having been warned by a few faithful brethren that the leadership is doctrinally corrupt), that the preacher is a fine fellow and worthy of support. Then, after reproving them, the few faithful members leave that congregation and begin a new congregation across town. They then, in order to obey God and warn other faithful churches publicly let it be known they have withdrawn their fellowship from the apostate church. This is proper. About 100 years ago this is basically what happened when some began to bring in the instrument, divided churches and stole property. Those who brought in the instrument became known as the "Christian Church." The faithful churches of Christ at that time publicly withdrew from whole "churches" who had caused divisions. They thus, withdrew from every brother who walked disorderly and not after the tradition (II Thessalonians 3:6).

AN ASTOUNDING STATEMENT

Smith wrote:

Although no local congregation is to be a watchdog over any other local congregation or group of congregations, individually and collectively we are still our brothers' keepers. We owe it to each other to contend for the faith in both our immediate and extended families. (p.172).

This statement from Smith's pen is astounding since he has already tied the hands of faithful brethren from withdrawing fellowship from an apostate sister congregation. Inconsistency was the only consistency Smith exhibited in his material. Smith seeks to qualify his earlier statement that congregations are not tied to each other by now saying "we are still our brothers' keepers" and we "owe it to each other (why if we are not tied together in some manner, i.e. doctrine? GLG) to contend for the faith." Implication: If a church teaches and practices error, contends for the faith on the divisive issues, but continues to fellowship them (can not withdraw he said earlier), Smith's inconsistent position would force a congregation in the same city with an apostate sister congregation to continue announcing their meetings and such like. How could the shepherds of the faithful church ever protect their (God's) flock from wolves under such a system? Perhaps Smith would like to answer the latter question for us. Think about antiism and liberalism. There are churches "of Christ" who are totally given over to these two extremes today. These have been marked and avoided (withdrawn from) by faithful churches and rightfully so! Jesus teaches followers to spot the wolf and then refuse to follow them (Matthew 7:15-20; 15:13-14). Followers of false teachers are accountable also. If one finds himself in one of these withdrawn-from churches he should study the matter and then get out! Then seek out the faithful congregation which neither binds where God's word does not bind, nor looses where God's word does not loose.

Paul rebuked the churches (plural) of Galatia for tolerating false teaching (Galatians 1:2; 3:1). Imitate me, said Paul (I Corinthians 11:1). Today, liberals and digressives would think a preacher insane to write a letter to a number

of area churches warning them of false teachers and their doctrines or an eldership writing a statement of warning about an apostate area church. Why is that? Did Paul violate the principle of church autonomy in taking such action? No. Each eldership still makes its own decisions in expedient matters before, during and after a scriptural (church-on-church) withdrawal.

AUTONOMY—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

While each congregation is autonomous (self-governing), each congregation is part of the universal body of Christ. The word church is spoken of in three different senses in the New Testament: 1) Universal sense (Matthew 16:18), 2) Area sense (Galatians 1:2), and 3) Local sense (I Corinthians 1:2). Each congregation is self governing under Christ as the head and elders under Christ (Colossians 1:18; Philippians 1:1). Elders have authority in expedient matters (Hebrews 13:7; 17). Each congregation is to have the same doctrine. Paul preached in many congregations, but he did not change the doctrine he preached, i.e. each congregation was to be guided by the same doctrine, the doctrine of Christ. "As I teach EVERY WHERE in EVERY CHURCH" (I Corinthians 4:17). Smith is critical of a congregation who withdraws fellowship from a sister congregation when that sister church steps out of line, saying: "As if congregations can withdraw from each other. As if congregations were ever tied together in the first place." However, the fact of congregational autonomy is not violated by saying that all of God's congregations are tied together in doctrine. Smith knows that congregations may EXTEND fellowship to one another, saying "This is not to say, of course, that we are without biblical precedent for interaction among the various churches of Christ... shared benevolence with other congregations..." (p. 171). He did not answer how a congregation has the right to extend fellowship but not the authority to withhold fellowship (this is withdrawal). He knows that God's churches are tied together in love. However, if God's congregations are tied together in love, then they are also tied together in the doctrine which teaches that God's churches are tied together in love. Congregations are tied together by the same doctrine which teaches how to express that love among saints.

When symbolism over substance is the fruit of one's writing on this issue, the sincere babe in Christ has a great chance at being deceived and those who disrespect Bible authority (the liberal) will rejoice feeling the writer (Smith) bravely expressed the sentiments for all advocates of true Christianity. The liberal comes away having read Smith's statements on his FEELING GOOD and thus mistakes his FEELINGS for TRUTH.

If there is any doubt that one church may scripturally withdraw from another, the reader is encouraged to read the excellent work of Michael Hatcher's five editorials on this very issue in the 1995 January through May issues of the DEFENDER (Bellview Church of Christ Pensacola, Florida) which is now on the net at <http://members.triipod.com/bellviewcoc/defender.htm>.

—2128 Crystal Court
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501

F. LaGard Smith's "Faith Fellowship" and Mark 9:38-41

Daniel Denham

In his controversial book *Who Is My Brother?* F. LaGard Smith advocates the notion that there are five levels of fellowship. One of those levels he has termed "faith fellowship." The idea is that we can have a form of fellowship with some denominational folk on the premise that we believe in the deity of Christ, *et al.* He contends that these folk are "like family, but not family" (p. 105). He classifies his activities with the *Ashton-under-Hill Free Church* in England as an example of such fellowship. He states, "Although this fellowship falls short of 'in Christ' fellowship, it rises higher than the 'universal fellowship' which I have with the family of men, even those who are spiritual seekers" (pp. 105-106).

THE OFTEN MISUSED TEXT OF MARK 9:38-41

Smith thereafter seeks to create an example of "faith fellowship" right out of Mark 9:38-41. It seems that whenever one seeks to blur the lines of fellowship, Mark 9:38-41 is the central text one starts with in so doing. Rubel Shelly, among many others, did it in his arrival at what he called "Big F" and "Little f" fellowship.

Shelly's doctrine involved the idea of two levels of fellowship, while Smith's involves five. Shelly has since gone to full-blown "open fellowship" with anything and anyone professing any sort of allegiance to Christ. He has hobnobbed even with denominational preachers who defend homosexuality and who deny the essential deity of Christ. Will LaGard follow suit?

LAGARD'S VERSION OF THE TEXT

Now here goes LaGard on Mark 9:38-41, by writing: "The level of fellowship which I have described as 'faith fellowship' finds its scriptural basis in a passage which unfortunately has come to be greatly misused in support of wide-open Christian fellowship with all who trust in Jesus" (p. 107). In the passage John informs Christ that he and the other apostles had forbade a man from casting out a demon in the name of the Lord, "because he followeth not us." Now watch carefully Smith's approach to the text. He implicitly takes the man casting out demons to be a member of a denomination. He says that, though he was not a part of the disciples, he did not "belong to the Lord." He says that the evidence for this is in the reference to the one who gives a cup of water. He quotes the Lord as saying, "I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward." He then asserts that Jesus was saying that only John and the other apostles belonged to him, but the one who gives them water does not! The "reward" that the latter would receive, according to LaGard, would be the honoring of his faith by the disciples. Smith then admits:

"There is no "support here for some all-inclusive Christian fellowship based upon nothing more than 'good works done in the name of the Lord'." But then he argues that "the demon chaser' and 'the cup giver' are to be honored for the good deeds which they have done in Christ's name." He says that Jesus taught, "They may not be *one of us*, but they are not our enemies. Indeed they may be in jeopardy of eternal condemnation, but they are not against us" (emphasis his, HDD). He concludes: "What he [Jesus] is saying is that we have a special kind of fellowship with all those who give honor to Christ in whatever they do. Not Christian fellowship, with all which that entails, but faith fellowship, giving honor to whom honor is due" (pp. 107-108).



We are to take the words of Christ here as a proclamation on the need to honor Baptist, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, etc., folk for their "faith" in Christ? And for the "good works" they do to "honor" Christ? Yet these are the implications of what LaGard Smith says the text teaches.

SOME KEY OBSERVATIONS ON MARK 9:38-41

There are a few things that Smith ignores on the text and others that he simply takes for granted in his exposition. Let us consider these matters.

First, this passage deals with a condition of things that were in vogue prior to the death of Christ – near the end of the Mosaic system and the beginning of the Christian Age. The law of Moses was still in effect, and its authority had not been abrogated (Hebrews 9:15-17; Colossians 2:14-16; Ephesians 2:14-16). There were Jews, under the auspices of that law, who were functioning in various capacities within the framework of that divinely-appointed system (*cf.* Matthew 10:27). However, there were no denominational churches in existence at this point in time. LaGard's exposition implies that denominational churches actually preceded the Lord's Church as to time of existence. He has Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Catholics parading around the countryside of ancient Israel during the earthly ministry of Christ doing "good works," while the Lord's Church would not be built until Pentecost of Acts 2 a couple of years later! And how Smith can find some application to organizations, that would not exist for centuries to begin with, and for denominational churches, which by their very nature have no scriptural right even to exist defies logic.

John the Baptizer and his disciples for a time co-existed side by side within Judaism with the disciples of the Lord,

though eventually John's disciples came to follow Christ due in part to the teaching of John (John 1:29ff.). The fact that the man who was casting out demons was not then among the immediate disciples of the Lord did not mean that he never would be. Nor does it follow that at the time of the text everyone had to be among the immediate disciples of the Lord, though that condition was changing due to the unfolding of God's plan through him.

Second, the very presence of the miracle involved divine approval of the man who was casting out demons (cf. John 3:1-2; Hebrews 4:2-4). The one rebuked by the apostles had the sanction of God: for in the act of the miraculous it was God himself acting through the human agent! The nature of the miraculous implies God's participation. This would in turn validate the message of the one performing the miracle. If this man is to represent Methodist preachers, Free Church elders, or Catholic priests, then what would be the implication? Shelly is more consistent in his tomfoolery on the text than Smith is!

Third, in both actions, the casting out of the demon and the giving of the cup of water, the acts are done "in the name of" Christ. This clearly means "by the authority of" Christ (Acts 4:7-12; Colossians 3:17). What was being done was authorized and approved by the Son of God. It demonstrates that the works and the individuals who performed them were acting in compliance with divine authority. Now let us see if Smith will apply that to denominations!

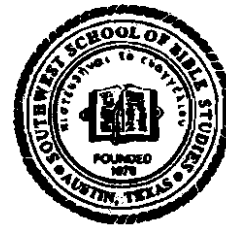
Fourth, though LaGard Smith tries to apply the "reward" of verse 41 to the honor given by the disciples of the Lord in the practice of "faith fellowship" (an explanation that "begs the question" to say the least, p.108), this is not the most natural understanding of the word as used here. It clearly contemplates salvation as contrasted with condemnation in Hell fire (Mark 9:42-48). Smith completely ignores the contrast in the immediate context of the passage. If the passage teaches anything, it teaches that the doers of the good deeds are saved. Now will Smith apply the passage to denominationalists in this regard? If so, then he joins with Rubel Shelly and Max Lucado fully on "open fellowship."

Fifth, earlier Christ had taught his disciples in the giving of the Limited Commission, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me" (Matthew 10:40-42). In Matthew 12:30 He taught, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad." Jesus denied the idea of neutrality relative to him and truth. What

would this teaching mean in view of Smith's exposition of Mark 9:38-41? Smith seems to envision a realm of neutrality, where one is a believer in Christ, worthy of "reward" and "faith fellowship" by the people of the Lord, but yet "may" (observe that he does not say that they are) be in danger of condemnation. Practically speaking, what is the difference between "Christian" and "faith" fellowship, as Smith uses those terms? From his exposition of Mark 9, it appears there is no real difference only one in nomenclature. It appears that F. LaGard Smith practices the same things regardless of which "level" of fellowship is in view.

The sad truth of the LaGard Smith view of fellowship is that it serves as a "Trojan Horse" to breach the gates of Zion and throw them open to those who profess faith in Christ, but who have not obeyed his gospel. The shocking thing is that some, who have appeared in time past to be strong for the truth, are given to entertaining his foolishness in the interest of peace and taut his book as bearing the answer to problems on fellowship, rather than simply submitting to a "thus, saith the Lord" and calling upon their fellow man to do likewise. The Restorers were men, who came out from different religious backgrounds, and who "struck hands" across the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice. That is the real answer to fellowship problems and always has been (Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16; 4:2; Ephesians 5:11; I Peter 4:11; II John 9-11).

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That They May Be One

Just before Jesus went to the cross He prayed that His disciples in every generation after Him would "be brought to complete unity" to let the world know that He had been sent by God and that God loved us all just as much as He loved His only begotten Son, Jesus. That unity is demonstrated in the events and people who were involved in the birth of Jesus. There were smelly, illiterate, poor shepherds. There were intellectual kings of a different race from the Far East. There were common every day working people like the innkeeper. There were godly people who had been serving the Lord faithfully all their lives. There were skeptics and heretics. Every segment of society was involved in the birth of Jesus and every one of them was focused on one thing (or should I say Person?) - Jesus. He came to bring unity and that unity exists only in Him.

One of my greatest dreams is when I can see the Church of Jesus Christ acting like Jesus and working together to help the world find a relationship with Jesus. A few weeks ago, St. Luke's had the honor of helping to be part of the answer to Jesus' prayer for unity. Something happened that I never thought possible. A pastor from Monterey Church of Christ baptized an infant in our building! A young couple had been married - one of them came from a Lutheran background, the other from the Church of Christ. I want to share with you the letter of thanks we received from

Monterey Church of Christ:

To Our Brothers and Sisters at St. Luke's United Methodist Church,

Thank you for allowing us to use your building on November 18th. The families involved were from two different backgrounds and saw a need to unite their faith and family through the sacrament of baptism. Because of your generous spirit, a household has been encouraged to continue their faith tradition. We of the Monterey Church of Christ are grateful to have you as our partners in spreading the good news of Jesus in our community and the world. May God bless your ministry richly.

Folks, that is the Body of Christ acting like Christ. That is what Christmas is all about! Jesus was sent to bring us all together in Him. I am proud to be part of a congregation that is seeking to be the answer to Jesus' prayer for unity. I am proud to be part of a congregation that is seeking to demonstrate the true spirit of Christmas by helping everyone to focus their lives on Jesus!

Have a blessed Christmas season, and may you come to know Jesus more intimately every day so that we may rejoice in all parts of His Body, the Church.
In Christ,

Tom

OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE TRUTH

The preceding article is from page 2 of the December 15, 1999, Volume 1, Number 8 issue of *In Touch*. It is the bulletin of *St. Luke's United Methodist Church*, 3717 44th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79413. The signature ("Tom") at the end of the article is that of the "The Reverend Dr. Tom Mills, Pastor" of the denomination. The article speaks for itself. It is another sad and dispicable example of the outcome of the departures from the New Testament pattern about which *Contending for the Faith* has warned for 30 years. It is obvious that the *Monterey Church of Christ* is no longer faithful to the Lord. She is apostate and herein marked accordingly by her own erroneous conduct.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

THE FRUITS OF ERROR

Danny Bennett

Many are not satisfied with what the inspired word says regarding how we are to worship God (John 4:24). The prevailing sentiment is like that of Naaman when he said, "Behold I thought" (II Kings 5:11). Therefore, the word is discarded for innovations based upon subjectivism rather than objective truth (John 17:17). The headline story in the local newspaper (*The Huntsville Times*, Religion Section, Saturday, October 18, 1997, by *Times* writer Yvonne White) reads, "the parable of the talents Twickenham Church of Christ makes most of gifted musicians." The implication of the article is that traditional Churches of Christ are not connecting culturally by not using mechanical instruments of music in worship. It is specifically stated in the article that there are Christians in all denominations, "We are trying to reach out to Christians of all denominations," which conflicts with Matthew 7:21. They cooperate with the denominations—"It works closely with other churches such as the First Baptist and Trinity Methodists, Salvation Army, Red Cross..." such violates Ephesians 5:11 and Romans 16:17.

It appears that James Kendrick (minister of music and education director) has confused his role with that of an elder when he said, "I believe as a church, we are responsible for our flock and we must allow them to utilize their talents for God." He also states:

Twickenham is making an effort to use more musical talent than just voices in the church... Too many people of the Church of Christ who are extremely gifted with musical talents have gone to other churches. We want to provide a place

where people, both our members and others in the community, can display their talents.

Therefore, they have opened the door for "open fellowship", mechanical instruments of music in worship (and other innovations in format; i.e., solos, choirs, *et al.*), and a Pentecostal type experience in worship.

Eddie Levick (minister) also implies that mechanical instruments may be acceptable in worship when he says:

The reason we don't use music in the worship setting is that our congregations have taken a very simple approach the fundamental reason why we opted for an cappella tradition is that we think it sounds good and it encourages everyone to participate.

Their justification for the above is without biblical support being based only on opinion; i.e., "I believe," "I guess," "we think..." Both the music minister and preacher exhibit an over abundance of pride, arrogance, and ignorance(*cf.*, Daniel 3:15).

A reasonable question is "What about the elders?" Well, they hired the preacher and music director. Rubel Shelly (March 16, 17, 1996) and Jeff Walling (May 18-20, 1997) have spoken at Twickenham. David Slater ('97) [Family life minister, Madison Church of Christ, Madison, TN] *Acappella* ('92), *Full Access* ('97), and *One By One* ('96) have also performed there. Eddie Levick has been a *Nashville Jubilee* speaker ('96). Also note that I have been informed that neither Levick nor Kendrick said they were misquoted in the article from the pulpit Sunday morning or evening. Sadly, not one congregation in North Alabama has spoken out publicly against Twickenham must less disfellowshipped them!

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THE POSITION OF OUR HEART

Shan Jackson

You are about to read the words of Psalm 123. It is four simple verses that display the proper attitude of prayer. It is written in the form of a prayer. Therefore, as you read it visualize a man in prayer. It does not matter if you picture him standing as he prays, or kneeling. It does not matter the position of his body at all. What matters is the position of his heart. A man, pious man, a man who loves God with all his heart, a man who wants to please God physically and spiritually, a man who loves God regardless of the difficulty of life, yet a man who realizes that not everyone feels toward God as he does. This is the heart of the man who wrote this psalm. This is the heart of a man of God.

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

ANGUISH OF HEART

The circumstances of the poem are unknown to us. I suppose we could allow Bible historians to speculate for us, but it would not change our understanding. If David is the psalmist then he must have been going through some difficult times. We do not know if this difficulty pertained to his family, his people, or his enemies, but for some reason he laments his situation in life. But as you and I visualized him praying I hope you empathized with him. Though we do not know the situation, though we do not know the time frame, we still should be able to recognize his anguish of heart. The reason why we can recognize his anguish is because at times every one of us has also suffered anguish. Whether our anguish was caused by ridicule we have suffered, hardship we have endured, scorn, contempt, or whatever, every one of us have suffered.

As I read this poem I realized that Noah, because of his felt anguish, could have penned this psalm. The whole time he labored to build the ark people were ridiculing him. Or, it could have been written by Ezra or Nehemiah, or even by Elijah. The people of their day were constantly making their lives miserable. I certainly know it could have been written by Job for Job probably suffered as much anguish of heart as anyone of the Old Testament. In the New Testament it could have been written by Jesus. Many times Jesus lifted his eyes toward heaven and poured out his heart to God. John 17 is the perfect example. But something that is very unusual in this psalm is that the Psalmist begins in the singular but ends it in the plural. His prayer was not just a personal prayer, it also was for the people. The psalm makes four points concerning prayer.

PRAYER IS TO GOD

“Unto thee lift I up mine eyes.” Prayer is to be made to God. God is the creator of our life, the sustainer and provider of our needs. We see in this psalm the one that protects our existence.

Over the years man has become more and more independent. Rich men, poor men, and all in between think they have what it takes to run their lives. Since we earn our own living, run our own household, I suppose we think we can create our own design for worshipping God as well. But this is not true. The Old Testament example of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10) serves our purpose well. These people thought they could create their own design, but God would not accept it. The story of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10) also serves our purpose. They thought they could make their own religious decisions, but God would not accept it. Do you remember when Moses led the children out of bondage? He went to the Holy Mount to receive the 10 Commandments and the people, in his absence, made a Golden Calf to support their worship. God would not accept it. God has always told his children what he wants and he has always expected them to deliver. He told Adam and Eve what he wanted. He told Cain and Abel, Abraham, Noah, David, and through his word, he tells us today as well. We need to go to God for assistance. Assistance which he alone can give. Our desire, hope, expectations, and confidence rest in him.

PRAYER REQUIRES HUMILITY AND PATIENCE

I have never been a slave and I have no desire to be one — unless God is my master. That is also what the Psalmist says, **“As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters.”** But the servitude David is talking about is voluntary. He is saying that we need to volunteer to be God’s servants. Jesus said it this way, **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God”** (Matthew 6.33). We do not make ourselves slaves to God because of his power, but because of his love.

“Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.” Christians must be patient. Simply because the Lord does not answer our prayer immediately does not mean he is not going to answer. God answered Abraham and Sarah’s prayer though time passed before Isaac was born. Remember, **“With God a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day.”** God answered the prayer of the Israelites in Egyptian bondage, but he answered on his schedule and not theirs.

PRAYER REQUIRES SPECIFICS

Sometimes we pray very generally, and I believe that is justified. We pray in general for the congregation, and our sister congregations in the world. We pray in general for the sick and those that are traveling. But sometimes we

need to be very specific when we pray to God. I think these specific requests are better served in our private prayers, but we need to be specific at times. David prayed specifically that his persecution end. In John 26 Jesus is very specific in his prayers. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

We learn a lot about prayer from Psalm 123. True prayer is directed at God. "O thou that dwellest in heavens." The spiritual posture of prayer is sincerity and honesty.

A PRINCE HAS FALLEN

Tracy Dugger

The immortal spirit of Thomas F. Eaves, Sr., was escorted by angels to the bosom of Abraham on December 21, 1999 in Cookeville, Tennessee. "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" (II Samuel 3:38). Indeed, a mighty prince in Israel has fallen. Friends and family will sorely miss him. As a former student and brother in Christ I offer this tribute.

On one occasion, Thomas gave me a surgical instrument (a type of forceps) he had confiscated as a deputy sheriff from drug users. Knowing I love to fish he suggested I use them in extracting hooks from a fish's mouth. I have often used it as a sermon illustration regarding one's purpose in life. The original purpose for this surgical instrument was not intended for use in drugs or hook extraction, but for medical procedures. In like manner, Thomas Eaves, Sr. had abilities in other areas. He was a man of many talents. However, he used his life to serve and glorify God. He was a faithful Christian, husband, father and preacher of the gospel.

THE TEACHER

Thomas took II Timothy 2:2 to heart. Paul explained to young 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." One of the greatest joys in the life of Thomas Eaves was preparing and training men to preach the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus. Thomas did this well. The word "professional" comes to mind when I ponder his instruction. Of all the classes I have been fortunate to sit in, his were always the most fruitful and thorough. As one man said, "You always get your bucket full when you sit at the feet of Thomas Eaves."

Thomas required much from his students. As my wife can attest, many hours were spent reading, memorizing, typing, and writing. Although the work was often wearisome, I did not mind it for he put so much into this labor of love. He was always well prepared and organized. It is easy to require much work from students to make up for a lack of instruction, but this was never the case with Thomas Eaves. He expected much, but gave much.

"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes." The accepted attitude of prayer is as a servant longing for his master, a maid wanting to serve her mistress. Finally, prayer, as communion and communication with God, requires specifics be told, and specific answers expected. But regardless, we accept the will of God who is, and will always be, our loving heavenly Father.

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A passage of scripture that Thomas often applied in the classroom to whatever we were doing was Philippians 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Indeed, he expected us to learn the material he was teaching, but he also greatly desired that we live it. I, as a product of his diligent instruction, have benefited greatly not only in my preaching but in my personal life as a child of God.

THE PREACHER

Thomas Eaves was a great orator of God's truth. He was very effective in teaching homiletics. I learned well many principles of public speaking and sermon preparation and delivery. Not only in homiletics, but it seems in every class, he emphasized to his preacher students the responsibility of the preacher being a herald. A herald is one who delivers a message from a higher source. He delivers this message without addition or subtraction. In this case, Thomas emphasized to us over and over again that a herald preached God's word without fear or favor. So did he command, so did he do. This, I believe, is why he so enjoyed teaching "The History of Apologetics." In this class Thomas went through the Old and New Testaments pointing to great defenders of the faith. He particularly liked the prophet Micaiah and frequently quoted his words, "As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak" (I Kings 22:14).

As a gospel preacher, Thomas was true to his work. He stood for the truth of the gospel without waver. He preached the message of the cross with firmness and yet with love and kindness. He often would emphasize the importance of preaching the word in love and would quote Ephesians 4:15. He preached the word "in season and out of season.

As a preacher he saw the importance of writing good solid articles. These articles were printed in many brotherhood journals and bulletins. His articles were always timely as they dealt with moral as well as doctrinal issues. Thomas was a stalwart against liberalism and radicalism within our own ranks. He well documented his oppositions. He was clear, precise, and practical.

One of his major motivations for preaching the gospel was his love for the lost. Anyone acquainted with Thomas Eaves knew this. During his funeral Mike Glenn related that on the desk of Thomas he found numerous un-mailed envelopes of tracts intended for his neighbors. This speaks volumes of the man we know as Thomas Eaves.

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Family Friendly Programming, Stay At Home Moms, and Religion and Evolution

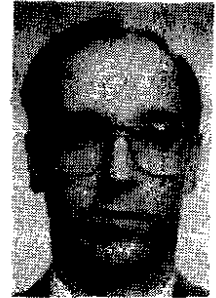
Compiled by Mark McWhorter

According to the U.S. census, nearly one-quarter of the nation's never married women have become mothers, a 60 percent increase over the past decade. The largest increases were among white women and college-educated women, particularly those with professional and managerial jobs (*The Washington Times*, May 17-23, 1999, p. 26). [Many parents want their daughters to go to college and get a good education. They push their daughters to be all they can be. But how many are being encouraged to be wives and mothers? Do not get me wrong, I have nothing against a woman having an education. But I believe the statistics are telling us something. Somewhere along the way of getting our daughters educated, we have lost priorities.—MTM]

Citing a lack of network programs that are acceptable for family viewing, a group of major advertisers—including McDonalds, Sears, General Motors, IBM, Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson — has announced a plan to pay writers to develop family-friendly programs for consideration by the WB network. The group has agreed to

underwrite the development costs of at least eight family-friendly pilots (*Maranatha News* service, 8/19/99). [This is good news. We hope that they are successful in reaching their goal. It is time that there was good programming on television again.—MTM]

“We have transformed ourselves into an activist membership movement,” said Paul Kurtz, who founded the Council for Secular Humanism in 1980. “We’re refocusing our efforts on young people.” In 1996, the council flew eight university students to Amherst to found the Campus Freethought Alliance. Since then it has had events or chapters on 50 to 80 campuses. Organized humanists have been around since 1933, when the first Humanist Manifesto was issued. Today the American Humanist Association has 5500 members (*The Washington Times*, May 17-23, 1999, p. 17). [They are realizing that the sooner they get the young people organized into thinking their way the easier it will be to change soci-



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Don Walker, San Antonio

SATURDAY

- 9:00 AM “When Upon Life’s Billows”
Jason Rollo, Bryan
- 10:00 AM “We Have An Anchor”
Monte Evans, Baytown
- 11:00 AM “There Is Much To Do”
Michael Light, Bangs

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- 1:30 PM “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”
Michael Wyatt, Portland
- 2:30 PM “Blest Be The Tie That Binds”
Tommy Moore, Port Lavaca
- 3:30 PM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Joseph Meador, Austin

- 7:00 PM “Our God, He Is Alive”
Jesse Whitlock, Beeville
- 8:00 PM “Is Thy Heart Right With God?”
Lynn Parker, Spring

SUNDAY

- 9:00 AM “It Is Well With My Soul”
Eddie Whitten, Bedford
- 10:00 AM “Angels Are Singing”
Tyler Young, Bedford
- NOON MEAL FURNISHED
- 2:30 PM “Lead Me To Calvary”
Robert Johnson, Corpus Christ
- 3:30 PM “Take Time To Be Holy”
Kevin Ruiz, Mathis
- 7:00 PM “Ring Out The Message”
Johnny Morris, Portland
- 8:00 PM “There’s A Great Day Coming”
H.D. Simmons, Corpus Christi


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ety. I have had church leaders tell me that there is no such thing as a humanist and that it can not be defined. I guess these 5500 individuals should be told.—MTM]

Gregg Easterbrook, author of *Beside Still Waters: Searching for Meaning in an Age of Doubt*, wrote an article recently in *The Los Angeles Times*. Easterbrook says that one reason scientists will now talk to theologians is that "religion is getting real about evolution." That is to say, many mainline theologians have jettisoned the traditional belief in God's creation in favor of evolutionary explanations. Orthodox Christian "views about evolution have long made many of the religious seem, to scientists, simply not worth talking to," says Easterbrook. "Now that mainstream faith is beginning to accept evolution, dialogue between science and religion becomes possible" (*World*, May 1, 1999, p. 26). [As long as theologians compromise their beliefs, scientists are ready to talk to them. The way Satan wins is for Bible believing people to compromise the truth. I am not calling scientists Satan. But anyone who denies biblical truth is a tool of Satan.—MTM]

"Increasingly, our sick culture has dismissed the importance of family and home in favor of a seductive upward mobility. Children are to be shunted aside in favor of that old goddess Success, and if you seek the results, just look around. Any parent who ever left a little one at a day care for the first time and saw the look in the kid's eyes knows what I'm talking about. "But it is now mindlessly assumed that no success in the home is worth losing out on the rewards offered by the glittering world outside, when in reality no success in business or politics or professional career can make up for failure in the home. Ask anybody who's had a child go astray or lost children through divorce or who can't find peace or even time at home. No amount of fragile success can make up for such a loss. Or its repercussions ("Stay-home moms need support, not bad mouthing" by Paul Greenberg, *AFA Journal*, May, 1998, p. 20). ['Nuff said.—MTM]

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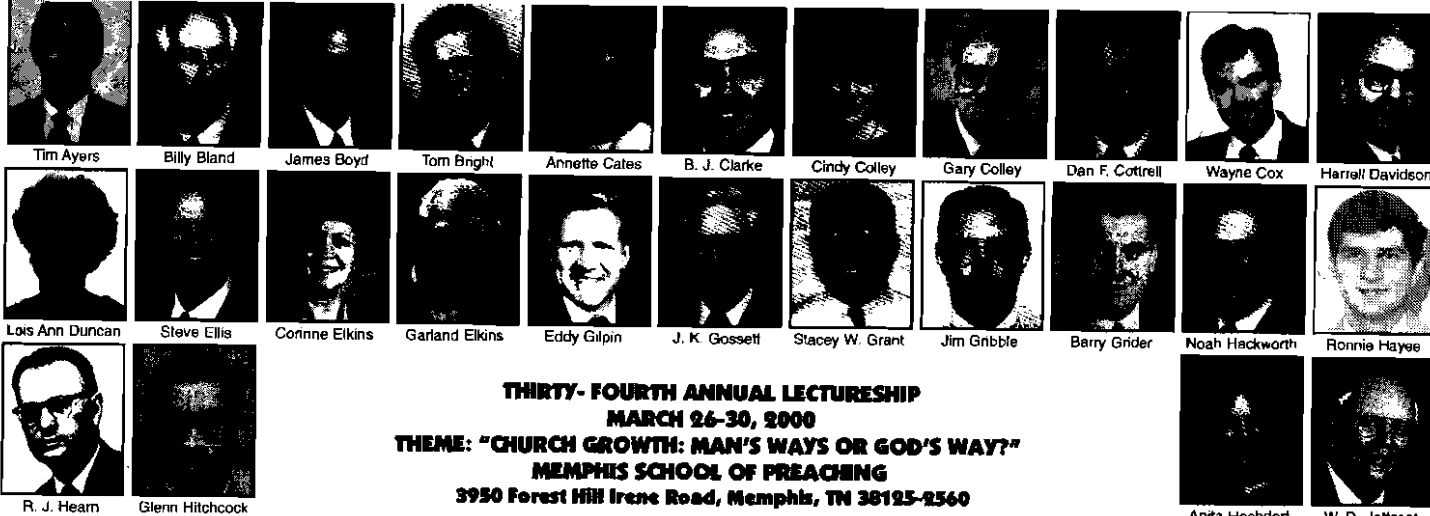
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SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2000

9:30-10:20 A.M. "Compromising Truth, Downplaying Distinctiveness to Grow" (Dub McClish)
 10:30-11:30 A.M. "Trashng Biblical Authority, Pattern Authority to Grow" (Steve Ellis)
 6:00-7:00 P.M. "Trashng the Validity of the Restoration Plea to Grow" (Don McWhorter)
MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2000
 9:00-9:50 A.M. "Extending Fellowship Parimeters to Grow" (J. K. Gossett)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "House Church Concept and Growth" (Ira Y. Rice, Jr.)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Women in the Early Church and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. "Elders Must Enhance Church Growth" (Corinne Elkins)
 Class 1: "Role of Gospel Meetings and Lecturashps in Church Growth" (Billy Bland)
 Class 2: "Role of Congregations Encouraging Other Congregations in Church Growth" (Paul Sain)
 Class 3: "Role of Prayer in Church Growth" (Wayne Cox)
 Class 4: "Church Growth and Individually Bearing Much Fruit" (Allen Webster)
11:30-1:10 P.M. LUNCH (Stacey Grant)
 1:10-2:00 P.M. "Church Growth and the Great Commission" (Eddy Gilpin)
 1:10-2:00 P.M.:
 Class 1: "Church Growth and the Use of the Media" (Glenn M. Lee)
 Class 2: "Church Growth and Bible Unity" (Toney Smith)
 Class 3: "Speaking Up for Morality and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M. "Church Growth in the First Century Church" (Anita Hochdorf)
 3:10-4:00 P.M. "Open Forum" (Glenn Hitchcock)
4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION (Garland Elkins)
 7:00-7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30-8:30 P.M. "Young Marrieds a Special Force in Church Growth" (Billy Smith)
TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2000
 9:00-9:50 A.M. "Copying the Mega Churches, i.e. Willow Creek, Use of Self Appointed Growth Experts to Grow" (Bobby Liddell)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Community Church Mana and Church Growth" (Ben Vick)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Wives of Restoration Leaders and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. "Deacons Must Enhance Church Growth" (Lois Duncan)
 11:00-11:50 A.M.:
 Class 1: "Role of Bible School and VBS in Church Growth" (Ed White)
 Class 2: "Role of Edification and Church Growth" (Danny Cottrell)
 Class 3: "Role of Contacting Newcomers, Visitors in Church Growth" (Bill Lyons)
 Class 4: "Church Growth and Adding Christian Gracias" (Tim Nichola)
11:30-1:10 LUNCH (James Boyd)
 1:10-2:00 P.M. "Church Growth and the Power of the Cross" (Sidney White)
 1:10-2:00 P.M.:
 Class 1: "Church Growth Jeopardized by Biting and Devouring one Another" (Marvin Rickett)
 Class 2: "Church Growth and Prayer" (Billy Michael Jones)
 Class 3: "Christian Women in the Workplace and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M.: "Church Growth During the Early Restoration Movement" (Dorothy Moshar)
PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR (Joel Morrison)
 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. "Young People a Special Force in Church Growth" (B. J. Clarke)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2000

9:00-9:50 A.M. "Adopting Preaching Policy of No Offense Created, Nothing Negative, No Name-Calling to Grow" (Roy J. Hearn)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Drama/Skits vs Gospel Preaching, Special Music, Performance vs Participatory Worship and Church Growth" (Harrell Davidson)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Vast Value of Ladies' Days and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. "Preachers Must Enhance Church Growth" (Irene Taylor)
 Class 1: "Role of Christian Colleges, Youth Camps in Church Growth" (Keith A. Moshar, Sr.)
 Class 2: "Role of Benevolence in Church Growth" (Ronnie Hayee)
 Class 3: "Role of Inviting Others in Church Growth" (Randy Vaughn)
 Class 4: "Church Growth and Faithful Attendance" (Jim Gribble)
11:30-1:10 LUNCH (Russell Kline)
 1:10-2:00 P.M. "Church Growth and True Worship" (Gary Colley)
 1:10-2:00 P.M.:
 Class 1: "Church Growth Against Great Odds (Revelation)" (Albert McDaniel)
 Class 2: "Church Growth and Church Discipline" (David Looney)
 Class 3: "Serving Those In Need and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M. "Church Growth During the 1940's-1960's" (Annette Cates)
 3:10-4:00 P.M. "Open Forum" (Flavil Nichols)
4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION (Garland Elkins)
 7:00-7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30-8:30 P.M. "Older Christians a Special Force in Church Growth" (Garland Elkins)
THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2000
 9:00-9:50 A.M. "Sheep Stealing: Building One Big Church at Expense of Small Ones to Grow" (Jerry Martin)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Entertainment Mania and Church Growth" (Tim Rice)
 10:00-10:50 A.M. "Wives, Mothers, and Grandmothers and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. "Bible School Teachers Must Enhance Church Growth" (Joan Liddell)
 11:00-11:50 A.M.:
 Class 1: "Role of Pulpit Preaching in Church Growth" (Jimmy Young)
 Class 2: "Role of Good Singing in Church Growth" (W. D. Jetcoat)
 Class 3: "Role of Parents and the Home in Church Growth" (Tom Bright)
 Class 4: "Church Growth and Each a Personal Worker" (Tim Ayers)
11:30 - 1:10 P.M. LUNCH (Barry Grider)
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. "Church Growth and a Dedicated, Working, Optimistic Membership" (Barry Grider)
 1:10- 2:00 P.M.:
 Class 1: "Church Growth When Faith Is Under Fire (I, II Peter)" (Mike McDaniel)
 Class 2: "Church Growth and the Power of Example" (Tony Lawrence)
 Class 3: "Use of Phone, Cards, Letters, E-Mail, Visits, etc., and Church Growth" (Women's Class)
 2:10- 3:00 P.M. "Church Growth and the Great Debates" (Cindy Colley)
 3:10 - 4:00 P.M. "Open Forum" (David Sain)
4:00 - 7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION (Garland Elkins)
 7:00 - 7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30 - 8:30 P.M. "Knowing We Shall Reap a Special Force in Church Growth" (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.**



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 Paul Sain Billy R. Smith Toney L. Smith Irene C. Taylor Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Randy Vaughan Ben Vick Allen Webster Edward White Sidney White Jimmy Young

WHAT DOES THE PHRASE “DECENTLY AND IN ORDER” MEAN?

Noah A. Hackworth

I Corinthians 14:1-40, for the most part, is a discussion of the nature and function of spiritual gifts. The use of a spiritual gift such as speaking in a language not previously learned was subject to regulation according to the apostle Paul.

If anyman speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let ore interpret but if there be no interpreter let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God (I Corinthians 14:27-28).

The reason why tongue-speaking had to be regulated is explained:

If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all (I Corinthians 14:23-24).

The ultimate reason behind the whole scenario of regulating the use of spiritual gifts is simply this: **“But let all things be done decently and in order”** (vs. 40). Can it be imagined what the Corinthian assemblies would have been like had Paul not taught the people to administer the things of the Lord with as little confusion as possible? After all it is said, **“God is not a God of confusion, but of peace”** (vs. 33).

SUBJECT DEVELOPED

Concerning the phrase **“decently and in order,”** the historian Josephus says **“the Roman army did not erect its camp in disorderly parties,”** and **“the Essenes only spoke in turn.”** We have in the Corinthian epistle a specific context in which decency and orderliness is to be observed, but in fact there is a need for all things to be done in orderly fashion. Every congregation of the Lord’s church today is under the apostolic admonition to follow this rule. To this there are no exceptions. Autonomy does not do away with the principle of orderliness. God’s people are expected to know and understand the present application of this principle. Congregational affairs must always be administered in such fashion that will permit peace and harmony to obtain. The business of the Lord is tremendously important, so much so that it must be handled with the utmost efficiency and effectiveness. While there is no obligation to be identical with the practices of the business world, simply because they are too harsh and mechanical, there is still the need to be well organized and efficient. One thing is for

sure, if the affairs of the corporate world were handled like the affairs of the church are sometimes handled, we would be fired.

THE USE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

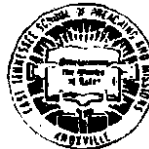
The New Testament was written not only to instruct us how to become Christians, but also how to live and conduct our affairs in a manner pleasing to the Lord. God’s word has to be repeatedly consulted in order to do this. From the Acts of the Apostles to the book of Revelation the principle of orderliness can be seen. Problems were handled and disputes were settled in orderly fashion when apostolic admonitions were followed. Take, for example, the murmuring of the Hellenists (the Jews who lived outside of Palestine but spoke the Greek language, about the neglect of their widows in the **“daily administration”** (Acts 6:1). The apostles saw the situation, recognized the need to act quickly and correctly, and appointed brethren to handle the case. The result? The problem was solved and growth continued. Then the Judaizers who came down from Judea and taught the brethren that circumcision was needful to be saved (Acts 15). This was a doctrinal matter and the apostles, elders, and perhaps some others came together in Jerusalem to consider the matter (vs. 6). After much discussion their decision was reached: circumcision is not binding on New Testament Christians (vs. 19). They then composed letters and sent them by messengers to the various churches to inform them of the truth of the matter (vv. 23-29). The matter was settled decently and in order.



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THOMAS CAMPBELL

Paul Vaughn

In 1807 **Martin Van Buren**, who would eventually become the eighth president, was married to **Hannah Hoes**. **James Madison** was secretary of state. He was two years away from becoming the fourth president of the United States. **Fulton's** steamboat, *Clermont*, steamed from New York to Albany. **Barton W. Stone** was working to recover from the disturbance of Shakerism in Kentucky and beginning his struggle with **Robert Marshall** and **John Thompson** over introducing creeds in the new churches.

EARLY YEARS

Thomas Campbell was born in County Down Ireland on February 1, 1763. There is not a great deal of information about Thomas as a boy. He grew up in the Anglican church, but disliked the cold formalism in that denomination. He went to the University of Glasgow and then entered the theological school of the Anti-Burgher split of the Seceder Presbyterian Church. Thomas married **Jane Corneigle** in June, 1787. Their first son was Alexander born in 1788.

It was in 1807 that Thomas Campbell left Ireland to come to America. There are a few individuals who teach that Thomas and **Alexander Campbell** founded the "Restoration Movement" in America. We do not want to take anything away from Thomas or Alexander Campbell. They did a great amount of good work, pointing many back to the "old paths" found only in the scriptures. But by the time Thomas Campbell left Ireland for America **Barton W. Stone**, **David Purviance**, **Rice Haggard**, **Reuben Dooley** and others had been pointing people back to the Bible for a number of years. The restoration principle of going back to the Bible was well under way on the American frontier. *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* was signed on June 28, 1804. Thomas Campbell arrived in America in May 1807.

OLD LIGHT, ANTI-BURGHER SECEDER PRESBYTERIAN

The Presbyterian Church in Scotland and Ireland was divided deeply at the time Thomas Campbell attended the University of Glasgow. The Church of Scotland endeavored to keep congregations from choosing their own preacher in 1712. From this effort to keep churches from choosing their own preacher a split came about by 1733. The new group was called "Seceders." In 1747 the Seceders split into two groups known as Burghers and Anti-Burghers. This split was over taking an oath to the Presby-

terian Church. The problem was whether the oath was to the Presbyterian Church including the Seceders or to the Church of Scotland. Those who disagreed with the oath were known as Anti-Burghers and those who endorsed the oath, Burghers. In 1795 another separation developed between the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers over the authority of public magistrates in the church. Consequently, the formation of "New Lights" and "Old Lights." Thomas Campbell united with the Old light, Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterians.

Campbell disliked the sectarian spirit among the Seceder Presbyterians and worked to promote unity between the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers. His attitude brought fruit in returning to New Testament Christianity in America.

In 1788 Thomas Campbell became the preacher for a church in Aforey, a town about thirty miles from Belfast. It was from this town that he left for America.

THOMAS CAMPBELL ARRIVES AT PHILADELPHIA

It was April 1807 that Campbell left his wife and seven children in Ireland to embark on his trip to America. The consensus of most historians is that the voyage was taken because of poor health. While other believe the freedom offered in the new land was a great force behind his move. After arriving in Philadelphia, Campbell discovered the Anti-Burgher Synod of North America was in session, so he approached them and was received into the Synod. Thomas requested and was assigned to the Presbytery of Charters which was in South West Pennsylvania.

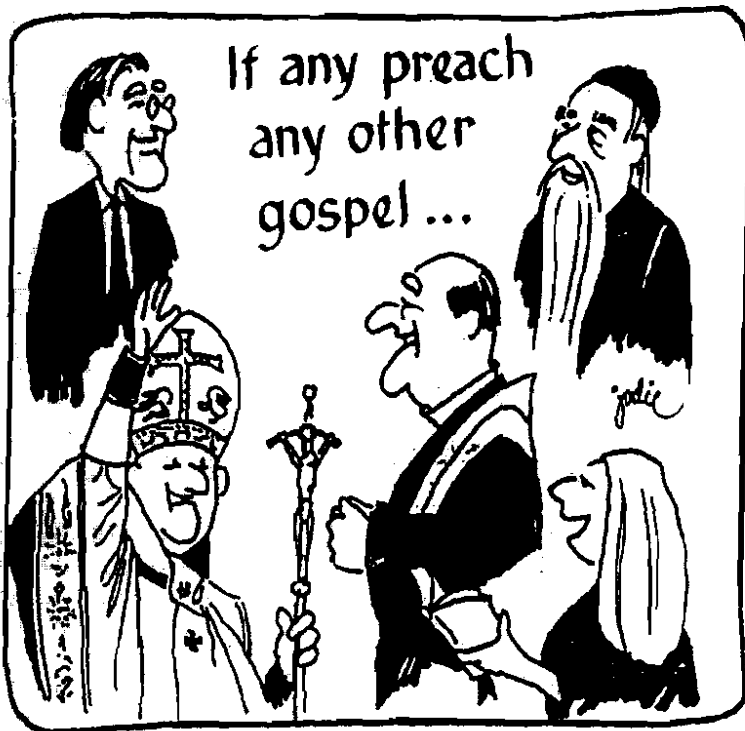
On a trip up the Allegheny River to serve the Lord's Supper to the Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterians Campbell fell under the eye of **William Wilson**, a fellow preacher in the Anti-Burgher Seceder sect. It was on this trip that Thomas Campbell saw the need of serving the Lord's Supper to different divisions in the Presbyterian Church. Rumors began to abound in regard to Campbell's attitude in serving the Lord's Supper. After being in America for only five months charges were brought against Thomas Campbell on October 27, 1807 for serving the Lord's Supper to those who were not anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterians. The Presbytery of Charters suspended Thomas Campbell on February 12, 1808 from preaching.

Just as the Washington Presbytery suspended **Richard McNemar** for Arminianism in 1803, the same attitude of sectarianism dealt a blow to Thomas Campbell's deviation from the orthodox teaching of the Anti-Burgher Seceders Presbyterians. The attitude of sectarianism always surfaces when their errors are pointed out by those endeavoring for truth. Stone discovered this in Kentucky and Thomas Campbell learned about it shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia. Christians attempting union with denominational churches must heed the examples of history, lest they be carried away into sectarianism.

—223 W. Maple Ave.
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WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Jodie Boren



Paul warned in Galatians 6:6-9 that "if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed." Since one who is guilty of perverting the gospel of Christ is in danger of being lost, it is imperative that we understand just what the gospel is. Is it simply, the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as some believe? Or, does the gospel encompass the entirety of Christ's teachings?

Let us notice a few things. Paul stated plainly in Galatians 1:8 that he preached unto them the gospel of Christ. Now, in verse 23 of that same chapter, it is said that Paul preached the truth he once destroyed. The word faith here means the teachings of Christ. It is this faith for which we are to earnestly contend (Jude 3). So, when Paul preached the gospel, he was preaching the faith which includes all the teachings of Christ.

In I Corinthians 15:2, we find we are saved by the gospel. James adds another dimension to this in James 1:18 and 21 where we read that we are saved by the word. The word and the gospel are thus interchangeable. We understand this when we read Mark's account of the great commission. The marching orders of the church is to preach the saving message of the gospel. Compare this with Paul's exhortation to the young evangelist, Timothy, in II Timothy 4:2-4, where Timothy is to preach the word. In the con-

text it is implied that this word contains the truth of the teachings of Christ. It is from these teachings we learn the sound doctrine of Christ. Put all this together and it is obvious that the words of Christ and the apostles can be understood to be the gospel.



In I Corinthians 15:1 it is said that we stand in the gospel. That is, our lives are sustained by the teachings of the gospel. Paul, in Ephesians 6:10-18, tells us to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might by putting on the whole armour of God in which we stand. As you examine this armour of God, you will see that one stands in the entirety of Christ's teachings—or the gospel.

We learn from Romans 10:16 that not all obey the gospel. Paul further states in II Thessalonians 1:8 that those who are not obedient to the gospel will be condemned to everlasting destruction. You can not obey facts. You can only obey commandments. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are facts. One must conclude, therefore, that if one is to obey the gospel, there must be commandments contained therein or else it would be impossible to be obedient to it. In beautiful symbolism we experience the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ when we obey the command to be baptized into Christ (Romans 6:1-11). But you cannot obey facts.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). It embodies all the teachings of Christ that bring us into a covenant relationship with the lord and it instructs us how to live faithfully before him all the days of our lives. Praise God for the gospel of Christ.

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Third Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 8-12, 2000

MOTIVATING MINDS TO GET ON BOARD, *Through The Local Congregation's Bible Class Program*

Darrell Broking

[This month's guest writer concerning the development of the church is Darrell Broking of Hayes, Virginia. He is a graduate of Memphis School of Preaching.]

A prepared and planned approach to congregational Bible class programs, will help congregations avoid some of the pitfalls and stumbling blocks of church development. Bible classes conducted by the hit and miss method, unnecessarily weigh the church down and slows her progress in the kingdom. This article will focus on a few of the self induced stumbling blocks which can be avoided by proper planning, diligent application and dedicated devotion to the Lord's work.

First of all, Bible class programs defeat themselves before they have a chance to take root, when congregations do not have a faithful and hard working man at the helm of the program. Turner, the celebrated painter, was once asked what was his secret to success. To this he replied, "I have no secret madam, but hard work." Hard work is a key to turning a congregation's Bible class program from a hindrance to a blessing.

Secondly, sound curriculum is essential to a successful Bible class program. Brethren must insure that they are using doctrinally sound materials to train minds, both young and old. Seeds of error planted into the hearts of men bloom into apostasy. They soon become smooth currents for the cool winds of change. Hell's fire is a reality that can only be overcome by embracing and obeying the soothing showers of truth from God's word. If God's word is not taught in Bible classes exactly as God intended, then the church actively helps Satan's cause. Some brethren purchase materials which have been prepared by denominations and re-packaged by erring brethren. One way to avoid this pitfall is to order tried and proven materials. Paul Sain Publications and Hanna Publications are excellent sources for sound materials.

In the third place, assuming that asking an unfaithful member of the church to teach a Bible class, will stir his or her heart to fidelity, is a false and dangerous assumption. While every member of the Lord's church is expected to be apt to teach (II Timothy 2:24), not every Christian is apt to teach. This is especially true in public settings (James 3:1). Paul wrote: "I will therefore that men pray every where, **lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting**" (I Timothy 2:8). The context of this verse is set in a mixed assembly of the church. Male leadership is always essential to proper worship.

Paul's statement, "**lifting up holy hands,**" does not refer to the physical position of the hands, but rather the spiritual condition of the heart (see Isaiah 1:15; Psalms 24:4).

The import of this truth is as clear as the golden rays of the sun in the beautiful Arizona sky. God **demands** faithful leaders in the church! A Bible class teacher is a leader of minds; therefore, public teachers must lift up holy hands. Dirty hands destroy, desecrate, and mar, the beautiful bride of Christ.

Finally, no plan of action leaves the church to grope in darkness. It is wise and expedient to the cause of Christ to follow a 3-5 year curriculum plan, for all classes in the local congregation. The class material published by Paul Sain is already keyed to a curriculum planner. Following a curriculum plan ensures that the congregation studies the entire Bible in a set number of years. It also ensures that topical studies geared to each educational level are covered; hence, the whole council of God is taught (Acts 20:27).

Theodore Parker once said, "The books which help you most are those which make you think most. The hardest way of learning is by easy reading; but a great book that comes from a great thinker is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth and beauty." The Bible is the deepest book of all. Nothing under the sun can help man more than the Bible. God expects his people to learn this book and use it properly. A well planned and prepared Bible class program, will go a long way toward motivating minds to get on board the greatest ship of thought ever to sail among the minds of mortal men!

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THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Tom Moore

I. INTRODUCTION

A. To any student of the Bible the parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most familiar.

1. Its sentiment, its scope, its message of a son's rebellion, a wasted life, and a father's love has been the source of inspiration for many lessons through the centuries.
2. The theme of this parable is "God's Attitude Toward the Lost," and the main lesson is "God not only accepts penitent sinners, He earnestly seeks their salvation".

B. The Background to the Parable

1. There are many precious words in our English language—"home" is one of them. Many this very hour are thinking of home (those in prisons, in the military, in hospitals, etc.).
2. The reason this parable was taught was because some were not glad to see some sinners come home.
 - a. Luke 15:1-2
 - b. We need to have the same type of attitude toward the lost as God does.
 - c. As God longs for, looks for, searches for, and puts forth effort for the lost—so must we.

C. Jesus in this remarkable chapter of Luke will show that there are basically three types of sinners:

1. The Parable of the Lost Sheep—Lost and did not know how to get back.
2. The Parable of the Lost Coin—Lost and did not know it.
3. The Parable of the Prodigal Son—Lost and knew how to get back.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE LOST SOUL

1. Luke 15:11-13.
2. The loss here is twofold:
 - a. God loses man.
 - b. Man loses God.
3. The son was lost through self-will.
 - a. James 1:13-16.
 - b. Because of self-will, the son desired to go into a "far country".
 - c. Because of self-will, the son made demands of his father—showing disrespect.
4. This son is a sober reminder that self-will separates one from the Father.

B. THE GRIEF OF SIN

1. Luke 15:14-16.
2. There are horrible consequences to sin—a famine always follows a life of sin.
3. This son had given in to his lust and had jumped full blown into sin, and now he was reaping the consequences.
 - a. This is one of the most difficult lessons to get the souls of this world to see.
 - b. Galatians 6:7-8

c. Sin had robbed this son of his dignity, purity and happy home.

d. Notice that he at this time was seeking help in "a far country" instead of seeking help from his father.

e. Today, too many are seeking help from the wrong sources.

- 1) The divine is our only true source of help.
- 2) II Peter 1:3
- 3) II Timothy 3:16-17

4. This son is a vivid reminder of the consequences of sins.



C. THE JOURNEY BACK

1. Luke 15:17-20a.
2. No one will ever repent until he comes to himself.
 - a. Reflection is needed on our part ... II Corinthians 13:5.
 - b. We must look honestly at ourselves ... James 1:22-25.
 - c. He remembered home and what he had left.
3. He admitted that he had sinned.
 - a. The three hardest words man to say is "I have sinned."
 - b. We cannot help ourselves until we admit we have a need.
4. He realized his unworthiness.
 - a. This helped him realize the need for his father.
 - b. This will help us realize the need for our heavenly father.
 - c. Matthew 5:3.
5. He took action.
 - a. Simply thinking about it will not get the job done.
 - b. Matthew 3:8.
6. This son is a wonderful reminder that we can come back to God.

D. THE JOY OF RESTITUTION

1. Luke 15:20b-24.
2. God will meet us halfway.
 - a. Notice that the son's father "ran" to meet him.
 - b. In restitution there is God's part (grace) and our part (obedience/repentance).
3. God is a God of compassion.
 - a. God continually looks for his children to come home. He is hurt by the separation.
 - b. Romans 5:8-9.
4. God forgives when we repent.
 - a. The slate is wiped clean.
 - b. We are not on probation.
5. This son is a beautiful reminder that God forgives the truly penitent.

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"EVERY WISE WOMAN..."

Annette B. Cates

"Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands," thus reads Proverbs 14:1. It is within the woman's nature to prepare the "nest" for her family. She does so, not necessarily with hammer, saw, lumber, and bricks, or with mop, broom, and dustpan, but by the way she conducts herself within her family, truly to be the **"keeper of the home"** (Titus 2:5).

GOD'S HOME

The basis of the home as God designed it is found in Ephesians 5:22-25:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.

This same principle is seen in I Corinthians 11:3, **"...the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God."** These roles have been so since the beginning and are not subject to cultural change. "Submission" is not a dirty word. Christ was in submission to God. The Christian man leads the family, and the Christian woman allows him to lead. Someone leads every organization. How many corporations have two CEOs? How many colleges have co-presidents? Why should the home be any different? This home environment will provide love and security for the children. The One who created us knew the best setting for the development of the family.

DIVINE ROLES

This balance of roles in the family is a different concept from that of today's society. To most people, marriage is little more than a matter of convenience. If things are not what they think are Hollywood perfect, the marriage contract can be discarded as if it is of no more significance than a used paper napkin. An unborn child is a "blob of protoplasm" invading the mother's body. Children are shuttled about between divorced parents as if they are just another part of the property settlement. Is it any wonder that our society is falling apart at the seams? To the Christian, marriage is a permanent bond, ordained by God "until death do us part." To the Christian parent, the unborn child is exactly that—a human being developing in an ideal God-designed environment until ready for the next stage of life. Job 31:15 speaks of God having fashioned us in the womb. Jeremiah 1:5 expands on that to tell us that even while we are in the womb, God knows us. To the Christian home, children are an heritage from the Lord (Psalms 127:3). The Christian home as God would have it brings a little bit of Heaven to earth—a haven from the turmoil of the world

around us. Every wise woman builds her house on commitment to the marriage bond.

Some enter into marriage thinking it will be a walk through a rose garden. But, all marriages have ups and downs because we are all human. It is how we handle the "downs" that determines the extent of the "ups." It takes effort to cultivate a happy marriage. There are some tools available for the wise woman as she works to build her house; this lesson will consider three.

ROMANCE AND "TEAMMATESHIP"

The first tool is romance, just as in the courtship. The Song of Solomon shows the importance of romance continuing into the marriage. In courtship, Solomon praised his love in the areas where she felt the weakest (chapter 1); in public, as well as in private, his banner over her was love (2:4). In marriage, he brought gifts of costly ointment and showed consideration for her feelings (ch. 5). If Solomon could do these things for his love, we wives (and husbands) can continue to demonstrate the kinds of caring that we showed before the wedding vows. How quickly some marriages lose the romance! Daily chores, conflicting schedules, concerns for finances, children needing attention, and job pressures crowd out the joy of everyday living. The tool of romance will allow the wise woman to recall the things that drew her mate in the first place and to return to those basics.

A second tool is "teammateship." God, husband, and wife together make up a team, united against the world. Children are the waterboys and the in-laws should be the fans in the stands, cheering the team on. This is the principle found in Genesis 2:24. A husband and wife are to cleave to one another and be one flesh. They must stand together and not allow outside influences to hinder their love. "Outside influences" can be anything from someone who would seek to destroy the marriage through temptation, to an overly demanding job, to meddling in-laws, to one's own children who often play one parent against the other. Teammates do not hurt one another. In war, friendly fire kills as surely as that of enemy fire and is much more tragic because it is so unnecessary. There is no room on this team for selfishness. **"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"** (Philippians 2:4). When one's interest is in what is best for the home, the marriage, and the mate, the result is what is best for "me." No matter what the problem, the wise woman knows that together, with God's help, prayer and the guidance of his word, the union will overcome the stresses of the world.



ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

A third tool is accentuating the positive. This tool does not allow for unrealistic expectations or unflattering comparisons to others, especially to old romances. Instead of dwelling on the negatives of one's mate, the focus should be on what is right with the loved one and the marriage. People tend to live up to what is expected of them. If we build one another up, the love will grow; tear one another down, and the love will be destroyed. All of us have times when we can be difficult to get along with. If "a better world begins with me," then certainly, "a better marriage begins with me." Ephesians 4:2 tells us to have forbear-

ance with love. If there is any place where forbearance and accentuating the positive are needed, it is in the home. The wise woman will build her house on optimism for the future.

There are many tools available to the woman who would build her house as God would have it. When she works to have a strong marriage and a secure home, she will be blessed with a truly happy life; she will not be as the foolish women of the world who seek to destroy, to tear down, this sacred institution.

—9194 Lakeside Drive
Olive Branch, Mississippi

Truth For Teens...

ABRAHAM—THE FRIEND OF GOD

Jason R. Roberts

If you could have any phrase etched into your tombstone, what would you like for someone to choose? Someone may select the great words describing the sterling character of Stephen, of whom it was said, he was "full of faith" (Acts 6:8). Others may select the notable words which characterized Enoch, who "walked with God" (Genesis 5:24). But of all the epitaphs that could grace the tombstones of God's people—the appraisal given to Abraham through the inspired writer James stands above all—"he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). There are several things that beautifully surface when one ponders this short, but superlative statement—*The Friend of God*.

A RARE TITLE

Three times in the Bible, Abraham is identified as the friend of God; both in the Old and New Testament he is given this supreme appellation. (II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). Furthermore, Abraham is the only Bible character whom was privileged to wear the title, *The Friend of God*. No greater praise could be given to any mortal man than to say he is the friend of God. Commenting on this title given to Abraham, Adam Clarke said it was "the highest character given to man." The words, *Friend of God* are not referring to Abraham's appraisal of God, rather it refers to God's appraisal of Abraham. In other words "Abraham was God's friend!" The question naturally rises, why Abraham? Why was he selected to bear such a lofty and rare title as this? A brief look at his life will reveal the answer. He was faithful (Hebrews 11:8-10,17). He was obedient (Genesis 22: 1-ff). He was a devoted worshiper (Genesis 12:8). He was a peacemaker (Genesis 13:8-9). He was hospitable (Genesis 18). He was a good father (Genesis 18:19). He was prayerful and compassionate (Genesis 18:23-33). His life epitomized every aspect of *friendliness* and *faithfulness*.

A REACHABLE TITLE

Though the title given to Abraham is rare; it is not unreachable. We too can have the wonderful privilege of having Christ consider us as his friends. He said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). If one wants to be considered the *Friend of God* today, he will humbly submit himself to whatever Jesus asks him to do without quibble or question. Thus, when Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), the person who obeys such is considered a friend in God's sight. Likewise, when Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20), the same is true.



A REWARDING TITLE

It is a rewarding title for the following reasons: *First, it identifies me with one of the greatest Old Testament heroes who ever lived.* Wearing the precious title—the *Friend of God*—is a distinct honor because it places me in the same camp as Abraham. *Second, it tells me something about the personal affection God has for me.* A friend denotes a relationship. A relationship implies communication. And communication conveys affection. We have the blessed assurance of knowing that the God of heaven enjoys such a precious relationship with his children.

There are few things that will give more weight to an individual's character than faithfulness. Abraham was such a man. A man, who, among the people of God today, still shines like a bright star in the sky. Truly, he was the *Friend of God*. Are you?

—3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd., S.,
Memphis, Tennessee 38125

NOTES AND QUOTES...

Guss Eoff
P.O. Box 137
Llano, Texas 76843

It has been a little over a year since I semi-retired. I plan to hold meetings, speak on lectureships and fill the pulpit for preachers who are ill or on vacation.

In the last two months I conducted two Gospel meetings, one in Cherokee, Texas and the other in Italy, Texas. In Cherokee, Texas we had eighteen responses. Too, I started a meeting in Palacios, Texas. I spoke three times on Sunday. Six or seven adults responded. The meeting continued through Wednesday night with three other speakers.

I have been filling in the last eight weeks in Voca, Texas, while their preacher has been in India.

Anyone interested in meetings, I would be happy to hear from you. My phone number is 915-247-1344.

Needed: a Motor Home or Travel Trailer. If someone no longer can use their travel Trailer or Motor Home we can certainly use one for preaching the Gospel in small places that cannot afford to pay for meetings. If someone would donate such a vehicle we are able to travel and preach. We are living on Social Security and our meager savings. If anyone can no longer use their travel vehicle because of illness, while we have health we would put it to good use. Please contact Guss Eoff P.O. Box 137 Llano, Texas 76843 or phone 925-247-1344. Thank you and God bless.

[Signed]
Guss Eoff

ESTABLISHING A NEW CONGREGATION

In February 2000 the Henderson Church of Christ, Henderson, Kentucky will be the supporting congregation in establishing a church in Hancock County, Kentucky. The missionaries that will be working in Hancock County are Paul Vaughn and his wife Ricki. Paul and Ricki have worked in helping to establish two other congregations, in Brown County Ohio and in Breathitt County, Kentucky.

There has never been a church of Christ in Hancock County so they will be blazing new territory. The congregation in Hancock County will also reach into

Southern Indiana in the cities of Cannelton and Tell City. There is about 25,000 people in a ten mile radius of the new church. The Henderson congregation will be supporting Paul and Ricki and has brought land to build a building for worship and Bible study.

The new Congregation is in need of support for the work fund and support to build a building. If you know of a church or individual that can help with the work fund or in building fund with this new mission work please contact the Henderson Church of Christ. Please call Gary Puryear at 270-827-1037 or the mailing address is Henderson Church of Christ 1202 N. Green Street, Henderson, Kentucky 42420.

January 26, 2000

Dear Brethren:

Ed Glover, faithful gospel preacher and former missionary to Australia, is in need of our prayers and financial support. Last fall, Ed was diagnosed as having a severe liver ailment which would eventually require a liver transplant. His condition worsened and he was hospitalized in November. A suitable liver was found and transplanted on December 25, 1999.

Ed's recovery has been very slow and has been complicated by pneumonia and other ailments. At the present time, he is in Bowld-UT in Memphis where he has been since November. He has not been able to work for several months. His wife, Janice, has been by his side and also has not been able to work during this critical time.

The Glovers have insurance, but it will not cover all the many expenses involved in Ed's extended hospital stay, the liver transplant, and a possible period of nursing home care. In order to assist them, the elders of the Lord's church in Trenton, Tennessee where the Glovers are members have set up a fund for brethren who would like to assist this worthy couple in their time of need.

Contributions can be sent to the Glover Fund at the following address: The Elders, Trenton Church of Christ P.O. Box 475, Trenton, TN 38382

If you would like further information, please contact the Trenton church or feel free to write or phone me.

Sincerely,
[Signed]
Rod Rutherford

More than half my life ago, my beloved mentor and friend W. R. Craig handed me the first edition of *Axe on The Root*. Its clear voice of warning was unmistakable. The forces of Satan were and remain at work within the body of Christ, and one of the few courageous men to sound the trumpet's call to arms was Ira Y. Rice, Jr. Born in the year of David Lipscomb's death, brother Rice has done for the church in our generation what Lipscomb did in Tennessee. Armed with the sling of truth, David Lipscomb stood against the Philistines of digression and Ira Rice has never wavered in his battle against that same evil spirit animating today's "change agents."

While we say farewell to brother Rice as editor of *Contending For The Faith*, we are grateful that he remains on the field of battle and express our deepest gratitude to him for his devotion to the cause for which our Lord died. In the same vein, we bid God speed to David Brown as brother Rice's mantle descends upon him. These are perilous times for the Lord's church and they call for clear, decisive voices that ring with God's Truth.

We believe brother Brown will measure up to that task and pray that his courage will never falter in the cause that is greater than us all.

Jerry Brewer
308 South Oklahoma
Elk City, OK 73644

Bill and Jean Coplan, of Woodsfield, Ohio, enclose \$25.00 toward our "Special Mailings" fund, saying, "We thought it would thrill your soul to learn the following amidst some congregations wanting to go instrumental music. We just learned of a West Virginia congregation of about 60 members who were all converted and that a faithful gospel preacher is moving to work with them. Keep up the good work, brethren."

People may doubt what you say but they will always believe what you do.

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PREACHERS WANTED

Congregation with 70 members with an eldership seeks a sound, conservative preacher. Salary plus 4-year old, 3 bedroom home included. Position is available immediately. Please send resume and a recent sermon tape to: Sunnyview Church of Christ, Box 896, Fannington, MO 63640 in care of the elders.

Preacher wanted for a small congregation averaging around 20 in attendance

in a town of 3,600. Will supply 6 bedroom house, utilities and \$400 per month. Additional support needed. Applicants must be sound and conservative in teaching, preaching and ministering to the body and the lost. Posi-

tion available June 1. Send resume, references, tape (audio or video) of recent sermon and family photo to: Church of Christ, Attention Ed Watts, P.O. Box 91, Buffalo, WY 82834.

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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, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Brian Chadwick, Tel. 01223 210101. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

Peterborough—Church of Christ, meeting at the Manor Farm Community Centre, Eye, Peterborough. BS 10 a.m., BB 11 a.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Contact evangelist Danny Douglas; Email: D.Douglas@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel:01144-1733-315907 or Keith Sisman: K.Sisman@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel: 01144-1487-710552.

—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. (850) 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 Albrinton, Evangelist.

—Michigan—

Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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. 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.

Bryan/College Station—Church of Christ, Sunday 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.; Call for location (409) 731-1230 or (409) 589-3725; Email: jasonr@al-pha1.net.

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.

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

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.

The Last Word...

THERE IS GREAT HOPE FOR THE CHURCH

Eddie Whitten

What a challenge! For the last three decades, the church has faced some of its most dangerous opposition. The church has always faced opposition and always will. Most of the battles fought in the past have been against outside forces. The challenges of today are more dangerous because, for the most part, they are from within. This should not really surprise anyone since that has been the devil's forte from the very beginning. Get inside the head of those in the most influential places and they will take it from there!

One thing Satan cannot do. Satan cannot overcome the word of God. He just is not able to conquer the inspired word of God (Matthew 24:35). Because he cannot win that battle, the soldiers of the cross continue a faithful march across the spectrum of life. There is a caution about which

we need to be reminded: Alarmists cry louder than those who are busy doing what they need to do. We have alarmists crying that the church of our Lord is about to be taken over by the liberals. It is true that the liberals, the sensationalists, the pseudo-intellectuals, the proud, the ultra-wise, are making inroads in the church and are carrying off the weak, ignorant and silly emotionalists. Paul said this would happen (II Timothy 4:3). It will continue to happen.

FRESH TROOPS ARE IN THE BATTLE

Those who are interested in the future welfare of the church make it a point to seek a solution to the problem. Thankfully, there are many of the "old guard" who have



not bowed their knees to Baal. They are fighting valiantly to hold up the banner of Jesus and defend his cause. Soldiers who believe in the cause for which they fight will remain true and loyal to the end. So will those who follow after them and who step into the gap when death robs us of faithful soldiers.

The church is not devoid of such stalwarts. Across this nation and abroad there is a phalanx of younger preachers and members who are stepping up to take the fallen flag of Faith. Sound, biblical men emerging from the ashes of churches ravaged by the fires of humanism, modernism, materialism, liberalism are taking the helm and guiding the church back into the safe waters of truth.

It is so encouraging to see young men in the pulpits of the church standing firm in the truth of the gospel. It may not seem apparent but we have many younger men taking the lead in preaching, lecturing, debating, writing and otherwise undergirding the faith of their peers. Men who rely solely upon a "Thus saith the Lord" for authority for what they preach are slowly stemming the tide of liberalism that has taken so many of our brethren into spiritual suicide. The church is going to survive the current onslaught. It always has!

THE FUTURE AS SEEN FROM THE PAST

The "Cycle of Faith" has always been with us. In the past, the lack of knowledge has brought destruction in the church. God, through Hosea, lamented, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Peter recorded, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (II Peter 1:3). Knowledge can come only through study (II Timothy 2:15). The source of knowledge we must have is the inspired scriptures (II

Timothy 3:16). Solomon wrote, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

We are under divine injunction to teach the word of God to the lost. The task is impossible without knowledge of what we are to teach. Tragically, a cycle of ignorance has also accompanied God's people through the ages. It will again if we are not willing to take up the banner of the cross and join the battle for truth.

THE LORD NEEDS YOU!

A war is going on and it has been since 33 A.D. There have been many times when the forces of evil have prevailed against truth. There has also been many times that the church has rebounded with great force and enthusiasm. Now is a time when Satan has marshaled his forces for an all-out attack against the church. Let us look at what we have to answer him.

We have (1) The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and the breastplate of righteousness. We have the truth girt about us, and our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We have the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:14-17). (2) We have dedicated servants determined to preach the word. (3) We have the precious seed, the word of God (Luke 8:11). (4) We have the blessed avenue of prayer.

We have great hope and strong confidence that the forces of righteousness will win the ultimate victory so that we can say, with Paul "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, 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).

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THE THREAT OF LIBERALISM

Rubel Shelly

...The threat of liberalism to the Lord's church is ten times as great as "anti-ism" was ever thought to be! In the first place, the advocate of "the liberal line" is more sophisticated and appealing in his manner than any "anti" could be. To be quite frank, the "anti" usually "cuts his own throat" by his arrogant and malicious acts and statements. He made himself offensive to people who might otherwise have had some sympathy with his cause. But not so with the liberal. He is careful to appear humble, pious and genuinely concerned for the welfare of the church. By such an appealing approach, he is able to win people to himself. How appropriate is our Lord's warning found in Matthew 7:15. **"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves."**

A second difference between the "anti" and the liberal is that the "anti" was quick to draw a line of fellowship and exclude himself from the larger portion of our brotherhood. But, again, not so with the liberal. He continues his insidious work from within! He uses pulpits, magazines, journals and every other known tool of influence among us to win people to himself and his false doctrines. I have more respect for the "anti" who flies his true colors and leaves our fellowship than for the liberal who is deceitfully leading brethren astray!

WE MUST BE ON GUARD

...The church must be on her guard against these encroachments. Liberalism must be called what it is—damnable heresy designed to overthrow the faith. Those professing the liberal position must be exposed for their sake in the hope of their eventual salvation and for the sake of the church at large. Faithful gospel preachers and elders in the church must be taught to recognize liberalism and must react to it in all boldness.

...It now seems that we have developed a "new breed of preachers" who can show only contempt and disgust for

what faithful brethren have said and done in the past. These same men are speaking and writing in such a way as to create doubt and confusion in the minds of our brethren. We must not be silent while this is going on around us. We must run the risk of being labelled (sic) as "witch-hunters" or "keepers of orthodoxy" in order to obey the biblical command to **"prove the spirits, whether they are of God"** (I John 4:1).

THE ERROR OF ATTITUDE TOWARD DOCTRINE

The first basic error of liberalism is one of attitude. It is usually expressed in language similar to the following: "We have haggled much too long over baptism and instrumental music. It is time that we realized that Christianity is a life, not a doctrine. The real integrity of the church is in its spiritual life rather than in its doctrinal structure!" I have a quotation from a supposed "faithful preacher of the gospel" in which he says that he never brings up doctrinal matters in assemblies which are composed of non-Christians.

Has our thinking become so closely bound to that of denominationalists that we now desire to be thought of as "one of the crowd"? Do we want to preach the same sermons that denominational people take delight in hearing, i.e., collections of polite platitudes that make about as much of an impression on sinners as a drop of water on the ocean tides? Shall we abandon the distinctive sound of authoritative gospel preaching? The liberal would like to see that day come.

Some evidently do not understand the matter, but there can be no preaching apart from doctrine. *Doctrine* is defined as "something that is taught: teaching." Can any man profess faith in anything at all without making a doctrinal statement? Preach of love, joy, peace and you are still dealing with matters of doctrine or teaching. It is absurd to think that there can be any religious discussion or statement without the involvement of doctrinal matters.

(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

Volume XXXI, No. 3

March/2000

David P. Brown,
Editor-in-Chief and Publisher

Ira Y. Rice, Jr.,
Founder and Senior 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-in-Chief David P. Brown, P.O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383. Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES

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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 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, 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.

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

Editorial...

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD DENOMINATIONALISM

Ultimate truth is found in the Last Will and Testament of Jesus Christ, the New Testament (John 8:31, 32). It alone must determine our attitude toward all things (II Timothy 3:16, 17; James 1:25; John 12:48; Colossians 3:17); I Peter 4:11; II Peter 1:2, 3). Therefore, it will form our view of religion in general and denominationalism in particular. The church of Christ (as that term is employed in the Bible and as I herein use it) is not of human origin (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:25-27; Romans 16:16). There are no faithful children of God outside of the church of Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27; Acts 2:42, 47; Ephesians 1:3). Denominations, on the other hand, are of human origin and every member of them is lost in sin. Persons dying in such churches will lose their souls in perdition. Any member of the church of Christ who does not oppose (as the Bible sets out such opposition) denominational doctrines and churches is not faithful to the Lord and needs to repent. Indeed, such truth is exclusive and offends many. However, since it is God's truth it does not offend him and, when eternity dawns, God is the only one who will matter.

WHO CARES IF THE DENOMINATIONS GET UPSET

When the denominations get upset with the Lord's church they try to portray us as narrow-minded bigots. However, when they try to convert people to believe "only in the deity of Christ" Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Atheists, Agnostics and others see them as arrogant, bigoted, narrow minded, unloving and dogmatic. Indeed they stand in opposition to the majority of mankind. Thus, when one truly decides to follow Jesus he needs to know all the truth regarding Christ and not compromise one scintilla of it. Why place so much importance on trying to convert the world to the deity of Christ and oppose some of his doctrine (Matthew 7:21-23)? Those of us who know the truth of the gospel are not about to tolerate denominational sectarian false doctrines, no matter the charges against us of being so narrow that we can see through a key hole with both eyes at the same time. We are going to follow the truth of the New Testament no matter how broad or how narrow it is. Indeed, that is the way that is always right.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD DENOMINATIONS

In 1939 during the *Abilene Christian College Lectures* the late and lamented Guy N. Woods, a man who fought denominational doctrines and churches as much as any man ever did, set out the position of *Contending for the Faith* toward denominations (Today

ACU and like institutions have repudiated Woods' statement). Woods declared:

Denominationalism is the curse and bane of the age. So long as it remains to mislead and deceive the people, our work will not be finished. It is our duty fearlessly to unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, boldly go forth to battle, and plunge it into the very heart of sectarianism, until, mangled and bleeding, it is left to

die in its own shame ("Christianity in a Changing World," page 57).

Indeed, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

—David P. Brown, Editor-in-Chief

THE THREAT OF LIBERALISM...

(Continued From Page 1)

We nevertheless understand those who profess to have left off doctrinal preaching. They mean that they do not preach on such subjects as baptism for the remission of sins, the one body, or instrumental music. But still the question remains: Why? Is there no objective truth to be sought in regard to these subjects? Are the statements "Baptism is essential unto salvation from sin" and "Baptism is not essential unto salvation from sin" equally true? To ask such a naïve question is to answer it!

A knowledge of doctrinal matters is necessary in order to do the will of God. **"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching (doctrine—KJV), whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself"** (John 7:17). One must know of the father and the sacrifice of his son in our behalf. He must know that the gospel reveals how we may receive salvation. He must be shown the commands relative to salvation and urged to obey them. He must be taught concerning the church and Christian living.

This question should be asked of those who disdain doctrinal sermons: Why do you preach at all? If you do not tell people of the distinctive nature of New Testament Christianity as opposed to denominationalism, you imply that their present status is acceptable before God and that you fellowship them in their error. Why not share your pulpit with the Baptist or Presbyterian preacher in town? He doesn't like "doctrinal" sermons either! But someone may answer, "But if we harp on doctrine we will drive those people away. They will stop listening altogether and then we will never reach them." If you are not pressing the distinctive commands of the gospel, with what do you hope to "reach them"? Are you trying to save them or convince them that you are a nice fellow and easy to get along with? If you are not saying anything distinctive, what difference could it make whether they listen to what you are saying or not?

When questioned about their doctrinal presentations, Peter and John said, **"Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard"** (Acts 4:19-20). We cannot afford to compromise where these men stood firm. When we fail to preach the "whole counsel of God" we are less than faithful to our calling!

As to the objection that Christianity is "a life, not a doctrine," very little needs to be said. For, although this assertion has an appearance of godliness, it is radically false!

This would make Christianity altogether subjective and remove it from the realm of objectively verifiable matters. If Christianity is not based on doctrine that is historically true, it is robbed of all value and meaning. If Christianity is not objectively verifiable through doctrine, Paul was altogether out of order when he declared certain men "anathema" from God for teaching a different gospel (Galatians 1:8-9). Yes, Christianity produces a changed life; but it is the *doctrine that justifies the life*, not vice versa. [Rubel Shelly, "Some Basic Errors of Liberalism," in Freed-Hardeman College Lectures, *The Church Faces Liberalism*, ed. Thomas B. Warren (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1970), pp. 35-39.]]

[Though several years have past since Shelly repudiated the views set out in his chapter and lecture at Freed-Hardeman College, he continues to be the perfect example of the liberal he described. He stated the truth about liberals when he wrote it for the 1970 FHC Lectures and, regardless of his change of heart in the intervening years, the truth he espoused then continues to condemn him and his religious kin today. Indeed, Shelly and company have failed to heed the sober warning of the inspired Hebrews' writer when he wrote, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). Thus, he rejects Christ for Billy Graham's embrace, and anyone else who can say "Jesus."

At the old FHC lectures in the early seventies I heard the late and lamented Franklin Camp say that the greatest danger to the most zealous and knowledgeable child of God is the temptation to grow weary in fighting error. Indeed, some just quit obeying Jude 3 because they do not desire to go through all that is involved in such controversy. I firmly believe that Franklin Camp's observations were on target, for I have seen too many church members "throw in the towel" of truth along with the courage of their convictions rather than suffer "the slings and arrows" of false teachers, hobby riders and their supporters. To suffer the loss of friends, to undergo divisions among brethren and in one's own family are never pleasant, but such is part and parcel of being a Christian. To live one's life to the contrary is to cease being faithful to the Lord. And, if we leave Christ, the gospel and his church where shall we go to find better replacements? The answer is "Nowhere!" (John 68, 69). Thus, we conclude with the apostle Paul, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9; ff. II Thessalonians 3:13; I Corinthians 15:58; Jude 3; II Timothy 4:1-8).

—David P. Brown, Editor-in-Chief

GOODMAN OAKS CHURCH OF CHRIST— CROSSES THE RUBICON

David B. Jones

The Rubicon is a small stream that flows into the Adriatic and in Roman times marked the boundary between Cisalpine Gaul and ancient Italy. In 49 B.C. **Julius Caesar** led his army across it, defying the Roman senate and commencing civil war. He thus committed himself to conquer or to perish and he reportedly said, "The die is cast." Thus, to "cross the Rubicon" is to take an irrevocable step.

The title indicates that the *Goodman Oaks Church of Christ* in Southaven, Mississippi, took a decisive step. The die was cast and they have stepped-over the line. They took that step when they invited **Jeff Walling** into the sheepfold to speak to and lead away even more followers into his path of digression and apostasy. Walling entered the sheepfold speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after himself on September 19-21, 1999.

For many years the *Goodman Oaks Church* has been headed toward the Rubicon, hosting **Rubel Shelly** several years ago and having other noted liberals such as **Jimmy Allen** and **Jim Woodruff**. Some years ago in a meeting held in the Nesbit, Mississippi church building, one of the elders stood and defended Rubel Shelly, claiming he was not a false teacher and a person could learn good things from listening to him. They have opposed good sound congregations in the area, opening their arms to take in members from other congregations regardless of whether they had been withdrawn from. Their goal is to be the largest church in Mississippi and they are getting "the numbers to prove it."

YES, THEY ARE LIBERAL

While it is sad to see the leaders (elders and preachers) who have digressed from truth into liberalism, it is truly sorrowful to know that many members are being led into such by those whom they trust. They advertised this digression in the local newspaper and in their bulletin. They have claimed for years they were not liberal, nor were they going liberal, but this step proved their faith and fidelity lies in the liberal camp and not in heaven. Jeff Walling has spread his venom all over the brotherhood and Goodman Oaks invited him to spread it in Desoto County.

I take no delight in writing and publishing such a report, but I cannot sit idly by and allow them to trample the name of the precious bride of Christ. We have no personal ill-will in exposing their sin and error, but we have a responsibility to God as he has entrusted the gospel to us and we must **STAND IN THE GAP** and defend it as the apostle Paul did. All sound congregations ought publicly and privately to oppose their decisive step. Paul would speak out, not considering his own personal safety or comfort. One day we will stand before the Judge of all the earth, giving an account of our defence for the truth. I would hate to appear

not having made any stand against such blatant sin and error. If I can turn even one head away from error and back to truth, or if I can stand in the gap between one person and the path of sin and error, my efforts will be worthwhile. In fact, I know they are worthwhile because I am defending the precious word of God and exposing those who would pervert the gospel.

OLD TESTAMENT EXHORTATIONS

Ezekiel used a figure from life when he spoke of false teachers. We read:

Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? (Ezekiel 13:10-12).

When a brick wall was built with such mortar, the wall would not stand when the enemy or some wild animal rushed and pressed it. The wear of life would also cause the bricks to break loose and the wall would be useless. This mortar is not prepared to stand against the day of trial and judgment. Jeff Walling "**daubs the wall he builds**" with untempered mortar. His doctrine is not from God and will not stand up under the heat of God's judgment. I will also be exposing more of the untempered mortar of Jeff Walling later in this article.

Ezekiel also recorded the fact we are all watchmen on the walls of Zion: "**Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.**" (Ezekiel 3:17). We have a responsibility to watch and warn of impending danger and destruction. Those who listen to and are led by the words of Walling regarding fellowship with denominations are daubing with mortar that will not hold in the day of judgment.

Another figure we see from the Old Testament comes in the form of Elijah who asked the question: "**And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word**" (I Kings 18:21). People need to decide today if they are going to follow Jeff Walling or Jesus! Jesus says one thing in his word—Walling comes along and says another.

Another example is taken from the prophet Micaiah, who when pressured to conform to another's voice said:

And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets

declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak (I Kings 22:8).

We need men who will not “bow the knee to Baal” and speak as the “nations round about,” but who will declare exactly what God has said. This is why Ahab said of him:

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. (I Kings 22:8).

We do not need to fear the Ahabs of the world, we need to continue standing and speaking as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11).

NEW TESTAMENT EXORTATIONS

The New Testament abounds with exhortations to watch and warn about false teachers. Peter paints a vivid description of them in his second epistle, especially in the second chapter. Notice he writes: “**These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever.**” (II Peter 2:17). False teachers are compared to clouds that are blown around by the wind, but which are empty of the water which is needed to sustain the lives of those affected by the clouds. False teachers are like this. They should reveal words whereby people can be saved, but instead, they are just “thundering” and not producing any life-giving rain! Jeff Walling is such a teacher. His words cannot save because he is not preaching truth.

Jude also describes these false teachers: “**These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;**” (Jude 12). Have we ever spread a blanket on the ground to have a picnic and sat down on the blanket to eat, only to have our knees hit a rock right under the blanket? How did it feel? Was the blanket able to give the type of comfort for which it was spread? False teachers are like those “spots.” They are supposed to give comfort with their words, but instead of comfort, they (and those who follow) will reap the consuming fire of God: “**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**” (Hebrews 10:31). “**For our God is a consuming fire.**” (Hebrews 12:29). Jeff Walling is just such a “spot.” His words will bring us into fellowship with error and denominations, but not with God!

Jude also says these false teachers are trees whose fruit has withered and died. A good number of men who no longer hold the truth were at one time great preachers of truth. However, because of the deceitfulness of Satan, they have been led astray and have fallen from their own steadfastness. Walling at one time was a good preacher. I have spoken to those who used to know him back when he was sound. However, he is now like the tree spoken of by Jude.

Paul reveals how we are to handle this type of man:

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

We are to “mark them”, that is, to put our eyes on them by careful examination and beware of who they are and what they teach. We are to avoid them, not invite them to come and devour the flock! Paul also wrote: “**A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;**” (Titus 3:10).

How many admonitions has Jeff Walling had? Many preachers have tried to get him back. This has been done for several years, but to no avail. He is to be rejected because he is a heretic. Paul further explains: “**Knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.**” (Titus 3:11). Walling actually condemns himself because of what he teaches. Many weak-kneed brethren will say we ought not judge, but Paul answered this foolishness. The false teacher condemns himself (John 7:24).

EXAMPLE OF WALLING'S DEPARTURES

The following article was published in the 1998 October issue of *Seek The Old Paths*, published by Garland Robinson:

[*Note: Following, is an excerpt from Jeff Walling's speech at the Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop, 1991. Immediately after reading John 17:20, 21 and getting his audience to repeat a couple of times in unison, "that we may be one," he said...]*

Now the problem we got in this auditorium is what you think when you say the word ‘we.’ You look around and say, ‘yea, we, that’s O.K.’ But what if we weren’t here? What if you were at a gathering where people sitting next to you didn’t go to a church of Christ? They believed in Jesus. They loved the Lord. They have a desire to do what’s right.

But assume for just a moment that crazy concept that there may be some folks out in the world who, honest to goodness, love Jesus with all their heart, who want to give him anything they have in their hands, but for whatever reason they are not fellowshipping in a building that says ‘Church of Christ’ on it. Now, just free your mind up for that bizarre possibility. Now, can you say with me, ‘that we may be one?’

The first odd thing I want you to note in the text is what Jesus doesn’t say when he says ‘they.’ He doesn’t say that ‘the obedient might be one.’ He doesn’t say that ‘the Church of Christ might be one.’ Who does he ask would be united, would be one? ‘I pray for those who will go to church?’ No, no, no. ‘I pray for those who will be baptized?’ Oddly enough, ‘I pray for those who will believe in me.’

Now, folks, I don’t want to break anybody’s back as you try to bend over and go with me. But I want you to wrestle with the fact that the text says, ‘believers.’ Those who say, ‘yes, Jesus is the Christ. Yes, he is divine, Yes, he is Lord.’ Now, I don’t know whether the folks who put the workshop together had this in mind? I should ask Jay, did you have this in mind? I don’t know whether they did or not.

But I will tell you what: in order to preach the text, we can't get into this lesson without appreciating the fact that Jesus asks that we throw a calf rope around all of those who just believe in him, and pray, and work, for the unity of all believers.

IT IS EASY TO SEE WHAT WALLING IS

It is not hard for the person wishing to please God to see what Walling teaches and what he endorses. His doctrine will lead us down the road of apostasy. Those who provide him a platform from which to speak will share in that leading. Notice that he classifies all who say they believe in Jesus as being in fellowship with God. The Bible often uses the word "believe" to include all those who are obedient. For example notice what Peter wrote: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner" (I Peter 2:7). Those who are "disobedient" are contrasted with those who "believe." Thus one who truly believes in God will be the one who truly obeys God. In Acts 16 we read of Paul and Silas in jail in Philippi. Having refused to leave once the doors were opened, the jailor came to them, asking what he must do to be saved (Acts 16:30). The answer was given: "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 10:31). However, the text does not end there. The word was preached unto him (v.32). He was then baptized (v. 33). Then we read: "And when he had brought them into his house he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:34). When did they "believe" by biblical standards? When they had obeyed what God said, they truly believed according to scripture. Walling once again needs to read the Bible! One who believes is one who obeys! His sarcastic comment about the Lord saying that believers were "one," but not the obedient being "one," is from hell and not heaven!

What Walling and his band of traveling liberals would have us do is erase the lines God has drawn in scripture, and throw a calf-rope around all who even claim to "believe." The problem is—Jeff Walling does not have an eraser that large or powerful! God drew the lines—we must recognize them and revere them!

Other departures and digressions could be pointed out. His endorsement of the Christian Church many years ago and his comments about instrumental music are also appalling. You can read these in many publications, for they are a matter of record (those comments were made in February 22-28, 1987, at Ozark Christian College [Christian Church School] in Joplin, Mo.). If you are interested in them you can contact Garland Robinson-East Corinth Church of Christ or O.B. Porterfield-Seibles Road Church of Christ, Montgomery, Alabama.

A SAD THING

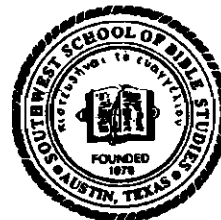
It is sad when articles such as this must be published exposing such false teachers. However, in the interest of truth, when they are needed, they must be published. Unfortunately, there are many other errors which could be highlighted. His associations with such men as Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, Max Lucado, the singing group Ac-

capella and others, show the direction he has taken and the doctrine which he teaches. When Goodman Oaks invited one of the "goliaths" to preach his presence challenged the sound congregations to rise and meet his challenge!

The apostle John was called the "apostle of love" by many. The Bible speaks of him whom Jesus loved (John 13:23). Polycarp was a companion of John and Irenaeus writes of a quote from Polycarp regarding John and a well-known false teacher of his day, "John the disciple of the Lord going to bathe at Ephesus and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly even the bath-house fall down because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within" [Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom* pg. 64].

Goodman Oaks was warned, the elders were warned, the preachers have been warned and yet they continue to rush into liberalism as the horse which is prepared for battle (Jeremiah 8:6). May God grant them time and space to repent, but may we never lay down our armor and hold hands with the enemy of truth in the meantime! We know this may not be received by all, but we remind you of what Paul wrote to the Galatians: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10)... "I am therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16).

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ROLE MODELS?

Brock Hartwigsen

America's women's soccer team won the World's Cup. The women on the team are being held up as role models for young American girls. But, do we really want the young girls of our country to follow the examples set by these women? When they won, one of the players striped off her blouse and ran in front of over 90,000 fans on worldwide TV in her underwear. Now do not bother to tell me that she was wearing her sports bra and that it was more decent than what we can regularly see many women wearing in public and that we can regularly see women in their bras and even their panties on TV. The question is do we really want little girls all over our country stripping their blouses off and running around the soccer fields of America in their training bras? I am no prophet, but I am willing to predict that there is going to be a lot of it done and very soon. Why not? One of their role models did and everybody seems to think that it was not only OK for her to do it but was, in fact, a wonderful thing for her to do. If it is OK for women to strip off their blouses when they achieve a victory on the soccer field then why stop there? Why don't women just strip off their blouses anytime they get excited? I am sure there are a lot of dirty old men who would appreciate it.

EVERYBODY ELSE DOES IT

Secondly, the game ended in a tie. When this happens both teams get five kicks on goal. The team that scores the most wins. The American team made all five. The American goalie blocked one of the Chinese's kicks and thus won

the game. However, video tape showed that she cheated on the kick she blocked. Soccer rules say that the goalie can move left or right but cannot move forward until after the ball is kicked. Video showed that she moved forward before the kick. When confronted with this evidence the goalie tried to justify herself by claiming that everybody else does it. She went on and added that it is only cheating if you are caught. Everybody else does it! Is this really a standard we want to teach the young girls of America? It does not matter if everybody else does it, it is against the rules! It is wrong! It is cheating! Besides that, everybody else does not do it. The Chinese goalie did not do it! Even if she did, it would not justify our goalie cheating. It is only cheating if you are caught! Again, is this really a standard we want to teach to the young girls of America? To their collective shame the team supported the goalie in her statements.

NO SENSE OF DECENCY

Three final points, *first*, the player who striped off her blouse owes an apology to America. She not only disgraced herself but her country. *Secondly*, the American soccer team needs to own up to the fact that they did not win the game. They cheated. They should do the right thing and concede the victory to China. When you win by cheating you do not win, you lose. You lose the game. You lose your self respect and the respect of honest people. *Thirdly*, if this is any indication of what young girls become who engage in sports, then parents all over this country should pull them out of sports. Do we really want to raise a generation of women who have no sense of public decency or good sportsmanship?

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"HELL'S BEST KEPT SECRET"

Jason R. Roberts

The following article is going to be somewhat unusual from the way I customarily write articles. Following the fictional story below, the remainder of the article, with the exception of the scripture citations and the conclusion, will be written as if Satan himself were the author and him revealing to us *Hell's Best Kept Secret*.

Many years ago, Satan was devising a plan by which he could destroy the souls of humanity. And so he gathered his angels together and they began to discuss the best method by which to carry out Satan's mission. One of his angels stepped forward and said, "I know what we should do!" Satan said, "Go on." He said, "I will go to the earth and convince the world that there is no God." Satan paused, and then said, "Good idea, but it will not work. You will convince some, but there is too much evidence of God's existence." A second angel stepped forward and said, "I have the solution!" Satan said, "Continue." He said, "I will go to the earth and convince the world that there is a God, but that man does not have to believe and obey Him." Satan said, "That's a better plan, but it still will not work. You will convince some, but most people will not only believe in God's existence but they will also believe that they must obey Him." A third angel stepped forward and he said, "I have the secret!" Satan said, "Speak on." He said, "I will go to the earth and convince the world that there is a God and that man must believe and obey Him in order to be saved." The other angels shouted, "Secret, what kind of secret is that? We're trying to destroy the world and your plan will save it!" Satan said to the third angel, "Go on." And the angel said, "But then I will tell them that they can do all of that . . . tomorrow." Satan grinned and said to him, "Go, you will convert them by the millions."

"AFTER ALL, TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY"

"OK, the secret is out. You know what it is now, I have told you. The secret that I have for destroying your soul is the word, "tomorrow." You see, tomorrow will come, I promise you. After all, it comes every day does it not? You have not forgotten that have you? Remember you are young, and full of life and freedom. You have many years ahead of you. And everyone knows that death is something that only happens to older people. You do not have a thing to worry about (I Samuel 20:3; II Samuel 12:23; James 4:13-14, *remember the scriptures have been inserted by me, JRR*). After all, you only go around once in this life. And since this is the only life there is, you might as well grab all you can while you are here (Luke 16:19-31; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). I promise you, tomorrow will give you another fresh set of days with which to work for God (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Remember, you are young and there-

fore not responsible to anyone but yourself (John 12:48; II Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 6:1). I assure you, when tomorrow arrives, you will have plenty of time to think about these matters more seriously. The Bible, yes it is a great book! But right now you are too busy to read the Bible. This is a time when you need to recreate. Remember Paul said, "Bodily exercise profiteth little." So you need to take Paul's great advice and recreate and profit as much as you can from this. This is also a time when you need to be thinking about college. Remember mom and dad keep talking to you about your grades and the importance of getting a good education. You want them to be proud of you do you not? Reading the Bible is great, but right now my best advice to you is for you to spend more time reading the latest, best sellers on the market. Allow me to show you some books you might enjoy reading I have just the ones you need. They have been my best sellers for years. Everybody is reading them. Besides, you will have plenty of time to read the Bible tomorrow (Psalms 1:1; II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13; II Peter 3:18).



THE GREATEST DECISION

Becoming a Christian is the greatest decision you will ever make. But the good news is that the statistics have been the same for years, and that is most people become Christians when they get older. You see, if they can become Christians when they get older, so can you. Besides, becoming a Christian while you are young will restrain you from being happy. Did not the wisest man of all tell us to be happy? He said to rejoice did he not? Do not worry. Sunday comes once a week. You have not forgotten that have you? There will always be another sermon, another invitation song. You just wait. This Sunday, you will see what I mean. Tomorrow, the baptistery will be just as warm as today. Remember, even Jesus said, "All things are ready..."

For those of you who did become Christians when you were young, let me first congratulate you on a job well done. You see the Bible teaches that when you were baptized you were saved. But did you know that the Bible also says that everyone who has been baptized will end up in heaven one day. Is that not great news?! So, now that you are a Christian, you can still pretty much do what you want. Do you not remember the Bible says that we have freedom in Christ? And listen, even greater news is that you do not have to worry about sinning any more because remember it was John, who said, "He that is born of God cannot sin any more." And you were born again like Jesus told Nico-

demus to do were you not? And anyway, Paul said “**where sin abounded, grace did abound much more.**” And so even if you do make a mistake, God’s grace will take care of it. Do you not remember that beautiful song, “*Amazing Grace?*” Just remember, tomorrow is the best time to ask God to forgive you, if you really believe you need to be forgiven.

Some secrets are hard to keep. I thought about keeping this one to myself, but I knew Satan would have rejoiced if I had done so. Our young people are being sold a bill of

goods by their Archenemy, Satan—the price tag is their most valuable possession, their soul. But now, His secret is out, and yes, here is one secret you do not want to keep to yourself. Pass it on. Tell your friends and loved ones about **Hell’s Best Kept Secret . . .** just do not tell them tomorrow! “**Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth**” (Proverbs 27:1).

—3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd., S.,
Memphis, Tennessee 38125

IT’S TIME TO SUFFER PERSECUTION

Preston Silcox

Paul told the young preacher Timothy that “**all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**” (II Timothy 3:12). As observed by another, one reason we may not be suffering persecution today is because we are not living very godly. Compare the church of today with the church of yesterday.

Without fear or favor the first century church loudly and clearly proclaimed the gospel of Christ. They were accused of turning the world “upside down” with their doctrine (Acts 17:6). They met false doctrine head on and refused to back down. Compromise was unknown to the faithful first century Christians and, as a result, a number of saints felt the sting of religious and political opposition with the loss of their jobs, homes, security, and even their lives.

Difficulties were also faced by the church of the nineteenth century. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. said that those pioneers, “waged relentless war on error in denominations.” As a result, “the doors of public buildings were closed against them,” family and friends forsook them, and much needed wages were withheld from them. Still, they pressed on. In the words of Leroy Brownlow, “They had enough bravery that they would have been willing to charge hell with only one bucket of water!”

It seems the church of twentieth century America is “at ease in Zion.” Political correctness has slipped into the brotherhood and fooled Christians into thinking that it is wrong to make others feel uncomfortable by having them question their beliefs. This spineless position must come to an end if today’s church is going to follow the example of yesterday’s church. The saints must stop being afraid of exposing and opposing error. The church needs to start turning the world upside down with the truth. Christians must cease from applying the “soft touch” and, in turn, begin an outright and uncompromising charge against the devil and his cohorts. Brethren, it is time to suffer persecution!

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Gambling, The National Education Association, And Methodist Clergy

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

“What I’m trying to do is not preach, but make films that change the status quo as much as entertain people. Film is such a powerful medium that can do so much good that it’s a shame it’s so underexploited.” (Director **Tony Kaye** in *Daily Variety*, 10/31/97 as quoted in *AFA Journal*, April, 1998).

The July 1999 issue of *Christian Chronicle* told of a group of people in Canada who desired to worship as a New Testament church. They pulled out of denominationalism seeking to “speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.” Eventually they met some members of the Lord’s church and after studying with them were baptized. The new group is now known as the North Shore Church of Christ. *[It is good to hear such wonderful news. There are true seekers out there. It is our duty and joy to go find them.—MTM]*

A survey of Massachusetts high school students found that 1 in 20 had already been arrested for a gambling-related offense; 1 in 10 had experienced gambling-related family problems; and 8 percent had gotten into trouble at work or school because of gambling. Americans now wager nearly \$600 billion a year—at least \$100 billion a year more than is spent on food (World, June 19, 1999, p. 32-33). *[The legislators are creating a problem which will decimate families in the future. Legalizing gambling is not going to solve problems. It will only proliferate them.—MTM]*

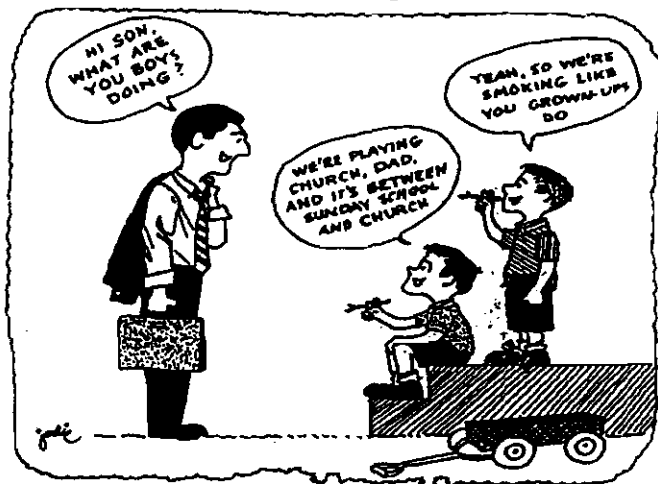
The Methodist Church of Zimbabwe last month (May, 1999) defrocked one of its clergy, Canaan Banana—Zimbabwe’s first president. His credentials were lifted following his conviction on a series of charges of sexual assaults on men who were employed by him when he was head of state (World, June 19, 1999, p. 42). *[While I do not condone the Methodist Church’s concept of clergy, I must commend them for taking a courageous stand. Too bad we don’t have some of the same courage in our own country.—MTM]*

The National Education Association (NEA) met over the Fourth of July weekend. Below are some of the resolutions passed at their convention. **B-37. Sex Education**—The Association recognizes that the public school must as-

sume an increasingly important role in providing instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. The Association also believes that, to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture, diversity of sexual orientation, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment. **C-14. Extremist Groups**—The National Education Association condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and urges active opposition to all such movements that are inimical to the ideals of the Association. *[This means anyone who might not like B-37 above or C-22 below—MTM]* **C-22. Comprehensive School Health Programs and Services**—The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. The Association believes that schools should provide: A planned sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, universal precautions, and HIV education). **E-3. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques**—The Association deplores pre-publishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school libraries/media centers and school curricula. **I-13. Family Planning**—The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. The Association further urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel (*The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, August 1999). *[You are an extremist if you disagree with any of the above. And the NEA leadership provides training seminars in how to deal with such extremists. Parents had better keep a very close eye on their children’s books and handouts. This is not meant to condemn those good teachers who are doing their best to be good role models and good teachers.—MTM]*



—420 Chula Vista Mountain Rd.
Pell City, Alabama 35125



SMOKING

Jodie Boren

Maybe you have seen it. It is a billboard with a powerful message condemning smoking. Five packs of cigarettes are shown and are labeled: "Phlegm Balls," "Breath Rotters," "Money Suckers," "(heart) By Pass," and "Cancerettes." Underneath is the message, "Why don't they just call them what they are?"



An estimated 450,000 Americans died from smoking-related diseases each year. That means tobacco claims 51 lives every hour in the U.S. An estimated 158,700 of them will die from lung cancer. These numbers are staggering—more than the combined number of people who die in one year from alcohol, AIDS, crack, cocaine, murder and fire. The total exceeds the number of the U.S. battle deaths in World War II, is eight times the number of those killed in Vietnam and is ten times the number who die annually in automobile accidents.

These facts by the *American Cancer Society* are frightening and indisputable. The Christian who smokes should also consider seriously the harm done by smoking to their spiritual welfare.

Paul writes in I Corinthians 3:16 that we, the church (or body of Christ), are the temple of the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 6:19 Paul declares this to be true of individual members. As such, we are not to defile this temple of God (I Corinthians 3:17) and if we do, God will destroy us, Paul says. Smoking defiles the body (see above). The Greek for defile means to spoil, to corrupt, to destroy, to deprave and to bring to a worse state. Smoking defiles in all these ways! For a Christian to smoke is to sin! What other conclusions can possible be drawn?

Then, too, the smoker needs to think about his/her influence when he/she smokes. In I Corinthians 10:32 Paul writes; "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to

the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." Consider also our Lord's teaching in Matthew 5:13-16. He tells us that Christians are the salt of the earth. If we lose our salty taste (our influence) we are good for nothing. Smoking will ruin our influence. Our Lord reminds us also, that we are the light of the world, but who would deny that we put out our light of influence when we light up a stinking cigarette or cigar. Smoking is worldly and we are admonished to come out from the world and be separate (II Corinthians 6:17). Remember, you influence your children to smoke when you smoke.

SMOKING VIOLATES THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

U.S. News & World Report stated that 3,000 people died in 1996 from secondhand smoke, Matthew 7:12 teaches that we should do unto others as would have them do unto us. A Christian must be sensitive to the needs, feelings, and rights of others.

This same *U.S. News* report says that tobacco companies spend six billion dollars a year advertising. That is a tremendous amount of money, but tobacco sales are so great that the tobacco companies get all this back plus a staggering profit! The Christian must be a good steward of the manifold grace of God (I Peter 4:10) and this would surely include our monetary earnings and how we use them. Paul exhorts us to do all for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31)? To waste our money on something so repugnant and harmful as smoking is certainly not glorifying God. Let us just call it what it is—SIN!

Smoking can lead to a habit that enslaves one to sin (Romans 6:16) that leads to spiritual death. Paul continues in verse 17 and 18 to say that if we obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to us we can then be made free from sin. May we not be chained to such a filthy sinful habit, but seek to honor and glorify our God by walking in the steps of Jesus.

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DAVID PURVIANCE: FARMER, LEGISLATOR, PREACHER

Paul Vaughn

One of the most interesting preachers in the early history of the Restoration Movement is **David Purviance**. He was a loyal friend to **Barton Stone** and faithful to the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

David Purviance was born in Iredell County, North Carolina on the 14th day of November, 1766, ten years before the First Union flag was unfurled at Cambridge, Massachusetts and the Declaration of Independence was adopted by Congress at Philadelphia. His parents were **John and Jane Wason Purviance**. John was a Justice of the Peace in Iredell County, North Carolina, and was a Colonel in the Revolutionary War. Purviance's parents took great measures to have him instructed in the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. When David was twelve, his parents enrolled him in a school that was directed by **Dr. James Hall**, a noted Presbyterian educator. He studied Latin and Greek with the intention of going into the ministry. During the Revolutionary War, David had to leave school at times to help his family make a living.

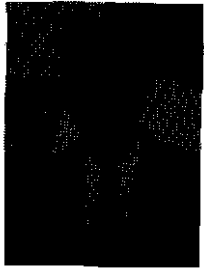
David was about 23 years of age when he married **Mary Ireland**, the daughter of **John and Martha Ireland**. They settled in the south fork of the Yadkin River in North Carolina. They farmed in that area for about two years and had one son before moving to Cumberland River near Nashville, Tennessee. Because of the Indian attacks on the settlers in the area, they moved in the fall of 1792 to Cane Ridge in Bourbon County, Kentucky. They chose a small tract of land about three miles south of the Cane Ridge meeting house to farm.

ELECTED TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE

In 1797, David Purviance was elected to the State Legislature from Bourbon County. In the 1792 session of the State Legislature, a law was passed giving the Court of Appeals jurisdiction in all cases concerning titles to land. They also established the oriental court of Oyer and Terminer. In 1795, the law giving the Court of Appeals vast jurisdiction was repealed and the court of Oyer and Terminer was eliminated.

Shortly after Purviance was seated in the State legislature, **John Breckinridge**, lawyer and legislator from Fayette County, introduced a bill to revise the court of Oyer and Terminer. David Purviance was elected by the people because of his opposition to that court. Breckinridge was one of the most powerful men in the State Legislature and in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Purviance, a farmer from Bourbon County, took up the challenge, debated Breckinridge and the bill was rejected by the majority.

While Purviance was in the State Legislature, **James Garrard** was the Governor. When David retired from the legislature to preach, the Governor remarked that David Purviance was one of the most honest men he knew and that he was a faithful member in the State Legislature.



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- 10:00 am "We Observe The Lord's Supper" Keith Mosher

11:00 am

- "...We Give To His Cause" Jeff Archey
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EMANCIPATOR

David Purviance was a man ahead of his time. He never believed in slavery. When he first moved to Bourbon County, Kentucky to work his land, the task was extremely hard, and was made even worse for David because he refused to own slaves to help him, and he could not afford to pay for farm workers. While in the House of Representatives, he tried to get a revision of the constitution to gradually abolish slavery in Kentucky. In the election of 1799, David Purviance was reelected to the State Legislature, even though Kentucky was a strong slave state, and he was the only member of the Legislature to be elected as an emancipator.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

In the Commonwealth of Kentucky during the late 1700's and early 1800's preachers could not hold office. David Purviance was more concerned about pleasing God than having power in state government. In 1803, he resolved to be a preacher in the Presbyterian Church. It was in the fall of 1803 that the Springfield Presbytery was formed by Barton Stone, Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard Mc'Nemar, and John Thompson. Purviance, like Stone had problems with the teaching of Calvinism and chose to cast his lot with those of like faith. One year later David Purviance was one of those who signed the *Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery*.

David had a great love for the restoration of the New Testament Church and worked hard to preach the "Old Paths." In 1806 he bought in a farm in Southwest Ohio and moved there in 1807. He fought hard against Thompson and Marshall when they deserted and returned to the Presbyterian Church. He was always preaching the gospel wherever he went in that area. Shortly after moving to Ohio, he ran for the Ohio Legislature and was elected. He served in the Ohio State House of Representatives and was elected to the State Senate. Purviance was influential in getting *Miami University* located at Oxford, Ohio and served as one of the trustees of the school.

CONCLUSION

There are many great men in the history of the Restoration Movement. Davis Purviance was a giant in the cause for Christ. He is mostly remembered as the only one who remained loyal with Barton Stone of those who signed the *Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery*. Mary, his wife, died in 1835. The remainder of his time on earth, he lived with his son, John Purviance, and preached as much as possible. One of the major concerns of David before his death was the apathy and indifference in the hearts of many Christians and churches. In this we can see that some things do not change. David Purviance died, at the age of 81, on August 19, 1847 at 3 P.M. He had served as a preacher for 45 years.

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IMPLICATIONS OF I THESSALONIANS 5:21

Tim Ayers

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). In this verse God is urging us to do something, which is best understood by examining the two main verbs. *Prove* "has reference to putting to the test" and "examining" something. The words *hold fast* carry the idea of "retaining faithfully." The implications of this verse are important for us all.

First, it is implied that there is something to be tested and examined. In the *religious* context this would be those things that present themselves as truth. Obviously, there are many contradictory doctrines taught today. We must examine all that we hear in light of the Bible's clear prepositional truth (Acts 17:11-12). The truth can save us and help us remain saved (Romans 1:16; James 1:21; 1 Timothy 4:16; I John 1:7). To "prove all things" means we do not base our salvation on "I think" or "I feel" but rather on the objective absolute truth of God's word.

Second, it is implied that proving truth is not enough. We must also hold fast to it and retain it faithfully. Once we have worked to grasp eternal truths we must and should cling to them! To fall away from what we know is true is a terrible sin and can only lead to eternally tragic consequences.

The third implication is that we ARE ABLE to prove and to hold fast. God would never leave us with an empty, unattainable goal. We can be good Christians and we can know that we are. This is not self-righteousness or pseudo-knowledge, but the result of careful examination of our lives using God's word as our standard. We CAN DO what we MUST DO, and this should be a source of assurance for all who diligently seek God (Hebrews 11:6).

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EVANGELISM ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN MURMANSK, RUSSIA

Cliff Lyons

Mark 16:15-16 still reads, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." That includes Murmansk, Russia. It is my understanding that Murmansk is the largest city in the world located this far north. Indeed, it gets very cold in the winter time, but a few warm hearts will brave the cold weather and come to a gospel meeting. We continue to sow the seed and look for that "good soil" that will obey the gospel and live a faithful Christian life. I try to remember that we must plant and water, but God gives the increase.

MURMANSK COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE

We began conducting classes in late 1995 as an extension of the *Memphis School of Preaching*. The classes were open to the general public since we had no Russian men to train as preachers. Admittedly we had quite a mixture of people for the first few classes — atheists, Pentecostals, Russian Orthodox, and others. Anyway it was not long until they realized that **Bob Hawkins** and I were going to stay with the Bible. Thus, students with denominational tunnel vision soon stopped attending the classes and we got on with teaching God's word. We have met on Saturdays now for nearly four years. Classes have been conducted on Christian Evidences, Survey of the Old Testament and Survey of the New Testament by **Rod Rutherford**, *Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ* by **Leroy Brownlow**, *You Can Understand the Bible!* (Preparing the Heart for Submission to God) by **Thomas B. Warren** and *God's Scheme of Redemption* (an outline book) by **Joe Nichols**. All of these books were translated and printed in the Russian language. This was a monumental task in and of itself. **Helen Vasilyeva** translated the above books and **Sasha Agafonov**, **Ilya Musychenko** and **Nickoli Nadtochiy** proofed them and helped get them ready for the printer. Our average attendance for our Saturday Bible classes has been about 12. A few have been baptized into Christ who began attending these classes. Also, several brethren have found the school a means of spiritual growth as they have increased their Bible knowledge by participating in the classes. Basically we have had a three-fold purpose for the Bible college. (1) We have used it to help reach lost souls (some have attended the classes for several months before ever attending a worship service). In fact, one man attended the classes quite regularly for about three years before attending on Sundays. He now attends both the college classes and on Sundays, but has not yet obeyed the gospel. (2) We use the college Bible class to help edify local brethren. It is encouraging to have them ask questions and study the Bible together. Perhaps one day some of these men will be qualified to serve as elders in our Lord's church? (3) We want to train some good men to be faithful preachers of the gospel of Christ (II Timothy

2:2; 4:2). **Alexander Nesterkin** received his training at the *Memphis School of Preaching*. However, we have found no other men in the Murmansk region who desire to be preachers. Of course, we would welcome good men from any part of Russia to come and study with us. Thus we are still praying and hoping that we will find those who are willing to dedicate their lives to helping preach the gospel to lost souls in Russia. One young man, **Roman**, whom we baptized here returned to the Ukraine and has done some preaching there. We conduct our Saturday Bible classes in one of the public schools, but we are not allowed to advertise this work. Thus, we are still looking forward to our new building where we can hopefully advertise the classes and teach more people the gospel of Christ.

MURMANSK CHURCH OF CHRIST

The church has gradually grown the past six years. We now have about 47 Christians in Murmansk. When most of our brethren are "in town" we usually have 45 to 53 in attendance on Sunday mornings. There are usually several present who have not yet obeyed the gospel. We are still meeting in a rented room at the music college. We think that meeting here has been a hindrance to us. Thus, we look forward to having our new building as a regular meeting place. One goal we keep before us is to preach in several gospel meetings each year. Numerous brethren have come to help us in the work from time to time, usually for about two weeks. We have already mentioned a few brethren, but let me name a few more. **Paul Brantley**, **Billy Bland**, **Keith Mosher**, **Sean Hochdorf**, **David Jones**, **Jamie Long**, **Terry Maberry**, **David Brown**, **Dub McClish**, **Nick Deiger**, **Glendon Cantrell** and others have come to help us in the work.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

We are continuing to translate good books into the Russian language. At present we are working on two books. (1) *The Bible Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, by **Robert R. Taylor, Jr.** and (2) *Dangerous 'Isms* (about 15 chapters of this great Southaven Lectureship book). We have given humanitarian aid to several hospitals, orphanages and individuals. **Alexander** and **Tatyana Nesterkin** are in charge of mailing out and grading a Bible correspondence course written by **Ira Y. Rice, Jr.** **Bob Hawkins** and I teach at the Seaman's Hospital and two orphanages regularly. **Bob** also teaches in a private English school. Trying to complete our new building has been a hassle in numerous ways; we pray and hope it will be worth all the effort, money and time we have put into it. We pray and hope that it will be used to further the cause of Christ in Murmansk for many years. Please pray for us and the work in Murmansk.

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Beware Of The Lies Of Satan: “Traditional Styles Of Worship Are Boring”

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

A. Beware of the lies of Satan!

1. The devil is the father of all liars ... John 8:44.
2. He was a liar from the beginning of creation...Genesis 3:1-5 (Proverbs 14:25; 30:6).

B. Let us notice one of the many lies of Satan.

1. Satan's lying tongue says, "Traditional styles of worship are boring."
2. The worship service is a main target of the devil.
 - a. And among the "change agents" (Satan's right hand men) the worship service is their primary target.
 - b. The devil and his cohorts want us to change the traditional and scriptural style of worship.

II. Discussion

A. Satan says, "The traditional styles of worship are boring, so you need A NEW STYLE PREACHING."

1. The Bible use to be the sum and substance of sermons.
 - a. Sermons use to be drenched with scripture—sadly this is not the case in an alarming number of congregations today.
 - b. Preaching in many places is filled secular philosophy and focuses more on the preacher than the message.
2. A host of "gospel preachers" are molding their preaching around the "felt needs" of their audience.
 - a. The preacher thus is always preaching on such things as loneliness and stress.
 - b. Notice that this type of preaching permits man to set the agenda of topics of discussion—instead of the Bible (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12).
 - c. Are we going to preach to the people what they want to hear or what the need to hear?!
3. Rather than spending so much time and money expounding the latest themes of the religious world, the great need today is straightforward Bible preaching.
 - a. We are not to tickle the ears of our audience (II Timothy 4:3).
 - b. We must preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

B. Satan says, "The traditional styles of worship are boring, so you need A NEW STYLE OF MUSIC."

1. Instrumental music has always seemed to loom in the background of Satan's lies.
 - a. Many liberal preachers falsely assert that instrumental music is not a fellowship issue—but,

this position is logically equivalent to sanctioning the use of the instrument.

- b. That instrumental music is not authorized—can be easily established by the law of exclusion (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

c. Much more could be said...

2. Special Music

- a. Special music has reference to such things as solos, trios, and choirs.
- b. Satan is not only telling us the Bible allows "special music," but is going so far as to say the Bible promotes "special worship."
- c. Some argue that the find permission for special music in I Corinthians 14:26.
 - 1) An ambiguous allusion to Christians "having a psalm" is flimsy and dangerous justification for pushing special music in the church.
 - 2) Truth-seekers will not allow the inconclusive passage (I Corinthians 14:26) to alter the clearer passages (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
 - 3) Not only that, but "a psalm" does not necessarily have reference to singing. A "psalm" is one form of inspired writing, i.e. scripture (cf., Acts 13:32-33).



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- 4) The devil acts as though 1 Corinthians 14:26 ought to be translated as "each one sings a solo" —which is clearly false!
- d. Colossians 3:16
- 1) According to Greek grammatical principles, the teaching, the admonishing, and the singing are NOT separate unrelated activities.
 - 2) This teaching and admonishing are to be done by each, one to another.
- C. Satan says, "The traditional styles of worship are boring, so you need to do a little HAND-CLAPPING.
1. Handclapping as musical accompaniment.
 - a. This is clearly unscriptural on the grounds that it is parallel to a mechanical device that might be used to supplement vocal music.
 - b. Clapping our hands along with the music is no different than beating a tambourine, beating on a piano, or fingering a guitar.
 - c. Handclapping is a nonvocal "natural" instrumental, while playing the piano or blowing a trumpet is a nonvocal mechanical instrumental —both are unauthorized because God demands only vocal verbal music in worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16,17).
 2. Handclapping as applause.
 - a. In many places the congregation is drawn into applause following baptisms, sermons, and other worship activities.

- b. The proponents of handclapping as applause say it is just the modern way of saying Amen.
- c. Handclapping used in American culture is basically a function of applause to indicate personal approval of a performance (football, actors, musicians).
- d. In the Old Testament "amen" is a transliteration of a Hebrew word which means "firm" —it is a term meaning "certain and true.
- e. "Amen" is found 126 times the New Testament and is used affirm that a statement is certain, true, and reliable.
- f. Applause in our society is a response to an entertaining performance—focused on the performer.
- g. Amen focuses on the message rather than the one giving the message.

III. Conclusion

- A. If we want to worship God correctly we must abide by John 4:23-24 B. When we worship God with the proper attitude and in truth —worship of God will not be boring, but will be uplifting and edifying.
- C. Instead of attempting to renovate worship for our own benefit, what we need to do is cultivate our appetites for pure, New Testament worship.

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Michael Light, Bangs
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SOME GUIDELINES OR GIVING

Daniel Denham

Giving is a vital portion of New Testament worship (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8; 9). Paul describes contribution made concerning the Jerusalem crisis as *koinonia*, the word most commonly rendered as "fellowship" (cf. Romans 15:26; II Corinthians 9:13, where it is translated "contribution" and "distribution" respectively in the KJV). Some commentators believe that the reference to "fellowship" (*koinonia*) in Acts 2:42 is also a reference to the contribution, though this is disputed by others. That the idea of "joint-participation" in the mutual support of the cause of Christ through evangelism and benevolence is attached to our giving in the New Testament is, however, granted by all on the weight of the textual evidence addressing the subject. The church is **"the pillar and ground of the truth"** (I Timothy 3:15). The support and furtherance of the truth, God's word (John 17:17), depend upon the functioning of God's people. The contribution is a means by which this is accomplished.

As worship, giving must be offered **"in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24). This demands that the spirit of the giver (i.e., his mind, will, intellect, emotions, *et. al*) be engaged in the preparation and execution of the act. It also demands that he give in proper compliance to New Testament teaching. Thus, any guidelines that we follow on giving must be drawn from it. Let me suggest a few for consideration.

FIRST, LET US GIVE OURSELVES

The Macedonian brethren did precisely this. Paul praised them in II Corinthians 8 for their liberality that abounded despite their own bitter poverty (cf., II Corinthians 8:1-3). They begged Paul to accept their contribution for the Jerusalem problem **"with much entreaty,"** because they earnestly desired to have part in **"the fellowship of the ministering to the saints"** (v. 4). Now watch the fifth verse: **"And this they did, not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."** They gave **"beyond their power"** (v. 3). Their giving was so stirring that it encouraged Paul to write to the Corinthians to exhort them to follow this noble example by their brethren in Macedonia (v. 6)! What the Corinthians had earlier boldly professed a desire to do, the Macedonians had actually done. As the former had stirred the latter by their bold promise, so now Paul hoped that the latter would stir the former by their bolder action (vs. 6ff.). This action was a direct result of the giving by the Macedonians of themselves **"first unto the Lord, and unto"** Paul and his compatriots involved in the Jerusalem effort.

One must give himself first and foremost to any meaningful work before he will support it materially in a proper way. This kind of person will never falter due to covetousness or greed. He will be no skinflint or miser, but will be a faithful supporter of good works.

SECOND, A CHEERFUL, WILLING HEART IS DESIRED

The Bible clearly teaches that **"God loveth a cheerful giver"** (II Corinthians 9:7). There must be a **"willing mind"** involved in our giving (II Corinthians 8:12). We need to realize the marvelous privilege that we possess in being the children of God (I John 3:1-2) and having the opportunity to serve him. Joy, not sorrow, should attend our free will offerings to God. We should be compelled to give not by a cold feeling of duty but by a fervent desire to do what we can to aid the cause of Christ.

Thankfulness would go a long way to developing this disposition. The realization of the wonderful and manifold blessings that God, the Great Giver, has given to us. James 1:17 reminds us, **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."** He gave his only-begotten son for us (John 3:16), the gift that is beyond measure. He has given unto us **"life and breath, and all things"** (Acts 17:25). **"In Him,"** Paul says, **"we live, and move, and have our being"** (Acts 17:28). He has also given to us **"all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"** (Ephesians 1:3). If you are wrestling in your heart relative to your feelings toward giving, read the first three chapters of Ephesians before you **"even commence to begin to start"** to give, and see if that does not help!

THIRD, GIVING SHOULD SHOW THE SINCERITY OF OUR LOVE

Paul called upon the Corinthians to prove the sincerity or genuineness of their love by following through with what they had promised in their giving (II Corinthians 8:6-8). They were not to love in word only, but in deed and truth (cf., I John 3:18).

One who says he loves God, but who will not support the work of God's missionary institution, the church, is at best a liar and a hypocrite. Our support of the gospel through our time, talents, and goods is a good demonstration of our real concern for lost souls, for our brethren, and for our love for him who first loved us (John 14:15; 15:14; I John 4:19-20; 5:1-3). It has been said that **"one can give without loving, but no one can ever love without giving."**

FOURTH, WE MUST GIVE AS WE HAVE BEEN PROSPERED

We are to give **"as God has prospered us"** (I Corinthians 16:2). The Book shows that our contribution **"is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not..."** (II Corinthians 8:12).



The widow of Luke 21:1-4 and the case of the Macedonians should remind us that all gifts to God, given in loving, faithful compliance to his will, are not to be sniffed at or demeaned by men. Only God fully knows how many congregations have been able to do much due to the contributions and efforts of their widows and the impoverished! God knows the condition of both the heart and life of each giver.

When one considers the examples of Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) and Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2, the Greek text indicates that she was a woman of means), he should be careful not to conclude that all rich folk are such because of avarice and the lack of true compassion. While few of those who are rich in worldly goods will be faithful servants of the Lord (Matthew 19:23-24; I Timothy 6:9-10), there are those who are able to overcome the temptations of wealth and serve the living God (I Timothy 6:17-19). **A.M. Burton, Archie Luper, and George Pepperdine** are men who set excellent examples of generous giving for the rich among us in this world!

FIFTH, WE MUST GIVE AS WE HAVE PURPOSED IN OUR HEART

Paul states this expressly in II Corinthians 9:7, **“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”** Giving is not to be haphazard or accidental. It is to be planned and purposed. It demands forethought.

Faithful evangelistic and benevolence efforts depend upon predictable and consistent support. Elderships need to be able to count on their memberships in order to plan the work that the congregation is to do, and memberships need elderships that are not only sound in doctrine but also are faithful stewards of what they are entrusted with. Elderships that support unsound works, whether deliberately or through sloth, need to repent and correct their practice. Elderships that see their duty as “hoarding funds till the Lord comes” are in for a rude awakening. All brethren need to learn the simple truth that all of the money, whether given in the contribution or not, is still the Lord’s money! He has been gracious enough to let us borrow some for a while.

CONCLUSION

We do not worship God by accident. It involves proper preparation, planning, and execution. It recognizes the greatness and goodness of God and seeks to give to him what is rightfully due his majesty.

Let us use the type of diligent, loving care that was demonstrated by the Macedonian brethren and other faithful givers in the first century A.D. New Testament giving will help cause growth for the New Testament church.

—405 Main Street
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Biblical Questions and Answers...

“DID I REPENT OR WAS I JUST SORRY?”

Noah A. Hackworth

Is godly sorrow repentance? This question can be answered in one word, No!

A segment of our brotherhood has mistakenly accepted “godly sorrow” for repentance. Those who have made this mistake have put themselves in an unfavorable, most unpleasant situation, as well as the local church where they hold membership. For years we have seen people try to become Christians without meeting the demands of repentance (Luke 13:3). They have been deceived, misinformed, or both by someone. Such people have somehow reached, without credible evidence, the conclusion that sorrow, especially “godly sorrow” is repentance. If sorrow, godly or not, is repentance, then someone could [1] rob the local bank, express sorrow to the authorities for having done so, but keep the money; [2] steal another man’s wife, or another woman’s husband, express sorrow to the offended parties and keep the stolen man or woman. If godly sorrow in these cases is repentance, it would be the ideal way to “get rich quick,” as well change a “marital status” at will. However, there is no need for anyone who is a competent

student of the Bible and/or who respects the authority of Jesus Christ to mistake sorrow for repentance.

MEN MUST REPENT

It has been made unmistakably clear by the Holy Spirit that men must repent, and he who does not will bring about his own demise (Luke 13:3). John, the man sent by God (John 1:6), interrupted the quietness of the Judean wilderness with **“Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matthew 3:1-2). Jesus also preached the same message (Matthew 4:17). The apostles were told by the Lord to preach repentance and remission of sins beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). On the day of Pentecost, people were told to **“repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”** (Acts 2:38). Paul told the Athenians that God **“now commandeth all men everywhere to repent”** (Acts 17:30). It is forever settled. Men must repent.



BIBLICAL USAGE

Without unnecessarily burdening ourselves with the number of times the word repentance is used in the Bible, suffice it to say in one form or another, whether explicitly stated or implied, repentance is taught hundreds of times. T.W. Brents (*The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, p. 236), says:

In all the forms in which the word is used it refers to God thirty-seven times, and with reference to man sixty-nine times. It is used to indicate sorrow or regret twenty-eight times, a change of mind or will twenty-five times, and a change of mind resulting in reformation of life fifty-three times...When used in the New Testament as a command to the alien in order to the remission of sins, it always indicates such a change of mind as produces a change or reformation of life under circumstances warranting the conclusion that sorrow for the past would or had preceded it.

Though I did not take the times to count how many times the word repentance is used in all its forms, I shall proceed under the assumption that Brents is correct in his numerical count. Even if he miscounted, it will not change the basic meaning of the word as used in the Bible.

REPENTANCE AND GODLY SORROW

To be sorry for our sins is certainly necessary to effect genuine repentance, but too many times "godly sorrow" is the only thing that occurs, and that without a change in behavior or relationship. Repentance demands the cessation of sins repented of; one cannot continue the sin of which he supposedly repented (Romans 6:1-2). God forbid that this be attempted. Anyone who has access to the original text, whether a Greek New Testament or an Interlinear, can see how Paul makes clear (II Corinthians 7:8-10) the distinction between godly sorrow and repentance.

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent (*metamelomai*, regret), though I did repent (*metemelomen*, regret): for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance (*metanolan*, reformation): for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance (*metanoian*, reformation) to salvation not to be repented (*metameleton*, regretted) of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death (the parenthetical additions are mine, NH).

Brents again observes:

Surely, nothing could be more apparent than the difference in the use which Paul makes of these two Greek words, though both rendered repent in the common version. Paul wrote the Corinthians a letter which made them sorry, and he regretted it, but he ceased to regret it when he saw that their sorrow worked in them repentance; i.e., such a change of mind as culminated in their reformation.

The case for repentance unto the remission of sins is clearly established. Godly sorrow is related to repentance and certainly necessary, but genuine repentance requires such a change of character and activity that effects a reformation of life; a reformation that can be clearly seen. John the Baptist put it correctly: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

This is a "problem spot" between many good brethren. Does godly sorrow which works repentance necessitate any kind of restitution? Adam Clark says:

No man should expect mercy at the hand of God, who, having wronged his neighbor, refuses, when he has it in his power, to make restitution. Were he to weep tears of blood, both the justice and mercy of God would shut out his prayers if he make not his neighbor amends for the injury he has done him [Commentary on Genesis].

Added to this is the comment made by Zaccheus available for all to read. "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

CONCLUSION

It is relatively easy to be sorry for our sins, unless we have become completely insensitive to wrongdoing, but if the sorrow is genuine it will culminate in repentance which is "a change of mind that leads to a reformation of life." And if restitution is in order let it take place. After all, the scriptures say, "... But the way of the transgressor is hard" (Proverbs 13:15). The work of elders, preachers, and church leaders will be made a lot easier, and their work much more pleasant when real repentance takes place in the lives of the people with whom they have to deal. The work of church leaders will be attended by less grief when people really repent and bring forth the fruits that will, without question, indicate that a change in life and character has taken place.

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Third Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 8-12, 2000

SEEKING RESOLUTION

Lynn Parker

In the early years of the Lord's church there were problems that led to division. Sometimes the seed of trouble in the church was false doctrine. Paul clearly stated that there are times when division was demanded: **"For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you"** (I Corinthians 11:19). The Apostle also wrote of those who had made **"shipwreck concerning the faith"** (I Timothy 1:19) and named two whose error caused the faith of others to be overthrown (II Timothy 2:17-18). Unfortunately, error is showing a strong pulse at the beginning of the year 2000.

But sometimes the cause of problems in the early church rested in the areas of opinion and personalities. We do not know all the particulars but Paul exhorted Euodia and Syntyche **"to be of the same mind in the Lord"** (Philippians 4:2). Sad but true, many a congregation has been torn asunder not by false doctrine, but by anger, strife, and backbiting. The Corinthians were plagued with carnality, jealousy, and strife (I Corinthians 3:3). Do any modern congregations suffer from the same afflictions? You know the answer.

Seeing that congregations are made up of people with personalities—all different—how is peace cultivated? How are bonds of Christian love developed? And when conflicts arise, how is good will restored? Here are a few pertinent points from the scriptures.

SEEK PEACE

Seek peace and pursue it (I Peter 3:11). Surely you have known of some who stirred up needless strife wherever they went. They seemed to enjoy feeding on conflict and bitterness. God's people are to constantly war against the devil and at the same time promote peace within the spiritual family. Be tolerant in matters where toleration can be tolerated. What? Let us say it another way. In the area of opinion, be generous to others. The noblest of examples is seen in Abraham's words to his nephew Lot. The Bible records, **"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen. For we are brethren"** (Genesis 13:8). The most mature brethren know how to bite their tongues. Not every comment needs or deserves a response. To be silent sometimes may not be cowardly but rather bold and wise. Every response given needs to be weighed in light of the family relationship that is to exist among brethren. **"Render to no man evil for evil..."** (Romans 10:17). A soft answer does indeed turn away wrath (Proverbs 15:1). **"Forbearing one another..."** (Colossians 3:13) is not hard at all as long as everyone does and says precisely what you want them to in any given situation. But the truth is that people do not always respond

to a situation the way I would or the way you would. That is why forbearance is essential to harmony.

SEEK PROPER RESOLUTION WITH URGENCY

When problems arise, settle the matter quickly, and with as few people as necessary involved. Conflicts allowed to continue tend to foster division as folks pick sides. The heart is hardened to one viewpoint with the passing of time. It is amazing that so many are aware of Christ's commands concerning personal offenses between brethren but few put them into practice. Our Lord instructed, **"And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother"** (Matthew 18:15). Have you ever learned from a third, uninvolved party that you were alleged to have wronged a brother or sister? The resolution of personal offenses is to begin between **"thee and him alone"**—not thee, him, and four other church member allies.

The Bible helps peace prevail when brethren are urgent to restore peace. **"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath"** (Ephesians 4:26). If brethren were as quick to seek problem resolution as they are to a Wal-Mart half-price sale, then no problem would be allowed to fester and boil for days, weeks, or months. Our children will learn the ways of harmony between brethren by watching and listening. What lessons are we teaching? Will the church be an army against error, or a battlefield for opinions and personalities?

CONCLUSION

The Psalmist wrote, **"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"** (Psalms 133:1)! We do not even begin to suggest that quarter be given to false doctrine. We do know that those who love God and are intent on going to heaven avoid needless strife; those bound for perdition do not care about peace. There is no insurmountable conflict when all concerned know and respect God's will, love the Lord, and one another. **"Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently"** (I Peter 1:22).

—Post Office Box 39
Spring, Texas 77383



BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE

Annette B. Cates

Slogans are a catchy way of getting the attention of a desired audience. The U.S. Army has effectively used the expression "Be all that you can be" to attract young adults to the service. There is drawing power in planting the thought that one can fulfill potential through the training provided by the military. There should be far greater appeal in a spiritual application of this slogan, regardless of age or status in life. Furthermore, there are some principles that are employed by the military that the Lord's army would do well to incorporate. Robert Browning said, "Our aspirations are our possibilities." If we determine to be the best we can be as Christians, then that is what we will achieve.

THE LORD'S ARMY

The Bible gives us numerous descriptions that compare the church and Christians to familiar things of the world. When we think of lambs in a sheepfold, we see the relationship between Christ and his followers (John 10:14, 15). When we think of family, we are reminded of the relationship that Christians should have with one another, as we are brothers and sisters in Christ (Hebrews 2:11; I Peter 1:22). Thus, we are not out of line to think of the Lord's army as our relationship with the world (Ephesians 6:10-18). What are some of the factors that make an army and its personnel great?

A great army is dedicated to its cause, devoted above and beyond the call of duty. We, too, must fight the good fight (II Timothy 4:7). We cannot be neutral in our war against Satan. In I Corinthians 15:58, we learn that we must be "...steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...." This thought is continued in the following chapter, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (I Corinthians 16:13). This dedication keeps us faithful when the trials and temptations come upon us. We know there is nothing more valuable than the soul, including popularity, material goods, even life itself. As members of the Lord's army, we will work to secure our own salvation, as well as that of anyone else over whom we can have influence, thus protecting and enlarging the church. The reward for this dedication is seen in Revelation 2:10, "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

A great army is well-trained. An army does not go out onto the field of battle without thorough instruction and drilling in the ways of combat. In the past, Christians were known as "Bible-toting, Bible-quoting" people, respected for our knowledge. At that time, we were one of the fastest growing religious organizations in the United States. Our growth came because we knew the scriptures and were uncompromising in teaching others the Gospel. Today, it seems that many of us blend into the world, possibly because we do not know enough of the scriptures to back up

our own beliefs, must learn to teach others. We must actively involve ourselves and our family in regular personal Bible study and take advantage of all the opportunities we have through the various congregations of the church (II Timothy 2:15).

A great army has the ability to identify the enemy. An army is in greater danger when the enemy looks no different from its soldiers. Spies who infiltrate the camp can cause destruction from within. The same thing is true when we become so intermingled with the world that there is no distinction between us and "them." Peter warned us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Satan is the enemy, we are the prey, and we had better be able to recognize him as such. We cannot allow sin to come into our lives.

A great army has camaraderie among its members. Soldiers are trained to forget self and to fight for the unit in the heat of combat. An army cannot go into battle fighting one another and expect to win the war. As Jesus said, a "house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25). We, too, must help one another in the daily battle we have against Satan (Galatians 6:2). We are together, not in competition with one another, as we wage this war. We must encourage one another, rejoicing with our comrades when they rejoice and weeping when they weep (Romans 12:15).

WHAT KIND OF SOLDIER ARE YOU?

As Christians, it should be our goal to be all that we can be, both personally and as the Lord's people. We can strengthen ourselves and the church by imitating some of the ways that an army takes on its enemies. Our battle is with Satan and we must NOT lose!

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NOTES AND QUOTES...

John Grubb, 625 W. Orchard Lane, Greenwood, Indiana: "I am sure you have heard of the recent earthquakes in Taiwan. So far, 2,109 people have died. Some 7,848 people have been injured, and there are still people missing. We have been in touch with brethren in Taiwan, and so far as we know, all are safe. There is going to be a great deal of cleanup and fixing up in the coming months. This is an opportunity for brethren to help (Matthew 25:34-46).

Kenneth Gossett, minister to the Downtown Church of Christ, 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 of good stuff...May good health and good help be yours as you work on Volume II."

C. B. Short, of Hale Center, Texas, enclosing \$100.00 for our "Special Mailings" fund, wrote, in part, "Finally I have found someone who isn't ashamed to quote THE BIBLE in Hebrews 6:4-6 without apologizing for the 'Calvinistic IF' appearing in verse 6! Even a kid of ten knows what 'if' means, and even though it may not actually appear in the Greek, per se, certainly that BIG little word does not alter the fact that one undeniably CAN fall away! Yet we see all the time quotes from men who (if they don't know any better, certainly ought to) belittle the Bible for teaching one or another Calvinistic tenet at that context.

"Wonder if this example might be what Peter meant about Paul's writings? So hard to be understood, BUT by whom? UNSTABLE and UNLEARNED MEN!..."

Mrs. Doris Hoggard, Ceres, California: "I agree with you whole heartedly that what is happening in the church of our Lord is frightening. May God have mercy on us. I know you are still doing good work. May God bless and keep you in his care..."

Bill & Jean Coplan, of Woodsfield, Ohio, enclosed \$25.00 toward our "Special Mailings" fund, saying, "We thought it would thrill your soul to learn the following amidst some congregations wanting to go to instrumental music. We just learned of a West Virginia congregation of about 60 members who were all converted and that a faithful gospel preacher is moving to work with them. Keep up the good work, brethren."

15th Annual Asian Bible Lectureship Held In Indonesia

The 15th Annual Asian Bible Lectureship was held in the city of Tanjung Karang, Bandar Lampung Province, on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, December 7-10, 1999. The theme of the lectureship was "Challenges Facing The Church In The 21st Century." Twenty speakers from Singapore, Philippines, Australia, Tasmania, Thailand, Pakistan, Indonesia and the United States discussed a variety of topics that are relevant to the problems and challenges faced by the church as we enter the year 2000.

The lectureship was preceded with a special gathering at the campus of the *Southern Sumatra Bible College* on Monday evening, December 6. This special gathering was for a dedication of the renovated building and new facilities of the school. David P. Brown, of Spring, Texas, was the special speaker for that occasion. Expectations were high that most, if not all, the graduates of the *Southern Sumatra Bible College*, and their families, were present along with the lectureship speakers, for this occasion. *Southern Sumatra Bible College* is a beacon of light in Indonesia as the young men and women who attend are taught the Bible and trained by a faculty that is dedicated to the cause of Bible truth and sound in the faith. We are fortunate that brother Don Waggonner was present. Waggonner and his faithful wife, Judy, began a great work in Sumatra many years ago and had the idea of a preacher training school there. Later, Barry and Melany Hatcher came to Indonesia and began to build upon the work started by Don and Judy. The results of their work are the *Southern Sumatra Bible College* (which is accredited by the Republic of Indonesia), many souls saved, congregations established, and many young Christians who are trained in the Bible and well-equipped to serve the Lord in their native villages, kampungs, cities and islands.

This year's Annual Asian Bible Lectureship actually consisted of two lectureships which were held in two locations beginning on Tuesday, December 7. One lectureship was conducted for the native Indonesian brethren in a special attractive encampment in Tanjung Karang, and another lectureship for English-speaking brethren was conducted in a meeting room of the Hotel Marcopolo in Tanjung Karang. The dual lectureship was conducted due to the need for translation into the Indonesian language for native brethren. The Indonesian side of the lectureship also featured several special Question-Answer sessions which enabled the Indonesians to ask questions relevant to their particular needs and problems.

The lectureship consisted of four special classes for women taught by four American women who have been or are

now living on the mission field. Brethren who have journeyed to such mission fields as Indonesia soon see the need for mature Christian women who can and will come to such difficult places to serve the Lord and teach the local women. The Indonesian women were taught by Susan Waller, Melany Hatcher, Judy Waggonner, and Rheba Stancliff.

The various lectures consisted of the following: Conflicts Between Culture and the Bible; Christian's Relationship to Civil Government; Second Coming of Christ; Developing Biblical Leaders in the Church; The Preacher and His Work; The Anti-Cooperation Movement; Questions and Problems Related to the Lord's Supper; Church Discipline; Marriage Laws and Customs; Angels; Giving; If Thy Brother Hath Ought Against Thee; Ancestor Worship; The Christian and Blood; Woman's Role in the Church and Home; Sin of Strong Drink; Islam; Study of Various Religious Holy Days; God, or The Secular World, Business, and Family? Cult of Spiritism and Superstition; Facing the Reality and Guilt of Sin; Christ and the General Resurrection and the Judgment; The Bible Teacher; Effective Methods of Teaching; Keep Thyself Pure; and, Christian Woman's Relationship To Her Husband." On Wednesday night of the lectureship there was a joint session at the special camp with all the brethren together. At this session, Don Waggonner spoke on the subject, "The New Testament Church Faces the 21st Century." — Steve Waller, Lectureship Director, JI. Janur Elok 7, Blok QG 3, No. 5, Kelapa Gading Permai, Jakarta Utara 14240, Indonesia

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth L. Edwards, Jr., of Paxton, Illinois, let us know that her mother, Velma Wreath Kelley, now is in a nursing home, saying,

"She was a faithful contributor of yours for many years. She would buy *Contending for the Faith* for all whom she thought needed it.

"We are enjoying your book of your life. We can't lay it down. My husband Ken, who has had eight strokes and one heart attack and many visits to the ER and hospital, is almost through with it. He sits there and laughs and cries as he reads it. Can't wait for the second volume. Your book makes everything seem worth while. We love you for your work..."

[NOTE: "Please convey my special appreciation to your mother Velma Wreath Kelley for the longtime, faithful contributions she made to our missionary endeavors." I replied, in part. "Also for everything she did to help us contend earnestly for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints. She may be in a nursing home now, but assure her that she is not forgotten. We hope to meet her in heaven someday.

"As for all those strokes and heart attack suffered by you, Ken, just be thankful that you are still with us, able to read my book, laugh, and perhaps shed a tear or two. I appreciate you both for letting me know your enjoyment of what I wrote and that you are looking forward to Volume II..." IYRJR.]

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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.

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Peterborough—Church of Christ, meeting at the Manor Farm Community Centre, Eye, Peterborough. BS 10 a.m., BB 11 a.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Contact evangelist Danny Douglas; Email: D.Douglas@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel:01144-1733-315907 or Keith Sisman: K.Sisman@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel: 01144-1487-710552.

—Florida—

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (850) 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. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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. 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. David Dalton, 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.

Bryan/College Station—Church of Christ, Sunday 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.; Call for location (409) 731-1230 or (409) 589-3725; Email: jasonr@alpha1.net.

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.

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

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.

The Last Word...

SELF-APPOINTED WATCHDOGS

Eddie Whitten

"Various self-appointed watchdogs have uselessly irritated faithful people and even bitten others whom they had no right to bite." This statement is an excerpt from an article appearing in the July, 1999 issue of the *Gospel Advocate* written by C. Philip Slate, recently retired professor of missions at Abilene Christian University. Slate's use of the phrase "self-appointed watchdogs" creates some questions. It is always a source of confusion as to what one means when he uses such expressions. What is the thinking of those who pose the idea that there is a problem with watchdogs?

Generally, the use of the term, "watchdog," indicates an aversion to those who call into question some teaching or practice that violates truth. Does it not seem strange that articles written, or speeches delivered, with which there is agreement does not elicit the "watchdog" assignment. It is

only those articles and others like them, that brings light to biblical departures that are tagged with the dreaded "self-appointed watchdog" condemnation. Every writer thinks that his articles are true. Courageous writers of books and articles write their convictions usually in harmony with his understanding of scripture. If there is agreement with the brotherhood in general, nothing is mentioned of a "watchdog." If it develops that error is being taught and a faithful brother exposes or objects to the error, out comes the charge of the "self-appointed watchdog" striking again.

WHO APPOINTS "WATCHDOGS" ?

Slate graciously states regarding "means of detecting potential dangers and warning the group when they ap-



pear," that those who performed these tasks were designated as "sentries, lookouts, watchmen, guards and posts and by the more colloquial terms watchdogs and whistle blowers." He adds, "Like it or not, these positions are here to stay, and on the whole, they are welcome for what they are designed to do. The church especially likes good watchdogs." He proceeds to warn that church watchdogs "may deviate from the best use."

It appears that, according to Slate, there is a need for watchdogs as long as the said watchdogs do not do anything. From that point on, Slate's article points to the idea that anything that disagrees with what he believes or upholds spews forth from the pens of "self-appointed" watchdogs. So, the question arises, from whence does the church get her watchdogs? Who appoints them? If they are good to have and the church needs good watchdogs and whistle blowers, how do they come to be? Does he mean that there is, or should be, a "church-appointed" board, or something to appoint watchdogs which the "self-appointed" watchdog has usurped? Is there a procedure for qualifying as a watchdog? Slate alludes to that very thing! He says, in conclusion of his article, "I welcome judicious whistle blowers. We need watchdogs. But it is not too much to insist that they be trained and free of rabies." I think we have the answer to our concerns expressed in this statement. Who trains our whistle blowers and our watchdogs? If my guess is correct, what this statement means is that our watchdogs are not to be trained by the Bible, they are to be trained by our liberal Christian (so-called) Universities.

THE POT AND THE KETTLE

As is the usual case, the one, who calls another a "self-appointed watchdog," is completely free of the same

charge. Invariably, those who smart under the critical eye of biblical principles and truth are quick to blow the whistle and shout, "watchdog, watchdog!" Isn't it strange that those who do so are also championing subtle, or perhaps not so subtle, changes in Bible doctrine? For instance, Slate "applauds F. LaGard Smith's efforts" for writing his infamous *Who Is My Brother? Facing the Crisis of Identity and Fellowship*. Many writers in many journals have adequately and unquestionably substantiated the liberal leanings and practices of F. LaGard Smith. Watchdog? Yes, there needs to be watchdogs to challenge and expose such statements, which are in support of liberal teachers. Want scripture for such challenges? The apostle John, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). There is the authority for watchdogs!

Thank God for brotherhood watchdogs! It would be advisable to be cautious when branding one who challenges a statement, or a practice, as a "self-appointed watchdog" when the Bible cautions us to do just that. Truth is absolute in spite of the agnostics, who claim nothing is absolute. Truth can be known and truth can make one free (John 8:32). Those who challenge the wisdom of challenging false doctrine are the ones that make it necessary for the brotherhood to have watchdogs. "Self-appointed"? Not at all, but watchdogs, nonetheless.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE SEA

J. E. Choate

An apocryphal story has long circulated with **David Lipscomb** pictured as an old woman with a broom engaged in a futile effort to sweep back the oncoming sea tide. The undocumented cartoon was calculated to satirize the futile efforts of David Lipscomb to stop the Digressive invasion of the *Christian Church* into churches of Christ.

The 1870s were the "years of the organ" in the *Christian Church*. This was the decade when leaders in the *Christian Church* debated the organ in worship. **John W. McGarvey** initiated the call in 1866 for candid discussions by church leaders to address the growing problem. Nothing new has been added to the subject since. Would that Restoration historians with reputations, e.g., **Dr. Robert E. Hooper**, **Bill Humble**, **Douglas Foster**, and **Richard Hughes** would address this proposition for accuracy.

Isaac Errett's support of the organ was a decisive factor in the late 19th century leading the *Christian Church* to adopt instrumental music in worship. He was the spiritual heir of **Alexander Campbell**. This was the age of 19th century Restoration giants such as **Moses E. Lard**, **Robert Milligan**, **John W. McGarvey**, and **Daniel Sommer**.

Hall Laurie Calhoun recognized the singular importance of Isaac Errett's role in shaping the character of the *Christian Church* as it is known today. He said in an ACC lecture (1928-29) that Errett: "by his pleasing personality, trenchant pen, and his powerful preaching did more to popularize and propagate the plea of the Disciples than any other man in his generation."

Before Calhoun left the *Christian Church* in 1926, he was a key *Christian Church* witness in the landmark 1904 "Newbern, Tennessee church trial." This Harvard Ph.D., praised Errett then as "the finest man and if we wanted to send a man or representative among people who knew nothing of us to give them a clear conception of what we

really stand for perhaps the best man we could send."

First, Errett's persuasive voice also led the Disciples to accept the practice of *open communion*, which is not the same as *open fellowship*. Today the Restructured Disciples of Christ denomination practices open communion and open fellowship with *no* distinctions. No contemporary denomination today is more apt to adopt the latest excesses of neo-liberal theologies and cultural influences.

Second, There is *no* question but that the many talented Errett developed the most convincing arguments to make *the case for the* missionary society. For example, he said there are good ways to carry the gospel world wide, and the missionary society is just one of the better ways.

Third, Errett did more to win the battle to move the organ into church worship with his sweetest and most plausible of all arguments that if the organ in worship is sinful (which he never admitted), then to divide a church over the presence of the organ in the church was an even greater sin. Errett argued that the organ is an aid to the singing like a song book. Song books do not sing, nor do they play on organs.

THE SECOND MAJOR SPLIT IN THE RANKS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The really big fight among the Disciples in modern times focused on the societies and conventions which lasted fifty years. **Corey J. Stevens** in his book, *Fifty Years of Attack And Controversy* (1953) tells the story of the fight to control the local churches by the officers of the conventions and societies. The local *Independent Christian Churches* and their elders were finally fed up with their defeats. The *Independents* put an end to this in 1926 by organizing the North American Christian Convention.

The successes of the NACC in its annual meetings since
(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Editorial...

TESTS OF FELLOWSHIP

Throughout the Lord's church there are those who have been deceived into thinking that doctrinal errors will not cause one to be lost. Therefore, in this editorial I will concentrate on the false idea of "We cannot make any doctrine a test of fellowship." Let us see what the divine volume has to reveal on this matter.

In the first century church certain brethren taught the false doctrine that Christians must be circumcised after the manner of Moses in order to be saved (Acts 15:1). Whatever correct doctrinal beliefs they had, Paul boldly declared that he did not for one moment tolerate their false doctrine (Galatians 2:5). Paul made his position crystal clear when he wrote: "...if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Galatians 5:2). If Christ profits one nothing, that one is lost. May a lost church member be fellowshipped by the faithful?

In Ephesus Paul found disciples who were not scripturally baptized (Acts 19:4). Did he concentrate on any "good spiritual qualities" possessed by them to the exclusion of their need to be scripturally baptized? Indeed not, Paul required them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 19:5; Colossians 3:16). Apollos is described by Luke as "mighty in the scriptures," "instructed in the way of the Lord," "fervent in spirit," who "spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord" (Acts 19:24, 25). However, until Apollos corrected his doctrine regarding baptism Priscilla and Aquila would not recommend him to the churches (Acts 18:26, 27). In the case of Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, if scriptural baptism was not a test of fellowship, what was it? How dare any in the church today not to follow their example.

Since there were no denominations (Christian, Baptist, Catholic, or Community Churches and the like) in the first century, Paul uses the temple of an idol to prove that worship unauthorized by the New Testament constitutes a test of fellowship. He wrote, "...that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils" (I Corinthians 10:20). If this verse does not teach us that Christians who engage in false worship are in fellowship with devils, what must Paul have written to get that point across to us today? I do not believe that one must be a graduate of the theological schools, Bible departments in so called Christian Colleges or, for that matter, preacher training schools to determine the answer to the proceeding question. One does not

benefit from God's love or his saving grace when one refuses to obey God's truth (John 8:31, 32; 14:15; 17:17; Hebrews 5:10; Romans 5:21; Psalms 119:172). It is God who made his doctrine a test of fellowship with him and his children (II John 9-11). If

we desire to go to heaven, the doctrine of Christ will be our only rule of faith, practice, and fellowship (Colossians 3:17; Romans 10:17; II Corinthians 5:7; I Corinthians 4:6—*ASV*, 1901; John 12:48).

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

THE OLD WOMAN...

(Continued From Page 1)

1927 have been phenomenal. *The Independent Christian Church* leaders over the years by means of the NACC have defined the Independent Christian Church as one of the most viable modern denominations in the Stone Campbell Restoration tradition. The Disciples mounted a ten year plan in 1957 called the *Committee on Brotherhood Organization* to restructure primarily to maintain control over the local churches.

This was their fatal error. The *Independents* local churches would have none of it. The local churches separated themselves from the 1968 Restructure by the hundreds, and members by the thousands. The most bizarre part of this story is that of our brethren today who are joining hands with the *Independents* to destroy the biblical identity of the traditional churches of Christ. No better example of this than Dr. Rubel Shelly. He makes no bones about it.

BACK TO THE OLD WOMAN AND THE SEA

David Lipscomb first voiced his opposition in 1873 to the organ in the worship. Numerous articles from Lipscomb's pen appeared thereafter in the *Gospel Advocate*. [William Woodson and I wrote the book on instrumental music in the Restoration Movement from 1827 on. The *Christian Standard* honored the book with a book review. The *Advocate* and the *21st Century Christian* did not. Dr. Robert E. Hooper makes the odd argument that Lipscomb was opposed to the organ in worship because he was a music illiterate and also tone deaf. I never had heard this one before, nor since.]

James S. Lamar, author of the *Memoirs of Isaac Errett* (1893), also played a major role through the 1880s with his militant defense of the organ. Lamar thought that the influence of David Lipscomb and the *Gospel Advocate* were on the wane by 1890. Lamar put Lipscomb under attack in his *Memoirs*: "The David Lipscomb fiasco which about this time, paraded itself before the civilized world, will not detain us long here." Lamar described Lipscomb as a "serio-comic" actor in the battle to stop the Digressive invasion in Tennessee.

And this is the place to compare the influence of David Lipscomb and Isaac Errett after the passing of a century. Come to Middle Tennessee and visit among *Independent Christian Churches*, and the *Disciples of Christ* denomination to learn for yourselves how few and how small for the most part these churches are, and how small their influence in the region. *A fiasco indeed!*

A SAD SHABBY STORY

Guess who supports both Digressive fellowships in Nashville, and who puts down the traditional churches of Christ with every move? Who else but Douglas Foster, late of Lipscomb University and now of ACU. Keep in mind his misrepresentations of David Upscomb on baptism in the first 1992 issue of *Wineskins*. Dr. Foster and Richard Hughes of Pepperdine argue unabashedly that the Church of Christ denomination traces its roots in early 19th century Stone-Campbell Restoration traditions. This proposition was argued by Richard Hughes on the Lipscomb campus during the Reed lectures. This was one of the events celebrating the elevation of Steve Flatt to the presidency of Lipscomb University.

REALITY VERSUS VIRTUAL REALITY

I am most interested in an interview of Dr. Earl West with a Harding University writer which was printed in the 1999 December issue of the *Christian Chronicle*. West is an honest and informed premier Restoration historian with hardly an equal among his peers.

He made some significant statements which I will focus on in order to express my own personal points of view.

• He wrote that: "Even some of our pulpit ministers and church leaders are at war with the past." Indeed preachers the likes of Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, Jeff Walling, and Joe Beam are in open war with the traditional churches of

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Christ with not one good word to say about them, and would drive them from the face of the earth.

• This statement of Dr. West is especially pertinent that the present trend of the **churches of Christ** is to embrace modern social thought. Nowhere do we see this better than in the "copy cat" imitations of the **Bill Hybels'** Willow Creek Community Church in the Woodmont Hills Family of God, and the Hendersonville Community Church of Christ in Nashville. This now recognized, e.g., in the 2000 March issue of the *Christian Chronicle* as a growing national problem among churches of Christ.

• Dr. West writes that some churches of Christ desire to be socially accepted by the denominational world. This now is far more than *visual reality*; It is *reality*. It comes as no surprise that Dr. Shelly is supporting the **Billy Graham** Crusade. How about the Harpeth Hills Church of Christ where the LU Chancellor **Harold Hazelip** worships. This is an insult to every member of the traditional churches of Christ, living and dead, and David Lipscomb in particular.

• Dr. West is of the opinion that **churches of Christ** in the future will be like the conservative **Christian Church** today. My reaction is that this virtual reality is already an established *reality* in the burgeoning *neo-modern Churches of Christ*. This denomination is already structured according to Douglas Foster and Richard Hughes who tell us all about it in *Will The Cycle Be Unbroken*; and *Reviving The Ancient Faith*. Though still a *virtual reality*, Foster and Hughes are comfortable in stating the case, of

all places, on the Lipscomb campus. This new hybrid denomination traces its immediate roots partially to Bill Hybel and the Willow Creek Community Church, the Third *Wave* Pentecostal movement, and the Kansas City Prophets.

POSTSCRIPT

Can any reader document the original source of this late 19th century caricature of David Lipscomb as an old woman with a broom? I have researched in likely places, e.g., *Christian standard*, and came up empty handed. Lately I have talked to some brethren who are certain that the cartoon exists, but do not know where. Help us clear up this mystery.

And a personal note to our *change agent* brethren that we have your city's zip, email, telephone, and street numbers. We know how to run the search engines to learn the facts, and what to do with them. Faithful brethren are on to your game plans. The *change agents* and their agendas are as easy to track as a full moon across a clear autumn sky.

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not just your knees."*

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- 11:00 AM "The Biblical Doctrine Of Redemption" Noah A. Mackintosh
- 12:00 PM POTLUCK LUNCH
- 2:00 PM "Redeemed Means Devoted To God" William Ford
- 3:00 PM "Redeemed Means I'm Not My Own" Greg Knight
- 6:00 PM "Redeemed To Bear Fruit" Michael Hatcher

Monday, May 8

- 10:00 AM "The Source Of Redemption" Jack Stewart
- 11:00 AM "The Price Of Our Redemption" Gary Anderson
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM "Redeemed To Serve" Greg Weston
- 3:00 PM "Redeemed To Be Happy" Ted Parks
- 7:00 PM "Redeemed To Be Pure" Tommy Hicks

Tuesday, May 9

- 10:00 AM "Redeemed To Evangelize" Michael Hatcher
- 11:00 AM "Redeemed For Good Works" Bronson Galt
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM "Redeemed To Sin No More" Dub McClish
- 3:00 PM "Redeemed To Say No" Tommy Hicks
- 7:00 PM "Redeemed To Contend" Randy Mabe

Wednesday, May 10

- 10:00 AM "Who Are The Redeemed?" Greg Weston
- 11:00 AM "Redeemed To Worship" Eddie Whitten
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM "Redemption Must Be Verbalized" Don Ruhl
- 3:00 PM "Redeemed To Live Above The World" David Brown
- 7:00 PM "Redeemed To Speak Out" Dub McClish

Thursday, May 11

- 10:00 AM "Redeemed To Glorify God" Eddie Whitten
- 11:00 AM "Redeemed To Be Content" Randy Mabe
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM "Redeemed To Live Forever" Don Ruhl
- 3:00 PM "The Redeemed Are Reconciled" Johnny Oxendine
- 7:00 PM "Only The Redeemed Are Saved" David Brown

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Marking False Teachers and Sympathizers:

OBEDIENCE OR VIGILANTISM?

A Review of Roger Comstock's Lecture

Gary L. Grizzell

In a lecture delivered in August of 1999 regarding "The Discipline of the Church", Roger Comstock brought up the New Testament passage, Romans 16:17. This inspired, passage says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Paul continued, "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18). A number of things stated in Comstock's lecture are deserving of an "amen" however, a segment of Comstock's lecture which is of concern to obedient brethren is given below. Please consider first his actual statements that are inset and in bold face, then my observations.

One passage in particular that I wanted to deal with in just a brief way this morning in talking about this one is Romans 16:17. There I am reading from the *New King James*, it says, "Now I urge you brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." The *King James* there instead of the word "note" is "mark," and quite frankly the word "note" is a more accurate translation.

Is the word "note" really a more accurate translation than the word "mark" as brother Comstock tells us or is this just a quibble? The word "mark" is from the Greek verb *skopeo* and is defined by Strong's as 1) to look at, observe, contemplate, 2) to mark 3) to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to anyone, and, 4) to look to, take heed to thyself.

The *King James* usage of *skopeo* is given by Strong's as follows: "mark" (Romans 16:17; Philippians 3:17); "take heed" (Luke 11:35); "look at" (II Corinthians 4:18); "look on" (Philippians 2:4); and "consider" (Galatians 6:1). *Skopeo* is translated as "mark" in both the *King James Version* and the *American Standard Version* in Romans 16:17.

In Paul's letter to the church at Thessalonica he wrote, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thessalonians 3:14; *KJV*; caps mine, GLG). The word "note" in this passage is translated from the verb *semeiōo* and means: "to mark, to note, distinguish by marking" and "to mark or note for one's self."

(Strong's). Contrary to what Comstock stated, it simply is not clear at all that "the word 'note' is a more accurate translation."

Sadly there are those within our brotherhood who have appointed themselves as vigilantes to go about cleaning up our brotherhood.

A vigilante is defined by the English dictionary as, "a member of a volunteer committee organized to suppress and punish crime summarily (as when the processes of law appear inadequate); broadly: a self-appointed doer of justice ... Etymology: Spanish, watchman, guard, from vigilante vigilant, from Latin vigilant, vigilans; Date: 1865" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).

According to Comstock, when brethren obey Romans 16:17, one has set himself/themselves up as an unauthorized, self-appointed doer of justice. While church autonomy is taught in the New Testament and is a treasured doctrine (and the limitations must be observed), it is also the case that leaders of each local congregation should have a care of all the churches, that is, *the cause of Christ everywhere*. If not, why not? Note Paul's attitude and example in his statement to the church at Corinth, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (II Corinthians 11:28). This concern should be exercised with care and done to the best of one's ability.

We need not be surprised if this principle and affection is, by-passed and neglected by those who do not understand nor believe the New Testament doctrine that condemns bidding Godspeed to false teachers and the teaching of guilt by association. (cf. II John 9-11 "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 his evil deeds").

Comstock wildly accuses some "within our brotherhood who have appointed themselves as vigilantes to go about cleaning up our brotherhood." One cannot help but wonder what Comstock is doing to help in the "cleaning up" process of the false teachers among us. If one has either a weak stomach or a weak faith (or both) I do not expect that he/she will enjoy reading a review of this particular lecture. In fact it is not en-

"Is the word 'note' really a more accurate translation than the word 'mark' as Comstock tells us or is this just a quibble?"

"One cannot help but wonder what Comstock is doing to help in the 'cleaning up' process of the false teachers among us."

joyable for me, but the battle for doctrinal purity is upon us so please consider carefully. Elders must discipline the false teacher who preaches pulpits under their authority. What would Comstock have faithful elders, preachers and other church leaders to do when a false teacher is allowed to travel throughout the brotherhood spreading his poisonous doctrine.

Perhaps Comstock would have them keep their mouths shut, drop their pens and timidly whistle in the dark, lest they be falsely accused of appointing themselves as vigilantes. It is simply unfair to accuse Christian soldiers with base motives and ungodly methods when warning of false teachers and their sympathizers. In a day of wholesale apostasy in some geographical areas, where is the concern for the sheep of the flock in that type of wild accusation? Jesus warned, **“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”** (Matthew 7:15). When wolves in sheep’s clothing abound, the watchman is to be upon the wall. **“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry”** (II Timothy 4:5).

And these that have taken these seem as though some of them speak first-hand and quite frankly I am alarmed.

I am scared by their tactics and by the way they approach the very things that they are hoping to correct.

Is Comstock equally alarmed by the wolf in sheep’s clothing as he is alarmed by those who dare expose and warn innocent babes in Christ of the wolf in sheep’s clothing AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS? One is reminded of Isaiah’s warning: **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”** (Isaiah 5:20). Jesus said, **“... And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”** (Matthew 15:14). Some helpful brethren have spoken first hand. Others have learned of departures through faithful, concerned witnesses. Did Paul speak “first hand” when he revealed to the Corinthians that he had heard and believed certain negative things about them? No, listen to him, **“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you”** (I Corinthians 1:11).

What of the scare tactic that Comstock has used in describing those who faithfully mark and thus warn brethren of false teachers and their sympathizers? A sympathizer of a “change agent” may be one, who, although he does not hold to the same liberal doctrine, nevertheless associates with the “change agent” in a lectureship or seminar without truly exposing the false teacher and addressing his error.

Would Comstock have approved of Jesus’ approach with to Pharisees in Matthew 23, had he been present?

Would he have been alarmed with Paul’s “tactics” in dealing with the false Judaizing teachers who had infiltrated the churches of Galatia (Galatians 1:6-9). Paul told the Galatians of his previous experience and behavior with certain false brethren, saying:

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

Comstock’s approach in dealing with false teachers and their sympathizers is that of approving one who bids Godspeed to a false teacher (like a

Steve Flatt sympathizer as Earl Edwards whom he named later in his comments below), However, he slams brethren who respond as Paul with Peter and Barnabus (Galatians 1:11-14).

I don’t believe that in my lifetime I have ever seen a time that we have seen such diversity in our congregation, in our fellowship. It is sad that we go to such far extremes.

And there certainly are brethren that we have no business fellowshiping. I understand that thoroughly.

Whoops! Comstock spoke of “our fellowship.” This implies he is speaking of brethren in general. Is this a first hand knowledge which he implies he possesses? Is this not the standard he bound above by implication?

Comstock is right to bemoan diversity if he speaks of doctrinal diversity and disunity in our interpretation and application of the truth in view of the present distress. God commands that we speak the same thing (I Corinthians 1:10). However, the solution is not to take cheap shots at brethren who are militant for the cause of Christ.

Does Comstock really understand “that thoroughly”? Why then did he approve of the brother he defends (Earl Edwards), since bade Godspeed to a false teacher. Edwards did this by his practice. Yes, one may practice fatal error as well as teach it! An example of this is the hypocritical behavior of Peter in Galatians 2:11-14. This fact continually alludes those with the flawed understanding and mentality of the speaker. Comstock does not understand that thoroughly.

But some have taken this word the word “mark” in Romans 16:17 and they have taken and then they think that gives them authority as to the expression that has earlier been used to write up everybody.

In such a serious discussion as this the speaker needs to repent of accusing faithful brethren of seeking to write up “everybody.” Such generalization is reflective of who really has the problem with proper perspective. I have given the definition of the word “mark” earlier in this review. Comstock’s observation about the *KJV*’s use of

“Perhaps Comstock would have them keep their mouths shut, drop their pens and timidly whistle in the dark, lest they be falsely accused of appointing themselves as vigilantes.”

“A sympathizer of a change agent may be one, who, although he does not hold to the same liberal doctrine, nevertheless associates with the change agent in a lectureship or seminar without truly exposing the false teacher and addressing his error.”

“mark” instead of the word “note” in Romans 16:17 is a quibble and misleading. He has erected a strawman argument, on his assumption that “mark” is not the best translation. He appears to argue that when certain brethren read the word “mark” in Romans 16:17, that the term causes the so-called bullish minds to CHARGE WITHOUT RESTRAINT!!! However, in actual cases where warped thinking men have radically misapplied the command to mark false teachers, it is not God’s word which caused the problem but their warped thinking.

I have heard them condemn many that I have believed to be faithful, godly, gospel preachers. One of them that was condemned most recently that I heard with my own ears is Earl Edwards.

If you know Brother Earl Edwards it shocked me.

Irritated, Comstock finally quits beating around the bush and tells us one of the burrs under his saddle prompted his criticisms of faithful soldiers of the cross. Note his mention and defense of Earl Edwards.

Is Comstock talking about the July 1999 issue of *Contending For The Faith* where certain brethren were exposed for bidding Godspeed to wayward brother Steve Flatt? If you do not know that Flatt is a false teacher you have not been keeping up. Those exposed for fellowshiping and bidding Godspeed to Flatt on page seven of the *CFTF* issue were Earl Edwards, Mack Lyon and Phil Sanders.

Fortunately, truth is not determined by Comstock’s personal feelings and shock scale. Comstock reminds us of Barnabus in the presence of his erring friend, Peter (Galatians 2:11-14). Suppose Barnabus, who had been carried away by the hypocrisy of his friend, Peter, had said, “But Paul, if you knew Peter on a personal basis like I do, you would not have publicly charged Peter with hypocrisy.” Yet, the public practice of error needed a corre-

sponding public rebuke due to the babes in Christ present. “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (I Timothy 5:20). Truth is the standard, not our feelings. Truth is not a respecter of persons (see Acts 10:34).

The man was scheduled to be on a lectureship, I don’t even know where it was. The lectureship was a couple of months in advance.

This brother was condemning brother Earl Edwards because he was scheduled to be, he didn’t have

any idea what brother Edwards was going to preach, had no idea what he was going to say, and yet he was marking him.

That is the way he views.

Comstock revealed his ignorance of the details concerning the lectureship under discussion, yet expected his audience to accept his severe, judgmental criticism of his faithful brethren who had called the hand of Edwards who dissimulated. How loving is that?

In the issue of *CFTF* wherein Earl Edward’s picture is seen on a copy of the flyer with Steve Flatt, the photocopy of the flyer advertising the seminar is dated, “Saturday, March 27, 1999.” The exposure of Edwards’ association with Flatt is in the *CFTF* issue dated July 1999.

Now that the seminar has come and gone, will Earl Edwards, Phil Sanders and Mack Lyon and/or the seminar director send to an inquiring brotherhood a copy of the manuscripts, cassette tapes or videos where these speakers used their platform as an opportunity to expose both Steve Flatt and his doctrines/practices? Has Comstock called for these records? If not, why not? Is he afraid he will be labeled a vigilante?

Well, I would submit to you that this attitude of vigilantism, this attitude of venom that comes from some of our brethren should not be tolerated either.

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Shades of Lindell Mitchell in his writing in the *Firm Foundation* of late! Does Comstock exhibit an "attitude of vigilantism" himself in inconsistently condemning the condemner? May the "attitude of venom" be seen in the speaker toward his faithful brethren who have had the love and courage to do that which he is unwilling to do, namely, mark sympathizers of influential change agents? Is Comstock like Paul who, in Galatians chapter two, rebuked Peter with his sympathizer Barnabus present? Or, is Comstock like Barnabus who sympathized with wayward Peter? Did Barnabus have the right to complain that Paul's supposed "attitude of vigilantism" should not have been tolerated?! I fear the spirit of compromise of Barnabus in the Antioch departure account is among us today more than many are willing to face. By the way, Paul named Barnabus (sympathizer) in his letter to the churches of Galatia. Why is it now wrong to name Earl, Phil and Mack (sympathizers)?

"Does Comstock exhibit an 'attitude of vigilantism' himself in inconsistently condemning the condemner?"

And these brethren if they would just think about it, this is what is amazing to me. These brethren could not fellowship themselves. Think about that. Because I would venture to guess that somewhere along the line they have been on a lectureship or somewhere where they have been in fellowship with somebody who has been fellowshiped that should not have been fellowshiped, therefore they cannot fellowship themselves.

"Is Comstock not guilty of practicing what he condemns in certain of his brethren?"

Comstock admits he is in the guessing business toward those on whom he spews out his criticism. He tells us that the basis from which he is accusing brethren of inconsistently speaking and writing with venom and exhibiting a spirit of vigilantism is his ventured "guess."

Thanks for the careful consideration, Comstock. Also, thanks for allowing in yourself that which you condemn in others. Is this a fair and consistent way to deal with those you view as practicing error? Is such not a double standard? Yet Comstock speaks of the "tactics" that scare him.

Is Comstock not guilty of practicing what he condemns in certain of his brethren? Yet, we are to believe that he is the honest, fair and loving one and his opponents scoundrels. His standard is clearly not the New Testament in so judging his brethren (see Matthew 7:1; John 7:24).

Comstock tells us that he ventures to guess concerning those he earlier called vigilantes, "they have been on a lectureship" where they have compromised on the fellowship issue advocated. Such is only assertion! In the art of persuasion assertion without evidence is a "tactic" to be sure!

That is the extreme that they have gone through and the hatred that they are bringing in our brotherhood. That is not Bible discipline. That is not at all what the scriptures teach about discipline.

I suppose Comstock's guessing faithful brethren into hell with his assertion without evidence is to be overlooked. The truth is that faithful brethren are not sinning, being radical, acting with venom, possessing a vigilant attitude or spreading hatred when refusing to bid Godspeed to false teachers and their sympathizers (read II John 9-11 and Ephesians 5:11).

Does Comstock at any time give the impression that it is possible to bid Godspeed to a false teacher by practicing a dignified silence? Absolutely not! Does he at any time acknowledge the New Testament's teaching of guilt by association? Certainly not! (II John 9-11). I have listened to the speaker's lecture through a video which was mailed to me. I dare say that Comstock does not presently comprehend the actual teaching in the New Testament of the subject of guilt by association.

Let me give you an example, a very personal example. Some of you are aware I guess and some of you may not be aware that a couple of years ago, a few years ago I was invited to speak at the Baptist church there in Bridgeport. I will tell you how this came about and let's move very quickly because I am running out of time. The way this came about was because the Baptist preacher there at that time had a heart attack. He was in the hospital and the day I visited him they were getting him ready for bypass surgery. Purely joking I said to him, "We have a couple of visiting preachers the next couple of weeks I'm free if you need me to fill in for you." The next week I got a call from one of their deacons. "You said you would fill in, will you?" I went to the elders and we sat down and talked about how I approach this, should I or shouldn't I? How could I not when I had offered myself? Interestingly one of our elders didn't want me to do it. Gladly, three of them wanted me to. Fortunately, one of our elders was converted from the Baptist church and he was very helpful in helping me prepare my remarks to them.

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You know what was interesting, I got a call. For those of you who don't know where Bridgeport is, it is in northeast Alabama, five miles out of Tennessee, thirty miles or so from Chattanooga. Lower Alabama is another country, but I got a call from lower Alabama just a week after I preached at the Baptist church. This man in passing very casually, his first words were "I heard you preached at the Baptist church," and I said, "yes that is right," he said "what makes you any different than Rubel Shelly?" I said, "Well, I don't know what Rubel Shelly preaches, but I went over there and preached the gospel. He said, "Oh, okay."

Well, I suspect that some of these brethren who have appointed themselves as vigilantes in our brotherhood who have heard about me preaching at the Baptist church, I would be on their list also.

I see absolutely no harm in going to a denomination and preaching the truth of God's word and I will do it again if they will invite me. In fact, there were some in the audience and if the word got out that we are a small community if word got out in the community some of the Methodist said "when are you going to come and preach to us?" I said, "As soon as you invite me." You know, I will tell you, there that morning, it was difficult for me, and I have never been in the worship of a denominational group, never in my life. I have been to funerals and weddings and things like that, but I have never in a worship. I asked our elder who had been converted from a Baptist church, "what do I do when they come to singing and when they sing: and crank up the organ, what do I do?" He said, "don't worry about it." I said, "well I don't want to offend them, but yet I can't consciously sit there and sing with them." He said, "don't worry about it, they don't sing either." He was right. I was amazed. Quite frankly, it was pitiful. Now I know why they crank up the organ.

Sad, but what is interesting was that was an opportunity to teach God's word. I would do it again. Does it make me a false teacher that needed to be written up in a brotherhood paper that I preached at a Baptist church? I don't think so. Some probably would think so.

That is a little off of our subject, but I am bothered if you can tell by those who have appointed themselves to clean up the church. It bothers me because of the venom that they spread, and the attitude that they have. It sickens me, and they should be ashamed.

What has Comstock, who has appointed himself to clean the vigilantes out of the church, done? He tells us that:

1) He jokingly offered to "fill in" the pulpit for a denominational (Baptist) preacher who had suffered a heart attack.

2) A leader from the denomination followed up on his offer to "fill in" the pulpit during their Baptist's preacher's sickness and he (our speaker) then approached the elders of the local congregation about this matter.

3) He asked the advice of the elders after jokingly offering to "fill in" for the false teacher. He felt obligated to go since he had offered his services.

4) Then he stated, "Interestingly one of our elders didn't want me to do it."

5) He was pleased to discover that three of the four elders wanted him to fill the pulpit of the Baptist worship period, saying, "Gladly, three of them wanted me to."

6) One of his elders was "very helpful" in helping him prepare his remarks to fill in for the Baptist preacher.

7) He commented to the elders that he did not intend to sing with the instrument as the Baptists, for which he is to be commended. However, it was quite astonishing that he (a gospel preacher) felt he needed to inquire of his elder(s) what to do when the Baptist congregation started singing with the organ, saying, "what do I do when they come to singing and when they sing and crank up the organ, what do I do?"

8) After word got out that he had spoken at the Baptist church, the news was favorable to the

ears of others in the community in that some of the Methodist said, "when are you going to come and preach to us?" to which he answered, "As soon as you invite me."

9) Someone from the lower part of his state called and questioned his preaching at the Baptist church and asked, "what makes you any different than Rubel Shelly?," to which he replied, "Well, I don't know what Rubel Shelly preaches, but I went over there and preached the gospel. He said, 'Oh, okay.'" It is more than alarming that a gospel preacher would be forced to admit that he did not know what Rubel Shelly preaches in view of all the exposure Shelly has received. A gospel preacher is to be a watchman as Paul wrote to Timothy, "But watch thou in all things,

"...I don't know what Rubel Shelly preaches."



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endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:5).

Comstock seems more than a little paranoid that he may be discussed in a brotherhood paper for his practice of speaking at the Baptist church. Why would he be concerned? Did he withhold the needed truth so that he should fear being found out? He once again takes a vicious swipe at those he refers to as “vigilantes in our brotherhood who have heard about me preaching at the Baptist church...”

10) What did Comstock preach in the Baptist pulpit? He tells us he had prepared “remarks” and “I went over there and preached the gospel” and “the truth of God’s word.”

The questions Comstock left unanswered are: (1) did he preach the needed truth to those in error?, and (2) did he forsake the assembling of the saints while filling in for the denominational preacher (Hebrews 10:25)? Did he provide things honest in the sight of all men (Romans 12:17).

We can only rejoice when a brother has an opportunity to preach the gospel to lost men—whether the lost are atheists, sectarians, denominationalists, cultists or those involved in a false world religion. However, one who so preaches to those in error has the obligation to speak as he ought to speak (“that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak,” Ephesians 6:20). He must speak the needed truth. If he does not preach against the error of the denominationalist who is present, so as to truly reprove such a one with the needed truth, that listener will remain in his lost condition.

When Paul was in Athens at Mars Hill among idolaters, he did not speak on “Where is Noah’s ark?,” but he spoke on the subject of the one God, exposed idolatry, pointed them to Christ and told them to repent (Acts 17:16-34).

To do otherwise would have been to compromise the gospel and bid Godspeed to fatal error. Paul wrote by inspiration to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:11). To do otherwise is to leave the impression that one thinks his religious neighbors are in a safe, right relationship with God. Such would be displeasing to God, compromising and unloving to those in error. If Comstock does not wish to have his harsh lecture statements analyzed and questioned concerning so-called vigilantes who scripturally mark (Romans 16:17) those who cannot be warned, who are sympathizers with men like Steve Flatt, Rubel Shelly (whose teaching Roger Comstock says he does not know), Max Lucado, and F. LaGard Smith, then let him cease such tirades.

If Comstock does not wish to have his statements analyzed and questioned concerning his preaching during a Baptist worship period, he should seek to be clear in addressing the two simple issues previously mentioned or say with Job, “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me” (Job 3:25).

May we hasten the day when we will refuse to bid Godspeed to false teachers in any way, shape or form. May the

day come when we will not sympathize with the sympathizers of the false teacher. For the sake of the blessed cause of Christ, let us hate every false way!

(The Way, The Truth and The Life Lectures; August 1-3, 1999; Sevierville Church of Christ)

[Editorial Note: I too, watched the video of Comstock’s

speech and had it transcribed so I could study it more closely. Comstock deviated from his assigned subject. This he admitted doing during his lecture. In so doing he evidenced that he did not know what he was doing as well as engaging in what he thinks he sees

and condemns in others. This is typical of the inconsistent conduct of those who criticize to show one should not criticize, who debate at a distance to show one should not debate and in general play the hypocrite.

The Sevierville Church of Christ is a faithful congregation of God’s people. Their lectures have always been commendable. Over the past year or so the church has undergone a battle against liberalism and have overcome the debacle. Those faithful brethren are to be highly commended for remaining steadfast and unmovable regarding the truth of the gospel. The elders that were appointed during the last year are true to the book. Their faithful preacher, John Daniels (who also serves in the eldership) loves the truth and is willing to suffer to uphold it. We appreciate and commend the faith of these brethren.

May I recommend attending the Sevierville congregation when you are vacationing in East Tennessee. Also, if you are faithful to the cause of Christ and moving to that part of the country, why not consider placing your membership with the Sevierville Church of Christ?--DPB, Editor-in-Chief]

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Congregational Development

“Let The Chips Fall”

Lynn Parker

A famous frontiersman of long ago said, “Be sure you’re right, then go ahead.” Every congregation is involved in decisions that concern its work and worship. Decisions made in haste—rashly, without consideration—can result in harm to the precious body of our Lord. We must all carefully examine every action in which we plan to engage. God gave us a brain and a Bible—both must be used. Paul wrote, “**prove all things; hold fast that which is good**” (I Thessalonians 5:21). By the pen of the same inspired writer, the Holy Spirit clearly set forth that all we do in Christian work, worship, and conduct is to be done by divine authority (Colossians 3:17). But even where the Lord has commanded there sometimes exists indecision, even stagnation. Right decisions can be squelched because of fear of “fallout.” Proper action by the church can be deterred because some are afraid of possible results. Good, wholesome spiritual growth in a congregation is stunted by being overly worried about how some will react.

For example, let us say that a congregation is selecting teachers for Bible classes. One indicating a desire to teach is not faithful in her Christian duty and conduct. The elders or men of the congregation discuss the matter, the facts are ascertained and documented that this sister forsakes the assemblies and frequents the community dance floor. She would not be allowed to teach except for the fact that her immediate and extended family make up 18 of the 75 members in the congregation, and give almost \$300 of the weekly contribution. What *should* be done? The answer is obvious to the Bible student. What *is* done in some congregations? Sister “unfaithful” is given a Bible class to teach.

Preaching brethren can succumb to fear of where the “chips may fall.” When the sermon really needs to be preached but is withheld for fear of temper tantrums in the pews, then the church is weakened. The pulpit becomes impotent when it no longer rings with the word “**in season and out of season**” (II Timothy 4:2). The preaching that folks like is not always what they need. Paul “**shrank not**

from declaring unto you anything that was profitable” (Acts 20:20). The fearless preacher stated, “**Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God**” (Acts 20:27). It is not enough to for a preacher to say, “I do not preach any error.” The question is will you preach the whole counsel of God? Will you stand where valiant man of old stood to fight every false way, without fear or partiality?



Elders can let intimidation from cliques influence their decisions as well. How many preachers have been hushed or fired to keep smiles on the faces of ungodly, weak, and rebellious members? How much good work has been halted because of objections from an extra noisy, grouchy, bitter, “squeaking wheel?” How many times does the projected contribution figure in when the church needs to take disciplinary action against a wayward church member?

Remember, it does not hurt an apple tree for bad apples to fall off. The sooner we realize that a congregation can grow spiritually when declining numerically the stronger the church will be! Some brothers and sisters strengthen the church by their presence and some by their departure. That may not be “politically correct” in our day of compromise and acceptance but it sure is biblical (I Corinthians 11:19).

When we let fear of where the “chips may fall” influence our decisions we are surely headed down a dark road toward candlestick removal. When we do things God’s way—the right way—we enjoy the blessings and approval of heaven. Let us study our Bibles, be sure our course of action is right, then follow it boldly and confidently. Our God who spoke the world into existence is certainly able to take care of a few falling chips.

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Third Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 8-12, 2000

"Among the Chief Rulers"

Daniel Denham

In John 12:42-43 the apostle John writes:

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him (Christ); but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The time of the text is set during the Passion Week, but before the arrest of Jesus at Gethsemane. It follows shortly after the Lord's triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem to mark the beginning of the final week of His earthly life.

John records the general reaction of the Jews to the Messiahship of Jesus, **"But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him"** (John 12:37). They rejected the tangible proof of his deity and authority. They rejected the message that he taught, and the miracles that confirmed it! They thus rejected him. In our text for study, John stresses that **"among the chief rulers"** there were those who did **"believe on"** Jesus, but they refused to confess him before others. Their reason was two-fold wherein the latter produced the former. 1) They feared the Pharisees would cast them out of the synagogue. 2) They **"loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."** They were more afraid of raising the ire of the Pharisees than they were the anger of God, and they desired the accolades of their fellowman over the approval of their Maker. They coveted the praise of the Pharisees, who hated the Lord of glory. Let us now examine the passage more carefully to glean from its bounty a few of the great lessons it holds in store for us.

FAILURE OF THE "FAITH ONLY" DOCTRINE

The verses before us obviously underscore the words of James that men are not justified by "faith only." Hear him, **"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"** (James 2:24). James adds, **"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"** (James 2:26).

In John 12:42-43 we see some who were believers, yet they refused to confess Christ before men! Now Jesus himself had said:

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Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 10:32-33).



So, if one does not confess Christ, then he cannot be saved. In fact, Romans 10:9-10 shows that confession with the mouth must precede salvation.

The "faith only" doctrine, however, holds that one is saved "at the point of faith, without any further acts of obedience." Thus, it implies that one can be saved without confession of Christ, though "faith only" advocates would dispute this. But John 12:42-43 speaks of believers who refused to confess Christ. "Faith only" would demand that these folks would be saved regardless. It would have individuals who **"love the praise of men more than the praise of God"** saved and go to Heaven, despite the fact that they refused to confess Christ!

Some may quibble that these rulers did not really believe, for had they done so they would have confessed Christ. The passage, however, clearly shows that they did believe on him. That is what the word of God says. Yet they did not confess him. They had faith, but did not confess him. Now if one wishes to contend that they did not have a working, obedient faith, then that would be fine. Saving, availing faith is **"faith that worketh by love"** (Galatians 5:6). It is a faith that shows itself by works of obedience (James 2:18-26). However, this point runs counter to the "faith only" doctrine. Remember, Romans 10:9-10 shows that confession of Christ with the mouth precedes salvation. In making the quibble, "faith only" advocates imply that there are some works of obedience that must be precede salvation. Confession is one of those works. Faith, repentance and baptism are also works that God has commanded for one to be saved (John 6:28-29; 8:24; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; et.al). The quibble then does not answer the problem, but raises a dilemma from whence faith only advocates cannot escape. They must either implicitly admit that some works are essential to salvation or else hold that confession is not and thus directly contradict both Christ in Matthew 10 and Paul in Romans 10! Let them choose either horn with which to be skewered!

THE ABSURDITY OF FEARING MEN

John 12:42-43 demonstrates the absurdity of fearing men rather than God. The rulers refused to acknowledge their faith in Christ, **"because of the Pharisees, lest they should be put out of the synagogue."** They were fearful that the Pharisees would be moved with anger to cast them

out of the synagogue. They were afraid of what the Pharisees might think of them, and especially what they might do to them. This crippled their resolve to follow the Son of God! It silenced their tongues from even confessing faith in his name.

How pitiful we are when we permit the opinions and actions of others who despise the Lord to determine whether or not we will serve God! First, the worst that they can do is torture and kill our body. Second, the worst that God can do—and will do, if we are unfaithful—is to send our souls to Hell. Matthew 10:28 warns: **“And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.”** Luke 12:4 reminds us that after we are dead men **“have no more that they can do”** to us. But Hell is a place of **“unquenchable fire”** (Matthew 3:12) and **“everlasting punishment”** (Matthew 25:41,46). Those who make Hell into annihilation strip John 12:42-43 and Matthew 10:28 of any real meaning. They would have men able to do to you what God can do! Why then fear God any more than men?

THE DANGER OF DESIRING THE PRAISE OF MEN OVER THE PRAISE OF GOD

Everyone desires to be popular with their peers as well as others. I do not know of anyone who get upset over receiving a “pat on the back” from their family members, co-workers, bosses, and such, when they have done a good job at something. Everyone likes to hear, “Well done,” from someone else. The danger lies in seeking the praise of men over that of almighty God. It lies in compromising heavenly principles for earthly recognition. It lies in seeking human approval regardless of the cost. The Lord teaches, **“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets”** (Luke 6:26). There is some praise that we can do without!

The fear of the rulers in John 12:42-43 was rooted in their desire to be men-pleasers. They thought more of the flattering admiration of the hypocritical Pharisees than they did Jehovah. This attitude is contrary to scripture (Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:22; Jude 16). Too many, like the false prophets of ancient Israel, **“walk the way the wind blows”** (cf. Micah 2:11).

THE COMMON FAILURE OF THE HIGH AND POWERFUL

While it is the case that there have been, and are, individuals of great wealth, power, and influence in human society who have served the Lord faithfully, they are the exception and not the rule. More often than not, the selfish, self-centered self-interests of the high and powerful in our world have served to staunch any spiritual inclinations or else have perverted them after a religion of convenience and carnality rather than genuine conviction. Such folk have no real allegiance to God and truth. It is rather to fad and fancy; it is to what is popular among the “elite.” It is vapid and vain.

In our own day we see this being played out with the P.T. Barnum-like approach to religion among our liberal brethren. The “church growth” movement, advocating “community churches” that “downplay” the name of Christ and hype entertainment and “fun” in a pep rally at-

mosphere euphemistically called “praise services” in order to appeal to the “unchurched,” plays into the hands of such a spineless and plastic version of spirituality. The adherents and converts to it have symbolism and no substance. In time of real crisis and persecution such spiritual invalids will be gone. The church in the third and fourth centuries A.D. learned this lesson the hard way! The “community church” folk and their fellow travelers are simply following a path of paganizing the church that led in centuries past to the formation of a syncretistic, secular apostate church. They are “building” their community churches from folks who would have been at home “among the chief rulers.”

The rulers of John 12 simply could not overcome their own vested self-interests that the Pharisees could adversely affect. In them we see the truth of Paul’s words to the Corinthians, **“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called...”** (I Corinthians 1:26ff.). They would not pay the price that might be required for genuine conviction.

In our day some profess Christ with the mouth for such is not yet socially dangerous today, but they deny him with their lives. They will pronounce their faith, but not practice it. Obedience to Christ is too much to expect of them. They refuse to bear such responsibility. They desire only the privileges of Christianity, but none of its duties! Obedience, the keeping of God’s commandments — these things are abhorrent to them. As long as they can “play” at church and feel good about themselves, regardless of what they may practice elsewhere and regardless whether what they practice in their services is sanctioned by God, they are happy with their “religion.” Convenience is king. Entertainment is its consort.

CONCLUSION

John 12:42-43 bears many valuable lessons to us today. Let us learn these lessons, of which I have touched upon but a few. These lessons include: 1) The Failure of the “Faith Only” Doctrine; 2) The Absurdity of Fearing Men; 3) The Danger of Desiring the Praise of Men over the Praise of God, and 4) The Common Failure of the High and Powerful.

Courage is needed to serve the Lord and to confess him openly, especially in a time when the hearts of men wax cold against truth and goodness and when that which is right is spoken evil of by them. May God give us preachers and elders who will not bend to popular themes.

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Recreationalizing Our Children To Death

Jason R. Roberts

The summer season is fast approaching and with it recreational activities and pursuits will be on the rise in the hearts of parents and their children. There is certainly nothing wrong with good, wholesome, recreational activities. Remember, it was Paul who said, “**Bodily exercise**” has some profit to our lives (I Timothy 4:8). However, there is no doubt that we have largely become a people where “**Bodily exercise**” has done more than profit us. It has tragically taken precedence over our spiritual needs and consequently blinded us to our true purpose for existing as God’s people (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 6:33). **Robert R. Taylor Jr.**, could not have expressed the current crisis more accurately when he stated:

We live in an age where people prefer fun over faith, the lake over the Lord, things over the truth, sports over the Savior, gadgets over God, gimmicks over the gospel, laughter over the Lord, recreation over redemption and entertainment over edification.

WHAT THE ISSUE IS NOT

As stated above, we are not opposed to certain forms of recreation. Involving oneself in various types of sporting events and recreational activities is not only good for one’s physical well-being; but is also good for one’s social well-being, because it gives the participant opportunities to interact with others.

WHAT THE ISSUE IS

When does one’s involvement in a recreational activity become a violation of God’s word? Answer—*any time* that activity takes precedence over the kingdom of God. When our Lord said, “**Seek ye first the kingdom of God**” (Matthew 6:33), He did not attach a clause to it that said, “...unless you have a ball game scheduled that evening, or homework, or a final exam the next day.” When Jesus said, “**Seek ye first,**” that is what He meant. The passage does not need *explaining*, the passage needs *believing* and *obeying*.

It needs to be believed and obeyed first in the lives of mom and dad, before their children will ever believe and obey it. If the worship service is not a top priority in the lives of mom and dad—then should we be surprised to see our children adopting the same soul-destructive philosophy when they get older? What about their children? And, what about the succeeding generations to come (cf. II Timothy 2:2; Psalm 78:1-8)?

The first time, we allow our sons and daughters to miss services because of a ball game, a school function or anything else, we (whether we realize it or not) are sowing the seeds that will possibly reap a full-blown harvest of apostasy in their lives. Is it any wonder why 70-75% of our children leave the Lord’s church *prior* to their leaving their homes? Why? It is because they can see right through the lives of their hypocritical parents like they can see through a ladder! **Glenn and Cindy Colley**, in their book, *Your*

Mama Don’t Dance, regarding how some parents consider the importance of faithful attendance to the worship services, succinctly stated:

They have the kids there most of the time, and only choose to miss if there is a really big ball game, or a really big exam in school which needs preparation, or if they have just returned from a really big trip and feel really exhausted. Then they miss. What they don’t realize is that such an approach may be paving the way for their children to quit the church altogether one day. When your children grow up and leave home say for college—how often will they have a really big ball game? Or a really big exam? Or really be tired? Or have another really big reason for choosing not to attend the worship assembly? The answer is every week.” We may have paved the way for our children to leave the church completely without realizing it ...It was on a Tuesday evening during a Gospel Meeting that our daughter Hannah left play rehearsal at 6:55 P.M. to be present for worship. It was an *important* rehearsal, and the director was none too happy about her absence. But it was under these circumstances that her heart was touched as she heard a lesson from God’s Word, and before returning to rehearsal she was baptized into Christ. We cannot measure the eternal difference that a single worship assembly may make (pp. 40A1).

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

While I do not claim to be expert in the field of parental advice concerning these matters; I firmly believe that God has given us some expert advice—some divinely inspired advice which has been made available for all of us whether we have children or not. The time to be considering these important matters and discussing them is not after we have children—the time to do so is before God ever gives them to us.

First, parents need to ask God to forgive them for putting him in second place. When children see an about face in the lives of mom and dad in this area, then, and only then, will their children see the importance of the kingdom of God in their own lives. *Second, parents need to inform their children that they have failed them in this area and are correcting it.* Parents expect their children to inform them when they have done them wrong. Perhaps some parents need to do the same for their children. *Third, parents need to confess their sin publicly before the local congregation.* Absenting oneself from the assembly is not a private sin to be handled between the offender and God. It is a sin of public nature and must be dealt with accordingly. May we be soberly reminded that the duration of time that has transpired between the sin committed to the present hour—regardless of how many weeks or years have passed—does not equal forgiveness in the mind of God.



Someone has well said, "Sin plus the passage of time does not equal forgiveness."

Some people think repenting of their delinquent attendance patterns is equivalent to their showing up again for the worship services. Not true. We are glad they have returned to the building, but they have not returned to the Lord until they ask God to forgive them and when it is publicly confessed before their brethren. Until then, there is still "sin in the camp" that needs to be corrected. **Fourth, their children—they have been baptized need to confess publicly their sin before the local congregation.** In fact, when they see mom and dad first leading the way in this area, it may serve as a springboard for them to do so.

SOME POINTS TO PONDER

It is interesting that many parents see nothing wrong with occasionally missing the worship services for their children's ball games, and the like, but when faced with the following scenarios they immediately see something wrong with it: (1) If it is permissible for one to miss services for his own ball game, would it be logically permissible for someone else to miss services to watch him play his game? What about the whole congregation's showing up at the ball field on Wednesday night? Would you feel comfortable with the local church skipping services and all the members showing up to see you play your game? (2) If it is permissible for one to miss services to attend his basketball game, would it be equally permissible for someone else to stay home and watch a basketball game on television the same night? (3) If a member can miss services for his ball game which was scheduled on Sunday night or Wednesday night what would you think of the elders or the preacher if they missed the same nights to come see you play your game? Would you consider it to be odd or would you be perfectly comfortable with their being there? Does God have different attendance requirements for elders and preachers than He does for the rest of the congregation?

HOW MANY TIMES?

How many times did Adam and Eve have to eat the forbidden fruit to "surely die" (Genesis 3:3)? How many times did Cain have to kill Abel his brother to become a murderer (Genesis 4:8)? How many times does a sow have to return to the mire to become filthy (II Peter 2:22)? How many times does one have to have a sexual affair with one other than his spouse to become an adulterer (Galatians 5:19-21)? How many times did Moses have to disobey God in striking the rock to get water before God refused his entrance into the promise land? How many times do we have to put things, people, or desires before God, before we are displeasing in his sight (Matthew 6:33)? How many times can a Christian forsake the assembly without sinning (Hebrews 10:25)?

"...It is high time to awake out of sleep" (Romans 13:11)!

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Current Events That Concern Christians

Sex Ed. Overhaul, Homosexuals, Hate-Crime Curriculum and Judicial Litmus Tests

Compiled By Mark McWhorter

"We have never had so much sex education, so much availability of free advice, so much ready availability of free contraception, and yet we have got record levels of teenage pregnancies."—Ann Widdecome, secretary for the British Conservative Party, criticizing the Labor Party's plan to reduce teen pregnancy. Central to the plan is a major overhaul of sex education and contraceptive services, which will be publicized more openly and made more accessible (*World*, June 26, 1999, p.14). [Tony Blair is from the same nitch as Bill Clinton. If your plans are making things worse, then obviously more of the same will make it better. The only thing that will bring teen pregnancy down is teaching Biblical morality.—MTM]

.....

A woman accused of trying to kill her unborn child with booze cannot be charged with attempted homicide. The 2nd District Court of Appeals stated, "We are persuaded that the term 'human being'... was not intended to refer to an unborn child and that (the woman's) prenatal conduct does not constitute attempted first-degree reckless injury." The woman was quoted before the incident as saying, "I'm just going to go home and keep drinking and drink myself to death, and I'm going to kill this thing because I don't want it anyways" (*The Washington Times*, May 31-June 6, 1999, p.19). [What could this Court be thinking??!! We need moral and virtuous individuals in the Presidency who will appoint the same type of individuals to our Courts.—MTM]

.....

Deborah Poritz, the chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, who wrote the opinion against the Boy Scouts of America says that the Scouts decision to dismiss James Dale, was "based on little more than prejudice," and "the sad truth is that excluded groups and individuals have been prevented from full participation in the social, economic and political life of our country. The human price of this bigotry has been enormous." Justice Alan Handler concurred with, "One particular stereotype that we renounce today is that homosexuals are inherently immoral. That myth is repudiated by decades of social science data that convincingly establish that being homosexual does not, in itself, derogate from one's ability to participate in and contribute responsibly and positively to society. In short, a lesbian and gay person, merely because he or she is a homosexual, is no more or less likely to be moral than a person who is heterosexual" (*The Washington Times*, August 16-22, 1999, p.4). [The Justices decided to write into law their own morality. Rather than allowing God's higher law to reign they decided that they know what is best for mankind. I would agree that a homosexual is no more likely to steal than a heterosexual. But that does not deter the fact that the homosexual is already immoral by his very sexuality.—MTM]

.....

"It's important for me to speak openly about my sexuality to help educate people. Forty years ago, when there was a lot of anti-Semitism, it would have been important for them to know that I'm Jewish. Today it is not a big deal that I'm Jewish. Where there is prejudice, it is important to be open. Then people can see for themselves that their prejudices are unfounded. It is important for gay people to let the rest of society know the fact of discrimination and

the pain of discrimination." —U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., to *Playboy* magazine, July issue (as reported in *Planet Out* email news service, 8/25/99). [This is a shame to our nation. Frank should not be serving in Congress. And a truly religious Jew would never have his name associated with a pornographic magazine. Frank is fortunate he lives today rather than 3000 years ago. He would have been stoned to death by the faithful of his own people.—MTM]



.....

The Child Safety and Youth Violence Prevention Act of 1999 includes a potluck of federal programs designed to prevent future Eric Harris and Dylan Klebolds. One of the programs is Healing the Hate, developed jointly by the Department of Justice and the Education Department. It bills itself as a "national hate-crime prevention curriculum for middle schools." Its introduction condemns "prejudice and contempt cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction.... They have nearly destroyed us in the past. They plague us still. They fuel the fanaticism of terror." The manual defines "institutionalized prejudice" as coming in part from "religious organizations" (*World*, June 26, 1999, p. 22). [The Clinton Administration is working hard at bringing doubt of religious belief into the classroom. They believe a secular utopia is possible. True Biblical love erases all racism.—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]

.....

Rather than simply ask whether an applicant for the bench can enforce the law, California Gov. Gray Davis' judicial appointments secretary is asking would-be judges a series of personal questions on issues from abortion to the death penalty. A spokesman says Davis wants judges who represent his views on the issues that got him elected. But critics worry that the governor may be imposing a litmus test that will undermine the independence of the judiciary (The Recorder as reported in Legal News Network email service, 7/22/99). [The litmus test is always thrown up when this type of activity occurs. It shows a complete lack of knowledge or intentional misrepresentation of what the Founding Fathers considered a litmus test. The litmus test refers to making it mandatory that a prospective judge or representative be a member of a particular religious body, i.e. Methodist or Baptist. Without asking about a man's religious beliefs one would never know if he would make right decisions in moral matters. It makes man's law higher than God's.—MTM]

—420 Chula Vista Road
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TWO IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Paul Vaughn

The importance of the written word is beyond measure. God chose the written word to communicate his will to man. Paul said, "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 3:16, 17). The scriptures are all sufficient to instruct man in the knowledge about God and his will. Today God reveals his will only through Jesus Christ and he put all the power in words of the New Testament. "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).

In the history of the Restoration Movement there are two documents that stand out as beacons pointing back to the Bible. They are "The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery" and the "Declaration and Address." The compelling and essential thing that stands out about these two documents is that the writers had no desire to write a creed, but wrote to point people back to the Bible, the Bible alone!

In this article we will only look at a few of the arguments of each of these two very important documents. It is suggested that you acquire a copy of each and read them.

"THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERY"

The Springfield Presbytery was formed when Barton W. Stone, Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, and John Thompson withdrew themselves from the Synod of Kentucky. In less than a year, those who composed the Springfield Presbytery saw the unscriptural nature of the organization they had formed. The group met to dissolve their organization and wrote the Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery on June 28, 1804. Following are two of the twelve resolutions that we will note in this article. It is also worthy of mention that this document is enjoyably ironical.

Item. We will, that this body (Springfield Presbytery, PV.), be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

Item. We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

It is plainly and simply seen that the writers of the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery had the desire to return to the pattern of the church given in the New Testament. It is noted that the above five men plus **David Purviance** were signers of this important document.

DECLARATION AND ADDRESS

The Christian Association of Washington was formed during a meeting at the headwaters of Buffalo Creek on August 17, 1809. **Thomas Campbell** was an associate of this group. After that meeting, Campbell began to write the Declaration and Address which was presented and accepted by the group on September 7, 1809. Campbell and his associates were working their way out of denominationalism at this time and had not come to see the error of a "Christian Association."

The Declaration and Address helped to point people back to the Bible. It was Campbell's desire to do away with the creeds of men. This can be seen in the following quote.

Our desire, therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that, rejecting human opinions and the inventions (creeds) of men as of any authority, or as having any place in the church of God, we might forever cease from further contentions about such things returning to and holding fast by the original standard; taking the Divine word alone for our rule....

There are thirteen propositions in the Declaration Address below are portions from two of them.

Prop. 1. That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

Prop. 4. ...The New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline, and government of the Old Testament Church, and the particular duties of its members.

Before and during the lives of Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell, sectarianism and denominationalism per-

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verted the scriptures to their own destruction. The same is true today! The writing of creeds, as the authorities in religion, has brought more division with the result being every man having his own church and beliefs.

The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery and The Declaration and Address declared that Christianity is undenominational and the Bible is the only sure guide for man to follow. These two documents are different from creeds because they could direct the heart of man

to God, honoring Jesus as the Sovereign Ruler in the church of Christ. It is interesting that these men could see this principle almost two hundred years ago, coming out of denominationalism. Yet, there are some in the church of Christ today who have forgotten this very important lesson and are trying to go back into denominationalism.

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Seeing It Helps Saying It

The Cafeteria Approach To Christianity

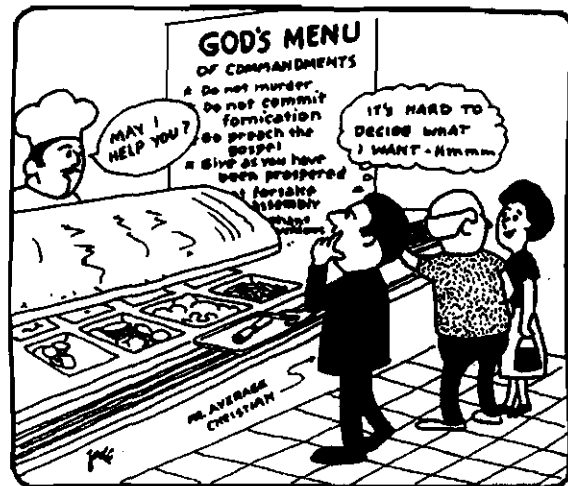
Jodie Boren

In a cafeteria there is a wide variety of salads, entrees, vegetables, breads, desserts, and drinks. As you go through the line you see the various items and select only those you want. This has great appeal for satisfying our physical hunger, but this approach to God's commandments will not feed one's spiritual body and will doom one's soul to perdition.



We cannot afford to be selective in the commandments of God we choose to obey. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Salvation is only to those who obey (Hebrews 5:9). Which of our Lord's commandments can we fail to keep and still be pleasing to him? Most of us would rise up in holy indignation if someone suggested it was not necessary to assemble on the first day of the week to worship God. We look forward to the coming together with those of like faith. Those great songs of Zion stir our hearts and the communion service is a sobering reminder of Jesus' sacrifice for which we are so thankful. If the preacher does not preach too long, we are comforted by his good sermon—especially if he hits the alien sinner hard with the gospel plan of salvation. But if he starts talking about our Lord's command to go and teach the lost, the great majority of us turn on our selective cafeteria mode and tune him out.

Did the Holy Spirit have us in mind when he had John pen the following words, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4). In failing to obey this command to teach, are we any less guilty than the one who has not obeyed our Lord's command to be baptized? When the Bible speaks of obedience, no where does God leave the decision up to us as to whether we want to obey only certain commandments. The great principle laid down in Deuteronomy 12:32 is still in effect today under the law of Christ. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Jesus said it like this, "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" (Matthew 7:21).



The great commission is perhaps Jesus' most ignored commandment. A teacher recently told a small west Texas congregation that if a farmer puts gasoline in his tractor, you know he is planning to use it. He then told the congregation that their baptistry was dry and had been dry for months and it was obvious, therefore, they had no intention of using it. How sad! We preach the necessity of obedience until our denominational friends mistakenly believe we teach salvation by commandment keeping. We preach the truth of God's word but obey only those commands that we are comfortable with and that requires but little effort. Because of this we could easily make the words of our Lord applicable to the situation today by substituting the 'average Christian' for the 'scribes and Pharisees'. Then the Lord would say to the whole world, "All therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3).

Whether it is the Lord's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel—or whether it is his command to give—or whether it is his command to visit the fatherless and the widows—or whichever commandment it is, as his servants ours is not to question or make a choice but to obey. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28). "To obey is better than sacrifice" (I Samuel 15:22).

—2557 Campus Court
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THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

- A. The book of Philemon was written by Paul
 - 1. Written about 62-63 AD
 - 2. Written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
- B. The book of Philemon is the only strictly private letter in the New Testament.
 - 1. The letters written to Timothy and Titus were written to individuals, but dealt with matters that involved the whole church.
 - 2. The matters in the book of Philemon involve two people, but still have valuable lessons for us today.
- C. The book of Philemon centers on a request for Philemon to receive a runaway slave, named Onesimus.
- D. In this epistle we will find:
 - 1. A Great Christian Man: Philemon (vs. 1-7)
 - 2. A Man Greatly Changed: Onesimus (vs. 8-21)

II. Discussion

- A. A Great Christian Man: Philemon (vs. 1-7).
 - 1. Philemon was a man of dedication (vs. 1-2).
 - a. Philemon was so committed to Christ that he was counted "beloved" by Paul himself.
 - b. Philemon was so committed to Christ that he was a laborer for Christ.
 - c. Philemon was so committed to Christ that he rooted his family in Christ.
 - d. Philemon was so committed to Christ that he opened his home to the church.
 - 2. Philemon was a testimony of love and faith (vs. 4-5, 7).
 - a. Philemon's testimony of love and faith was so strong that Paul would thank God for him—not just now or then, but "always".
 - b. Philemon's life was steeped in love and faith and it showed—it was easily seen.
 - 3. Philemon was one who manifested his faith (v. 6)
 - a. Paul prayed that Philemon would excel in this area even more.
 - b. Acts 4:20; II Timothy 2:2; I John 1:3
- B. A Man Greatly Changed: Onesimus (vs. 8-21)
 - 1. This section is a picture of a man greatly changed—changed by Christ. It shows us the difference that conversion should make in a life and just how we should receive a person who has been converted.
 - 2. Paul wanted to make a special request of Philemon (vs. 8-9).
 - a. Paul is telling Philemon that he has the right to demand that he grant this request.
 - b. But, instead, Paul is going to ask that he do the proper thing.
 - c. Paul implies here that what he is about to ask, was proper to be done in the circumstances—but he does not put it on that ground, but rather asks it as a personal favor. Here is a lesson learned in tact ... Colossians 4:6.
 - 3. Onesimus had become a Christian (vs. 10-11).
 - a. While Paul was in prison he converted Onesimus.

- b. Onesimus was a runaway slave, and while in that rebellious state he was unprofitable to Philemon. But now, he profitable to both Paul and Philemon.
 - c. No matter how low a person has sunk, no matter how spiritually unprofitable they may have been in the past—they can change all that.
 - d. Jesus can change a person and make him or her the most useful person in the world.
 - 1) II Corinthians 5:17
 - 2) Galatians 3:27
- 4. Onesimus was willing to face his past in order to right his wrong (vs. 12-14).
 - a. Here we have clear evidence that the heart of Onesimus had been truly converted to Christ. He wanted to return and right the wrong he had done.
 - b. Note how dear Onesimus was to Paul—he said he is sending a part of his own heart to Philemon.
 - c. We learn a very valuable lesson in all of this, and that is we need to make restitution, to right whatever wrong has been done—in so far as it is humanly possible.
 - 1) Leviticus 6:4
 - 2) Proverbs 6:31
 - 5. Onesimus was a changed man (vs. 15-16).
 - a. Paul seems to say here that it may be the providence of God that things worked out as they did.
 - b. Onesimus is no longer just a servant to Philemon, but a brother.
 - 6. Onesimus was to be received and trusted as much as Paul (vs. 17-21).
 - a. Paul asks Philemon to receive a slave who was a lawless thief just as he would receive himself.
 - b. A very important lesson we need to learn is that no matter how low or base, useless and unprofitable, sinful and derelict one had become—they should not be shunned after getting their life right with the Lord.
 - c. Paul had confidence that Philemon would do the right thing—and that he would even go the extra mile (v. 21).



III. Conclusion

- A. Valuable lessons
 - 1. Paul was a model of courtesy.
 - 2. Tact is important in getting the desired result.
 - 3. Good examples are important.
 - 4. Look for the good in situations.
 - 5. Do what is right—go the extra mile.
 - 6. Receive a penitent sinner.
- B. Let us apply these truths to our lives.

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One Woman's Perspective

BEAUTY FROM WITHIN

Annette B. Cates

I remember an advertisement used by One-a-Day Vitamins several years ago. It appeared in numerous women's magazines and featured a close-up of a woman with her hair in huge rollers and a blue "mud" pack on her face. The caption read, "So you think it all happens on the outside?" (or words to that effect.) The point, of course, was to sell their product, but I can also see a spiritual application. True beauty comes from within. "...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Let us now consider a few of the inner qualities that make a woman truly beautiful.

INNER QUALITIES

Beauty from within comes from a life of purity (Matthew 5:8; Philippians 4:8; I Timothy 5:22). We are influenced by the books we read, the television or movies we see, the jokes we hear and tell, for "**Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh**" (Matthew 12:34). We can be defiled as surely by that which enters the mind as we can by ingesting poison. Poison does not have to be taken all at once in order to kill. A little bit at a time builds up until death follows. An "R" or "X" movie here, a dirty joke there, also builds up to destroy the soul. "**Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life**" (Proverbs 4:23). An old French proverb says, "Beauty without virtue is a flower without perfume." The beauty of purity is seen through the way we conduct ourselves morally.

Beauty from within comes from a life of contentment. "...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Grumbling, complaining, and nagging spoil the visage of a woman who would otherwise be beautiful. It has been said that people who complain do not keep it to themselves. Even if they say not a word about their discontent, it shows in their speech, slumped shoulders, and the frown instead of a smile. The beauty of contentment comes through in our attitudes, appearance, and voice.

Beauty from within comes from a life of selflessness. "**And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another...**" (Ephesians 4:32). Kindness toward others was a characteristic of the Worthy Woman (Proverbs 31:26). It is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and one of the "Christian graces" of II Peter 1:7. Today's society has been called the "me generation" with people demanding their own personal "rights" at the expense of everyone else. Self-indulgence takes precedence. But, the Bible way is different. By bearing one another's burdens, we "**fulfill the law of Christ**" (Galatians 6:20). When we concentrate on the needs of others, we clothe ourselves in good works and the beauty of selflessness marks our service.

Beauty from within comes from a life of humility. The importance of this quality is seen in James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5, "**...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**" Jesus tells us to humble ourselves and become as little children (Matthew 18:4). In fact, we cannot obey God without submitting our will to his. Humility is the opposite of pride, which "**goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall**" (Proverbs 16:18). The contrast between humility and pride is seen in the world's attitude and God's attitude. The world judges us by who serves us while God looks at whom we have served. Egotistical, self-promoting individuals may succeed in today's business and social realms, but are looked upon by God with disdain as he did toward Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:8-32) and Haman (Esther 8, 9). We are told to "**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time**" (I Peter 5:6). The beauty of humility is seen in our relationships with others and with God.

TIME CHANGES PHYSICAL IDEALS

Physical ideals change with time. Styles go out of date and fads come and go. Earlier in this century full figures and pale complexions were admired, and thought to indicate a life of luxury, well-fed and never having to toil in the sun. The opposite of this became popular in the 1950's, culminating in the "Twiggy" look of the 1960's and deep tans that represented such an easy life that all one had to do was to lie out in the sun all day. If there is no deeper basis for one's happiness, then all that is left is an empty facade. The only beauty that truly endures comes from within, cultivating qualities of beauty that conform to God's eternal standard (II Corinthians 4:16).

Obviously, we all want to be as attractive as possible, but physical beauty is not a quality necessary for salvation! Fortunately, service to God does not depend on one's height, weight, or hair color. There are two verses that sum up the proper role of beauty. "**Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised**" (Proverbs 31:30). "**But Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you**" (Matthew 5:30). As Christian women, let us seek him first, placing our emphasis on the inner qualities that make us truly beautiful.

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LEADERSHIP OR LORDSHIP?

Noah Hackworth

While these two words are for the most part used with reference to elders, there is apparently a great deal of confusion over their meaning, with no little amount of the confusion coming from the uninformed in our brotherhood. There are those who seem to think that leadership is synonymous with lordship, that leadership cannot be exercised or decisions made without "lording it over" others, namely the flock. To begin with it ought to be recognized that the apostle Peter distinguishes between the two concepts and shows plainly that leadership can be exercised without lordship. Hear him: **"Tend the flock of God 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"** (I Peter 5:2). In this passage leadership is unequivocally affirmed while lordship is strongly condemned.

The lordship-leadership controversy, for the most part, comes mainly from small groups of disgruntled brethren who are supported by a breed of preachers who are unwilling to place themselves under the authority of anyone, especially elders. In so doing they place themselves in a precarious situation because they are fighting against what is authorized by the Holy Spirit when he said, **"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge"** (Titus 1:5).

"Wanting" is the translation of the Greek term *leiponta* which refers to "the things remaining or lacking." The implication of this passage is that every congregation of the Lord's people should desire godly elders to take the lead and exercise the oversight of the Lord's affairs. To desire less than this is to fight against God (cf. Acts 5:39).

WHEN IS IT LORDSHIP?

The idea of lordship always starts in an individual's own mind. A brother who crosses over the line that separates lordship and leadership will usually be a brother who has misunderstood and/or assumed too much regarding the word *authority*. This is why some men seem to be on a "power trip" which has caused them to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Romans 12:3). This was obviously in the Lord's mind when He said, **"...Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you..."** (Matthew 20:25-26). This passage cannot be used to negate the fact that elders have authority delegated to them by the Lord with an obligation to use it (*authority*) without "lording it over anyone." The Greek word *exousia* means "the right to act" (cf. John 1:12). If no follower of the Lord could have *exousia* then Paul did not and could not have *exousia*, but Paul did have *exousia* (II Corinthians 10:8); so did various other NT characters. Elders have *exousia* as seen in the fact that they are to "feed" the church (Acts 20:28) and **"tend the flock"** (I Peter 5:2). Lordship occurs when elders never, under any

circumstances or conditions, seek input from the flock which they oversee.

Lordship occurs when elders are completely oblivious to the feelings of the flock which they lead. Lordship occurs when elders will never, under any circumstances and/or conditions change their minds. Lordship occurs when elders imply or say, "Don't do as we do, do as we say." Lordship occurs when elders become intoxicated with the "power" syndrome. Lordship occurs when elders will retain an unsound or liberal preacher in spite of membership objections. Lordship occurs when elders refuse to resign even though they have become physically and/or mentally incapacitated.



WHEN IS IT LEADERSHIP?

Leadership occurs when elders oversee the flock; when they accept their responsibility and perform their God-appointed obligations (I Peter 5:1-5). It is leadership when the flock of God is fed, which involves protection, guidance, guarding, governing, securing it from enemies, and directing its affairs so as to promote its edification and peace (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). Leadership is when elders protect the flock from false teachers, which is precisely what Paul told the Ephesian elders to do (Acts 20:29-30). It is biblical leadership when elders watch and admonish the flock (Acts 20:31; I Thessalonians 5:12). It is leadership when elders direct the spiritual and/or physical affairs of the congregation (Acts 11:20-30). It is leadership when elders lead in the settlement of doctrinal matters and disputes (Acts 15:1, 6, 22). Leadership is demonstrated when the elders take the lead in administering discipline (I Corinthians 5:4; Thessalonians 3:6). It is leadership when elders teach the word of God to the flock they oversee, and when they see that the right people occupy the classrooms.

Elders are obligated to lead not lord, and most elders know this. They must know the difference and be able to exercise the one without the other. The elders are obligated to "call the shots" as one preacher put it. They have the right to make decisions in matters of expediency. They have the right and the obligation to (1) carry out the generics of the gospel, (2) see that the Lord's will is carried out in legislated matters and (3) make decisions in matters of judgment. Surely most of us realize that the greater percent of the decisions required of the elders involve judgment in the areas of expediency, and since this is the case, if there are members who rebel against this arrangement, they should know they are rebelling against God (Hebrews 13:17). Congregations that have elders or bishops who understand the concept of leadership, and exercise it on a continual basis, truly have great and godly men among them.

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NOTES AND QUOTES...

BIBLE QUEST 2000

The Madisonville Church of Christ and the Poole Church of Christ are happy to report the successful launch of a bold new work for the youth in the Lord's church. An annual Bible knowledge bowl, known as BIBLE QUEST was instituted last year as young people from churches in Kentucky and Tennessee gathered for BIBLE QUEST '99. Unique from other Bible bowls in that only reliable translations of the Bible were used, and that the questions were concerned only with the participant's knowledge of the text, the event was received enthusiastically by children and adults, alike. This year, BIBLE QUEST 2000 is scheduled for August 5th. We would like to invite young people from any congregation in the brotherhood to come and participate. We will even provide accommodations for youth groups that must travel great distances. For information about how to register, contact the Madisonville Church of Christ, 1035 North Main Street, Madisonville, Kentucky, 42431, or contact the Poole Church of Christ, P. O. Box 55, Poole, Kentucky, 42444. You may call the Madisonville Church of Christ at (270) 821-3544, or the Poole Church of Christ at (270) 639-5541. Also, you may find more information on the web site of the Madisonville Church of Christ at <http://www.homestead.com/mvcofc>.

Wayne D. Tague, of Burleson, Texas, during his lifetime, was one of the strongest supporters of our preacher-teacher-training work at Four Seas College, in Singapore—giving \$150.00 each month in his later years. Imagine our astonishment, when he died, that he, also, had named Four Seas College in his will! It truly helps.

WHO KNOCKED DOWN THE WALLS OF JERICHO?

A preacher had moved to a new congregation to preach. He decided to visit each Bible class. He went into a class of youngsters, and asked them, "Who knocked down the walls of Jericho?"

One boy said, "Preacher, I didn't do it."

That shocked the preacher and he turned to the teacher.

She said, "Preacher, Johnny is an honest boy, and if he said he didn't do it, then you can take his word for it."

Now the preacher was just flabbergasted, so he went to the elders with the matter. They heard his tale and was told they thought he was making too much over the incident.

Then they told him that the thing for him to do was find out the amount of the damage done, and they would write a check to cover it all!

Mrs. Izyal Stout, of Grove, Oklahoma, is another one who loves to help our missionary work around the world—usually with checks of \$200.00 to \$250.00. We are truly grateful.

Inclosing a check for \$10.00, sister Lois X. Steale, of Chardon, Ohio, saying, "Not much, but use it wherever you think best.

Jim & Jane Stephens, of Angleton, Texas, wrote, saying, "Sorry we have been unable to help for a while. However, we are sending \$100.00 this time to be used wherever it is needed."

Margaret E. Spear, of Canon City, Colorado, continued supporting our work at the rate of \$50.00 each month until she died at past 90 years of age.

Herman J. Smith, of Jackson, Tennessee, sent \$25.00 toward our work in Russia.

In whatever way we try to extend our Master's cause around the world, Russel & Grace Thompson, of Mesa, Arizona, always send to our support. So do Albert & June Shroades, of Newell, West Virginia. Even after retiring, and being on Social Security, these sent \$10.00, saying, "We take comfort that our Lord can use the little bit as well as the double-handful...if it is from a cheerful giver."

Margaret Sellers, of Obion, Tennessee, enclosed \$10.00, saying, "Maybe this will help a bit. So thankful some brethren are doing this good work and know it is with God's blessing, too."

George & Lorine Qualls, of White Bluff, Tennessee, jointly sent \$50.00 each month to our missionary support during their final years. Now both of them have passed from this life and are sorely missed.

In one of their letters toward the end, they wrote, "Should our check fail to show up anytime, just know I'm slipping—or broke." We always knew we could count on them.

In current theological literature we have to wade through a sea of words giving the impression of learning but contributing little to our understanding.

Most of us have learned more from the writings of the last century than from most of the writings of this century.

Hazel Powell, of Cincinnati, Ohio, always sends \$15.00, usually with an encouraging note attached. In one of them she wrote, "Love and prayers for all those working so diligently in the greatest cause on earth." In another she said, "I wish I could increase my amount tenfold...! especially am encouraged by your getting Contending for the Faith to the people."

Joe & Ruth Paschal, of Manchester, Tennessee, have helped us ever since before we first went overseas as missionaries in 1955—usually at the rate of \$50.00 to \$100.00 each time.

E. L. Whitaker, who preached to the Knight Arnold congregation, in Memphis, Tennessee, until he died, related Sidney White telling of a person who needed to repent and return to God, saying, "Preacher, I'm going to surprise you one day."

White said, "I hope God does not surprise you before you surprise me."

STRENGTH IN SMALLNESS

Nails are tiny things, but they hold buildings together. Springs are tiny things, but they feed tremendous streams. Helms are tiny things, but they govern great ships.

A thought, a word, a smile, a frown, a deed—these are tiny things, but they are tremendous things for good or evil. Watch the little things, and the big things will take care of themselves.

If it's Bible, PREACH IT!

Asghar Ali, of Lahore, Pakistan, lives in a Moslem country. One would suppose that going from there to another Moslem country would be almost a matter of course. However, when he sought a visa so he could attend our Asian Bible Lectureship, in Indonesia, to his dismay he learned it was not all that simple.

"Even this time I could not get the visa stamped in my passport," he reported. "Therefore, it seems I won't be able to participate in the lectureship in Indonesia. I sent an e-mail to brother Steve Waller letting him know the problem and telling him that he should arrange for someone in my place. He sent me the e-mail telling me that he had forwarded the e-mail to one of the local brethren who would be able to help me in this connection. Yesterday I sent that Indonesian brother an e-mail asking him to let me know if he would be able to help me get the visa. If so, I would be able to come for the Asia Lectureship..."

"May God bless all of you who are participating in the lectureship and through you build up the saints in Indonesia."

[NOTE: "It always distresses me when I think how much you have to suffer seemingly so unnecessarily," I replied in part.

"When the authorities will not let you travel even to another Muslim country, such as Indonesia, this is indeed hard for some of us to understand. No doubt it is their way of punishing you for becoming and being a Christian. The Lord will even this out on the last great day.

"Even though we understand your being unable to be with us for the Lectureship in Indonesia without a visa, we shall miss you..." IYR Jr.]

DIRECTORY OF CHURCHES

—Alabama—

Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Tel. (256) 796-6802, (205) 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.

—England—

England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Brian Chadwick, Tel. 01223 210101. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

Peterborough—Church of Christ, meeting at the Manor Farm Community Centre, Eye, Peterborough. BS 10 a.m., BB 11 a.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Contact evangelist Danny Douglas; Email: D.Douglas@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel:01144-1733-315907 or Keith Sisman: K.Sisman@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel: 01144-1487-710552.

—Florida—

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, tel. (850) 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-cocfc@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. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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. 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. David Dalton, 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.

Bryan/College Station—Church of Christ, Sunday 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.; Call for location (409) 731-1230 or (409) 589-3725; Email: jasonr@alpha1.net.

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 Spring Bible Institute and the SBI 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.

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

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.

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The Last Word...

LEANING ON THE HOE HANDLE

Eddie Whitten

"But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money" (Matthew 25:18). Jesus told his disciples about the kingdom of heaven. He likened it to the man who gave talents to each of three of his servants. To one he gave five talents, to another he gave two talents and to the third he gave one talent. The first two servants put their talents to use for their master so that when he returned he would receive the profit from their investments. They received the approval of their master when he returned. The third servant hid his talent and made no profit for his master. He received condemnation for not putting his talent to use. It was not that he had misused his talent, it was just that he had done nothing with it. There were two things wrong with his action. First, he was afraid. He said, "And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine" (v. 25). The sec-

ond thing wrong was that his master classified him as wicked and slothful (v. 26).

THE HOE HANDLE

There was a time in our country when there was a great depression. It was a hard time for most people. Extreme measures were implemented to provide jobs for people, yet many found themselves at the mercy of others for their existence. Whatever works a man could find, however meager, at least provided a living for him and his family. There was very little equipment available to the ordinary worker during that time. Most of the cultivation was done manually. The pick and shovel and the hoe were the main tools used for most jobs. It was hard work and there were many lazy, indifferent men, who spent most



of the time leaning on the hoe handle, yet received a day's pay. They were profiting from the work of others.

Times have changed since those hard days. Most people have a much easier life now in many ways. The era of electronics and automation have made so much difference in the way one can provide for his family. Of course, that responsibility still rests on the shoulders of every family head. Some things cannot change. But, we still have many who lean on the hoe handle, figuratively, and let others do most of the work. Industry loses millions of dollars each year because of those who do not help carry the load.

THE SPIRITUAL HOE HANDLE

There is another area in which we see the same attitude. Spiritually speaking, there are many people in the church who "show up" on Sunday mornings for worship and are seen no more until the next Sunday morning. The idea of working in the kingdom is completely foreign to their thinking. Their attitude is "Let someone else do the work while I lean on my spiritual hoe handle!" They want the benefits of the church, but are unwilling to contribute to its success. They become spiritual parasites, feeding off of the work of others as if they were going to reap the benefits of their labors.

It is possible that all the blame for such attitudes does not fall entirely on the one who neglects his work in the kingdom. A person enters the kingdom of God through his obedience to the gospel of Christ. He understands what he must do to be saved. The Lord adds him to the church when his obedience is culminated in baptism. Now he is eager and anxious to get to work but there is no encouragement or instruction on the part of the elders or preacher. His enthusiasm is not channeled to productive efforts in any quarter and he soon finds himself leaning on a hoe handle, spiritually, doing nothing. The talent he has goes to waste and is not profitable to the kingdom of God. As time goes by, idleness becomes his norm and what could have been a real worker in the kingdom is lost to the detriment to the souls of others.

Fear conquers the heart of the weak. Whether one is a "new convert" or has been in the church for years, fear strikes at the heart of those not well grounded in the faith.

The lack of knowledge defeats the majority who could otherwise do great work in the kingdom. The very idea of entering into a dialogue with someone about a spiritual matter scares many into leaning on the spiritual hoe handle! It is much easier to let someone else do the arguing than to study to know how to answer every man (I Peter 3:15). For him who can find so many other things to do and let his study of the Bible go wanting, the stark reality of eternity looms ever closer. He is slothful toward God and the knowledge of his word. Paul admonished to "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).

CONCLUSION

The work of the Lord in the advancement of his kingdom can be accomplished only through the concerted efforts of every member. Souls are at stake and the talent of every individual is sorely needed to reach the lost. There are many workers striving to do the work given us by the Master. Some are five-talent people; some are two-talent people. They are doing the best they can and will hear the master's voice in commendation. There are also too many one-talent people who are either (1) afraid to work, (2) not encouraged to work, or (3) who are too slothful to work. They are leaning on the spiritual hoe handle of idleness. They will hear the condemning voice of the master. Do not be one of them!

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

RECOMMENDED READING: ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Gary W. Summers

Roman Catholicism may be one of the most important lectureship books published by brethren in recent years. Not only is the subject matter of vital interest in today's world, but it drew a great deal of attention in Spring, Texas the last few days of February. (See article by Spring elders on page 3.)

The reason that this book is so valuable is that it is the first major work to examine the teachings of Roman Catholicism in almost four decades, and there have been a number of changes in the Catholic Church since then. The writers of the chapters look at some of the old teachings, many of which were established by the *Council of Trent* (1545-63), as well as some of their new policies, as set forth in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in 1994.

HISTORICAL SECTIONS

The book begins with three historical sections that are worth the price of the book all by themselves. "Apostasy in the Church" discusses what happened in the first few centuries after the establishment of the church; it discusses the influence that **Constantine** had on the church, as well as the *Council of Nicaea* (325). Included are sections on Gnosticism, Montanism, and Ebionitism. The origins of "holy water," infant baptism, and the use of mechanical instruments of music are explained. The second historical chapter traces the Roman Church from A.D. 700 to 1500. This "Dark Age" period outlines some of the problems and conflicts within the papacy and between the papacy and civil government. The Crusades are noticed, and the chapter closes with the beginnings of the Reformation. The third historical summary looks at the Catholic Church from 1500 to the present day. **Martin Luther** played an important role in the changes that soon took place, which

prompted the Catholic Counter Reformation during the close of the 16th century. Various councils and popes are highlighted with respect to their accomplishments and significance.

MARIOLATRY, APOSTASY AND THE APOCRYPHA

Chapter 4 deals with Mariolatry, the worship of **Mary**. Catholics do not like this term; they prefer Mariology (93). But the fact is that they do venerate and worship **Mary**. This material will provoke one to think (101-102). The chapter following it deals with some of the worship and liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. The use of relics and the rosary are described and analyzed (125-29). An even fuller treatment of these two subjects is found in the next chapter, along with a look at Catholic holidays and feasts.

It has been claimed in debates that the New Testament does not predict any apostasy of the church; so there is a chapter devoted to that subject. It is then followed by one which emphasizes some of the differences between the first century church and the Roman Catholic Church. There is a vast difference between the two in organization, since the Bible does not mention cardinals or popes. Numerous discrepancies in doctrine can also be cited; in fact, similarities might be more difficult to find. Nearly every New Testament teaching has been changed or altered in some way.

One question that many have wondered about concerns "The Apocrypha: Is It Part of the Bible?" What are these books which the Catholic Church has in their Bible? Do they belong there? Why or why not? This thorough chapter leaves no doubt concerning these books.

Scarcely could a subject be more pertinent than a comparison of the "Standard of Authority for the Catholic Church and for the Lord's Church." Probably, it is no sur-

(Continued On Page 4)

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Editorial...

WHO IS IN AUTHORITY?

Recently I read where a person took the position that if at any time or any place a woman imparted Bible knowledge to a man she was by such action necessarily exercising dominion over him and thereby in violation of I Timothy 2:12. If that were the case, a woman could not by her remarks in a Bible class enlighten the male members of the class on some scripture. A wife could not enlighten her husband regarding the meaning of scripture. In fact, no woman anywhere or at anytime could engage in the discussion of the Bible if men were present, lest she risk saying something that might enlighten one of the men regarding the meaning of some scripture. She could not write a letter to her adult son and refer to the scriptures lest she impart biblical information to him. If a man asked her what to do to be saved she could not tell him. It would be a sin for a man to read any religious article, tract, or book written by a woman. Indeed, a grown man could not listen to his aged mother sing a gospel song lest the words of the song enlighten him and, thereby, she would exercise dominion over him.

WHAT IS REALLY AFFIRMED

One who holds such a view is really affirming the following proposition: "The scriptures teach that under any and all circumstances it is a sin for a female to impart biblical knowledge to an adult male." Therefore, if she writes a religious article only women may read the article. Furthermore, that being the case, such a person would be forced to affirm: "The scriptures teach that it is a sin for an adult male to read any religious literature produced by a woman."

The problem with such thinking is this: it equates "imparting of information" by a woman to a man with "exercising dominion over the man." But such is not necessarily the case. That is obvious from the teaching of Apollos done by Aquila and Priscilla. Priscilla taught Apollos in such a way as not to exercise dominion over him.

It does no good (it possibly does a great amount of harm) to say Aquila and Priscilla's teaching of Apollos has no bearing on this study because Apollos was not a Christian. One who holds such a view is affirming far more than one realizes. Does such a one not understand that he is affirming that the scriptures teach that Christian women may exercise dominion over non-Christian adult males in teaching them the truth of the gospel? By this erroneous logic a Christian woman could preach the gospel to a thousand adult males in one assembly—as long as all them are not

Christians. Who believes it? Indeed, I Timothy 2:12 covers the Christian woman's relationship to non-Christian and well as Christian adult males. Why is this the case? Because all persons (in and out of the church) are amenable to the perfect law of liberty (Matthew 28:18; James 1:25; John 12:48).

WHAT GOD FORBIDS

Indeed, for a woman to exercise dominion over a male in the process of her imparting Bible knowledge to him there must be some other element involved. What is it? The answer: a woman must be in a position of controlling the man. Likewise, the adult male must be subservient to the woman. He must be submissive to her as the one who leads, directs and guides him. Such inspiration forbids (I Timothy 2:12). Thus, we have male song leaders. However, in the assembly lead by the male song leader women are singing. As they sing they are "teaching and admonishing" all that

hear them—including any adult males who are found in most of our assemblies (Colossians 3:16). Moreover, these Christian sisters are not in a leading and controlling relationship to the adult males who are taught by them. It is the male song leader who occupies that position. Thus, they teach adult males without violating I Timothy 2:12.

All other things being scripturally equal, it is obvious by this biblical instruction and our compliance thereto that the mere impartation of knowledge by a woman to an adult male does not in and of itself alone constitute a woman exercising dominion over a man. Hence, there is no sin necessarily inhering in a religious article written by a woman for the public to study. Husbands, have your wives ever enlightened you on a religious subject?

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

FROM THE ELDERS OF THE SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST REGARDING OUR UPCOMING DEBATE ON CATHOLICISM

Our recent annual *Spring Bible Institute Lectureship* (formerly *Houston College of the Bible Lectures*) dealt with the topic of Catholicism. [See Gary Summers review of the book in this issue of *CFTF*—Editor-in-Chief] We were greatly pleased at the results of the lectureship. In advertising for the lectures we sent out 15,000 graphic brochures to as many addresses. Indeed, we stirred up much of the public not only in Spring, but also throughout the greater Houston area. Due to the mailing numerous phone calls came to us from Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Most of these phone calls came from Catholics.

ROMAN CATHOLICS AND OTHERS PROTEST LECTURES

The Catholic Diocese turned us into the *Anti-Defamation League* and they contacted us by mail. Also, a Catholic civil and religious rights group sent our lecture brochure to a reporter from *Newsday*, a daily paper in New York City. This was an effort to link us with politics. When the *Newsday* reporter phoned the church during the lectures David Brown spoke to the reporter. Having understood the nature of the lectures, the reporter realized that our lectures on Catholicism were not politically motivated. Moreover, the *Christian Coalition* phoned us protesting the lectureship. Kenneth Cohn took the phone call. Cohn asked the caller if he thought that believers in Christ had to believe alike. No, the caller replied. Cohn then read First Corinthians 1:10 to the caller. His only reply to Cohn was that he did not have time to argue with Cohn. Cohn reminded the caller that as a representative of the *Christian Coalition* he made the phone call to the Spring Church of Christ, not the other way around. At that point the so-called

Christian Coalition representative terminated the phone conversation.

Several Catholics were in daily attendance at the lectures. For the most part these Catholics were a part of a "lay group" who make it their business to defend Catholic doctrine. These people tried to distribute literature and did engage in numerous discussions with different brethren, including some of our lectureship speakers. As the Catholic priests were incensed because they could not speak at our lectures, so were they. They were candidly told that this was not their property and thus we would control our own lectures regardless of what they thought. They also desired to debate us. They were informed that we were in contact with a Catholic priest who had agreed to debate and until that was settled one way or the other we would not discuss such with them. Moreover, they were told that unless they could produce credentials from the appropriate Catholic authorities stating they officially represented Roman Catholicism we would not be interested in debating them. To say the least, that stipulation did not set well with them.

DEBATE CHALLENGE MADE, ACCEPTED, AND DATES SET

Of the phone calls received from Catholics one came from the Roman Catholic priest who is the Chancellor of the Houston Roman Catholic Diocese, another from a local Roman Catholic priest, and Daniel Callam. Callam is a Catholic priest who is an associate professor and Chairman of the Theology Department at the *University of St. Thomas*, the Roman Catholic University in Houston. He is British and holds several academic degrees terminating with the Doctorate of Philosophy from *Oxford University*,

Oxford, England. As did the other priests Dr. Callam protested our lectures on Catholicism and could not or would not understand why we would not let Catholics have a part in our lectures to "properly represent Catholic interests." Therefore, Dr. Callam was asked if he would defend his convictions publicly. With permission from his superiors he agreed to do so. He received their permission and after some negotiations propositions and the rules for the debate were signed.

The debate is set for July 17, 18, 20, and 21 at the Klein High School Gymnasium. It is located 16715 Stuebner-Airline Road, Klein, Texas 77379. The gymnasium will seat 2000 people. The subject for discussion is religious authority. David P. Brown, evangelist for the Spring congregation and the director of the *Spring Bible Institute*, will affirm that the Bible only is the sole authority for the Christian religion. Dr. Callam will affirm that the Bible plus Roman Catholic traditions are the authority for the Christian religion. Brown will be in the affirmative the first two nights of the debate and Callam the last two nights. The elders have full confidence in the ability of Brown to defend the truth and expose the error propagated by Callam.

RARE OPORTUNITY—WILL YOU HELP FINANCIALLY AND WITH PRAYER?

With this debate we have a rare opportunity to teach and defend the truth of the gospel. Seldom is there a Catholic priest willing and permitted to debate, especially one with the status and credentials of Daniel Callam. **In view of this singular opportunity we are requesting your help in financing this task.** The Spring congregation will bear a large portion of this expense. However, because we want to get this before as many people as possible in the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States, with a very large Catholic population, we are requesting your financial assistance. Will you help us?

We plan to advertise in the *Houston Chronicle*, other local newspapers, as well as religious journals. We also intend to use radio and television as well as televise the debate live over the Internet. Audio and video recordings will be made. If possible we will put the debate into book form. Moreover, we plan a mass mailing of brochures to individual addresses. This mailing will number into the thousands and involve a substantial amount of money.

We are endeavoring to secure at least \$15,000 to help fund the debate. This is a rather conservative figure in view of the cost of printing, airtime, Internet costs, newspaper ads, mailing, and rental of the facility. We are asking congregations to contribute \$300.00 and individuals \$50.00, respectively. However, some churches and individuals may be able to do far more than what we are requesting. Of course, some churches and individuals may not be able to give as much. Whatever the case, we will deeply appreciate what you can contribute. Especially we request your prayers in this endeavor to defend and propagate the truth. Moreover, will you place this request for help into the hands of others that are willing to support such an effort?

Because we have less than ninety days (at this writing) before the debate begins, time is critical. Any contributions should be sent to the **Spring Church of Christ, PO Box 39, Spring, TX 77383-0039**, with a notation of "debate expense."

PLEASE MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND. Regarding housing and R. V. spaces please write to the previously noted address. You may also reach us by phone: (281) 353-2707 (Church office), E-mail: springbibleinstitute@swbell.com and FAX: (281) 288-3676. Thank you for your support in this work for the Lord. Also, David Brown earnestly requests your prayers.

[Signed]

Buddy Roth, Elder
Kenneth D. Cohn, Elder

RECOMMENDED READING

(Continued From Page 1)

prise that all authority in the Catholic Church does not reside in the word of God-but rather in the pope: "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered" (219). This statement is from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, published in 1994. The author includes 23 points about the Catholic Church which contrast their practices with the Scriptures (239-42). Following this chapter is one which examines a number of Roman Catholic teachings: "The Dogmatism of the Roman Catholic Church."

FROM MONKS TO FALSE MIRACLES

The material on "Bishops, Priests, Nuns, Monks, Synods, and Councils" is well-researched (as, in fact, every chapter is). Each writer took great care to make certain of his accuracy. The difference between a nun and a sister is

noticed (275). The author summarizes briefly 21 Roman Catholic councils, citing the reasons for their fame. The aforementioned *Council of Trent* had as its purpose to refute the "errors" of Luther. "It produced the largest number of dogmatic and reformatory decrees and reformed the discipline of the church" (280). Another chapter is devoted exclusively to "The Organization of the Catholic Church."

"False Miracles of the Catholic Church" delves into *apparitions*. The superstitious nature of Catholicism is called attention to by newspaper accounts of an alleged "image of Mary" in a bank window in Clearwater, Florida (309-10). Then there is the account of a statue of Mary, which has been weeping tears, but after the initial flurry of attention, no one has been allowed to investigate the "phenomenon" (310-11). The author provides, from a Catholic Website, a list of "saints' bodies" that have not deteriorated since they died (312-14). It is odd however that St. Bernadette's incorruptible body was covered in wax and that St. Viucnt DePaul's bones are encased in a wax figure!

THE STEVENS-BEEVERS, MASS, AND INTOLERANCE

This rather unusual material is followed by "A Review of the Stevens-Beevers Debate" (323-38). This event took place May 13-16, 1952 in Stillwater, Oklahoma, between **Eldred Stevens**, who then was working with the Stillwater Church of Christ, and **Dr. Eric Beevers**, pastor of the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in the same town. The first proposition was: "The New Testament Is the Supreme Authority in the Christian Religion." The second proposition was: "The Roman Catholic Church Is the Original, Apostolic, Church of Christ." Included are four charts that were used in this debate (330, 332, 333, 337).

The Celebration of Mass and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation" receives sufficient treatment, which it should, since this is a cardinal teaching of Roman Catholicism. It is also covered more briefly in the chapter on "The Seven Sacraments." Non-Catholics should be familiar with these facets of Roman Catholic worship so they can better understand this religion.

Another chapter of great interest is "The Intolerance of Catholicism." The purpose is not to vilify or misrepresent the Catholic Church, but the truth has a right to be heard regarding their history and current philosophy. Pope **Boniface VIII**, for example, would flunk today's "politically correct" philosophy; he made this claim: "We declare it to be altogether necessary that every human creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (361). This policy led to far more than "social" ostracism:

Francis sent an army, under Catholic leadership, which massacred hundreds and destroyed twenty-two towns completely. The persecuting spirit reached its height in the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day and for weeks afterward, in 1572, when by different estimates from twenty thousand to one hundred thousand people perished (364).

Who knows how many people lost their lives in various countries because they did not accept Roman Catholicism as their religion of choice? This chapter contains other events and teachings of significance

that reveal the historic Catholic doctrine of intolerance. You have undoubtedly heard of the *Knights of Columbus*. The chapter that deals with them covers their origin, the choice of their name, their purpose for existence, and their history.

PURGATORY AND THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Another Catholic idea frequently referred to is the doctrine of purgatory. The *Council of Trent* ruled that this alleged place is "where one continues to pay for his sins after baptism" (388). The New Testament teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins and that Jesus' blood fully atones for sins, but such is not a money-making proposition; purgatory is.

The Catholic hierarchy teaches that all ten commandments are binding upon men today except those they have changed or excluded. They claim the right to change the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. In actuality, they did no such thing. The Old Testament that God gave to the Israelites through Moses was done away (including the ten commandments); in the New Testament era we worship on the Lord's day. But even more disturbing is their omission of the second commandment! For some reason they have an aversion to the commandment that says not to make idols and bow down before them. Many of the catechisms skip the second commandment and stretch the tenth one into two separate commandments: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" and "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods" (409).

THE BIBLE AND THE CONFESSIONAL

The chapter that deals with the all-sufficiency of the scriptures contains a list of 20 items that the word of God accomplishes (419). It also introduces, from the *Catholic Manual of Christian Doctrine* and the *Manual of Moral Theology*, the doctrine of "mental reservation," which in effect permits lying (425).

The chapter on the Roman Catholic use of the "confessional" is likewise thought-

CATHOLICISM DEBATE

SPRING BIBLE INSTITUTE

Announces that Director **David Brown**, Spring Church of Christ, Spring, TX, will debate **Daniel Callam**, Roman Catholic Priest, and Chairman of the Department of Theology, University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas.

DATES:

July 17-18, 20-21, 2000
7 p.m. each evening

LOCATION:

Klein High School Gymnasium
16715 Strubger-Airline Rd., Klein, TX 77379

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"The New Testament is the exclusive authority in the Christian religion." Affirm: David Brown. Deny: Daniel Callam.

THURSDAY & FRIDAY

"The Bible and tradition, as defined by the Roman Catholic Church, constitute the authority of the Christian religion." Affirm: Daniel Callam. Deny: David Brown.

Much effort, planning, prayer, and expense have been invested in this effort. We invite you to be our guests for this debate, and bring your denominational friends with you.

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provoking. The question asked by the scribes keeps coming to mind: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:7). You will not want to overlook the quotation from the Cardinals who advised **Pope Jules the III** to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people (432-33). **Augustine** and "The Roman Catholic Doctrine of Original Sin" is the reason behind infant baptism; this subject merits its own chapter.

CONLEY AND CAMPBELL'S DEBATE REVIEWED

Darrell Conley was privileged to review his own debate (August, 1995) with the two men from Catholic Response (**Mike Luther** and **Dr. Robert Narvaez**). He reported that there have been 14 people converted out of Catholicism to the truth as a result of that debate. Sadly, men like **Max Lucado**, who lives in San Antonio where the debate occurred, would have told these 14 people that they were all right just the way they were; when the scriptures are handled by him, people remain lost in their sins. A number of points in this summary are of great interest, such as the statement by **John Francis Knoll** in Catholic Facts: "If it is not identical in belief, government, and etc. with the primitive church then it is not the Church of Christ" (459). Conley gives a summary of the key issues that were discussed each of the four nights of the debate. That debate is still in print and well worth studying.

Conley's review of his own debate is followed by **Tyler Young's** "Review of the Campbell-Purcell Debate," which took place in 1837. These two men debated from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. each day (except Sunday) from January 13th to the 21st (485). Purcell would only agree to debate if he could be in the

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negative on each proposition. That this was a debate of some substance can be seen by the first of the seven propositions:

1. The Roman Catholic Institution, sometimes called the "Holy, Apostolic, Catholic, Church," is not now, nor was she ever, catholic, apostolic, or holy; but is a sect in the fair import of that word, older than any other sect now existing, not the "Mother and Mistress of all Churches," but an apostasy of the only true, holy, apostolic, and catholic church of Christ (487).

Some of the topics discussed in the debate (and this review of it) are: the papacy, the corruption of the popes, the so-called succession of the popes, the infallibility of the pope, the contradictory doctrines taught by popes and councils, the immorality of Romanism, the teachings of the *Council of Trent*, and the Inquisition. Since this landmark debate is no longer generally available, this review of it is immensely helpful. Of great interest is Purcell's denial of the infallibility of the pope: "[Campbell, gws], that the Catholic church has never taught that the pope's infallibility was an article of faith" (465). Yet 33 years later (1870) that doctrine became an article of faith, and then Archbishop Purcell had to defend it.

SCANDALS, FORGERIES AND PROPAGANDA

In "Scandals of Catholic History" there are pictures of cruel and inhuman devices that were used during the Spanish Inquisition (530-34). The tortures were monstrous. Is it any wonder that we have so few records of the true church during this time?

Most of us may not be familiar with "The Syllabus of Errors of Pius IX," but it was a significant document. He is referred to as the "creator of the modern papacy" (556); during his reign (1846-70) the "Immaculate Conception" of Mary was established (1854), as well as the doctrine of papal infallibility (1870). Several points in the Syllabus of Errors are discussed.

"Catholic Forgeries and Propaganda" is another fascinating chapter. Equally disturbing with the fact that many frauds have been perpetrated upon Catholics is the Catholic Church attitude that these fraudulent artifacts are a matter of indifference! The chapter on "Was Peter the First Pope?" includes a chart of all the popes, beginning with Peter (who never claimed to be head of the church and also traveled about with a wife, I Corinthians 9:5).

This book is a necessary addition to every thinking person's library. It is a wealth of information.

—312 Pearl Street
Denton, Texas 76201-8610

International Churches of Christ **THE BOSTON MOVEMENT—A CULT**

Patrick D. Andrews

The International Church of Christ is in the news again. The newscasters did not come to us for any of their information. However, some were careful to make the point that the International group is not affiliated with "the mainstream churches of Christ."

What we once knew as the "Crossroads Philosophy" has a diverse background. One "convert" learned the false doctrine well and took it to a more intense level—the "Boston Movement." This cult has grown and moved again. Now it is "headquartered" in metropolitan Los Angeles with a newly acquired evening entertainment club which they named Upside Down—Acts 17:6b.

Rarely do church problems start big! So it is with this one. Although the elders of Gainesville, Florida's Crossroads Church of Christ, confessed their sin, and sought forgiveness, we must understand that confessions and apologies do not remove the problem. That which gained momentum and grew beyond belief cannot be eliminated with one prayer. The "Crossroads—Boston—International doctrine" is still taught to young people who teach others. The first "converts" have become its leaders. They are busily recruiting college coeds, and infiltrating unsuspecting churches.

It has appeal. This false doctrine quickly produces new converts. However, these "converts" are converted to something other than Christianity. Their leader promulgates an unquestioned authority over this cult that leads the followers into some very deep, long lasting, soul-damning psychological problems.

"International missionaries" with their "discipling movement" are in San Antonio, Texas—college campuses—university classrooms. They will attempt to infiltrate our own congregations; they are set on recruiting the gullible. They will attempt to segregate the weak—a process of *discipling* which involves total mind control. They will dictate the whole lifestyle—dates, associates, activities, what to eat, how to dress, to include the most minute detail.

We easily recognize the situation when it is in the textbook. But this problem is beyond the printed page: it has flesh and blood. It is even more difficult when it involves you, your loved ones, and your brethren. It is hard to detect before the damage is done (I Peter 5:8)!

It sounds right, peaceful, passive and loving. They advocate greater interest in spiritual growth. Their "soul talks" with "prayer partners" seems all right, but they do

not participate in the congregation's efforts. They establish their own. They are opposed to elders and biblical authority. It appears like just another method to reach the lost—do not be fooled. The "International" claimant speaks of a continuation of the restoration process, but what they are doing is divisive. They are subversive!

(1) They propose to be "loving and totally committed Christians" but they are not committed to Christ! Their doctrine teaches a salvation that is contrary to what Christ taught. When they speak of great love for the body, they do not mean what God intended

(2) They are evasive! When their non-participation is challenged they respond with "I'm not a member here." When they arrive it is not band, banner, or great fanfare. They sneak in and steal God's children. The followers are led well. They do not get involved with any work of the local church. They focus on cult, movement, and group.

(3) There's a vacuity where the scriptures teach organization. Their teaching results in the cult having neither respect for, nor willingness to submit themselves to the God-given authority of the elders within the local congregation. Their dedication is to their "prayer partners." Closer examination reveals yet another name for the prayer partner—spiritual father. The proscriptions and anathemas of this spiritual father and the group's "Leader of Disciple Makers" are as binding as any pronouncement that any parish priest has ever made. They exercise absolute control which even exceeds the imposed military discipline found in basic boot camp.

(4) Converts are coerced (encouraged is their word) by means of mind control. If their family expresses concern regarding their scheduled activities (as many as six nights a week in extended "soul talks") they are coerced to sever the home relationship (husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, father). They equate devotion to cult as devotion to God. Young husbands and wives are taught (encouraged is their word) to believe that neglecting their families is merely the cost of discipleship. Matthew 10:37 does not contradict I Corinthians 7:10.

(5) Any questions regarding the wisdom of any program or practice is attacked as the devil's craftiness. They proffer that "weaknesses" such as attending to one's family's needs instead of attending a "soul talk", must be confessed to the "prayer partner" who, with the help of the "spiritual leaders" will impose stronger mind control by manipulating the feeling of guilt. This continues until the "wayward and sinful one" ceases from such "unrighteous and worldly activities" and again comes back into total submission to the group's will.

The International Churches of Christ applied evangelical fascist doctrine closely resembles an Amway Sales organization (pyramid structure). Ascetic philosophy is condemned (Colossians 2:20-23). Their insidiously mind-controlling perversion of Christianity cannot be opposed too much! It adds more pain to the cross, causes spiritual and mental anguish, and results in division within the Lord's church!

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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, and relates to the miraculous age of inspiration. It has no bearing on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians today. To use it as a proof text in that vein is to misuse and misapply it.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. he that belleveth 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 by direct inspiration. (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's 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 re-

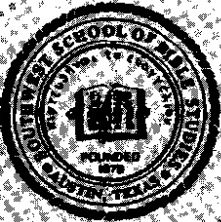
mission of sins in the name of Christ. (Luke 24:47). The 47th chapter of Ezekiel is prophetic of the living water of the gospel overspreading the earth for the healing of the nations and connects with the river of life of the New Jerusalem of Revelation 22:1.

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 miraculous beginning of the gospel dispensation when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. That's the import of Jesus' statement in John 7 and his final words to the apostles in Luke 24: 45-47. All were fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2. John 7:39 does not teach the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians today, direct or otherwise. The waters of Ezekiel's vision began their flow, Zechariah's living waters went "out from Jerusalem" and the living water of the gospel flowed from inspired men as Jesus had promised.

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WHERE IS THE AUTHORITY?

Noah Hackworth

Recently someone came to my office and asked several questions which, in substance, amounted to "Where do you get authority to do what you do in your worship services on Sunday?" The question was valid and needed to be answered, and the querist was familiar with what we do on Sunday. The person was not given to argument and seemed anxious to know how to justify a worship service like we have. I answered the question in the following manner.

It is important to realize that "Sunday" has no religious significance attached to it per se. Sunday apparently was named after a sun god. Thursday, after the Greek god Thor, and Saturday after Saturn. But Sunday is important because it is the first day of the week. Bible readers will observe the fact that Sunday does not appear in the sacred text, but the first day of the week does (cf. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2), and the first day of the week always falls on a Sunday. The word pentecost means fiftieth, the fiftieth day from the morrow after the Sabbath of the Passover week (Leviticus 23:15-16). The morrow after the Sabbath was the first day of the week. Since the count began on the day after the Sabbath, it would end on the same day of the week or our Sunday.

AN ASSEMBLY MUST BE ESTABLISHED

The Bible does not indicate the number of times the church needs to meet on any given day or during the week. It may meet several times in the course of a week, but one thing is clear: the faithful church must meet at least one time on the Lord's Day to observe the Lord's Supper and the other acts of worship. This necessitates an assembly. Preparing the Lord's Supper and placing it in some convenient place in the building so that members can come and partake anytime during the Lord's Day is not an alternative. In Hebrews 10:25 the Bible says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." This passage authorizes the church to assemble; though a particular assembly is not named, for obvious reasons it would include the Sunday or Lord's Day assembly. There have been some great gospel preachers who have taken the view that "the day approaching" means Sunday, or the Lord's Day. This possibility is conceded, but the "destruction of Jerusalem" fits the context better.

FREQUENCY OF THE ASSEMBLY

Was it the custom of the primitive Christians to meet on the first day of every week? The answer is unquestionably yes. While the scriptures abound with evidence that leads to this inescapable conclusion, not all of it is needed to sustain the proposition. Concerning the collection for the saints Paul instructed the churches of Galatia and the church at Corinth in these words:

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (I Corinthians 16:2).

Both the *KJV* (1611) and the *ASV* (1901) left out a critical word in their translation: the word "every." The original text has this word in it. "*kata mian sabbatou*" (every one of a week, or on the first day of every week). The word "*kata*" (every) is used in a distributive sense. This passage does not indicate everything that was done in the weekly assembly to which it refers, but it conclusively shows that the early Christians were in the habit of meeting on the first day of every week. Hence frequency is established.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WORSHIP

The Lord's Supper and preaching. Both were a part of the Lord's Day assembly. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). The context of the passage indicates the fact that Paul and company remained in Troas (v. 6) for seven days no doubt waiting for the first day of the week.

Though Paul was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, he nevertheless delayed his travels in order to observe the Lord's Supper. The contribution is also a part of the worship on Lord's Day. Some good brethren, when finished with serving the Lord Supper say, or have said, "Aside from the worship is our obligation to contribute (give)." This is really not the case because when we worship on Lord's Day, we "give" or "contribute." Genesis 22:1-8 helps us to see this point. Responding to the instructions given him by God, Abraham took Isaac, his son, and journeyed to Moriah to offer him for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains. Reaching his destination, Abraham said to the young men who were with him, "...Abide ye here...And I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you" (v. 5). Abraham "gave" Isaac to the Lord. The contribution or "giving" is a part of the worship on Lord's Day because when we worship we give something (I Corinthians 16:2). Singing is a part of the worship, and it is congregational or corporate worship. Solos and choirs do not take the place of congregational worship. When Paul says to the Ephesians (5:19), "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," and says to the Colossians (3:16), "...Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..." he had reciprocation in mind. Singing is speaking to one another, "back and forth" so to speak; it is a reciprocal teaching, for so the passages teach.



Prayer is a part of the Lord's Day worship, as well as all other periods of worship. I have never heard anyone deny the place of prayer in worship on the Lord's Day or at any other time. "Pray without ceasing" is the admonition of Paul (I Thessalonians 5:17). This would certainly include the assembly on Lord's Day.

What the churches of Christ are authorized to do on Lord's Day (Lord's Supper, pray, preach, contribute, and sing) has never been successfully refuted by anyone, and is not likely to be because of the overwhelming amount of

biblical evidence. Some local churches which are prone to be "progressive" in nature, may do things in their worship services on the Lord's Day which are unauthorized by the Bible, but in so doing they convict themselves of usurpation. They usurp the authority of Christ to do what they do and no blessing will follow. It can never be right to go beyond the doctrine or teaching of Christ (cf. II John 9).

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Studies from the Biblical Text

There Is A Way Which Seemeth Right"

Daniel Denham

Proverbs 14:12 declares: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." These words penned centuries ago by Solomon well fit our own generation, even as they did his! The basic nature of man has not changed. Human beings tend to think of themselves as the wisest of all beings in the universe. Thus, as Solomon also writes, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Proverbs 16:2).

People have a tendency to desire their own way in everything. Selfishness, self-centeredness, and self-interest are things that we constantly must fight against in our lives. Our generation is the "Me-Generation." The emphasis of our time is on "my rights," et al. Like the people of Israel in the time of the judges, every man seeks to do that "which is right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

Now to be sure there are some things in which we may have our own way. There are matters of indifference, where human judgment or opinion holds sway. These are matters that are neither right nor wrong.

However, there are some things wherein our own personal judgment simply will not suffice. Such things as morality cannot be left to human preferences, but must of necessity involve a higher authority or standard. The nonsensical statement "You can't legislate morality not withstanding," there is adequate evidence to show that morality not only can be legislated but indeed has been. Those who make the statement should be thankful that murder, among other heinous deeds, is against the law and has been in civilized nations. God, who is good, has given us by revelation the ultimate standard upon which all truly beneficent and helpful laws are based. The Bible, particularly the New Testament of Christ, is the objective standard for such conduct. Sometimes those who make the preceding statement anathematizing the legislating of morality simply mean laws alone will not produce morality. However, proper obedience to good laws founded on the ultimate standard will do so.

There are other matters that go beyond the sufficiency of human judgment. This is especially true relative to those matters concerning salvation. It is also true concerning the

worship that God has prescribed in the New Testament. All of these matters must be dealt with as God has instructed.

Let us now consider some things pertinent to Proverbs 14:12 that will help us to see that, though we may "feel" something to be right, the criterion for what we do in these matters is not our feelings or how we may view it, but is the will of God revealed in God's inspired, inerrant, and all-sufficient word.

THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

As intimated earlier, the word of God is the ultimate source of authority in these matters. Isaiah's exhortation to Israel reminds us of this. He says in Isaiah 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony; if they (the false prophets of verse 19, HDD) speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The muttering and peeping of wizards, the use of necromancy, and such like were expressly condemned. The standard by which the people were to compare and condemn this activity was God's law. Isaiah did not tell them to "feel" that the enchantments of the charlatans were evil, but rather he called their attention to a specific standard that taught both explicitly and implicitly what was evil and what was good.

This principle, expressed in the Old Testament, is also established in the New Testament. John commands: "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).

How were they to "try" (to test, document, or prove the genuineness of) these "spirits"? Most certainly at the time John penned these words, many, if not all of his readers, possessed certain miraculous gifts, which existed to confirm the word (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:2-4). John refers to the "unction" or anointing that they had by which they "knew all things" (I John 2:20,27). The exercise of some of these gifts, especially the gift of the discerning of spirits (I Corinthians 12:10), would help them to separate the genuine from the fraudulent. If the proposed prophet could not "back up" what he taught with an appropriate



demonstration of power and hence divine approval, then that would also be a good indication that he was a fraud (cf. I Corinthians 2:4; I Thessalonians 1:5). A third way, which could be used in some measure even then, would be to compare what the proposed prophet was teaching with what they already knew to be the case from the writings of the apostles and other inspired men, which writings they had received as genuine – hence canonical – by virtue of the history that lay behind them (cf. II Peter 3:14-16). After all, the miraculous ultimately existed in the first century to reveal and confirm those writings that comprise the New Testament. Once those works were finished, then the miraculous would no longer be needed and would be ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-13; James 1:25; Jude 3). The confirmed word then would be a sufficient test for any proposed teaching thereafter.

THE PRINCIPLE OF OBEDIENCE

Another thought raised by Solomon's words in Proverbs 14:12 is that God's blessings are always hinged on the principle of obedience. God does not bless people in their rebellion nor through their presumption. Blessing is reserved for those who obey him. God has always demanded the obedience of men, and at the same time amply rewarded that obedience.

The case of Noah illustrates the point. God had determined to destroy the antediluvian world because of its rampant and unbridled wickedness in Genesis 6. Yet Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:5-8). The reason was that "Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). He had been obeying God in his life. God instructed him on what to do to save himself and his family from the coming flood. Those instructions were thoroughly explicit and precise. They were also knowable. He was to build an ark of the right dimensions and from the right material (cf. Gen. 6:10ff.). Noah did not go out and just do as he pleased. The record says, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22). After

completing his work and loading the ark with the specified number of animals, Noah and his family entered into the ark. The Bible says, "And they went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in" (Genesis 7:16). This last act solemnly demonstrated God's approval of Noah and his family (cf. Hebrews 11:6). The Hebrews writer informs us, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

The necessity of obedience for salvation is stressed in the New Testament. Hebrews 5:8-9 says, "Though He {Christ} were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (cf. Matthew 7:21-27; Revelation 22:14).

THE FAILURE OF MAN'S PRESUMPTIVE WAY

The words of Solomon also remind us that God will punish those who strive to walk in their own wisdom—those who do that which is right in their own eyes. Such activity lead to "the ways of death." Utter ruin is the destination of the path of the wicked. Sin must be punished, unless it is forgiven through the blood of Christ (Romans 6:23).

Jeremiah declares, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). When man forgets or ignores the way of God, he will fall over "the precipice of eternity!" Psalm 1:5 reads: "...the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." When one is "wise in his own eyes" (Isaiah 5:20-24), the Bible calls him foolish.

Several years ago I saw a couple of bumper stickers each on the back of a different pickup truck. The caption of one of the stickers read, "Heaven don't want me and Hell's afraid I'll take over." The other one read, "Dirty, rotten, mean, and filthy as I want to be!" These evidently expressed the attitudes of the respective owners of each vehicle. They reminded me of Psalm 36:1, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." They also reminded me that some folk think they are the baddest, toughest things to ever exist, but they are headed for one shattering "reality check" come the judgment day. There will come a time of terror for such folk of which they have never previously experienced. Fear of the most intense and passionate kind will grip their throats and silence their haughty boasting. The Lord will have the last word (John 12:48).

Let us learn the lessons of Proverbs 14:12. (1) God's word is the final court of appeal, the ultimate authority in matters that affect our eternal condition. (2) God blesses those who obey Him. (3) He punishes those who do not. As God admonished Israel through Moses, let us "choose life" and live (cf. Deuteronomy 30:15-20). The alternative is spiritual death (cf. Revelation 20:11-15).

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Abortion, Cloning, Internet Church, Post-Modern Thinking, Woman and TV

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

A majority of the Senate supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision that makes abortion a constitutional right. The body voted 51-48 in support of a nonbinding resolution proposed by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), The Associated Press reports. The resolution states, "It is the sense of the Congress that *Roe v. Wade* was an appropriate decision and secures an important constitutional right and such a decision should not be overturned." ...Eight Republicans voted in favor of the resolution and two Democrats voted against it. Arizona's John McCain, a Republican who has opposed abortion in the past, did not vote because he was in New Hampshire campaigning. ...Harkin proposed the resolution in the midst of debate over a bill to outlaw partial-birth abortion. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) is sponsoring the bill, which forbids partial-birth abortions unless they threaten the life of the mother. "This is about infanticide. This is a baby who is all but born and then killed," he said. President Clinton has vetoed two bills banning partial-birth abortion and is expected to veto any others, according to news reports (*Religion Today* email service, 10/25/99). [So sad that our elected officials deem murder of innocent babies as appropriate. —MTM]

According to a 1998 survey of nearly 21,000 California students by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, 70 percent of high-school students (and 54 percent of middle-school students) said they had cheated on an exam in the last 12 months, an increase of 6 percent since the survey two years prior. A poll of 3,123 students on the 1998 list of Who's Who Among American High School Students found 80 percent of them admitting to cheating in some form to get to the top of their class. Of those who cheated, 95 percent said they had not been caught, and a majority declared that they were untroubled by their behavior (*Insight*, September 20, 1999, p.18). [Most troubling. The second survey is supposedly representative of our best students. But with a very vocal Presidential example to use as a role model, what can we expect? Lying and cheating is rampant throughout our society. —MTM]

Remember Dolly the first mammal ever cloned? It has been discovered that she is aging prematurely. As creatures age, the tips of their chromosomes fray and shorten. It appears that Dolly has in-

herited the 'pre-aged' genetic material of the adult from which she was cloned (*Nature*, May 27, 1999, pp.316-317 as reported in *Creation* 21(4) September-November, 1999, p.7). [This supports what conservatives have said all along. There are many variables which cannot be accounted for due to man's limited knowledge. Cloning has many unanswered questions. —MTM]

With "Christian" researcher George Barna predicting that 20 percent of the population will get all religious training from the Internet by the year 2010, Lyndon Glaesman, pastor of Totalechurch and an alumnus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said he and his family's burden for an Internet church was part of a logical progression in using technology for the kingdom. An Internet church has been in a lot of people's minds, but the idea had received little follow-through, said Glaesman, who learned that the Satanic church beat preceded Totalechurch to the Internet. "That shows that we need to jump onto the technology bandwagon or lose to those that do," he said. The church, and its technology, have garnered an overwhelming response. Though the church has only been open since June 15 of this year, it has recorded more than 14,000 visits to the site (an astounding figure even for the Internet) and has seen more than 50 professions of faith in Christ from all over the world. The church roster presently includes members from across the country and from Bulgaria, Japan, Australia and South Africa, its daily devotions are sent to more than 450 participants every day, which are usually forwarded to hundreds of others (*Baptist Press*, October, 1999). [While the preacher for this "church" states that the final goal is to get all members to attend a local church, this "church" concept will probably not lead to that. People will for the most part be content with being able to log-on and "attend" worship. Obviously the statement of faith to become a member falls far short of baptism for remission of sins. —MTM]

"The church is learning to pay attention at a faster rate," says Doug Pagitt, an administrator with the Dallas based Leadership Network. He and 150 "youth ministers" recently attended the Ministry on the New Edge conference where they focused on generation X and its younger siblings. Some find fault with this theology associated with this movement,

which is heavily into concepts of relativity, points of view and context. But for postmoderns, "absolutes aren't possible because they presuppose objectivity," says Pagitt. "Absolute truth is a construct. It doesn't exist in reality, only in theory." The Bible is not absolute truth in this construct, but "it is viewed as very authoritative" (*Insight*, July 5-12, 1999, p. 40). [There you have it. There is no absolute truth. I wonder if Mr. Pagitt is 100% sure of that? Why would one consider the Bible as very authoritative if it was lying about being the absolute word of God? I guess logic is not a part of this post-modern thinking. —MTM]



Women who watch as little as 22 hours of prime time TV each month are more likely than women who watch less TV to endorse a "recreational" view of sex, says L. Monique Ward, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan. Young adults' sexual attitudes and expectations are influenced by "TV's countless verbal and visual references to dating and sexual relationships," she said in a September 13 *Washington Times* article. Her study appeared in the August issue of the *Journal of Sex Research*. Her research went on to show that students who identify with show characters are likely to be sexually experienced and expect greater sexual activity. She says that the problem with sex on TV is that it is often portrayed as unrealistically spontaneous, risk-free, and glamorous. This portrayal also "gives the impression that 'everyone is doing it.'" In a previous study, Ward found that teen-oriented sitcoms refer to sex in one out of every four conversations. Furthermore, these shows often portray people as sex objects and show sex as recreational, superficial, or inconsequential (*Parents Television Council email service*, 9/18/99). [It is hoped that none of the ladies of the church are wasting the time that God has given them to watch such trash. And parents should not be letting their children watch this trash. —MTM]

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ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF DRESS

Jason R. Roberts

It seems that as the temperatures start to rise, our standards of dress begin to fall within the church. It is therefore not uncommon to see members of the Lord's church, who profess to be Christians, dressed like the world—even for worship services. During this time of the year, one does not have to go out into the public or turn on the television for very long before he is confronted with immodestly attired women and men. Many families will soon take their summer vacations and some automatically assume that it is permissible for them to take a vacation from their Christianity. Parents, who would never allow their sons and daughters to view, in their homes, the salacious literature depicting nude men and women, will take those same children to the beach where they will see men and women in scantily clad bathing suits—leaving very little to their imaginations. The father, who would never allow his teenage son to view the "Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue" in his house, is the same father who will take his son to the beach where he can view a live motion version of the same. The mother, who would never allow her teenage daughter to wear her bathing suit to the mall or to the supermarket, is the same mother who will take her daughter to the beach and allow her to parade herself in the same bathing suit in front of men. **AND WE ARE TOLD THAT BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE AT THE BEACH IS ATTIRED IN THE SAME FASHION, IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE PERFECTLY NORMAL!**

Those who are repulsed by immodesty and have the fortitude to speak out against it, are often accused of being "out of touch with the times," having a dirty mind, or both. Christians, who love the Lord and who desire to please him will not be intimidated by such false accusations, but will unashamedly *expose* the indecent *exposure* with which they are confronted (Ephesians 5:11).

CLOTHING AND CHARACTER

The type of clothing one wears certainly says something about the character one possesses. When the Proverbs writer listed the deceitful tactics of the strange woman, among other things, he said, "And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart" (Proverbs 7:10, emp. added). Note carefully the words, "attire" (clothing), "harlot" (character). It is evident that the clothing one wears, whether he admits it or not, does say something about his character. If this is not the case, then why do we sometimes hear people say when they see a woman who is scantily dressed, "She is dressed like a prostitute?" This is not to suggest that every woman who dresses immodestly does so for the express purpose of seducing men. However, we are fooling ourselves if we think that clothing and sexuality are not linked together. Just about every clothing commercial shown today depicts a sexually suggestive innuendo or a scenario to advance

the sale of their merchandise. Why? Because the clothing industry is keenly aware that there is a corresponding link between clothing and sexuality. The multimillion dollars they spend annually on these ungodly commercials is a mere fraction when one considers the money spent by the consumers whose eyes view them. They know that sex sells, and what better way is there for them to sell their merchandise than by *dressing it up*, glamorizing it with a fine touch of sex appeal. The truth of the matter is ladies have a great appeal to men by just being themselves. In a world of lasciviousness, a modestly dressed woman becomes the rare jewel. A man could have his pick of worldly women. A modest Christian woman is worth more than all of them put together.



MARY QUAIN— "THE MOTHER OF THE MINISKIRT"

Mary Quaint, who is known for designing the miniskirt, was interviewed in 1967 by *Newsweek* magazine. In the course of the interview, she said that the primary reason for designing the miniskirt was for girls who did not want to wait until dark to seduce a man into bed.

Am I the only woman who has ever wanted to go to bed with a man in the afternoon? Any law-abiding female, it used to be thought, waits until dark. Well, there are lots of girls who don't want to wait. Miniskirts are symbolic of them (*Newsweek*, November 13, 1967).

Again, we hasten to say that this does not suggest that every girl who wears a miniskirt does so for the express purpose of fulfilling Quaint's statement. However, it does not take a Solomon to figure that the majority of "ladies" who wear miniskirts do so for the purpose of getting men to notice what they are wearing, or should we say what they are not wearing. This reminds me of a little boy who was lost. He was asked why he did not hold on to his mother's skirt. He replied, "I couldn't reach it."

Quaint was later interviewed by *McCalls* magazine, in which she defined the purpose of today's fashion:

I mean today's woman is proud of her body. She knows about dieting. She doesn't need clothes with a built-in shape. She is the shape. And so she wants clothes that just sort of flow over her. She dresses to say I enjoy my body, I am sexy, I like men, I enjoy life. Her clothing is worn for decoration, provocation, and look at me. A lot of look-at-me-about-it (*McCalls Magazine*, March 1970).

COME AND ENJOY THE SCENERY

The late Thomas F. Eaves Sr., in his excellent tract, *The Christian And Modest Clothing*, reproduced the below advertisement from a dance held at a denominational church in Memphis, Tennessee.

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COME AND ENJOY THE SCENERY

Eaves went on to say, "That this statement (come and enjoy the scenery) explodes the often used justifications for immodest apparel, 'I wear this type of apparel for comfort, or to keep cool'" (p.7).

SOME REVEALING INCONSISTENCIES

There are several thoughts which need to be addressed regarding the glaring inconsistencies found within the minds of those who seemingly see nothing wrong with the wearing of immodest apparel. (1) If a woman wears her undergarments to the mailbox, she is considered to be inappropriately attired. However, the same woman, by today's standards, is considered modest if she adds a little color to those same undergarments and wears them to the beach. Since when did the presence of sand, sun, and water automatically make this permissible? God's laws regarding modest apparel are not cultural. They are universal. The beach or public swimming pool does not licence the Christian to dress immodestly, just because our culture considers it to be the norm. When culture sets the standard for what is right and wrong; then when the culture changes so do the standards. If the public beach is not a sexual pressure cooker, having the capacity to ignite lust in the hearts of those who go there, then why do thousands of college age students flock there for "Spring Break" each year? Do you suppose they go there for the purpose of just relaxing and getting a little sand, sun and surf? Furthermore, what would happen if the beaches decided for next year's "Spring Break" they would limit all of the women to one side of the beach (out of view of any men) and all of the men to the other side? How many would still go? **Louis Rushmore** expressed it ever so accurately:

Watching a woman bathe has been known to arouse unlawful lusts in a man. King David saw Bathsheba washing,

lusted after her, committed adultery with her, fathered a child, murdered her husband, and brought much misery upon himself and the nation (2 Samuel 11:2-5). Is it advisable for women, especially those professing godliness, to bathe in the presence of men, whether it be sunbathing or swimming? (*Modesty: Biblical Investigation, Contemporary Application*, article taken from Internet).

(2) If a woman answered the door in her slip, she would be embarrassed. However, the same woman could answer the door in a bathing suit (which reveals far more) and this is considered to be acceptable by society's standards. (3) If a man were to walk through the mall wearing just his swimming suit, he would be dressed immodestly and would immediately be asked to leave by Security. However, the same man has the prerogative, with our culture's stamp of approval, to wear the same thing at the public swimming pool and beach. And we are told that this is supposed to be acceptable in the eyes of God.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

First, is there an elder, deacon, preacher or member of the Lord's church, who would be willing to write an article for the church bulletin attempting to justify the practice of mixed undressing? *Second*, if the modern day swimsuit is not immodest, then what would have to be done to it to make it immodest? *Third*, if it is permissible to parade oneself in a bathing suit in the presence of those of the opposite sex at the beach, would it equally be permissible for the local church, after their Sunday morning worship service, to bring in some truck loads of sand, a large pool and have a "FUN IN THE SUN DAY?" Each member could then bring their bathing suits and everyone could enjoy some good "fleshly fellowship" together. What makes it wrong for us to do this on the church grounds but right at the public swimming pool or beach?

What we do in moderation, the next generation will do in excess. For example, thirty years ago (in the United States) public schools had dress codes. Girls wore dresses and the boys wore dress pants and dress shirts. Today the standards are gone and practically anything goes. Therefore, the church must keep her standards high for the next generation. Older women should set a godly example for the younger women: a 24-hour example; not just a 9-to-5 or Sunday morning example (Titus 2:3-5).

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Third Annual Lubbock Lectureship, Oct. 8-12, 2000

The Vine and the Branches

Tom Moore

INTRODUCTION

- A. In John 13-17, John records Jesus' last assembly with his disciples before his death. On the next day the jealous Jewish jury would crucify Jesus.
- B. During these last few hours Jesus is preparing his disciples for their appointed agony.
- C. Jesus said all these things to prepare them—to keep them from falling away.
- D. Before Jesus and his disciples started their walk from the upper room to the garden of prayer, Jesus said ... John 15:1-8.

DISCUSSION

A. JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE

1. John 15:1
 - a. Jesus says he is the real and genuine vine.
 - b. This is important because all of the nutrients come through the vine to the branches.
2. In the Old Testament Israel was pictured as the vine or vineyard of God (Isaiah 5:1-7).
 - a. But the nation of Israel was a degenerate vine and her prophets informed her so.
 - b. Opposed to this, Jesus is telling his audience that he is the true vine.
3. God the Father is the "husbandman"—not merely a hired dresser, but the owner.
4. As such he gives close attention to the vine.

B. BRANCHES ARE TO BEAR FRUIT

1. John 15:2
2. The branch that does not bear fruit is taken away - it is severed from the vine.
 - a. Luke 13:6-9
 - b. Since the branches represent individual Christians (v. 5), we are instructed that to be pleasing to God we must bear fruit—or be severed from God.
3. The branch that does not bear fruit is "cleansed" (purgeth-KJV, pruned-NKJ) Teaching, training, and discipline cleanse fruit bearing branches—and they grow to produce even more fruit.
 - b. The more fruit we bear the more we are pruned by the word of God to do more.
 - c. How do we bear fruit as Christians?—Galatians 5:22-23

C. THE DISCIPLES' SPIRITUAL STATE

1. John 15:3
2. Jesus refers to the spiritual state of his disciples in the upper room.
3. They were "clean" from their past sins, yet needed continuous cleansing.
4. To apply this to the analogy, the disciples needed regular pruning to maintain their highest efficiency.
5. The cleansing was done by means of the word.
 - a. It is, of course God who forgives, but this forgiveness comes as we obey the word.

b. I Peter 1:22-23; I Corinthians 1:2

D. WE ABIDE IN CHRIST TO BEAR FRUIT

1. John 15:4-5

2. Jesus here sets forth the condition for cleansing and fruit bearing—"abide in me." As the life of the branch depends on its connection to the vine, so our spiritual life is wholly dependant on our connection with the true vine.



3. The phrase "abide in me, and I in you" is command and a command.
 - a. We are to abide in Christ ... Galatians 3:27.
 - b. We are to have Christ in us ... Philippians 2:5.
4. Abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in us can only occur as we live wholly by the word of God—obedience is the key.
 - a. Fruit bearing can only be had in this relationship.
 - b. Apart from Christ we can do nothing that is acceptable to him.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23
 - 2) Philippians 4:13
 5. In verse 1, Jesus identified himself as the vine, and here in verse 5 Jesus informs us that the disciples ("ye") are the branches.
 - a. This is important to realize because many try to teach that the branches are various denominations.
 - b. Denomination were not in existence at that time.
 - c. The branches are not to be separate, but are to be in the vine, a part of the one true church of Jesus Christ.
 - d. If a branch is not in the vine—it cannot survive.

E. THE RESULT OF ABIDING IN THE VINE

1. John 15:6
2. Notice, "If a man abide not in me"—A MAN—not a denomination.
3. If we are not abiding in Christ we will be cast forth.
 - a. Remember, Jesus previously stated that to abide in the vine we had to bear fruit.
 - b. Galatians 5:4; Matthew 3:10
 - c. Those that are severed from Christ are ultimately cast into the lake of fire.
4. This is unmistakable evidence for the possibility of apostasy (there are more than 2000 warnings concerning this in scripture).

F. THE BLESSINGS OF ABIDING IN THE VINE

1. John 15:7
2. To "abide" in Christ is not only to be in His church, but is to live in close communion and fellowship with Jesus.
3. Promise for those in Christ: "ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you".
 - a. I John 5:14-15 helps us to better understand this. Those in the vine do not ask for forbidden things,

way she was dressed. In an article in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, May 10, 1997, her murderer is quoted as having said, "She would write in chalk in the streets. She would wear shorts with no panties and I would see this." The way we dress is a serious matter.

Another category of immodest apparel is that which is not appropriate for the occasion, even though it might otherwise be modest. There are times when properly fitted slacks are more modest than a dress. Clothing fit for a picnic is not modest apparel for a funeral or a wedding. Our appearance indicates the importance we place on any given activity. Appropriate attire is a must for worship. Not only does inappropriate clothing distract others and hinders their worship, it reflects an irreverent attitude on the part of the wearer. One area of giving our best to the Master involves taking care to dress our best when we attend worship services. What we wear to worship is not that important to God, but what it represents in our attitude is.

Another consideration in our clothing is gaudiness or drabness that draws attention to oneself. Paul described the former as "braided hair, or gold or pearls, or costly array" (I Timothy 2:9). Flaunting one's wealth is not a characteristic of the woman Paul describes as "professing Godliness." Clothing that intimidates or otherwise makes others uncomfortable is not modest apparel. The opposite is an equal problem. It seems there are some women who pride themselves on NOT doing anything to make themselves look better. Some young people today dress in the grunge look or "heroin chic." Their intent is shock value. Some women use no make-up, have no hair style, and wear ill-fitting, colorless clothing. Just a little lipstick and blush can work wonders and give us a far healthier appearance. The dress need not be expensive, but the color and style should be attractive. Our appearance reflects pride and self-esteem. Can others see that we have the abundant life

as Christians when our hair is unkempt and our clothing prison drab?

As with our clothing, our manner of life must be modest. Using the same definition of not drawing undue attention to oneself, we conduct ourselves in such a way that Christ is reflected in us. As Christian women, we have tremendous influence on others. We must maintain purity publicly as well as privately. This involves where we go and what we do. With summer approaching, many are looking forward to sunning by the pool. If we have a backyard pool and a privacy fence, fine. Before we do so at a public pool, we need to consider the account of David's sin with Bathsheba. She was bathing in an open area and he observed her doing so. She may have thought she was alone and had no idea he was watching and lusting after her. The end result of this was their affair and the murder of her husband in an attempt to cover the sin. The child born of their illicit union died. It all started with a roof-top bath and lusting eyes (II Samuel 11).

In his commentary on *The Pastoral Epistles*, Donald Guthrie wrote that "a woman's dress is a mirror of her mind" and that those who profess Godliness will always have standards that are higher than those of non-Christians.¹ We will not want to dress or conduct ourselves in such a way as to sin and to cause others to sin. We will not want to cause others to be uncomfortable around us. As Christians, let us live in such a way that our light will shine so that the world will see our good works and glorify our Heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16).

¹Donald Guthrie, *THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), 74-75.

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MODEST APPAREL

Annetta B. Cates

It is the season of the year that most of us begin to think about summer and the lighter, brighter, and sometimes briefer clothes that we will be buying and wearing in the coming months. As with every other decision Christians make, we must consider whether there are Biblical guidelines that apply and realize the importance of staying within those confines. And, yes, the Bible does have something to say to us when we are making clothing decisions.

The Apostle Paul tells us in I Timothy 2:9-10:

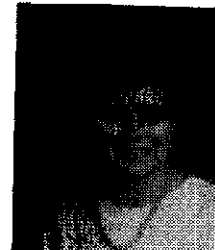
In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing Godliness) with good works.

The thrust of these verses is that the Christian woman so conduct her life that all who know her will see Christ living in her. These verses refer to modest behavior and modest attitudes as well as to modest dress. We live in an age where society is not all that different from the world Jeremiah knew. The prevalent immorality so influenced God's people of that day that Jeremiah wrote:

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord (Jeremiah 6:15).

We are bombarded on all sides by negative images that would pull us into degradation. As Christians, we cannot allow ourselves to be sold a bill of goods that destroy our souls. We are the ones to show the world through attitude and action that there is a better way.

While it is true that styles change, standards of right and wrong do not. The use of clothing as a covering for nakedness goes back to the Garden of Eden. In addition to I Timothy 2:9, 10, there are other verses that offer the same principles. I Peter 3:3, 4 speaks of dressing in such a way as to not draw undue attention to oneself. Actually, this is the very definition of modesty! Christians are to keep themselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27). We are not to love the world and the things of the world (I John 2:15). The Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). The Christian will deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (including causing others to lust), and will **"live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world"** (Titus 2:12).



WHAT IS IMMODEST

Using the definition of "anything that draws undue attention to oneself," what is immodest apparel and behavior? It is that which is too revealing, not appropriate to the occasion, and that which is either so flamboyant or so drab as to give others the wrong impression about us and who we should be. The dictionary uses the word "propriety" or proper for the occasion in its definition.

What is too revealing? Anything that is too thin, too tight, too clingy, too short, too low cut, or lacking in appropriate underwear fits the definition of immodest. Clothing that allows our underwear, or the imprint of our underwear to show through is too thin and/or too tight and/or too clingy. Too short reveals the thigh. One might ask, "What is the significance of the thigh? That's cultural. One hundred years ago, it was considered immodest for the calf of the leg to show. Some societies today think it immodest to have bare arms." The Bible has the answer to this question in Isaiah 47:2-3 where Isaiah links uncovering the thigh and **"thy shame shall be seen."** Further, too low cut and the upper area of breast is uncovered. While cropped tops that expose an inch or two of the waist are popular, these, too, would come in the same category. The wearer of such clothing is guilty of lasciviousness which includes causing others to lust and is condemned in Galatians 5:19. A woman should be aware of the effect her clothes may have on others and dress in such a way as to not cause others to sin. We cannot know what others are thinking, thus must realize that if our clothing fits the description of immodest, then it is indeed immodest. Mothers need to take care in selecting the clothes their children wear and own. The importance dressing even our youngest children modestly was underscored when the news reported a convicted child molester/murderer as having said he was drawn to little six year old Megan Kanka of New Jersey in July, 1994, by the

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and realize that God will answer our request in a way that is best for us.

G. FRUIT BEARING BRANCHES GLORIFIES THE FATHER.

1. John 15:8
2. Fruit bearing is proof of faithful discipleship...Matthew 7:15-20.
3. As faithful disciples we bring glory to God...Matthew 5:16; Philippians 1:11.

CONCLUSION

- A. Are you in the vine, or are you trying to abide as a branch apart from the vine.
- B. Spiritual life can only be found in the vine.
- C. To stay in the vine we must bear fruit .

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Congregational Development Characteristics Of A Soul Winning Church

Gary L. Grizzell

[Brethren, we can ill afford to sit around wringing our hands and fretting over bygone days before the current digression. The faithful congregation does not make a choice between being sound or evangelistic. We must seize the moment and be both doctrinally sound and burning up with desire to save the lost. Faithful preacher Gary Grizzell focuses on important characteristics that must mark every congregation—Lynn Parker.]

The writer of Proverbs wrote, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Jesus taught the importance and influence of not only the individual disciple, but of the whole church (Matthew 5:13-16). Jerusalem at night was a bright city set on a hill and the church of Christ is such a spiritual force in a world of darkness.

A soul winning church is a **SOUL-CONSCIOUS church**. God is concerned about the physical needs of man, but He places the spiritual needs of man **ABOVE** the physical needs. Jesus said, "But what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). The faithful Christian is always alert to a receptive lost soul who is hungering the truth of the Bible.

A soul winning church has the wonderful characteristic of **LOVE**. Paul summed up the problem of the church at Corinth by writing, "Without love I am nothing." (read I Corinthians 13:1-3). Love is the motive for living for Christ and doing all Christian works (Galatians 5:6). The congregation with this type of working love cannot help but tell the lost of the joys of heaven and the horrors of an eternal hell.

A soul winning church has the necessary ingredient of **ZEAL**! The first church was on fire to march across the Roman Empire holding high the name of Christ because of bold zeal. The church in the imperial city of Rome had so much zeal that their faith was known throughout the Roman Empire (Romans 1:8). Zeal says, "Even though it is midnight and I must go to work in the morning, I will go down to the meeting house to see a baptism and encourage a babe in Christ."

A soul winning church has a **KNOWLEDGE** of God's word. Zeal without knowledge is a dangerous thing (imagine a child with a power saw)! Romans 10:1-2 re-

veals that Paul desired for his fellow Jews to be saved, but their problem was zeal without knowledge. I cannot pray knowledge in but I must study it in. (see II Timothy 2:15).

Last, the characteristic of **FAITH** is necessary for success in seeking and saving the lost. "For we walk by faith and not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). It is not a leap into the dark but is a leap into the light, that is, the light of God's word (Hebrews 11:1; I John 1:7). Contrary to popular opinion, faith does not outrun the evidence. (Romans 10:17; I Thessalonians 5:21). Walking by faith says in regard to leading a soul to Christ, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

While other characteristics such as hope, joy and fellowship with God's family may also be noted, is it not interesting that all of these soul winning characteristics were first possessed by our Lord Jesus Christ while he was here on this earth about 2,000 years ago? Since Jesus is the example of every disciple of Christ (I Peter 2:21), may all who name his name seek to put on these marvelous traits. "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

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FATHER AND SON UNITED

Paul Vaughn

In the migration to America in the 1800's, as it is today, many times families were separated. They hoped to reunite as means and opportunities became available for the rest of the family to come to their new country. In 1807, **Thomas Campbell** left his wife and seven children in Ireland to weigh anchor for this new land of promises and possibilities.

Upon his arrival in America, Campbell was welcomed into the fellowship of the Old Light, Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterian Church. The sectarian attitudes that had divided this group a number of times soon caused the hierarchy to find fault with the teachings of Thomas Campbell. They suspended him from preaching in February 1808.

SHIPWRECK

In mid-summer of 1808, Thomas Campbell sent word for his family to join him in America. Campbell's wife and children embarked on their trip to America from Londonderry on October 1, 1808. They were shipwrecked soon after setting sail, but all of the passengers made it to safety. *Transatlantic crossing at that time of the year was dangerous and difficult, so the Campbell family wintered in Glasgow.*

Perhaps most of you have heard "when life hands you a lemon, make lemonade." This is the very thing that Alexander Campbell did as a result of the shipwreck. The shipwreck gave him the opportunity to study at the University of Glasgow. There were many positive influences on Campbell while he studied in Glasgow. It was at this time that he reached the decision to be a preacher. Also while at the University, he became a good friend of **Greville Ewing**, the director of the school for preachers. Ewing introduced Alexander Campbell to the writings of **John Glas**, **Robert Sandeman**, and **Robert and James Haldane**.

JOHN GLAS

John Glas was a Scottish Presbyterian. He was born at Auchtermuchty, Scotland on September 21, 1695. He was educated at Edinburgh and St. Andrews, Scotland. Glas was the minister in the Presbytery of Dundee at the Tealing parish.

Glas differed with the teachings of the Scottish Presbyterian Church about the government of the church. He believed that one must look to the New Testament and that there was no pattern in the Scriptures for a national church. Glas taught that in the New Testament one can find only the universal church with local congregations.

ROBERT SANDEMAN AND THE HALDANES

Robert Sandeman was born in Perth, Scotland in 1718. About 1734 Sandeman entered the University at Edinburgh to become a Presbyterian preacher. While at Edinburgh, he met John Glas. Meeting of Glas had a great effect

on Sandeman's life. He relinquished his desire to preach in the Presbyterian Church and married one of Glas' daughters. Sandeman worked hard to promote the teachings of Glas, as well as developing arguments on the importance of faith and truth in the Christian religion.

Robert and James Haldane were orphaned as boys and were reared by their uncle who was an Admiral in the navy. The Haldanes believed in the local autonomy of the church, baptism by immersion only, and the observance of the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Robert Haldane established the school at Edinburgh in 1798, appointing Greville Ewing as its director. Ewing moved then to Glasgow and, by the time of the shipwreck of the Campbell family, he was in the position to influence Alexander Campbell.

DECLARATION AND ADDRESS

Thomas Campbell, after being ostracized from the Old Light, Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterian Church, met with a small group of men who believed the same things about sectarianism that he was teaching. They formed the "Christian Association of Washington" in August 1809. It was at this time that Thomas Campbell wrote the Declaration and Address. Their desire was to follow the Scriptures, "to speak where the scriptures speak and to be silent where the scriptures are silent."

In 1809 that **Alexander Campbell** arrived in America from Glasgow. An interesting historical note is that on February 12, 1809 **Abraham Lincoln**, the 16th president, was born to **Thomas and Nancy Lincoln** at Nolin Creek, Kentucky.

When Thomas and Alexander Campbell met, both men had come to the same conclusion about going back to the Bible and following it alone though they were an ocean apart from each other. Both had come to the same belief to break from their religious past by charting a new course seeking the "old paths."

Thomas and his son Alexander were united physically on October 19, 1809 in western Pennsylvania. This was a happy time for father and son, yet one can only imagine the happiness they enjoyed finding that they both were united in their beliefs about the authority of the scriptures.

—1415 Lincoln Rd.
Lewisport, Kentucky 42351

"... liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith." —Alexis de Tocqueville

Seeing It Helps Saying It

Selecting Clothes

Jodie Boren

You cannot put a size 14 body into size 8 clothing unless you bring about a drastic change. To make such a change will require a lot of self discipline, i.e., dieting and exercise. The cost, therefore, will be great.

Many people today want to be in a right relationship with the Lord and wear the clothes of righteousness. However, this will require a drastic change in their lifestyle and most are not willing to pay the price. To be clothed in white raiment one must overcome (Revelations 3:5) and walk with the Lord so as to keep his garments undefiled from the corruption of the world. Paul commanded the Corinthians to **"come out from among them (the unbelievers and the unrighteous)"** II Corinthians 6:14-17).

The pages of the Bible are filled with examples of God's servants who paid great prices—sacrificial prices—to walk with God. I think of Joseph who experienced the trauma of being sold into slavery by his own brethren. Later, he was accused of sexual impropriety by his master's wife which led to his imprisonment. Through all this he remained loyal to God and was exalted by God. Then there's Job, a servant of God and a righteous man. What a price he paid! He lost all his earthly possessions and even his family but he continued faithful to God. Because of his steadfastness God gave Job twice as much as he had before and he lived afterwards 140 years. How about Paul? He was beaten; stoned, cast into prison, and martyred for the cause of Christ. He gave his all for Jesus because he believed with all his heart that a crown of righteousness awaited him in heaven. Space does not permit the telling of the other apostles, of the prophets, of the Christian martyrs, and such.

All these willingly paid the cost, but what about you and me? The cost of being God's servant will be great. Listen to Paul as he wrote in Romans 12:1, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...."** He further wrote in Galatians 2:20 as he thought of the crucifixion of Christ, **"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..."** In the sixth chapter and verse 14, he wrote, **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."** This is what the Lord spoke of "overcoming" above. Sacrifice! Jesus also said, **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"** (Luke 9:23).



When we rise from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4) Paul commands us in vs. 12, **"Let not in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."** When we have obeyed from the heart the doctrine that we have received, we are then made free from sin and become the servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18).

We may not be able to change our physical bodies from a size 14 to a size 8, but, spiritually speaking, we all can put on (clothe ourselves with) our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14) if we are willing to pay the price. We must put Christ and his kingdom first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).

This "paying the price," however, must be put in the proper perspective. Jesus said in Luke 18:29-30:

Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

When viewed from this perspective, it is not "paying a price" to be God's servant but enjoying the abundant life (John 10:10) with the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).

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NOTES AND QUOTES...

Robert Villines, Springfield, Tennessee: "Enclosed is a check for \$1,000.00 to be used for 'Special Mailings.' Use it to inform the members around Nashville, Tennessee. I wish someone would start a school like East Tennessee School of Preaching & Missions and the Memphis School of Preaching somewhere around Nashville.

"I attended David Lipscomb College in 1934. Franklin Camp and Willard Collins were roommates. After Harold Hazelip came in as president, the school has really gone down. Athans Clay Pullias was one of my teachers, and you know what happened to him. Steve Flatt preaches good sermons. (I hear him some over T.V.) How in the world he can keep on associating with the old Jubilee bunch is beyond me. I'll believe he is going to straighten out the school when I see it.

"I read your book. It is excellent. It brought back lots of memories. I am 83 years old. When you get the next one finished, please send me one and I will send you the price of same.

"My father-in-law was P. B. Clements. He was a part time preacher and song leader. At one time in the '40s he was the local preacher for the church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Ira, you have done more for the church than any other man I know of. I hope you live to be 100 years old. Don't ever retire...

"P.S. I loaned your book to the local preacher. He wanted to read it."

[NOTE: Thanking brother Villines for his wonderful contribution of \$1,000.00 for "Special Mailings" of Contending for the Faith to help us inform members around Nashville of what is REALLY happening to our Lord's church, I assured him that this would help significantly in getting the message out where it could affect those who are still concerned for truth versus error any more.

"I quite agree with you that a preacher-training school of the sort you mentioned needs to be established somewhere around Nashville," I replied, in part. "I plan to pass your idea along to others. Who knows? It might take hold with someone and grow! At least it's worth a try. I think David Lipscomb himself would approve.

"So you attended D.L.C. in 1934! That is the same year I entered the University of Oklahoma. I should have finished in 1938; but I ran out of money and felt impelled to drop out that January to earn enough to pay my debts. It took me 5 1/2 years to get back; but I finally did graduate (in Journalism) in 1944!

"All five of our children attended Lipscomb elementary and high school—thanks to sister Burton. Also, one of them finished a B.A. degree at D.L.C. After taking her A.A. degree from Fraed-Hardeman College, and a year of Chinese at Yale University, Vada finally

finished a degree in Religious Education at D.L.C., in 1967. (She would have finished 17 years earlier had I not insisted she marry me in 1947, after which we had our family and did eight years of missionary work in Southeast Asia.

"In any case, we had enough exposure to D.L.C. to know intimately what is happening there in particular as well as in Nashville in general. The only way I can explain Steve Flatt's continuing to run with those he does is that he had a major part in BEGINNING the Nashville Jubilee, and, deep down, he still is one of them in heart. His claims that he is going to 'straighten out' the school are just so much window dressing. He can preach a good sermon; but what good is such preaching when his life and influence go another way!

"Thanks for what you said of my autobiography, Volume I. We shall put you down for Volume II, when it is finished, hopefully, early the coming year. Then, of course, I plan for Volume III after that, if the Lord lets me live that long...

"As for my living to be 100 years old and never retiring, that has a nice ring to it. Thanks for hoping so, anyway. Lord willing, on November 26th, I leave these shores again for more missionary work in Asia, including a city-wide campaign in Kathmandu, Nepal; some preaching in Hyderabad, India; speaking on the annual Asian lectureship in southern Sumatra, Indonesia; on another one at Quezon City, Philippines; on another one at Battambang, Cambodia; and speaking several times in Singapore and Malaysia. Don Thornton wants me to do likewise in Hong Kong and also Shenzhen, China, before returning Stateside. I may try to work these into my schedule, also, this time out.

"Physically speaking, at 82 years of age, such intensive preaching journeys are getting harder and harder for me to make. However, if the cross was not too much for our Lord to bear for us, I reckon physical exhaustion is not too much to bear for him...Keep Pressing Toward the Mark." [YRJR.]

Wayne Coats, Mt. Juliet, Tennessee: "When brother Tom Warren called me and related that he had read my review of the Shelly-Harris speeches on The Second Incarnation, I was thankful; but when he stated that he wanted to see the book distributed all over the world, I was all but speechless.

"After discussing the matter with some good brethren, I began to think that such could be done if enough people would help. Members of the East Hill congregation in Pulaski, Tennessee, where Paul Sain preaches, pitched in and helped Sain print the first ten thousand copies. We were able to get the book printed for sixty cents per copy due to all the free labor...

"Due to my present affliction, which of course developed after I began the effort, there is so little I seem to be able to do just now. But I promise that I will keep plowing until I get to the end of the row and I intend for the devil to know that he cannot hold the plow handles with me..."

[NOTE: It is amazing how long it is taking brother Coats to overcome his long, long illness. However, even being in constant pain across his lower abdomen, he keeps on trying. Those wishing to help distribute the above-mentioned book and others that he has written, please make your checks payable to the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ, clearly stating what they are for, and address them % Wayne Coats, 705 Hillview Drive, Mt. Juliet, Tennessee 37122. IYRJR.]

Rickey & Julia Comer, of Oakdale, Tennessee, wrote: "Contending for the Faith has improved. There is a much improved balance in the articles. A good balance of what is wrong and how to improve in our service and worship to God. Keep up the good work."

Jack & Dorthie Allan, of Trona, California, ordered a bundle of 40 copies of one of our issues, saying, "We are greatly concerned with the insidious movement within the Lord's church. We are doing our best to get some unconcerned brethren interested in what is happening in the brotherhood, especially the brain-washing of our young people. It amazes us that some of our brethren can't distinguish truth from error. Hang in there and don't let go. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6).

Eugene Botz, Ravenden, Arkansas: "We are thankful to you in your continuing efforts of exposing error and trying to get it corrected. In this we back you 200% and pray for you to continue as long as you can. As you and I age we must not slow down as you well know. We are slow in body but not in mind.

"Too many of our brethren are like Elijah in thinking God has forsaken us and are all sitting under their own JUNIPER TREES feeling sorry for themselves. Not so you and I and others are truly God's servants when we contend for the faith..."

Myrtle Marlow, Old Hickory, Tennessee: "I am so glad you are doing those mailings to these congregations...I was talking with one of our elders and his wife about the way the church was going...I told them by the way the church was going liberal, it would not be long until a person would have to look and go a long way to find a true church. He agreed..."

"If I can help, let me know. I would like to see the church clear of this liberal teaching. Our souls are at stake and these young children are being misled into a doctrine that will not stand in judgment, I am sure, when it is not BASED ON THE BIBLE."

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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.

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England—South Cambridge Church of Christ, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Sunday: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday: 7:30 p.m., Brian Chadwick, Tel. 01223 210101. Publishers of "Oracles of God."

Peterborough—Church of Christ, meeting at the Manor Farm Community Centre, Eye, Peterborough. BS 10 a.m., BB 11 a.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Contact evangelist Danny Douglas; Email: D.Douglas@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel:01144-1733-315907 or Keith Sisman: K.Sisman@church-of-Christ-uk.net tel: 01144-1487-710552.

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

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—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. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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. 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. David Dalton, 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.

Bryan/College Station—Church of Christ, Sunday 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.; (979) 822-1539; Calvin Engledinger, 2109 Pebblebrook, Bryan, TX 77807 Email: CALENG@TCA.net.

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 Spring Bible Institute and the SBI 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.

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

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.

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The Last Word

ASKS FOR THE OLD PATHS

Eddie Whitten

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16). The plaintive plea of Jeremiah went unheeded just as the pleas of faithful brethren are going unheeded today. The plea is the same: "Ask for the old paths," but the retort is, "we are not guided by the pleas of faithful brethren." To be sure, faithful brethren do not lead us. However, they would not be faithful brethren if their pleas were not in harmony with the Bible. "There is a sense" seems to be a qualifying term connected to the proper understanding of the simple gospel of Christ. "There is a sense" in which this or that may be the case, but few things are absolute.

REGARDING CONVERSION

It would be very difficult to convict an alien sinner of his need to obey the gospel on the basis of "there is a sense" in which he is guilty of sin. He either is or he is not! The Bible says that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Also, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). Today, our sensationalists might say, "There is a sense in



which he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but there is a sense in which he that believeth not shall be damned." Denominationalists have long been saying, "There is a sense in which one is baptized," but it might be by sprinkling, or pouring water on one's head, or by a nice feeling in one's heart, or baptized in the Holy Spirit, on in some other "sense." No, the Bible says emphatically and authoritatively what is necessary to be saved. There is no "in a sense" to it. Anything short of doing what the Bible says to do is to fail. There is no sense saying, "there is a sense."

REGARDING DIRECT OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are too many questions unanswered regarding the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the spirit of man. Yet, there is insistence, on the part of some, that the Holy Spirit operates separate from the word of God to help us in matters we are incapable of understanding. The implication is that those who do not agree are ignorant, unlearned and who will probably not be suitable for heaven. "There is a sense" in which the Holy Spirit has revealed new vistas of understanding to those who tout this philosophy, but not to all of us. If this is not true, then how is it that all faithful Christians have not received the same revelation. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11). Peter, the apostle, inspired as he was, said God had given to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). What else is needed for us to go to heaven? Unless "there is a sense" in which God has revealed special gifts of understanding, and the ability to utilize said understanding to the benefit of those not so gifted, then "there is a sense" in which God is a respecter of persons. Does that make sense? Certainly not!

ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP EXCEPT FOR EXCEPTIONS

Another of the senseless positions of sensationalism is that of everything we do in life is worship except for sin and "mundane" things. The dodge here is that "there is a sense" in which all of life is worship, but not in everything.

The very statement is a contradiction of itself. You cannot have "everything" if "some things" are exempt. Whatever is exempt is that much short of "everything." The tree in the midst of the Garden diminished by one every tree that is in the Garden from which man could eat. (Genesis 2:16-17). Fornication is the exemption to the law of God regarding divorce and remarriage. God is the authority for the exemptions in those cases. God did not say, "there is a sense" in which an exemption is granted. He was specific. Now, "mundane" things belong to the realm of "there is a sense" in which all we do is worship, but not everything. It is left up to one's imagination as to what constitutes "mundane" things.

The Bible is specific as to what we do in worship. Worship involves the heart, the mind, attitude and actions. God does not give a "there is a sense" as to what we do in our worship of him. He is specific. We are to sing, pray, give, teach (preach, learn) and take the Lord's Supper. Other things, such as benevolence (alms giving), fasting, individual prayer, are matters of option with the person and are to be done without fanfare. There is not a sense in which "there is a sense" regarding our worship of God.

We repeat the plea of Jeremiah. "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." What about those old paths? Have they not been sufficient for the salvation of souls for six millennia? Does it now take a new level of understanding, which evidently has been revealed only to a miniscule few, to enlighten the world to the fact that "there is a sense" in which all those principles we hold to be true may, indeed, not be?

We offer this observation to those who embrace weak, wobbly, wearisome and worthless "there is a sense" religion. "There is a sense" in which Jesus is going to "judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). That "sense" is going to be the word of God (John 12:48). It would be the better part of good sense to abandon "there is a sense" religion. It is nonsense.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

FRANKLIN GRAHAM AND LUBBOCK, TEXAS

Why The *Southside Church of Christ* Will Not Participate In Franklin Graham's West Texas Festival 2000 and Other Ecumenical Efforts

Why does the *Southside Church of Christ* consider it necessary to publish a statement as to why she will not participate in **Franklin Graham's West Texas Festival 2000** and other ecumenical efforts in Lubbock or elsewhere? That question deserves an honest, sincere, biblical answer (1 Peter 3:15). Please understand that this answer is given with Christian love for all (Ephesians, 4:15), and with malice toward none (Colossians 3:8).

There are some churches of Christ in and around Lubbock which have departed from their scriptural and spiritual moorings (Hebrews 2:1-3; 1 John 2:19), as evidenced by their having integral parts in local ecumenical endeavors. Likewise, there are churches of Christ which are participating in the *Graham Festival 2000*. The involvement of those churches of Christ in those activities has been promulgated far and wide. They seem to be the headline makers. Naturally, this has caused many people in the denominational churches, and even some members in churches of Christ, to mistakenly conclude that ALL churches of Christ in Lubbock accept ecumenism and see nothing wrong with participation in such events as the *Graham Festival 2000*. To the contrary, the *Southside Church of Christ* will fellowship neither ecumenism nor the *Graham Festival 2000* (Ephesians 5:11).

SOUTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST CANNOT FELLOWSHIP FRANKLIN GRAHAM

Graham is a Baptist. True to his Baptist profession, Graham preaches Baptist doctrine. A couple of those doctrines having to do with "sin" and "salvation" are worthy of note.

Baptist doctrine insists that all men are "born in sin." Holding that doctrine, Graham told his audience in his *1999 Festival in Jamaica*, "You were born as a sinner!" Thankfully, the Bible teaches no such thing. Scripture stresses that children are innocent (Psalms 106:37-38) and do not inherit

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BILLY GRAHAM AND NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Jim E. Waldron

Billy Graham was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1918. Graham, who is an ordained Baptist preacher; worked in the late 40s with the "Youth for Christ Crusade" both in the United States and England. His first "large-scale evangelistic campaign (was held) in Los Angeles in 1949 (*World Book Encyclopedia*, p. 290, 1976). In the early 50s, while I was in high school at Bellevue in Davidson County, Tennessee, Graham came to *Dudley Stadium* at *Vanderbilt University* to hold one of his "Crusades for Christ." This June he held a similar "Crusade" in the *Adelphia Coliseum*, which is the home field of the *Tennessee Titans* football team.

AN ECUMENICAL BAPTIST

Graham, while proclaiming an ecumenical message e.g. "join the church of your choice" has boldly taught and upheld standard Baptist doctrines such as salvation by faith alone, once saved always saved and the future establishment of Christ's kingdom on this planet and Jesus' reign for a thousand years in Jerusalem.

Salvation is *not* by faith alone (Mark 16:15-16; James 2:24). Those who have been saved by God's grace can fall from that grace (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 6:4-6) and Jesus' kingdom was founded on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection in Jerusalem about 1970 years ago (Matthew 16:18-19; Luke 9:27; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:33-42; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9). Also, Jesus has been "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 1:18-22) since that date (Pentecost 28 May 30 AD) Graham's contradictions of these scriptures places him in the ranks of false teachers for he perverts the gospel (cf. Galatians 1:6-9).

BILLY, RUBEL AND WOODMONT HILLS

Of the 120 *churches of Christ* in Nashville and Davidson County in 1953 not one shamed our beloved brotherhood (1 Peter 2:17) by bidding Godspeed to this false teacher. But now it is different. Last fall the preacher for the *Woodmont*

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Editorial...

TWO DIFFERENT FELLOWSHIPS

Because of this special issue we are not running the regular monthly articles by Annette B. Cates, Noah Hackworth, Lynn Parker, Mark McWhorter, Tom Moore and Jason R. Roberts. They will appear in our next issue.

APOSTATES FELOWSHIP THE GRAHAMS

In this issue we are dealing with the fellowship of certain false brethren with Franklin Graham's *West Texas Festival 2000* held in Lubbock, Texas on the last weekend of April, 2000 and his father, Billy Graham's Crusade in Nashville, Tennessee conducted the first weekend of June 2000. Indeed, we are happy to note that certain faithful churches have taken a scriptural stand against these apostate churches. All alone the faithful *Southside Church of Christ* in Lubbock spearheaded the opposition to Franklin Graham's ecumenical efforts with the article beginning on the front page of this issue in the left-hand column. It originally appeared in Lubbock's local newspaper, *Avalanche-Journal*. The article occupied a full page in the paper and was paid for by the *Southside* congregation. The articles that follow and pertain to it are self-explanatory. Since, the article was published a number of brethren have contributed to the cost of the article. We commend *Southside's* faithful elders, preacher and members for their efforts. Tom Hicks is their preacher.

The three articles that appear on pages 17 and 18 are derived from tracts written by Garland Elkins and James McGill. The complete tracts may be ordered from *Sain Publications*, 217 East Jefferson, Pulaski, Tennessee 38470. One of these articles appeared each day of the Billy Graham Crusade in *The Tennessean*, a Nashville newspaper. They appear in *CFTF* in the order they appeared in the newspaper. The faithful *East Hill Church of Christ*, 509 East Madison, Pulaski, Tennessee 38478 took the lead in publishing these articles. To the *East Hill* congregation, her elders and preachers (Paul Sain is the pulpit preacher and instrumental in printing the tracts just noted) we express our appreciation. We also commend all brethren who shared in getting these articles published. The tracts were distributed to persons before each session of the Graham Crusade by students of the *Memphis School of Preaching*. In next month's issue we will have a report of this activity.

PRESSING THE BATTLE

We are sending this issue of *CFTF* to approximately 7,000 addresses on our "Special Mailings" list in Lubbock and Nashville. The paper, printing and mailing expense is around \$3,500. However, we think that this paper needs all the circulation it can get. Will you help us defray the cost with a generous contribution? You may send your contribution to *Spring Church of Christ*, P. O. Box 39, Spring,

Texas 77383. Mark your checks "Special Mailings, CFTF."

The reason for this mailing is clear—the state of the church in Lubbock and Nashville is indicative of the whole brotherhood. Two distinct and different fellowships exist. *The Woodmont Hills* denominational sectarian ecumenical variety and those of us who continue to follow the New

Testament pattern of doing only what is authorized thereby (Colossians 3:17). Surely those churches in Lubbock, Nashville, the nation and the world who continue to act as if nothing has changed within churches of Christ are not so willfully ignorant and blind that they will not see the reality of two incompatible religions.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

Southside Church of Christ

(Continued From Page 1)

sin from their fathers (Ezekial 18:19-20). In fact, Jesus taught that one must become as a little child in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3-4; 19:14).

JUST PRAY THE SINNER'S PRAYER

When it comes to salvation from sin, Graham teaches Baptist, not Bible, doctrine. Concerning his own "salvation" Graham said, "I got on my knees one night, I confessed my sin, I repented of my sin, I asked Christ to come into my heart and life. That night God forgave Graham" (sermon 1999 *Jamaica Festival*). In his book, *Living Beyond the Limits* (p. 214), Graham told of a "Dr. Josip" who expressed, "I want to know I am forgiven. I want to be a child of God." Graham said to him, "Dr. Josip ... just repeat this simple prayer after me—God will hear us." In the last sentence of this book (p. 215), Graham told his readers, "If you want Jesus to come into your heart and give you life eternal, pray the prayer I prayed with Dr. Josip." In the Bible, from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) onward, when alien sinners asked what to do in order to be saved, where were they ever told, "Just repeat this simple prayer after me"? NOWHERE!

The Bible teaches that in order to be saved one must: hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God (John 8:24), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30), confess that Jesus Christ is the son of God (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21). When one is baptized, he is baptized into Christ's death (Romans 6:3-5) and he puts on Christ (Galatians 3:27). All spiritual blessings, including salvation, are "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Baptism is the only means revealed in the Bible by which one can enter "into" Christ.

If *Southside* believed, preached, and practiced Baptist doctrine, or believed that "doctrine did not matter," she would have no qualms about fellowshiping Graham. However, true to her profession, *Southside Church of Christ* is committed to preaching the word of God (II Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 4:11), the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), only the doctrine of Christ (II John 9-11), without going beyond that which is written (I Corinthians 4:6). Believing, preaching, and practicing the doctrine of Christ (Bible doctrine) is what makes *Southside*, or any other congregation, a church of Christ. Because Bible doctrine instructs Christians to have no fellowship with men who teach things contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; II John 9-11), *Southside Church of Christ* cannot fellowship Graham.

SOUTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST CANNOT FELLOWSHIP THINGS DONE IN GRAHAM'S 2000

A number of things will be done during *Graham's Festival 2000* which violate the Lord's will. Because this is so, *South-*

side Church of Christ cannot participate in *Graham's Festival 2000*. Here is but one example of the many that can be provided.

Music, performed in the various worship services by a variety of "stars" and groups, is one of the major "drawing cards" for *Graham's Festival 2000*. Someone noted tongue-in-cheek, "Every style of music will be featured, from 'Hard Rock' to 'Honky-tonk,' but that's okay if you call it 'Christian Rock' and 'Christian Honky-tonk'." It must also be noted that instrumental music will be a major factor incorporated into those periods of worship.

If for no other reason, *Southside Church of Christ* cannot be in fellowship with *Graham's Festival 2000* because instrumental music will be used in the worship. Colossians 3:17 commands, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Thus, in religious matters before a doctrine can be taught or a thing done, there must be explicit or implicit authority from the Lord (which is found only in the Bible, cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19). When it comes to the music God wants used in the church's worship, only "singing" is scripturally authorized (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15; James 5:13). Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Worship done using instrumental music cannot be done "in spirit and in truth" since the Bible does not authorize its use.

SOUTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST CANNOT FELLOWSHIP DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Jesus established only one church (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4 [note from these verses that the "body" and the "church" are one and the same]) and it was (is) not a denomination. Matthew was not a member of one denomination, Luke a member of another denomination, Paul a member of yet another denomination, and so on. They were all members of one and the same church—the Lord's church. *The Southside Church of Christ* is not a denomination, it is—and seeks only to be the Lord's church. This means fellowship with denominations cannot be done with the Lord's approval.

God condemns divisions and those who cause divisions among his people (Proverbs 6:16-19; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 3:3). Concerning his followers, Jesus prayed:

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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me, (John 17:20-23).

Here, Jesus implied that division is harmful to his cause because it hinders the world from believing.

Knowing this to be the case, and knowing that it is the Lord's will for all his followers to be united—**ONE**—each and everyone who professes to be a follower of Jesus should be doing all that he can to achieve and maintain a genuine unity which is acceptable to Christ. All who profess to be Christians should be, "**Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" (Ephesians 4:3). In Ephesians 4:13, Paul stressed that there is to be "**unity of the faith.**"

ECUMENICAL UNITY IS NOT THE "UNITY OF THE SPIRIT"

Ecumenism may have "a spirit of unity," but it is not "the unity of the Spirit." In truth, ecumenism is not calling for the unity for which Jesus prayed. Instead, ecumenism is advocating union. There is a vast difference between union and unity. That difference is beautifully and emphatically demonstrated in the statement: "You can take two cats and tie their tails together and drop them over a clothes line. You will have union, but you won't have unity." But, those with an "ecumenical spirit" proclaim, "We denominations are united on all 'essential' matters anyway." Stating it another way, some assert that all churches (i.e., denominations) "share common 'core' values" and that their "differences are only over unimportant matters." Perhaps, a few naive people might accept such claims. Others may utilize such errant verbiage to salve their consciences in an effort to ease their guilt for compromising and for allowing the divisions to go unhealed. However, no one who analyzes the very reasons why denominations exist can factually say that the differences are unimportant or that they all really believe and are united in the essential matters, the "core" doctrines.

The truth is, "Denominations differ on the following: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, redemption, justification, sanctification, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, the name of the church, identity of the church, origin of the church, importance of the church, polity of the church, terms of membership in the church, worship of the church, work of the church, organization of the church. Folks, ARE ALL THESE NON-ESSENTIAL THINGS?" (*Ready Answers to Religious Errors*, A.C. Williams and J. Harvey Dykes, pp. 72-73). Differences regarding such matters cannot be swept under the rug. Slogans such as, "Let's agree to disagree" are absolutely meaningless, and certainly without scriptural foundation. The Bible asks, "**Can two walk together, except they be agreed?**" Amos 3:3. No! *Southside Church of Christ* can neither agree with (or overlook) denominational doctrines nor compromise the truth she holds in order to participate in the ecumenical movement.

HOW TO ACHIEVE BIBLE UNITY, "THE UNITY" OF THE SPIRIT

Southside Church of Christ advocates the unity of the Spirit, Bible unity, not the pseudo-unity of ecumenism. To those who would follow Christ, Paul said, "**Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing**" (Philippians 3:16). Paul told the Corinthians,

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10).

NO DIVISIONS! All the followers of Christ are to **SPEAK THE SAME THING!** All the followers of Christ are to be of

the **SAME MIND!** All the followers of Christ are to be of the **SAME JUDGMENT!** Is that what is seen in denominationalism? Is that what is being advocated by the ecumenical movement? No! No, it is not! The means for achieving God-approved unity can be found only in the Bible.

Paul told the Ephesian elders that the Lord's church was, "**purchased with his own blood**" (Acts 20:28). Further, Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, "**Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body**" (Ephesians 5:23). Remember, the church and the body are one and the same. Ephesians 5:25 declares, "**Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.**" And, in Matthew 16:18, Jesus said he would build his church. If Jesus built his church, gave himself for his church, became the savior of his church, purchased his church with his own blood, then should not the church bear the name of Christ, rather than the name of some man (regardless of that man's greatness)? Should it not bear the name of Christ rather than the name of a faction (i.e., a denomination)? Peter emphatically proclaimed, "**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**" (Acts 4:12).

One cannot read in the Bible where Paul, or any other member of the Lord's church, was ever called by a denominational name. As prophesied in Isaiah 62:2, members of the Lord's church were "**called by a new name.**" There is one, and only one new name given in the New Testament. Members of Christ's church were called "disciples" (Acts 6:1), but that was not the new name. God's children in Old Testament times were called "disciples" (Isaiah 8:16). Members of the New Testament church were called "saints" (Acts 9:3), but people living prior to the church's establishment were also called "saints" (1 Samuel 2:9); therefore, "saints" was not the new name. The members of the Lord's church were called "brethren" (Acts 6:3); however, people under the Old Testament were also called "brethren" (Isaiah 66:20). So, "brethren" was not the new name. The new name was revealed in Acts 11:26, "**And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**" By—what greater term, than "Christian," could any man desire to be called?

If the denominations' names were never given in the Bible as the terms by which the Lord's people were to be known, and if such terms only serve to delineate and maintain divisions, should those names not be given up? Should not only the terms provided by God in the Bible for those who are members of his church be used? Terms such as "disciples," "saints," "brethren," and "Christians" are not divisive. They do not foster a party spirit. Certainly, no one should ever continue in anything which only furthers divisions.

Because "**God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints**" (1 Corinthians 14:33), and because it is the Lord's will for all those who would follow him to be united, even as he and God the father are united (John 17:20-23), and because internal divisions are strictly forbidden to those who would follow Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:10-13), and because those who would follow Jesus are commanded to endeavor "**to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" (Ephesians 4:3), and because divisions among the professed followers of Christ bring harm to the cause for which he bled and died (John 17:21): then every soul that claims to desire UNITY should do everything that is right, approved by God in his word, to restore the unity set forth in the New Testament.

Only two things are necessary to have and to maintain the "unity of the Spirit" as charged in Ephesians 4:3, *First*, all will give up those things which have caused and perpetuated the divisions in the first place. *Second*, all will have to return to the simplicity of New Testament Christianity, as set forth in

the New Testament. Until these two things are done, there will be no "unity of the Spirit"—the only unity God will accept.

[Paid for by *Southside Church of Christ*, Lubbock, Texas (appeared in *Avalanche-Journal*, April 23, 2000)

Local churches accept Southside's stand against religious event

By BETH PRATT
A-J Religion Editor

Lubbock is abuzz about a Sunday advertisement in *The Avalanche-Journal* from *Southside Church of Christ* criticizing other churches of Christ that participate in the *West Texas Festival 2000* with **Franklin Graham**.

The three-day festival of music and evangelism will begin at 7 p.m. Friday at the United Spirit Arena.

E.C. Leslie, longtime elder at *Monterey Church of Christ*, said he is sad to see the attitude of exclusivity represented in the advertisement, although he acknowledges the church's right to express its opinion.

"Even though we will have differences with people, we will fellowship with all believers," Leslie said. "We have a common fellowship with those who believe in Jesus Christ as the son of God."

In speaking to the *Monterey* congregation about the festival, Leslie and the other *Monterey* elders made their support clear in Sunday's church bulletin:

"Truly, it is a rare occurrence when an entire city and region is focused on issues related to faith and Christianity. We invite you to join us in praying that the crucified Christ will be lifted up in a powerful way this week. May events such as this remind

us that we must be more diligent in sharing the good news of Jesus with our friends, neighbors and work associates."

Rodney Plunket, pulpit minister at *Broadway Church of Christ*, said his church "practices adult baptism by immersion for the forgiveness of sins, and we believe God wants us to keep doing that. We worship without instruments of music. We believe we should keep doing that as well.

"But we love many believers in this city who are different from us. Their friendship has blessed our lives and strengthened our faith. We also know that we are fallible human beings who are still learning and growing and far from perfect.

"So we hold our beliefs with humility, and in the hope that the people who inhabit heaven will all have reason to be surprised by others found there.

"James W. McGarvey, one of the leaders in churches of Christ over a century ago wrote in the gospel advocate in 1895: 'Don't injure the cause of truth by taking positions which rob God of the power to be merciful.' We believe that is good advice and intend to keep following it."

In the advertisement, *Southside Church of Christ* states that Graham is a Baptist, which is not the case. Although their famous father, the Rev. Billy Graham, holds membership at *First Baptist Church of*

Dallas, the Graham children were raised in a *Presbyterian Church*, which they attended with mother, **Ruth Bell Graham**, who is the daughter of *Presbyterian missionaries to China*.

Franklin and his wife, Jane, are members of the *Christian and Missionary Alliance Church*, which was begun in 1881 by a strongly evangelistic *Presbyterian minister* in New York City. In a recent telephone interview, Franklin said they joined the church while they were in college. However, they have attended a country Baptist church near their home because it had a youth program for their children.

The Rev. Bill Couch, senior pastor of *LakeRidge United Methodist Church*, has been involved in the leadership of the *Pray Lubbock* movement and bringing Graham to Lubbock.

"Part of our *Pray Lubbock* covenant is we're not wanting to say anything negative about other churches in town," Couch said. "*Southside* is entitled to its opinion and has the right to express that opinion. We just want to pray for them and bless them like we do all the churches in Lubbock."

Beth Pratt can be contacted at 766-8724 or pratt@Lubbockonline.com

[*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, page 4A, *Metro/Region Section*, April 26, 2000, *Used by Permission*]

April 26th Letter To Beth Pratt, AJ Religion Editor

Tommy Hicks

[NOTE: The following answer from Tom Hicks to Beth Pratt was published in the *Southside Church of Christ* bulletin.]

Mrs. Beth Pratt,

Mrs. Pratt, since the *Southside Church of Christ* was the "subject" of your story/editorial (some are calling it a "hatchet job") in today's paper, why would you not contact me or one of *Southside's* elders (**Dale Stone** and/or **Malcolm Young**) before writing the article? I know you are an enthusiastic supporter of ecumenical efforts (in general) and of the *Graham Festival* (in particular). Even so, I was disappointed because, it seems to me, your bias towards such things has

clouded your journalistic objectivity and, perhaps, even your journalistic ethics.

BIASED JOURNALISM

Is there not something wrong with this picture? —*Southside* PAID (mega-bucks) to run "an advertisement" (i.e., the article in question) in the *Avalanche Journal* (throughout the rest of the article *AJ* will be used). The *AJ* takes *Southside's* money, but then the *AJ* (Beth Pratt) turns around and provides space "FREE OF CHARGE" to those who oppose that which was contained in the PAID advertisement. More than that, I have been informed, the *AJ* (Beth Pratt) "solicited" the opposition (I suppose you would call it "investigative reporting").

If the *Broadway Church of Christ*, the *Monterey Church of Christ*, or any other church of Christ thought they were being "criticized" (as per your article) in *Southside's* PAID advertisement, then let them purchase space in the *AJ* and run their responses as PAID advertisements, too. Either that, or do not charge/bill *Southside* for the article she had published. If you are not willing to GIVE *Southside* FREE space, why are you willing to GIVE *Broadway* and *Monterey* FREE space? If *Southside* has to pay, then let everyone else pay. Has anyone at the *AJ* calculated how much FREE publicity you have given, and will give, to local ecumenical efforts and more specifically to the *Graham Festival*?

NO PERSONAL ATTACKS BY SOUTHSIDE

In *Southside's* PAID ad, it was pointed out that its publication was deemed necessary because some were under the mistaken impression that ALL churches of Christ were going along with local ecumenical efforts and the *Franklin Graham Festival*. The article was published to protect the integrity of the *Southside* congregation and that which she believes, preaches, and practices. In so doing, we did not specify (and therefore did not "attack") any churches of Christ. *Southside's* PAID ad gave Book, Chapter, and Verse for her position. Please see the article. While *Southside* did state her "doctrinal" position and did point out where she is in "doctrinal" disagreement with others, no "personal" attacks were made against any congregation or any person—including Franklin Graham.

Having said that, is it right for you, and those you have called upon, to maliciously attack *Southside* for expressing her sincere and deep religious convictions with regard to ecumenism and the *Graham Festival*? You did not deal with any of the scriptures or doctrinal positions presented in *Southside's* PAID ad. Instead, ugly, unsubstantiated, untrue allegations were made by implication to attack the *Southside* congregation. It is a smear effort of the worst sort. Do not deny that *Southside* was attacked. If any church is being criticized, it is *Southside*!

FALSE BRETHREN SPEAK

Mrs. Pratt, your article states, "E.C. Leslie, longtime elder at *Monterey Church of Christ*, said he is sad to see the attitude of exclusivity represented in the advertisement." Is the negative charge of having "the attitude of exclusivity" not an attack? Is that not a smear against *Southside*? (Since the quotation from *Monterey's* bulletin could not have had reference to *Southside's* PAID ad [*Monterey's* bulletin was published before *Southside's* PAID ad appeared in the *AJ*], I will forego here the inferences you might have hoped your readers would draw from it.)

By his statements, did not Rodney Plunket imply: 1) *Southside* members do not "love" the people of Lubbock, 2) *Southside* members consider themselves to be perfect, 3) *Southside* members consider themselves to be infallible, not "fallible human beings who are still learning," 4) *Southside* members lack humility, 5) *Southside* members have injured "the cause of truth by taking positions which rob God of the power to be merciful." Now, Mrs. Pratt, if these are not attacks (subtle as they may be) against *Southside*, what would you call them?

Well, Mrs. Pratt, the "kind" of attacks you (and those you have quoted) are attempting to level against *Southside* say

more about you (and them) than they do about *Southside*. If you (or those you pit against *Southside*) could successfully deal with the doctrinal (i.e., scriptural) positions presented in *Southside's* PAID ad, no doubt, you and they would have already done so. Thus, since you cannot demonstrate that *Southside* is teaching false doctrine or setting forth scriptural error, you are attacking *Southside* in the unscrupulous ways you are. Perhaps, this has caused my greatest disappointment in you. I gave you credit for being a better person than that.

Contrary to what might be inferred from your article (i.e.; *Broadway Church of Christ* is one of those "churches of Christ that [will] participate in the *West Texas Festival 2000* with Franklin Graham"), and your quotes from Rodney Plunket notwithstanding, the elders of that congregation stated in the January 30, issue of the *Broadway Church of Christ Bulletin*, "In the spirit of unity and in Christ's love, we, the elders of the *Broadway Church of Christ*, feel that the *Broadway* congregation cannot serve as an official sponsor of *Festival 2000*." Yet, your article makes it sound as though the *Broadway Church of Christ* has taken a stand in "full support" of the *Graham Festival*. If the *Broadway Church of Christ* has altered its position since January 30, I am not aware of it.

WORDS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

In your article, Mrs. Pratt, you alleged, "In the advertisement, *Southside Church of Christ* states that Graham is a Baptist, which is not the case." This is one of the reasons you should have contacted me before you published your article. Before considering this point, let us note how you slanted what you said in today's article.

In the April 22 issue of the *Lubbock Avalanche Journal*, you wrote: "Franklin and his wife attend (emphasis mine, and note present tense, TH) a small country Baptist church near their home in Boone, N.C." Was it not an effort to cast reflec-

tion on *Southside's* PAID ad, in today's article when you wrote: "However, they *have attended* (emphasis mine, and note past tense, TH) a country Baptist church near their home because it had a youth program for their children"? Now, Mrs. Pratt, why would you use "attend" (present tense) in the 4/22/2000 article (the day before *Southside's* article appeared) and "*have attended*" (past tense) in today's article (three days after *Southside's* article appeared)? There is a difference between "*attend*" and "*have attended*" Do they, or do they not, *now attend a Baptist church* in Boone, N.C.?

Mrs. Pratt, I understand you are a Baptist. In any case, you are familiar with how Baptists, Presbyterians, and other denominations view church membership. Understanding that you are a Baptist, I will use Baptists as an example (with the recognition that there are variant terminologies and "slight" variations in the practices followed among denominations). When a Baptist "places" his/her "letter" with a particular Baptist congregation, he/she is a member of that congregation until: 1) he/she moves his/her "letter," 2) he/she is removed from that church's membership for disciplinary reasons, 3) he/she dies. After his/her "letter" is "placed" with a congregation, he/she may go for years (or may go forever) without physically attending that congregation again. After, placing his/her "letter," that "Baptist" may "associate" (be "associating") or "profess" (or be "professing") there are various terms for this—himself/herself with another denomination.

Methodists commonly accept Baptists into their fellowship. Yet, until the moment of death, what was he/she, a Baptist or a Methodist? I have had some people tell me, "Both."

Others, usually Methodists, have said, "A Methodist." Of course, the Baptists usually respond, "A Baptist." Such deceased person may have his/her funeral in the Methodist church building. During the funeral oration his/her attendance and service, as a part of that Methodist church may be proclaimed to all. However, at the same time, in the same funeral, it may be said that "So-and-so was a member of the Baptist Church in Podunk" because that is where his/her "letter" was. Actually, technically speaking, he/she is a "Baptist," but practically speaking, he/she is whatever people of the later denomination are called. You know or should know how this works. That is why I question your reason for making the allegation that you did. Yes, technically speaking Graham is a member of the *Christian and Missionary Alliance Church*. However, practically speaking, Graham is a Baptist.

Your article said: "Franklin and his wife, Jane, are members of the *Christian and Missionary Alliance Church*...Franklin said they joined the church while they were in college." Has Graham regularly and faithfully attended the *Christian and Missionary Alliance Church* since he graduated from college? If he does not, how often does he attend there? When was the last time his shadow darkened the doorway of that church? Concerning the Baptist church in Boone, N.C., does Graham regularly and faithfully attend that congregation?

PRATT CHALLENGED

Mrs. Pratt, before *Southside's* PMD ad was taken to the *AJ*, ample research had gone into Graham's religious background. When *Southside's* article referred to Graham as a Baptist, it had reference to his "association" or "profession" with the Baptist church in Boone, N.C. And, the context of

Southside's article bears that out. The article said that Graham preaches Baptist doctrine (and the article provided two examples of the Baptists doctrines he preaches)—which you did not challenge. Now, I challenge you, are the doctrines specified in *Southside's* PAID article Baptist doctrines or not. If you had spoken to us before going into print, we could have made this very clear to you.

Your "objectivity" in dealing with churches of Christ and their relationship to the *Graham Festival* needs to be rectified. I know of churches of Christ that "do," and of churches of Christ that "do not," support the *Graham Festival*. Yes, there are some congregations about which I do not know. It is evident you know the churches of Christ that "do." Were any other churches of Christ, besides *Broadway* and *Monterey* (and, perhaps, *Vandelia*), contacted? If not, why not? If so, why did you not report what they had to say about whether or not they planned to participate in the *Graham Festival*?

If you want to write an article which gives the "true" picture "where" the churches of Christ stand concerning the *Graham Festival*, why not do a complete, objective survey of the congregations in Lubbock and the surrounding counties. I will not "hold my breath" until you do so, but I will assure you with all confidence, *Southside* does not stand alone.

Please know that while I am saddened and disappointed by what you have done, I harbor no ill will toward you. I do pray that you will repent. This is so because I love your soul.

Your friend, *Tommy J. Hicks*

PRATT'S REPLY

Mrs. Pratt did reply to my letter. For your information and to be fair to her, here *in toto*, is Mrs. Pratt's response.

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Thank you for your letter. I am always interested in feedback, whether negative or positive. I will consider your complaints should we do any future articles on the topic.

Beth Pratt

I guess if you cannot, or will not, answer someone (especially regarding the Bible's teaching), the best thing to do is "duck." Is it not strange that the faithful brethren are expected to give an accounting, answering why they have said or done something, but their detractors do not consider themselves to be under the same obligations? Maybe they have not read I Peter 3:15.

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Lubbock church won't help Franklin Graham, festival

By **DON MUNSCH**
Globe-News Staff Writer

A church of Christ congregation in Lubbock will not participate in the *West Texas Festival 2000* with Franklin Graham and has criticized other member churches for doing so.

The festival, which includes three days of music and evangelism, is Friday through Sunday at *United Spirit Arena* in Lubbock.

Southside Church of Christ placed an advertisement in Sunday's *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* stating its reasons for not participating in the festival.

It also took aim at other churches of Christ for participating. "There are some churches of Christ in and around Lubbock which have departed from their scriptural and spiritual moorings (Heb. 2:1-3; John 2:19), as evidenced by their having integral parts in local ecumenical endeavors," the ad read, adding that the festival would be one of those efforts.

The ad said Graham, the son of evangelist **Billy Graham**, chooses Baptist doctrine over Biblical doctrine. Franklin Graham grew up in the Presbyterian

Church, according to an article in the *Avalanche-Journal*, although he attends a Baptist church. The ad said *Southside Church of Christ* cannot fellowship with Franklin Graham or "denominational churches."

Dick Marcear, minister of *Central Church of Christ* in Amarillo, 1401 S. Monroe St., said individual churches of Christ may decide for themselves whether they want to participate in the festival. *The Texas Panhandle Festival 2000* with Franklin Graham is slated for Aug. 18-20 at *Dick Bivins Stadium* in Amarillo.

"Yes, we're participating, and I'm on the at-large (local festival) committee, and it's part of the executive committee," Marcear said. "Each congregation is independent, and each can choose what they want to do. There are several here that are involved, and there are several that won't be involved."

University Church of Christ in Canyon is one church that won't participate. "We're not directly supporting it," said **David Lough**, minister. "We find it difficult to support Gospel preaching that falls short of salvation."

Lough said he does generally support efforts for people to learn about the Gospel but said his church differs from other churches regarding the conversion experience: Baptism must be received to receive salvation. For some Protestant churches, Lough said, baptism comes after a profession of faith. Baptism and profession of faith in his church go hand in hand, Lough said.

"In the churches of Christ—and I'm not saying all churches of Christ say this—unless you're baptized, you're not saved," Lough said.

Marcear said he understands differences exist among churches.

Members of Catholic churches will be involved in the festival, for example, and no one attending the festival will be encouraged to attend any particular church, Marcear said.

"I think it's going to be a wonderful thing for our city and provide opportunities for churches to be involved," Marcear said.

Marcear said people will hear the central message of Christianity at the festival: that Jesus Christ is the son of God, and the Bible is God's word.

[*Amarillo Daily News*, page 1A, 2A, April 27, 2000, Used by permission]

Minister Explains Ad Opposing Festival

By **DON MUNSCH**
Globe-News Staff Writer

Tommy Hicks said he doesn't care for **Franklin Graham's** sermons, but then, he doesn't think his sermons are biblical to begin with.

Hicks' church, *Southside Church of Christ* in Lubbock, placed an advertisement in Sunday's *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* that said it would not participate in the *West Texas Festival 2000* with Franklin Graham and criticized member Churches of Christ that choose to participate in it.

The festival is today through Sunday in *United Spirit Arena* in Lubbock. *The Texas Panhandle Festival 2000* with Franklin Graham will be Aug. 18-20 at *Dick Bivins Stadium* in Amarillo.

Hicks, a preacher at *Southside*, said the idea for the advertisement came from people in his congregation. The congregation decided to run the ad to let people know that *Southside* has doctrinal differences with Franklin Graham, son of evangelist

Billy Graham, and ecumenical efforts like the festival.

Hicks said most of the response has been supportive of the ad 70 percent pro, 30 percent con—and some people sent him money to pay for it. Not everyone who has responded to the ad has been a member of the church of Christ. He said a Baptist man called him and said he was frustrated with churches there.

"There are so many people in churches that are opposed to ecumenical efforts," Hicks said.

The ad states some churches of Christ in and around Lubbock have joined ecumenical efforts. *Southside* opposes ecumenism because of church teachings, especially on salvation: baptism and profession of faith must go hand in hand. The advertisement also states its opposition to instrumental music performed in worship services.

"We're just going by what the scriptures teach," Hicks said.

Hicks also said he doesn't think Gra-

ham's sermons are biblical, explaining he doesn't tell people how they can be saved.

"He doesn't believe that baptism has a thing to do with salvation," he said. "I don't believe that baptism saves (by itself)—you still have to believe."

Sherman Barnette, director of *Texas Panhandle Festival 2000*, said Franklin Graham will be "sharing the same basic message that his father has shared for 50 years." He said Graham will discuss how forgiveness can be acquired through a relationship with Jesus Christ. He said the sermons are biblical.

Hicks said he would be willing to meet with Graham and have a public discussion with him on Gospel matters.

Jud Wilhite, associate senior minister at *Paramount Terrace Christian Church* in Amarillo, said his church places emphasis on baptism, but he believes people are saved by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

"We wouldn't say you're not a Christian until you come out of the water," he said.

Wilhite said Christians "agree on a whole lot more than they disagree."

"Our challenge is not to bicker and fight with members of our faith," he said, adding that it's not constructive to have these external battles in newspapers and other public places.

David Brack, pastor of *Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church* in Amarillo, said his church was not officially participating in the festival because he disagrees

with *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's* presentation of the Gospel. Brack said the Graham effort lacks a connection with a church.

"Genuine conversion is lived out in the connection with the church," Brack said. "That's where Graham is weakest... If you come to (Christ), you also join his people."

[*Amarillo Daily News*, page 11A, April 28, 2000, Used by permission]

Franklin Graham Festival 2000 and the Broadway Elders Approval of Apostasy

Marvin L. Weir

One will never read a more revealing statement authorizing religious apostasy than the one given by the elders of the *Broadway Church of Christ* in Lubbock, Texas. The statement that follows is taken from their Volume 68, Number 3, January 30, 2000 bulletin. The statement is quoted below in its entirety.

THE FRANKLIN GRAHAM FESTIVAL 2000

In the coming weeks you will hear a great deal about the upcoming *Franklin Graham Festival 2000*. The Festival will be coming to Lubbock in the spring of 2000, and Max Lucado will be coming this winter to "kick-off" the events that will lead up to the Festival.

Some of our fellowship will hail this event as a powerful opportunity to have the name of Jesus held high in our community and consider it an opportunity to teach any who may seek further study. Others will not believe members should participate. In short, the Festival has the potential to be a very divisive issue.

In the spirit of unity and in Christ's love, we, the elders of the *Broadway Church of Christ*, feel that the *Broadway* congregation cannot serve as an official sponsor of *Festival 2000*.

We, as an eldership, make this request of our *Broadway* family. For those of you who might be uncomfortable with any participation in *Festival 2000*, we ask your prayers and encouragement for those of our family who may attend or work for the crusade. Their desire is that souls are saved and doors opened for the gospel of Christ. For those of you who might feel called to attend or work for *Festival 2000*, we ask your prayers and understanding for those who might be

uncomfortable with any role in the Festival. Their desire is also that souls are saved and doors opened for the gospel of Christ.

We know that *Broadway* has people wanting to attend or serve in various capacities; and, out of this same desire for unity in Christ, we want them to know that they have the blessings of the *Broadway* eldership. In a paraphrase of what Paul says in Romans 14...what may be wrong for one brother is not necessarily wrong for another.

Our goal is for people to be open and receptive to the gospel of Christ, and that God receive all the glory and honor for what we do. We pray for God's blessings for our congregation as we serve this diverse family of believers. [The emphasis in bold is mine, MLW].

THE "SPIRIT OF UNITY" OR COMPROMISE?

Max Lucado is hailed as the one to "kick-off" the denominational campaign. No one makes mockery of the Lord's church more or embraces denominationalism more closely than Max! The *Broadway* elders obviously approve of Max Lucado.

It is obvious that those who consider *Festival 2000* as "an opportunity to have the name of Jesus held high in the community" are considered in "fellowship" at *Broadway*. But please notice—the decision by the elders for *Broadway* not to serve as an official sponsor is in the "spirit of unity and in Christ's love."

According to the elders, those who desire to attend and work at the crusade and those who are uncomfortable in par-

CATHOLICISM DEBATE

icipating have the same desire — “for souls to be saved and doors opened for the gospel of Christ.” Is there more than one gospel to be proclaimed to a lost and dying world (Galatians 1:6-9)? I think not! Thus, if the gospel is being taught and proclaimed, every member at *Broadway* and in Lubbock should support the effort. If a perversion of the gospel is being taught and proclaimed, no member of the church of Christ should participate in the campaign. Neither Franklin Graham nor his father, **Billy Graham**, preaches the gospel of Christ in its purity! They are members of a manmade denomination and believe and teach that one can be saved in such.

BLATANT HYPOCRISY PRACTICED

Now note that it is because of this “**same desire for unity in Christ**” that those members desiring to support Franklin Graham and *Festival 2000* will have “**the blessings of the Broadway elders.**” Never will you see more blatant hypocrisy practiced! In the “spirit of unity and in Christ’s love” the elders will

not allow *Broadway* to be a sponsoring congregation, but in the “**same desire for unity in Christ**” they do not hesitate to place their “blessings” on all who desire to participate in the Festival. They run to Romans 14 in an attempt to justify their sanction of those who participate, but Romans 14 is not discussing matters of doctrine or that which is sinful in and of itself. Denominationalism is condemned by scripture (I Corinthians 1:10-13) and those who support and encourage it commit a grievous sin against the Lord and his church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; I Corinthians 12:13). Jesus never spoke truer words than when He said:

Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit (Matthew 15:13-14).

BROADWAY NO LONGER FAITHFUL

Christians are to “**have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,**

but rather even reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11). Instead of attempting to act in such a way as to preserve “bodies” and “money,” **godly elders** would not hesitate to hold “**to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that (they) may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers**” (Titus 1:9).

Faithful brethren who truly love the Lord and his church will demonstrate that love by **marking,**

them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our—Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the heads of the innocent (Romans 16:17-18).

I refuse to fellowship or follow *Broadway* and those like her who support denominationalism—enemy of the Lord’s church!

—5810 Liberty Grove Road
Rowlett, Texas

BILLY GRAHAM...

(Continued From Page 1)

Hills Church (Rubel Shelly) announced “several of our shepherds wrote letters of invitation to Dr. Graham to encourage him to come to our city” (*Lovelines*, Vol. 25, No. 39, Sept. 29, 1999 www.woodmont.org/lwhtt2539.html).

Graham’s response to their invitation and that of denominational preachers was “on behalf of my colleagues at the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, I accept this generous invitation to partner with your church and community leaders...” (*Middle Tennessee Crusade Home Page* at info@tennesseecrusade.org or webmaster@bgea.org).

In Rubel Shelly’s praise of Graham he said, “Dr. Graham has a reputation of honesty, accountability and moral uprightness” (*Lovelines*, op.cit.). Jesus said, “**beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves**” (Matthew 7:15). Graham uses his moral life and piety as a cloak to get his false teachings across to the American people.

WOODMONT WOLVES, HERETIC HAZELIP AND LIBERAL LIBSCOMB UNIVERSITY

It is a great evil that the *Woodmont Hills* elders have invited this wolf to come among God’s flock in Middle Tennessee. Well did Paul prophecy by the Spirit of a similar evil in Ephesus “**savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves (elders) men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them**” (Acts 20:28-29).

Not only has *Woodmont Hills* shamed the churches of Christ in Tennessee because of their compromise with denominational doctrine but three other churches worked with the *Graham Crusade*. These are the *Community Church* in Hendersonville, the church at Smith Springs, Nashville, Tennessee, and the *Harpeth Hills* church in Brentwood, which is the home congregation of **Harold Hazelip**, Chancellor of *David Lipscomb University*.

Another ungodly thing about *Woodmont Hills*’ elders inviting Graham to Nashville is that at least 37 teachers and staff at *DLU* attend the *Woodmont Hills* church (check the *Lipscomb University Campus Directory* for 1999-2000).

Parents need to ask themselves if they want their children to be taught and influenced by those who worship and serve under elders who compromise with the denominationalism of Billy Graham.

—Post Office Box 123
Dunlap, Tennessee 37327

“If a man accepts the deity of Christ and is living for Christ to the best of his knowledge, I intend to have fellowship with him in Christ. [Just As I Am, *The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (Harper Collins Worldwide, New York, 1997) p. 251].

Alton Fonville, One of our faithful readers, wrote *Woodmont Hills* expressing his concern with Woodmont's involvement in the Billy Graham Crusade. The following letter is Woodmont's response to him.—Editor-in-Chief

FAMILY OF
GOD
AT WOODMONT HILLS

Mr. Alton W. Fonville
HC 33, Box 140
St. Paul, Arkansas 72760

Dear Brother Fonville,

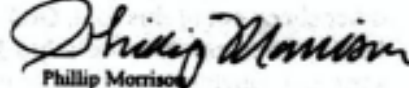
As one of the elders of the Woodmont Hills church, I am responding to your letter of February 18. We have all we can do to provide spiritual leadership for the flock God has entrusted to our care, and would not think of offering unsolicited advice or criticism to church leaders elsewhere.

You are entitled to hold whatever views you wish regarding our work and ministry. We do ask your prayers for us as we seek to do God's will, and we respectfully ask that you leave the judging of our work to God.

The enclosed information will help explain the decision we have made regarding participation in the Billy Graham crusade. We believe this participation affords us an unprecedented evangelistic opportunity to teach and baptize many who may respond to God's call. In anticipation of that opportunity we are currently training approximately one thousand workers who will be busy with follow-up for many months after the crusade.

Thank you for your concern, and may God bless the work you do for him.

Sincerely,


Phillip Morrison

WOODMONT HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST • 3710 FRANKLIN ROAD • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE • 37204-3506
TELEPHONE: 615-297-8351 • FAX: 615-297-8660 • E-MAIL: whcoc@woodmont.org

WOODMONT HILLS AND THE BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE

NOTE: The following personal response has been prepared by **Phillip Morrison** for people asking him about the participation of the *Woodmont Hills Church of Christ* in the *Billy Graham Crusade* scheduled for June 1-4, 2000 in Nashville's *Adelphia Coliseum*.

Your concern about our participation in the *Billy Graham Crusade* is understandable, as such participation is not typical for churches of Christ. During my forty years of pulpit ministry, I had to deal with such opportunities two or three times. My choices were always (1) to combat the effort, as congregations have sometimes done by taking out anti-Graham newspaper ads, for example; or (2) to attempt neutrality or at least inactivity; or (3) to be a silent encourager; or (4) to be an open supporter of the effort. Because of my background, training, and personal conviction I was always an opponent of the Graham efforts, though not always loudly and publicly so. I now believe that was not an appropriate action for me.

ELDERS VOICED NO OPPOSITION OR CONCERN

It is significant that, when the question of *Woodmont Hills'* participation came up, the discussion was very brief and none of the twenty-one elders voiced opposition or concern. We chose to support the crusade because of our admiration for the more than half century of effective ministry that has characterized Dr. Graham. He has been, for a long time, the most effective voice for goodness and decency in our nation; indeed, he has been its moral barometer and conscience.

Does he preach everything I would preach, in the way I would preach it? No. Like many of my brothers and sisters, I wish he would give more attention to the proper place of baptism in the life of believers. You may be interested to know that, year after year, *Woodmont Hills* baptizes more people—and more adults—than any congregation in town, clearly showing the importance that we attach to baptism.)

It is precisely at this point that we think we can render a valuable service. Here in Middle Tennessee, where churches

of Christ are so numerous (and former members of the church may outnumber current members), there are sure to be many people from *Church of Christ* backgrounds to respond to the invitation. When they respond and indicate their religious background or preference, our presence will assure that such respondents are sent to us for post-response counseling. Then we will have fresh opportunities to reclaim those who have fallen away, teach the importance of baptism to the unbaptized, and otherwise represent Christ and his church in ways that we think appropriate. The crusade people are fully aware of our intentions, and have encouraged us just as they encourage Baptist, Methodist, Nazarene, and other crusade workers to be true to their convictions.

BILLY GRAHAM NOT MORRISON'S ENEMY

Some years ago, I became convinced that neither Billy Graham nor the evangelical preacher down the street is my enemy. We may be opponents in the sense that we teach some opposing doctrines, but we are not enemies. The real enemies of God in this city are the pagans who have no regard for God, the porno dealers who present such a warped view of humanity, the drug dealers who are after our children and grandchildren, and so on. Those enemies are so powerful that we need all the help we can get in opposing them. Billy Graham is a powerful voice speaking out against all such enemies of God.

We understand that not everyone will agree with our judgments or our actions. We respect their right to disagree, and we hope to have their respect as we pursue a course of action that we believe to be right.

UNITY STATEMENT, WOODMONT HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Read by Phillip Morrison, January 23, 2000

We have come to a point in our study of the Gospel of Mark (chapter 9:38-41) when it seems appropriate for an elder of this church to make a statement about our commitment to Christian unity. Jesus prayed for and died for the unity of all believers.

METHODIST PREACHER IS MAN OF GOD

The only kind of unity that I knew and preached in earlier days was a narrow, exclusivist kind that required everyone else to become like me and see things as I saw them. I once thought I could have fellowship only with those who agreed with me, thinking that unity preceded fellowship. In reality, it is fellowship that leads to unity. We believe we have a message people need to hear, but they will never hear it if we have no relationship with them.

In early December, Mary Margaret and I were privileged to travel in Israel with about 150 people, mostly preachers and their wives. We were the only ones from our Church of Christ tradition, but it didn't take us long to learn that the other people loved God and were committed to his service at least as much as we were. A small group of us stood in the cave underneath the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and the silence

was broken by the soft but passionate voice of a retired Methodist minister who began to quote from memory Luke's account of Jesus' birth. We were listening to the word of God recited by a man of God.

SOCIAL GOSPEL EMBRACED BY WOODMONT HILLS

On the first Sunday of this year, we were helping with the physical arrangements—greeting, ushering, taking up collection—at the *Gathering 2000* at the arena downtown. A man walked up, shook hands, identified himself as a Presbyterian volunteer, and said, "Could I ask you a question? Isn't it unusual for a Church of Christ guy to be involved in an ecumenical service like this?" With some embarrassment, I said, "Yes, it is unusual, but it shouldn't be. We're gathering tonight in Jesus' name, to honor and praise him, and to collect money to benefit the poor of our city. When we get through feeding all the hungry and housing all the homeless in Jesus' name, then we can get back to talking about the things that divide us." The thought occurred to us at the same time, and we stood with our arms around one another and said, almost in unison, "When we get the hungry fed and the homeless housed in Jesus' name, the things that divide us will not seem nearly so important as they do now."

All of us feel inadequate as shepherds of this flock, and we feel much less adequate when we remember that Jesus has other sheep not of this fold. God's Kingdom is greater—and larger—than any the world has known. Wherever God has sons and daughters, we have brothers and sisters.

We can never create unity, for unity is primarily God's business, not ours. God answered his Son's prayer by uniting all his followers. Our challenge is to keep or maintain that unity.

HARDEMAN'S TABERNACLE MEETINGS DO NOT MEASURE UP TO GRAHAM'S

This church will continue to seek the unity of all believers who trust in God's saving grace and seek to honor him with committed lives. We will encourage, pray for, and participate in the *Billy Graham Crusade* next June because it will provide opportunities to assist people who are earnestly seeking God's will. We are interested in evangelism, and we cannot turn away from the greatest evangelistic event in this city's history. We will not, with a spirit of arrogance or superiority, expect everyone to be like us. But, in a spirit of genuine humility, we will encourage all believers to be like Christ. Only then will Jesus' prayer be fully answered, and the whole world will be full of his glory.

When in Lubbock, please visit

SOUTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST
8301 Quaker Avenue - Lubbock, Texas
(806) 794-5068
Tommy J. Hicks, Preacher

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Morning Worship 9:35 a.m.	Wednesday
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Third Annual Lubbock Lenten Devotions, Oct. 4-12, 2000

WHAT ABOUT THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT?

Rubel Shelly

[Editorial Note: Please read closely this article by Rubel Shelly. It was written in the 1972, Volume 3, Number 4 issue of The Spiritual Sword, pages 30 - 34. Although Shelly has repented for believing and teaching what is in the article, it remains the truth. Indeed, he reproves and rebukes himself, Woodmont Hills and like-minded false brethren with the truth he wrote almost thirty years ago.—Editor-in-Chief]

One of the more significant movements in the so-called Protestant world today is ecumenism. *The Ecumenical Movement* has been hailed as a wonderful giant step toward the "unity of the visible body of Christ." It stresses conciliation and universality. It decries what its leaders have termed "sectarian fragmentation of the Christian fellowship." Its goal is to bring the various communions of Protestantism and Catholicism together so as to present a "united front" of "Christianity" to the world.

HARMONY AND PEACE AT THE EXPENSE OF TRUTH

The fact of the matter is that the *Ecumenical Movement* has been spawned by liberalism and is only one more weapon in its arsenal to destroy true Christianity. Ecumenism is seeking harmony and peace at the expense of revealed truth. It is an attempt to reconcile differences by means of a deliberate deviation from the will of God. It is condemned in scripture and must be resisted by the people of God!

There are trends toward ecumenism among the churches of Christ which make the study of this movement especially crucial at this time. Some among us are contending that we have unduly restricted our fellowship. They are urging that we "recognize Christians of other denominations" as our fellow-laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

The suggestion of the *Ecumenical Movement* (which has been taken up by some brethren) that we should seek union by "agreeing to disagree" on the doctrinal content of Christianity is fundamentally erroneous! The spirit of ecumenism is an utter repudiation of scriptural authority. Whereas God would have men to be united in their mutual submission to his word, liberalism's *Ecumenical Movement* offers union apart from a biblical norm or standard.

A disregard for such doctrines as the Godhead, the nature of man, sin, salvation, the nature of the church and its mission might produce a sort of weak confederation of people for a generation or two. But the confederation would soon die because of its uncertain sound to the world and its lack of ability to excite men with its cause and bring them to embrace it.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

For some time now, the established denominations have realized that their fragmented state is not ideal and that there ought to be a better way! A number of purely practical considerations have helped bring about this consensus opinion. For one thing, they know a unified body of people could speak to the heathen world about Christ in a more effective way. As the situation stands at the present, a pagan nation might witness the influx of ten "Christian missionaries" who supposedly

speak for the same Lord Jesus Christ yet have ten different versions of what men ought to believe about him and do in his name! It is no wonder that many of those who witness this sort of thing turn away from Christianity in disgust. Also, there is the consideration of wasted effort and money—Why should five different denominations send five men to the same place to compete with one another for converts when those denominations could merge and mutually support those five missionaries to go to five different places where Christ is unknown?

Aside from these practical considerations, it has been correctly pointed out that Jesus prayed for the unity of believers. "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:21). If the Lord prayed for unity, should we not strive toward the achievement of that goal? Indeed. But by what process? "By the spirit of ecumenism," comes the popular reply of our time!

The *Roman Catholic Church* is making concessions now that it has never been willing to make to Protestantism before. Mergers among Protestant bodies are taking place rather frequently. Lines of denominational distinction are largely ignored by their memberships.

WHY IS THIS MOVEMENT WRONG

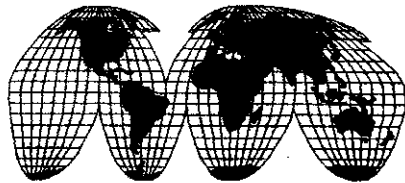
While it is encouraging to see people dissatisfied with the evils of religious division and anxious to see the situation changed, it will not help matters to seek and promote a union which is not according to truth and therefore unacceptable to God!

A point which many seem not to have realized is that spiritual fellowship depends on something more than an individual's personal feelings toward men around him. One who has been saved in his obedience to the gospel is granted fellowship in the spiritual body of Christ (the church) and can not scripturally deny fellowship to all others who are faithful children of God or bestow fellowship upon those who are not faithful Christians. This point is made by John in the following words: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7). Notice that "fellowship one with another" is contingent upon one's walking "in the light." It is only as men walk in the blessed light of truth that they can have fellowship with each other.

While it is certainly to be granted that saved people are under obligation to be tolerant toward each other in matters of liberty (cf. Romans 14), the fact remains that there can be no fellowship among parties whose disagreements involve is-

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sues of truth and error. In matters of opinion we must be tolerant and capable of friendly and loving disagreement. In matters of faith we must be altogether intolerant of anything which falls short of being the truth! For example, there can be no spiritual fellowship between a Christian and one who denies that Jesus Christ is the son of God. There can be no fellowship between a Christian and one who denies that baptism is essential unto the remission of sins. There can be no fellowship between a Christian and any erring brother who is living an immoral life. Why? Because the child of God is arrogant and self-righteous? No, but because his fellowship can be only with such men as "walk in the light." He cannot bestow fellowship on men to whom the Lord has denied it in his word! But the *Ecumenical Movement* would do just this very thing. It would create a situation where men would supposedly be in "fellowship" while holding contrary views on the virgin birth, inerrancy of scripture, necessity of baptism unto salvation, etc.

On one occasion Paul required that certain teachers who "preach Christ even of envy and strife" be tolerated. (Philippians 1:15-18). On another occasion he pronounced the anathema of God on a group of teachers. (Galatians 1:8-9). Why the great tolerance in one situation and the dogmatic intolerance in the other? In the former case the men preaching were, although from less than the noblest of motives, preaching the truth. In the latter case the persons involved were teaching "another gospel."

Truth cannot fellowship error. There can be no spiritual fellowship between New Testament Christians and individuals or groups which teach anything other than the pure gospel of Christ, worship in any manner than that authorized in the New Testament, organize themselves differently from the pattern of organization set forth in scripture and/or live a worldly life. The effort of the *Ecumenical Movement* to bring about a state of spiritual fellowship apart from a mutual submission to the one faith of the gospel by all who are involved is doomed to failure in the eyes of Almighty God!

Peace and harmony should always be desired and zealously sought—but not at the expense of truth. Truth is more important than peace and, at times, demands that its devotees be set against other men. Jesus said, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34). Now according to some religious leaders today, peace among professed believers in Jesus is the chief aim of existence—even if it be peace at any price. Yet Jesus said that loyalty to him would frequently involve "a sword" and "division." (cf. Luke 12:51). He went on to say that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:36-37). How strange that sounds when compared to what men are saying today! Jesus would have us love him and his truth to the degree that we would forfeit spiritual fellowship with our own families in order to be faithful disciples. The notion of achieving union by "agreeing to disagree" did not have its origin with the son of God!

Jesus wants men to be united. He prayed that it could be so. Yet he made it clear that such unity would have to be according to truth and not at its expense. Thus it can be correctly observed that a *unity with one another that does not grow out of*

a unity with God is not a valid unity. God will not bless it and it will bring evil instead of good.

MEANING OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

One of the primary obstacles to the unity envisioned by the savior is the general failure on the part of men to understand what is involved in its achievement. To equate religious unity with union, federation or consolidation of different parties into one (regardless of their doctrines and practices) is to make a serious mistake. To merely set up some sort of super-organizational structure which will nominally incorporate men of all faiths without regard to their differences is not the same as establishing scriptural unity.

The term "unity" refers to a situation of harmony, agreement and accord. It has to do with the quality or state of being made one. With particular reference to spiritual matters, it refers to a state such as Paul envisioned when he wrote:

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 (I Corinthians 1:10).

As an illustration of the difference between ecumenism and scriptural unity, consider the following statement and how different men might react to it: Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God. Ecumenism would create a situation wherein one man could subscribe to this view of Jesus without reservation (i.e., believe in the virgin birth, bodily resurrection, etc.) and another could hold only that Jesus was the greatest religious teacher in the history of the world (i.e., not actually God in the flesh) and both of them could be in "fellowship" with one another. This is a far cry from the unity envisioned by Jesus and Paul!

With regard to the statement, Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, there are only two possible positions. It is either true or false. The Bible clearly teaches that it is a true statement and offers evidence to substantiate it. John 1:14, 3:16 and I John 4:19 (among other Bible passages) clearly affirm this doctrine. But does it really matter what men believe on this issue? The Lord himself said, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

As another example, take the statement: The Bible teaches that one must repent of his sins and be immersed in water in order to be saved. Is the statement true or false? Or does it really matter what men believe about this issue? The statement is true. It is based on Peter's command to sinners on the first Pentecost following Christ's resurrection from the dead when he said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Either repentance and baptism are essential for salvation or they are not essential. It cannot be that both views on the matter are correct! Yet ecumenism would allow contradictory views on this and other subjects to be held by men and still consider them all in fellowship with one another. This is not unity!

Division is based on the teaching of conflicting doctrines about God, Christ, the Bible, salvation and the church. Unity does not come about by overlooking contradictory views but by bringing men to share a common view based on an authoritative standard.

VALID BASIS FOR UNITY

The central issue with regard to religious unity is the matter of *authority in religion*. If men could agree as to the standard of absolute authority to be followed in religious teaching and practice, we could realize our goal of unity in Christ. Only if there is truth in the realm of religious considerations — truth which can be both learned and obeyed — can there ever be real unity.

Jesus affirmed the existence of absolute truth with regard to spiritual matters. Beyond that, he identified that truth as the word of God. (John 17:17). He also taught that men have the ability to learn, abide in and be made free by the truth. "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

The only reliable guide in religion whereby men may attain unto unity is the word of God. Not councils, tradition or subjective feelings, but the objective word of God! The prophet Jeremiah cried, "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). He recognized, as all thinking men eventually must, that man must be able to appeal to an authority higher than himself. He must have an absolute and objective standard. That standard is holy scripture.

The all-sufficiency and alone-sufficiency of the Bible as the guide in religion is a basic doctrine of Christianity. "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



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3:16-17). Christ gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles to guide them fully in speaking and in writing his message as we now have it in the New Testament (Cf. John 14:26; 16:13). This message in its written form is just as authoritative as it was in its original spoken form. The written revelation of God to men forms a fixed, objective standard. Men can never come together on the different creeds, theories and speculations of human beings. But all men can come together on the word of God as the common authority and basis for united faith and action.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...” (Ephesians 4:4-6). Here is the ‘key’ to scriptural unity. This text lays the foundation on which men of every generation may be one in the Lord. By virtue of the fact that men hear the *one faith*, which is the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), they can believe on the *one God, one Lord and one Spirit*. They can then be baptized with the *one baptism* (immersion in water unto the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38), be added to the *one body* of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13) and share the *one hope* of everlasting life with God (which is the promise of the Father unto his faithful children).

All those people who have believed and obeyed the true gospel of Christ have been saved and added to his church.

These persons (and only these) constitute the people of God in any age or generation. Among these people (and only these) does real unity exist. The source of that unity is mutual fellowship with the Father by means of the saving blood of his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

Let us plead for and work toward unity in the truth. Let us not be diverted from that goal by liberalism’s ecumenical approach, but contend for the *one faith* of the gospel (Jude 3) and the unity of believers which is brought about by a mutual submission to its absolute authority over our lives.

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Baptism: The Bible and Billy Graham

Billy Graham often tells those seeking salvation that they must do three things: (1) Repent, (2) Believe, and (3) Live for Jesus. He has preached this message to millions. He is right in saying all these commands must be obeyed.

But the problem is what he does not say! For half a century Billy Graham has not included baptism when he tells men and women what they must do to be saved.

Changing God's Plan of Salvation

Leaving out even one step changes the gospel of Christ. See Galatians 1:6-10.

How could Billy Graham have failed to see In the Bible the command to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins?

He readily sees Jesus' command to believe in Mark 16:16—**"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...."**

He clearly sees the commandment to repent in Acts 2:38—**"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...."**

This Is not a new question. A half-century ago, during a Billy Graham crusade in Nashville, a crusade team member was asked this question directly: **"Why does Billy Graham not include in his preaching the command to be baptized?"**

The very unsatisfactory answer:

"Because it is a controversial subject."

The Leslie Spear Letters

More light was shed on the subject with the publication of Leslie L. Spear's book *The True Religion and Religion of Others*.

One chapter of Spear's book attracted immediate attention—**Chapter 2**—all exchange of letters between the author and the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association* in Minneapolis.

The first letter, dated January 12, 1963, was written by Leslie L. Spear in response to a Billy Graham *My Answer* column that had just appeared in the Newspaper. An inquirer had asked: "Please give me a simple answer to

"What must I do to be saved?"

Billy Graham, in his reply, **did not even mention baptism!**

Spear's letter quoted the words of Paul the apostle in Galatians 3:27—**"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."** Then Leslie Spear asked:

"Mr. Graham, why didn't you give Paul's answer to the question. You could have told where it was found, so the person could have read it for himself."

Spear also suggested the words of Jesus, **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"** (Mark 16:16).

The Question Answered

On April 17, 1963, he received a reply from the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*. It was signed by **John D. Lundenberg**, Spiritual Counselor.

At last, there was to be an answer to this puzzling question? The portion of the answer responding directly to the question was brief.

"Salvation is not dependent upon a person having been baptized...."

There it is! When people have been steeped in centuries of religious prejudice, they can somehow read right through all the Scriptures that teach clearly that obedience in baptism is necessary for salvation.

The false doctrine that salvation can occur before and without baptism has been preached many times since it began to be

taught in Europe five centuries ago. Billy Graham has accepted this error as though it were true.

Yet to say that obedience in baptism is not necessary for salvation is just as false today as it was when men like **John Calvin** invented and first propagated the doctrine in the 1500's.

THE RESULT

Think of the multiplied millions who have heard and accepted Billy Graham's teaching. Every one of these souls will one day stand before God in the great day of Judgment.

They will not be able to account for why they were not baptized for the forgiveness of their sins except to say, honestly,

"Billy Graham didn't tell me I had to do that."

And Billy Graham will face God in judgment, too, as all people—great and small—must do. What will he answer if God asks,

"Billy, why did you never tell all these millions that they must be baptized to be saved?"

The Graham-Shelly Crusade

As Billy Graham preaches in Nashville tonight, it will be the same message as fifty years ago. Graham is consistent.

We know what to expect. We know there will be thousands of "decisions for Christ." We know men and women will be counseled to "pray the Sinner's Prayer."

We also know that the command to **"be baptized...for the remission of sins"** (Acts 2:38) will not be heard.

CRUSADE COUNSELORS

"Only Crusade counseling materials are to be used." Everyone who applies to be a counselor signs an application form stating that he or she understands this obligation.

The official counseling materials prescribe that the one being counseled is to "ask Him to take away my sin... Then I'll be a part of God's family." **"You cross the bridge Into God's family when you prayerfully ask Jesus to come Into your life."**

This is all carefully planned. It has worked effectively. It has achieved the purposes of the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*. As expected, many evangelical Protestant churches support the Crusade. Billy Graham is preaching their message.

THE SHELLY CONNECTION

But in this Crusade there is something new—an inexplicable phenomenon—an utterly unaccountable occurrence:

Rubel Shelly has joined the Billy Graham Crusade

Who is Rubel Shelly? Shelly, 54, preaches for the *Woodmont Hills Family of God*. When he began his association with this church in 1978, it was called the *Ashwood Church of Christ*.

Additional Background: Shelly became a Christian just over forty years ago. He heard the gospel, believed, repented, confessed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and was baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. On that day the Lord added Rubel to His church (Acts 2:47).

Like many others in the *Woodmont Hills Family of God*, Shelly was blessed as a young person with the advantage of being taught the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. In sermons, in Sunday School classes, at home, over and over, repeatedly, the plan of salvation was impressed at every opportunity—that every accountable person must...

1. Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17).

2. **Believe In Jesus** (Mark 16:16).
3. **Repent of sins** (Luke 24:47).
4. **Confess faith in Jesus** (Romans 10:10).
5. **Be baptized** for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38)
6. **Live the Christian life** (2 Peter 1:10).

Yet now Shelly is committed to using only the prescribed counseling materials. **These say nothing about obedience in baptism being necessary for salvation!**

How can Rubel Shelly in good conscience take part in a crusade where Jesus command: **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”** (Mark 16:16) is not respected?

What starting insensitivity toward those precious souls who, in sincerity, will respond during the Crusade—only to be misled by the counselors into thinking they can be saved by praying the “Sinner’s Prayer.”

They will not learn at the *Crusade* that they are to be **“baptized into Christ”** (Galatians 3:27). They won’t be told to **“...be baptized, and wash away thy sins...”** (Acts 22:16).

Up to now some have attempted to justify various questionable practices by saying that this or that is “not a salvation issue.”

Those who follow Shelly’s lead say this, for example, about participating in *Interfaith* gatherings where musical instruments are used.

This time, though, what is involved is the very gospel plan of salvation itself—

**This is the ultimate
salvation issue!**

Which Church

Through the years, Billy Graham’s *My Answer* newspaper column has provided interesting and often helpful reading. But his answer to one inquiry was not at all helpful:

QUESTION: In our city there are 35 different denominations. From my reading of the Bible, I cannot believe that Christ founded all these different religions. How can I tell which one of the thirty-five is the one founded by Christ?

Billy Graham’s reply appeared to be influenced by a desire to try, to defend the existing denominational system. He made statements that have no Bible basis, such as...

“We speak of the church visible and the church invisible... But within every denomination there are committed Christians. These comprise the church invisible...If you are trying to find the true church, don’t look to any one in particular—look in all of them.”

COMMENTS: *Graham* speaks of “the church visible and the church invisible” but the *Bible* does not. The New Testament speaks of but one church and it was certainly visible.

Billy Graham tells the questioner that if he is trying to find the one true church, he should “not look to any one in particular. But if the inquirer finds the true church, it will be “one in particular.” Jesus established only one: Jesus said, **“...I will build my church...”** (Matthew 16:18).

FINDING THE CHURCH JESUS FOUNDED

There is just one way to answer the question: Go to the New Testament. Disregard the many conflicting claims of men. Conduct your own investigation.

Jesus said, **“The seed is the word of God”** (Luke 8:11). Whenever and wherever the word of God is proclaimed and obeyed in its original purity, it will bear the same fruit.

Seed produces after its kind. This assures that when the Bible is followed in every matter of faith *in our time*, it will produce a church identical to the New Testament church of the *1st century*. It will be the same church. It will be the Lord’s church.

So, in conducting your own investigation, go to the New Testament. Jesus’ church was referred to most often simply as *the church*. Individual congregations were just called **“churches of Christ”** (Romans 16:16).

Members of the Lord’s church were just *Christians*, not a particular kind of Christian. **“And the disciples were called Christians...”** (Acts 11:26).

Their worship consisted of singing (Ephesians 5:19), praying and teaching (Acts 2:42); and, upon the first day of every week, the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7) and giving of their means (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

The plan of salvation the church proclaimed was that the gospel must be heard (Romans 10:17), and believed (Mark 16:16). Believers must repent (Acts 2:38), confess their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, (Romans 10:10), and then be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27) to have their sins “washed away” (Acts 22:16).

Then the Lord *added* the saved each day to *his church* (Acts 2:47). They did not join any denomination.

Jesus promises an eternal home in heaven to all who obey the gospel and then live the pure, faithful life of a Christian (Rev. 2:7).

These are just some of the things an investigation will reveal. Time and effort will be needed, but it can be done. The Bible was written so that every responsible person can understand it well enough to believe it, obey it, and be saved.

**When the eternal destiny of the soul is
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Seeing It Helps Saying It...

It Takes Two to Tango

Jodie Boren

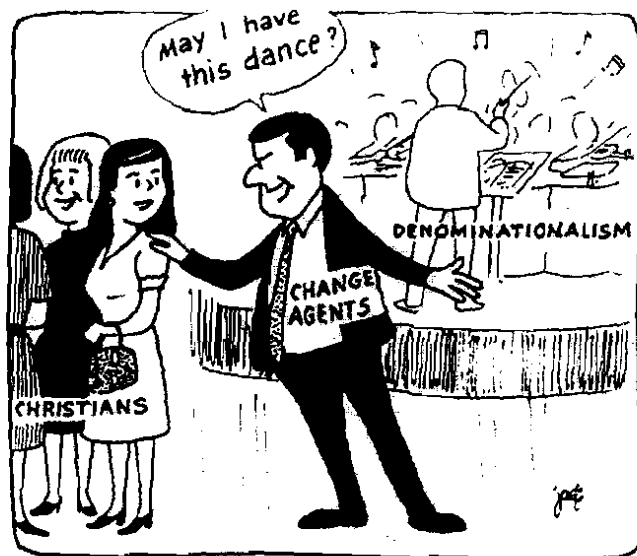
"It takes two to tango" is an expression that means something happened that one could not do alone. For example, a woman becomes pregnant out of wedlock. It is sinful and unfortunate, but it is obvious that she was not alone—there was also a man involved. In like manner, those who are determined to restructure the church and make it into a denomination, cannot do it by themselves. It is sinful and unfortunate but "it takes two to tango!" That is, in order for these false teachers to succeed in their efforts, there must be those who will believe and follow them. These self-styled change agents cannot do it by themselves!



In Acts 20:29-30, Paul says to the elders, that grievous wolves will enter in among them not sparing the flock. **"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."** Some will follow their perverse teachings because they want false teachers who will preach to them smooth things (Isaiah 30:10). They want teachers **"having itching ears"** (II Timothy 4:3). These people desire to be entertained rather than hearing the word which is able to make them wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:15). We should be committed to Jesus as Paul was (II Timothy 1:12) and follow only those teachers that follow Jesus in truth.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). So, some follow false doctrine because they are not well versed in the scriptures sufficiently to discern truth from error. They are easily misled being deceived by enticing and persuasive words. But, how can we recognize error and **"hold fast the form of sound words"** (II Timothy 1:15) if the word of Christ does not dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16)? Peter says we are to be able to give an answer to any man that asks us a reason for the hope that lies within us (I Peter 3:15). We are to try the spirits whether they are of God (I John 4:1). Or, as Luke writes, we are to search the scriptures daily to determine if what is being preached is true (Acts 17:11). We must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18) and be set for the defence of the gospel (Philippians 1:17).

Still other follow these wolves in sheep's clothing because they are blinded by their love for them and their loyalty to them. The same is true for their almaters. Preacheritis is not new. In I Corinthians 1:12, we find those who were loyal to Paul — others to Apollos — some to Peter — and some to Christ. Paul says this should not be because only Christ was crucified for the sins of the world. So



Paul was determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified (ch. 2:1-2). Christ is our example to follow (I Peter 2:21). To follow him we must keep our eyes focused upon him (Hebrews 12:2) - not on some man.

For whatever reason, many today are following the false teachings of these change agents, completing the "tango" necessary to change the Lord's church. This happens when people do not have a love for the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10). Note Romans 1:18, **"for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (suppress) the truth in unrighteousness."**

Certainly the words of Jesus are applicable to us today; **"...for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them"** (Matthew 13:14-15).

We need to be strong in the Lord and stand steadfast in the truth of his word. If we do this, these false teachers cannot lead us into denominationalism. Remember, it "takes two to tango."

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"WE HAVE NOT FOLLOWED CUNNINGLY DEvised FABLES"

Daniel Denham

In II Peter 1:16 Peter declares, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitness of his majesty." The word "for" refers to his expressed desire that the saints "may be able after (his) decease to have these things always in remembrance" (v. 15). "These things" concerned "The present truth" in which they needed to be firmly established (v.12) Christians ought always to be mindful of the word of God, which is "the truth" (John 8:32; 17:17) They also ought to realize the certainty of the things revealed therein (of Luke 1:1-4). Contrary to the pet and vain theories of men who seek to discard the Bible and it's authority over their lives, the Bible is divine in origin and authoritative in power. The foundation of the Christian's faith is the book of faith (Romans 10:17).

PRIMARY HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

In II Peter 1:16-18 Peter demonstrated the surety of the word of God on the basis that he and others (i.e. some of the other apostles) were "eyewitnesses" and even heard God's own declaration of the glorious deity and majestic power of Christ. Peter especially has reference to the events that transpired on the mount of transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17:1ff), when Christ was manifested in his glory. The apostles not only were inspired of God to preach and write about these matters, but they themselves were able to provide firsthand testimony concerning them. They constituted what historians term "primary historical witnesses" Their position is comparable, in this regard, to an eyewitness giving testimony in a court of law concerning what he saw/or heard firsthand directly to the case at hand. Their writings, bearing such firsthand testimony in the area of

historiography constitute primary evidence as to the truth of those things of which they bear record (cf. I John 1:1-4). This needs to be grasped and fully appreciated by all of us. These men and their writings are historical evidence in and of themselves as to the truth of the deity of Christ and the certainty of the divine origin of the religion that he founded. It is neither by presumption nor by vain pride that the church of our Lord insists upon the truth of its place in the plan of God to redeem men.



CERTITUDE OF TRUTH CLAIMS

The saved are in the church: having been added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:47). He died for it (Acts 20:28). It is his spiritual body (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). He is the savior of it (Ephesians 5:23). According to the testimony of the scriptures there are no saved any place else in this world! This may not be popular in a "pluralistic" age, but it is nonetheless true. Only those who obey Christ are saved (Hebrews 5:3-9). He is "the way, the truth, the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by (him)," (John 14:6). Christ is not a pluralist, as that term is commonly used today. The pluralist says that all ways are equally good, that no one can be certain of the truth that he professes to hold, that no religion has the right to claim sanction from Heaven, and that it is arrogant and haughty to claim ever to know truth. (They do not bother to reconcile this notion with their own "truth claim" that one cannot know truth!) But the word of God is unequivocal in its proclamation. The son of God is not "a way" among many ways to God; neither is he "a truth" as part of a broad spectrum of equally valid truths; nor is he "one pattern of life" among many divergent and distinct (and frequently self-contradictory) patterns that may serve men "well" through the eyes of the pluralist. His word is the final, ultimate, and nonpareil standard of judgment (John 12:43). Let the pluralists debate with the great "I am" and see how impressed he is with their feigned love, use piety, and , squeamish sensibilities about matters pertaining to truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil!

Christianity (and subsequently the church of Christ) is right because the objective evidence exists to verify its

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truth claims. It has never been a matter of professing ourselves as being right. It has always been a matter of God declaring beforehand in the scriptures what is right! When one practices in heart and life what is right, then he will be right (I John 3:7). It has always been wrong for men to do that "which is right in (their) own eyes" (Judges 21:25). The sweetly-sickening sentimentalism of pluralism may comfort feeble-minded folk and liberal brethren, but truth is still truth

THE SIN OF COMPROMISE

The current move to compromise on matters of faith should alarm every right thinking person. The effort to open up our brotherhood to "fellowship the sects and denominations is premised on the fallacy of ecumenism, which is but one of many expressions of the pluralist philosophy. Ecumenism is nothing short of treason against truth and rebellion against right. Nothing good can come from it. A snake practices his own form of ecumenism when he swallows the mouse whole!

The word of God is not of purely human origin, but rather "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (cf. II Peter 1:21-22). The phrase "moved by" literally can be rendered "borne along by." The word picture is that of the Spirit of God picking them up, directing them, watching over them in what they said while under his direct influence. He kept them from error, and revealed to them the great mind of God and his will for the human race. Thus, we have the Bible, the *very* word of the living God! Let us therefore respect its authority, knowing it is from God, cherish its message, knowing it is the only *source* of genuine hope and happiness in this world, and let us study and obey it, knowing that without it we would still be in darkness. The word of God will stand long after this old world is on fire in the consummation of all things (Matthew 24:35). Indeed, the faithful Christian has not followed "cunningly devised fables," but the voice of God in scripture!

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Restoration Reflections

DRINKING FROM THE RIVER LETHE

Paul Vaughn

There is always the need to emphasize the principles of the Restoration Movement to go to the Bible and restore the pattern for the church revealed in the word of God. Thus saith the Lord:

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (I Peter 4:11).

The Restoration Plea glorifies God because it points people to the New Testament and not the creeds of men. The scriptures "are able to make one wise unto salvation" (II Timothy 4:15). They will make one spiritually healthy, if they are obeyed. Paul told Titus to teach only the doctrine that is faultless and flawless. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

There are many who are destitute of truth because they have rejected the Restoration Principle. Moving away from the foundation of the scriptures has caused many to lose the distinctive nature of New Testament Christianity. Disenchantment with the "old paths" is leading Christians into liberalism and legalism.

ATTITUDE OF THE EARLY RESTORERS

The attitude of respecting the authority of the Bible was prominent on the hearts of the early restorers. They were willing to lose all for the simplicity of the scriptures. Barton W. Stone chose to sacrifice everything for New Testament Christianity. He said, "I honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully sought for the truth, determined to buy it at the sacrifice of everything else."¹ The creeds of men and their

denominational ways were sickening to his heart. "My heart was sickened, and effectually turned against creeds, as nuisances of religious society, and the very bane of Christian unity."²

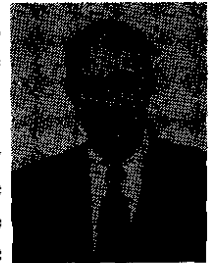
Thomas Campbell deplored the divided condition of religion in his day and advanced the return to the Bible alone as the sufficient rule and practice of Christianity. His eagerness to cleave to biblical teaching enabled him to say, "Where the Bible speaks we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent."³

M. C. Kurfees, an apologist extra ordinaire, in his excellent book, *Instrumental Music in the Worship*, paints a picture of the work of strife and self-will that has caused division in the church of Christ.

Indeed, it may be truly said, as the enemies of Christ mangled his physical body and nailed it to the cross, so the professed friends of Christ have divided his spiritual body and left it bleeding at every pore, while insidious skepticism and infidelity are spreading their deadly poison and sapping the foundation of religious faith.⁴

Kurfees fought long and hard for the simplicity of the scriptures, advancing the Restoration Principle in the face of the enemies of the cross of Christ.

These are but a few of the men who respected the authority of the scriptures over the compromises of the denominational world. They chose to follow the Bible and "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3).



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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.

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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.

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SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

During the past two decades the spirit of compromise has draped the hearts of many Christians. They have lost the desire to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:5), choosing to court the sectarian world for favors and notoriety. What has happened to change that was so prevalent in many of the hearts of the early restorers? They have forgotten the Restoration Plea, abandoning the distinctive nature of New Testament Christianity.

In his book, *The Death of Outrage*, William Bennett, former Secretary of Education under President Bush, said the *River Lethe* effect was permeating our society. "In Greek mythology, Lethe is one of the rivers of Hades. The souls of the dead are obliged to taste its water, so that they may forget everything said and done while alive."⁵ Perhaps there have been some in the church drinking from the *River Lethe*. They have forgotten the distinctive nature of the church of Christ. They have forgotten the authority of

the scriptures and they have forgotten the sacrifices of the old preachers, in whose pulpits they fill.

Drinking from the *River Lethe* is dangerous to the soul because it can lead people to believe they have no accountability to the word of God. Stone, Campbell, and Kurfess understood the importance of cleaving, adhering, and holding on tightly to the Bible. The Restoration Principle will influence every person not to forget the "Old paths" found only in the scriptures.

ENDNOTES

1. Barton W. Stone, "Biography of Barton W. Stone," *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke Dickerson (Cincinnati Ohio) p. 31.
2. Ibid. p. 48
3. Robert Richardson, *Memairs of A. Campbell*, Vol. 1, p. 238.
4. M.C. Kurfess, Instrumental Music in the Worship, *Gospel Advocate* (Nashville) 1975. P.269
5. William Bennett, *The Death of Outrage*, *The Free Press* (New York), 1998, p. 18.

—14150 Lincoln Road
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The Last Word

Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve

Eddie Whitten

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24:15).

The worship of pagan gods is not limited to the ages before Christ came into the world. Idols are currently used in pagan rituals in many religions. Superstitions motivate many cultures in their religious observances. We are not too far removed from times of human sacrifice as a religious ordinance. The day of superstition is still with us big-time.

God's people throughout their history practiced idolatry as a matter of course. In spite of the very first commandment in the Law of Moses, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3), The Israelites had their household gods they worshipped. Graven images were a real problem to them until the time of the Babylonian captivity. Since then, idolatry has assumed many different forms.

IGNORANCE

Ignorance is certainly one reason men do not embrace Christianity. One cannot obey what one does not know. Ignorance is not an acceptable alibi for not obeying the gospel else it would be better that none learn of the gospel than reject it. That would make the gospel an instrument of condemnation to all that did not obey it. Ignorance comes from several sources: (1) Many lack the opportunity to learn. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is unknown in the majority of the cultures of the world. It is astounding that the

name "Coca Cola" is familiar to more people in the world than the name Jesus. Yet, the folks that claim to know tell us that this fact such is the case. John 6:45 becomes much more weighty and urgent for those of us who do know who Jesus is, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." It is incumbent upon all Christians to do the best they can to teach all nations about Christ (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). (2) Many reject the truth. Rejection reflects an air of superiority, of self-sufficiency, of snobbishness. It says, "You believe what you want to believe; I'll believe what I want to believe and don't try to change me!" What those who reject the gospel do not realize is that in the Day of Judgment, they are not going to have the choice they insist on while they live on earth. The apostle Paul said that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11).



INDIVIDUALISM

Throughout history men have exalted themselves. There seems to be some kind of "gene" that says, "I am above everybody else mentally, intellectually, emotionally." Every era has had its "Prima Donnas." In their minds, human wisdom is exalted above God's word. Every denomination is a product of human thought. There is no divine authority for denominations. The institution of sal-

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vation for man is the church which Jesus purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28). It is singular in nature (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-5; 5:25-27). Men who disagreed with the Bible set about to establish a worship of God based upon human standards. Jesus condemned this practice, saying, "**In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men**" (Matthew 15:9). Many religious leaders in denominational circles are hailed as great reformers. To their followers they are heroes and icons to be revered.

To revolt against the norm is a hallmark of individualism. With some exceptions, those who have led schisms are those who have rebelled against an established religious doctrine. Unable to cope with conformity and consumed with individuality, they have launched into a new vista of religious piety. The more they succeeded the braver the efforts. The braver their efforts, the less concern for biblical compliance. The vicious cycle expands until the Bible becomes secondary to their individualism. The result is a new religious thought thrust upon the populace. It eventually becomes a new entity with a new hero for its head and heart. (Where is the "individualism" that seeks to do God's will not matter what the cost?—Editor-in-Chief)

INTELLECTUALISM

Paul said: "**For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,**" (Romans 12:3). Education is a wonderful thing, especially to those who can handle it. It (education) can be detrimental if it becomes a millstone around the neck of the educated. Many, many persons have earned terminal degrees and have been a blessing to mankind through the benefits of the knowledge they have gained and the application of their knowledge to society. What gigantic strides have been accomplished in every field of human endeavor because of the advanced education people have acquired! We applaud emphatically the contributions so many have made to our benefit.

Some, however, have had an adverse effect in the religious world. Convinced they have attained the ultimate in knowledge, intellectual acumen, and unquestioned judgment, they become invincible in their own minds. The apostle Paul cautioned against such intellectualism in the verse previously quoted. Men must realize they cannot supplant the unapproachable wisdom of deity. Paul addressed this in I Corinthians, chapters 1-3. He emphasized the foolishness of the wisdom of men when compared to the wisdom of God. There is no comparison. Men have come forth in the past, and continue to do so, sounding a blaring trumpet announcing their presence as an immaculate gift to the religious dilemma the world faces. The only problem with that (No, not the only problem) is that there are so many of them, all saying different things, yet all are adamant and to be unquestioned in their doctrines and judgments.

Joshua was confronted with essentially the same problems that we face. The people had chased after every kind of idol they could find. Jehovah, who had led them out of bondage in Egypt, who had provided for them and protected them in the wilderness, who had given them a land in which to live and who had loved them, was shunted aside for pagan idols. Joshua, who had always been obedient to God for the most part (he failed to drive out all the pagan nations of Canaan) saw the spiritual condition of the Israelites for what it really was. He chided them to return to God, but in any case, whether they would be faithful to God, or not, he and his house would worship the LORD.

In spite of the efforts of the ignorant, the individualists and the intellectuals of our time, we must lay aside the prating of those who would lead us away from the simple truth of God's holy word and worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Jesus told Satan, "**Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve**" (Matthew 4:10).

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

SHAME ON APOSTATE NASHVILLE Churches For Following Ichabod Rubel Shelly In Fellowshiping Billy Graham Crusade

Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

We had known for months that ichabod/heretic **Rubel Shelly** was determined to undermine the churches of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee by having fellowship with **Billy Graham** in his so-called "crusade" this June 1-4; however, as we saw the day approaching, the principal question was what were faithful brethren and churches going to do about it?

From their silence and inaction it seemed clear that most Nashville churches—even those *relatively* faithful to the restoration plea—were not going to do anything to obviate what Shelly et. al. were perpetrating against the truth of the gospel. They were just going to let it happen and keep quiet about it regardless of the outcome.

Two faithful brethren—**Garland Elkins**, of Memphis, and **James McGill**, of Nashville—were not so minded. they knew that they might not be able to *stop* Shelly and his followers from taking part with Graham in this inter-denominational event; but they were not willing for the cause of truth to be thus compromised without doing what *they could to uphold it*.

First, they went to the Nashville *Tennessean* to see what a full-page ad would cost. It would be more than \$23,000. They discovered, however, that *quarter-page* ads would be approximately \$7,000 each if contracted for so many. Deciding that *several* quarter-page ads on *separate* days probably would accomplish more than just *one* full-pager on *one* day, they thought that one should appear on Wednesday, the day *before* the Graham event would start on Thursday, then two more for Saturday and Sunday on the weekend.

Next, brother Elkins went to the **East Hill Church of Christ**, in Pulaski, Tennessee, to see if the elders there might accept sponsorship for *placing* these ads with the *Tennessean*. The East Hill elders agreed to do so, provided that other faithful brethren and churches would chip in the money to pay for the ads.

Since East Hill was having its tenth annual *Truth in Love Lectureship*, May 17-21, this was a propitious occasion for putting the matter before a large number of brethren and churches from middle Tennessee and roundabout all at the same time. Almost immediately more than enough was forthcoming to pay for the *first* ad. Elkins was authorized to go back to the *Tennessean* and proceed with the contract.

In addition, the East Hill elders authorized their preacher **Paul Sain** to print large quantities of folders and leaflets to be distributed to those who would be going into the new Adelphia Coliseum, in Nashville, where the event would be held.

Meanwhile, in Goodlettsville, Tennessee, a principal suburb on the north side of Nashville, **Al** and **Caroline Thompson** were busy with their video camera recording churches of Christ throughout the area who were allowing the so-called **Billy Graham "Music City Miracle"** be advertised on their premises.

Not only was this true of the *Woodmont Hills Family of God*, now calling itself a *church of Christ*, on Franklin Road, where Rubel preaches in Nashville proper; but also of the *Community Church*, now styling itself as "...a *body of Christ*," in Hendersonville; and also the *Smith Springs church of Christ*, southeast of Nashville.

(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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EDITORIAL...

"CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER EXCEPT THEY BE AGREED?"

(Amos 3:3).

Recently I received a letter from Mac Deaver. He made reference to a letter I wrote him around two years ago. In the letter, among other things, he complained about my use of sarcasm in making my points pertaining to matters relating to his view of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's heart. With several months intervening, this was the second time he had complained to me in writing about the use of sarcasm in said letter. The first time he protested I was somewhat surprised that such would bother him. The second time he brought it up I was more than amazed that it continued to be a point of concern with him.

Why was I surprised about his protesting my use of sarcasm? Here is the reason. In response to two articles appearing in early 1998 issues of the *Defender*, editor Michael Hatcher wrote about "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38. Roy Deaver, Mac's father, took exception to what Hatcher taught about "the gift of the Holy Spirit." In a letter dated May 6, 1998 to Hatcher in which he protested his position, R. Deaver employed sarcasm to make his points. In a letter dated May 13, 1998 Hatcher asked him why he employed such sarcasm in dealing with him. R. Deaver replied in part in a letter to him dated May 18, 1998. He wrote:

I make no apology for doing the very best that I can do in saying what (in my judgment) ought to be said, and in the best possible way that I can say it. A bit of sarcasm? Yes! Absolutely sincere? Yes! Did it make the point? I can hope and pray that it did.

I do not think I could answer M. Deaver any better than his Daddy did. I am content to let them debate one another over the use of sarcasm in making points. What about the following propositions for father and son to debate?

The indwelling Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word directly guides Christians to use sarcasm in making points.

Affirm: Roy Deaver

Deny: Mac Deaver

The indwelling Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word directly guides Christians to oppose the use of sarcasm in making points.

Affirm: Mac Deaver

Deny: Roy Deaver

I close with the words of R. Deaver: "A bit of sarcasm? Yes! Absolutely sincere? Yes! Did it make my point? I can hope and pray that it did."

—David P. Brown, Editor-in-Chief

SHAME ON NASHVILLE...

(Continued From Page 1)

On May 22nd, the Thompsons sent me a copy of their videotape. Reaching me on the weekend, I took it over to *Memphis School of Preaching* on Monday morning so we could view it on their VCR. **Curtis A. Cates** and **Garland Elkins** invited all the teachers and students of *MSOP* to come to the chapel hall to view it with me. They, the same as the Thompsons, could hardly believe their eyes and ears as they saw supposed-to-be churches of Christ advocating participation with Billy Graham and his "Music City Miracle" Crusade.

That afternoon it seemed good to me to go to Nashville, in person, so that brother **J. E. Choate** and I might search out the Greater Nashville Area to document any more "churches of Christ" who were thus having interdenominational fellowship with the Billy Graham "Crusade."

Picking up brother Choate early the following morning (Tuesday), he and I networked the city of Nashville and Davidson County in this regard. To our astonishment, though the stanchions were still there, when we reached *Woodmont Hills*, where the Thompsons had videotaped the Graham banner on their front lawn, it was no longer in sight! We could not help wondering *who* took it down? Or *why*? Were Rubel and Woodmont Hills having *second thoughts* about fellowshipping the Crusade? Or had a rain-storm come through and *blown* it down? *Whatever* caused it, Billy Graham's banner was *no longer to be seen!* BUT IT UNQUESTIONABLY HAD BEEN THERE THE WEEK BEFORE—THE THOMPSON VIDEOTAPE WAS *PROOF POSITIVE*.

Someone said that *Harpeth Hills* had one of the banners. We went there to photograph it; however, if so, it no longer



PROOF POSITIVE that Rubel Shelly and his Woodmont Hills congregation on Franklin Road, in Nashville, Tennessee, took part with Billy Graham and his Nashville Crusade, the above photos were videotaped by Al and Caroline Thompson, of Goodlettsville, the week before. Patrick Harper, one of the students at Memphis School of Preaching, took them off the tape for reproduction here. Note Woodmont Hills' now calling themselves "A Family of GOD," downplaying their former name to "church of Christ."

there. Nevertheless, banner or not, *Harpeth Hills* definitely was having fellowship with the Billy Graham event having provided their facilities for the training of Crusade counsellors. The same was true of *Otter Creek*.

Going out to *Smith Springs*, they not only had the *Billy Graham* banner tied to a tree in their front yard, but they also had lettered *their own* sign, saying, "RIDE OUR BUS TO THE BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE. CALL 361-1618 JUNE 1-4." As for Hendersonville, the so-called



WHEN SENIOR EDITOR Ira Y. Rice, Jr., of Memphis, together with J. E. Choate, of Nashville, went to Woodmont Hills on Tuesday before the Billy Graham Crusade was to begin two days later on Thursday, they found the stanchions which supported the Billy Graham banner still in place but the banner itself was gone. When Choate telephoned Woodmont Hills to find out why, Rubel Shelly told him a rain storm blew it down and they just hadn't put it back up.



ANYONE WHO GOT BY THE OTHERS without a leaflet still could get one from red-haired Mike Morgan (see photo) when they were almost to the Adelpia Coliseum gate.

Community Church had the Billy Graham banner in their front yard plain for all to see.

Returning to Memphis with photos of the aforementioned meeting places (with or without the *Billy Graham* banners), I learned that the entire student body of *Memphis School of Preaching* would accompany brother Elkins back to Nashville that Thursday morning to participate in distributing leaflets and folders to those entering the Adelpia Coliseum for the "Crusade" that same evening and the next.

Handing my camera to **Denver (Chip) Horton**, one of these preacher-students, I asked him to take pertinent photos of materials being thus distributed that I might include same with this report.

At 10:30 that Thursday morning, several carloads of *MSOP* preaching-students (some 40 in all) departed Memphis headed for Nashville. By 5:15 p.m. they all were well-dressed in suits and ties, had taken the Memorial Bridge across the Cumberland River, had placed themselves along the Woodland Street approach to the Coliseum and were passing out some 16,000 leaflets, written by Garland Elkins and James McGill, entitled, *Baptism: The Bible and Billy Graham*. The second evening they handed out the same number (16,000) tracts, by the same authors, entitled, *Which Church?*

The local newspaper estimated attendance at the "Crusade" at approximately 45,000 each night. If so, this meant that one out of every three persons in the Coliseum those first two nights received a copy of one or both of these two tracts answering doctrinal errors always preached by Billy Graham in his "Crusades."

Several of our preacher-students who handed out the tracts commented on what happened as far as they experienced or observed. **Israel Crocker** reported, "One man approached me as I was handing out tracts, and asked, Are you a Baptist Christian?" I said, "No." Then he asked, Are you a Methodist Christian? I said, "No, I am a Christian only. Acts 11:26." [All the while I was thinking, "He asked my questions."] He then stuck his finger to my forehead, pushed me and shouted, 'YOU'RE SICK IN THE HEAD!' Then he proceeded on his way..."

Our brethren were not the *only* ones there in opposition to the Graham Crusade. Another anti-Graham group, from California, calling themselves **God's Word of Fellowship**, were also present.

"We argued extensively with the fanatical, anti-Graham group known as 'God's Word of Fellowship,' from California, Crocker continued. "As we approached our positions, we found these men holding signs stating, 'GRAHAM OPPOSES GOD,' and 'GRAHAM IS A FALSE TEACHER.'



ALTHOUGH OTTER CREEK still had "Church of Christ" over the door, their sign in the yard featured "THE OTTER CREEK FAMILY." We did not see a Billy Graham sign on the premises; however, Otter Creek definitely was for the Billy Graham event.

Unfortunately, people thought this group was from the church of Christ. Strange, considering that we were in suits and they had long hair and beards with shorts. They would shout at the people passing by, 'You are going to hell if you



DRIVING OUT TO Smith Springs, southeast of Nashville, not only did they have Billy Graham's banner prominently displayed in their front yard but also on their own signboard they advertized, "RIDE OUR BUS TO THE BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE CALL 361-1618 JUNE 1-4.

listen to Billy Graham.' They would also tell the young, immodestly dressed ladies, 'You are whores, and you are going to hell.' All we had to say was that we are not with them, and the people readily received our tracts."

Joshua Ankiah said the "highlight" of his experience in Nashville was "the pleasure of seeing soldiers of Christ (our preacher students) stand for the truth against abuse." The "lowlight" for him was "a member of the church of Christ who gave me back the flyer and said she was a member of the church of Christ. Upon asking her for the purpose of going to the Crusade, she said she was a voluntary worker. My heart sank."

While at the Billy Graham show, **Billy W. Lee** wrote, "a man was telling me that all we wanted to do was quench the spirit. I told him that all we wanted to do was preach the truth. He said Billy Graham was trying to instruct the people... I cut him off there and said, That's the problem. Everybody wants to do what *Billy Graham* says. Nobody wants to do what *the Bible* says. Look around at all these people. How many people do you see carrying a Bible? There were none out of the many people walking by but me. He looked at all the people and left."



THE COMMUNITY CHURCH, in Hendersonville, formerly called itself "Church of Christ;" however, seeking to downgrade that connection, their sign now calls them "...a body of Christ." Unashamedly they had a Billy Graham banner prominently displayed on their front lawn. (also see picture below)

"A guy told me, I am a member of the church of Christ," **Michael Gilbert** recalled. "I asked him why he was going to the Crusade and he told me not to worry about it and Don't tell anyone." In Mike's opinion, what the *MSOP* preacher-students did "was [itself] a great crusade for the cause of Christ."

One of the students wrote, "I met a man who grew up in the church of Christ and was now an associate pastor at a community church...I went to hand a tract to an older lady and she started singing I know whom I have believed and am persuaded..." That touched me because she was really sincere, but was blinded and deceived...One man told me to bring a baptistery and start baptizing people...One [inappropriate] thing right above the stage where Billy Graham

was preaching was a big BUD LITE logo shining forth to the audience...Another was the immodest apparell the women had on."

Mike Hisaw felt that "the trip to Nashville was a great success. The hospitality extended to us by the local congregations was wonderful. Also being with the (*MSOP*) brethren in this endeavor was very encouraging."

"On the other hand, it was disappointing to see how few local [Nashville] brethren took part in the effort to pass out the tracts. While passing out the material, we ran across several brethren who were attending the





SOMEONE TOLD US that Harpeth Hills had a Billy Graham banner on display. If so, we were unable to find it (see photo). However, Harpeth Hills undeniably supported Billy Graham, lending their facilities as a site for training his Crusade "counselors."

Graham Crusade, not to *examine* it but to *support* it. This was a great disappointment."

"The denominational folks did not always accept the material gladly. There was some opposition on their part. Especially was this true with a group known as God's Word Fellowship, a Calvinistic group, there in opposition to Graham. Unfortunately they also were belligerent to the cause of Christ."

Among the extraordinary things that **Pierre J. Edouard, Jr.**, observed about the Nashville Crusade, he listed the following:

"It is amazing that among those who opposed us, many were from the Church of Christ (erring brethren)."

"It is amazing that numerous teenagers were taking the time to sit down and passionately read the tracts."

"It is amazing that among many married couples, the wives were more receptive to the tracts than their husbands."

First-year student **James Simmons, Jr.**, gave the most detailed highlights of any who went from the *Memphis School of Preaching*. He remembered:

"Most were generally receptive to receiving the tracts the first night. After reading them, some either threw them down or returned them to the ones of us handing them out."

Both nights, in general the majority of the younger women (and some older

women) were dressed immodestly.

For the Baptism tract, most who voiced opposition said, "What about the thief on the cross?" When asked a question by a lady, "Is this for or against Billy Graham?" I replied, "This is for the Bible." She said, in defiance, "I am for Billy Graham"

"A man claiming to be a preacher verbally assaulted first-year-student **Robbie Brunjes** who was standing with me and was to the point of getting physical in his boistrous attack the second night. He yelled that we should be inside praising God instead of being divisive. In raising the point of the plan of salvation, Robbie stated the importance of bap-

tism in I Peter 3:21. The man yelled that it has nothing to do with salvation but with obedience.

"Some not taking the tract the second night, when they were asked to consider the question by the Bible, said they already knew the Bible."

"Most people attending the event did not carry Bibles...Maybe they didn't want to lose them inside when they had to stand and sway back and forth to the Charlie Daniels band...The show was more important than carrying a Bible."

"A group was there carrying hateful signs against Billy Graham. Some of the people said that they were happy that we were not associated with them."



LEADER OF OUR PREACHER-STUDENTS in Nashville was white-haired **Garland Elkins**, shown handing out doctrinal leaflets in photo. Others of our group seen, left to right, included **Andy Cates**, **Jerry Murrell**, **Mark Cross** and **Israel Crocker**.

"I believe we represented the cause of Christ in the manner of I Peter 2:21. It was an honor to stand for the Lord!"

No comment about our passing out the gospel tracts was forthcoming from the Billy Graham side on the first night. However, on the second night, his right-hand man **Cliff Barrows** stated briefly over the p.a. system that those distributing tracts were not authorized to do so and that folks were under no obligation to accept them.

Our 40 preacher-students dressed in suits and ties handing out the tracts made a good impression on most of those going into the Coliseum. Special thanks are due to **Curtis A. Cates**, Director of *Memphis School of Preaching*, for letting them go...to both the *Crieve Hall* as well as the *Spring Hill* congregations for affording them places to sleep that Thursday night...to the *Lindsley Avenue* congregation for giving them a place to park their cars while distributing tracts...and to the *Woodson Chapel* congregation for providing facilities for their mini-lectureship from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Friday.

Having accomplished what they went to Nashville to do, all 40 of them started back to Memphis by 8:15 Friday night happy in heart that God's word would not return unto him void, "but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

Special thanks go to **Al and Caroline Thompson** for sending me the videotape of those apostate churches allowing their facilities to be used to advertise the interdenominational Billy Graham Crusade...to **J. E. Choate** for guiding me all over Greater Nashville to photograph the same...to **Denver (Chip) Horton** for taking my camera to Nashville to record *MSOP* preacher-students' distributing those 32,000 flyers and tracts on the approach to the Coliseum...and to **Patrick Harper** for taking photos off the Thompson videotape for reproduction herewith.

JUST FOR INFORMATION

The *East Hill church* has put together a 20 page booklet which details the promotion of the *Billy Graham Crusade*, the newspaper articles from faithful brethren opposing this effort and then the follow-up. It also contains additional articles/information related to this digressive action.

The publication is called "SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL" (Vol. 2). It is free upon request.

East Hill Church

P.O. Box 329, Pulaski, TN 38478

Call 931-363-2777

email psain@usit.net.



WHERE THE WALK WAS WIDE, some indeed got by without one of our leaflets; even so at least a third of those going into the Billy Graham Crusade were thus warned against his doctrinal errors.

Much appreciation goes to **Garland Elkins** and **James McGill** for designing and writing the ads that appeared in the *Tennessean*...to the Elders of the East Hill Church of Christ, of Pulaski, Tennessee, for sponsoring both the ads and also the printing of the material that was distributed...and also to **Paul Sain** for printing it.

There is literally no telling how much good was and will be accomplished by all this. One thing is certain: **Rubel Shelly** and those few congregations who followed his misguided lead in fellowshipping Billy Graham and his interdenominationalism now know that faithful brethren from Middle Tennessee and beyond did not fellowship them in such apostate, contrary-to-scripture shenanigans.

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The Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville

James R. McGill

As the time neared for the June 1-4 Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville, Garland Elkins, an instructor at *Memphis School of Preaching*, said we ought to respond to the error that would be presented during the crusade. Following through on his conviction, Garland had the opportunity to present this urgent need to those attending the *Truth in Love Lectureship* in Pulaski, Tennessee, on Saturday, May 20, at the **East Hill church**.

The outpouring of support from churches and individuals was immediate and generous. The decision was made to publish three timely teaching articles in Nashville's daily newspaper, *The TENNESSEAN*. Also, Paul Sain would print 25,000 copies of each of two brochures for distribution at the coliseum during the Graham Crusade—one tract to be handed out on each of the first two evenings.

The **East Hill church** agreed to coordinate the effort, and the elders approved the following message to be published at the bottom of each of the three newspaper articles and the two brochures: Coordinated by the **East Hill church of Christ**, Pulaski, Tennessee, and supported by many churches and individuals.

THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

The first of the quarter-page newspaper articles, "Baptism: The Bible and Billy Graham," appeared on Wednesday, May 31—the day before the Graham Crusade began. This article focused sharply on Graham's 50-year failure to include in his preaching the command to be baptized for the remission of sins.

The second of the three articles was headed, "The Graham-Shelly Crusade." It appeared in the Saturday morning paper, with a circulation of 239,000.

Rubel Shelly came to Nashville in 1978 as a gospel preacher and began preaching for the Ashwood Church of Christ. Over the years he led this group to become what is now known as the **Woodmont Hills Family of God**.

Yet the local media has persisted in referring to Rubel as a "church of Christ minister." Shelly very early, publicly, and strongly supported and promoted the Billy Graham Crusade. These circumstances gave the false impression that churches of Christ were endorsing Billy Graham.

Proof of this problem came on the first night of the Crusade when Billy Graham announced: "We're all together now: Presbyterians and Baptists.. and the **Church of Christ!**" These last words drew the loudest and longest applause of the evening.

No one in the history of Nashville—at least not since **Jesse B. Ferguson** 150 years ago—has been so divisive, so destructive, and so damaging to the church of Christ as has Rubel Shelly.

The third article was published in the **Sunday TENNESSEAN** (circulation almost 300,000). This article dealt with a question that had appeared in the Billy Graham *My Answer* newspaper column: *Which church is the one founded by Christ?* It pointed out the error of Graham's reply, and then followed with the Bible answer.

HANDING OUT BROCHURES

Paul Sain, who preaches at **East Hill** in Pulaski, did an outstanding printing job in making the brochures attractive. His layout and his beautiful use of color—red and yellow in addition to black and white—made the brochures just about irresistibly appealing to those arriving to attend the Graham Crusade.

Garland Elkins arrived in Nashville on Thursday afternoon, along with about thirty-five students from the Memphis School of Preaching, and others, including **Brandon Britton**, who brought the brochures from Pulaski.

We assembled in the **Lindsley Avenue church building** located near the Adelpia Coliseum for prayers. We received some final instructions and took our positions about 4:30—two and a half hours before the activities were to begin inside the stadium. But it was none too early. Thousands of people arrived by 5:30.

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The students made a wonderful impression on those attending the crusade, by the gentle, pleasant, courteous, and kind way they acted and by the way they were dressed—in suits and ties even though they were to be out in the hot sun five hours each day. The brochure distributed the first night had the same title as the first newspaper article: "Baptism: The Bible and Billy Graham."

CHURCHES ASSIST STUDENTS

The students spent Thursday night with families of the **Woodson Chapel** congregation. The next day, Friday, they had classes—two hundred miles away from their Memphis campus—at the Woodson Chapel church building, with five guest teachers.

They got back to **Lindsley Avenue** church parking lot about 3 p.m., ready for their second evening of work. They encountered relatively very little hostility. But even when they did, they remained pleasant and courteous. I wish everyone could have seen the wonderful way they acted. I am especially happy that many thousands of those who came to the Crusade did see that.

Once, as I was walking past Garland, while he was handing out the brochures, I overheard an aggressive young woman asking him, accusingly, "Does Billy Graham know what you are doing?" He responded immediately, quietly, pleasantly, "I don't know whether Billy Graham knows, but the Lord knows."

THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND TRACTS

At least thirty-five thousand tracts were distributed altogether the first two nights of the crusade, about the same number each night. The title of the handout on the second night was "Which Church?" I have never seen a more opportune place and time to present the truth in sharp contrast to error than at this Billy Graham Crusade.

The attractiveness of the brochures, the timeliness of the subjects, and the readers curiosity, along with the fact that most people arrived at least an hour before the event began, meant that thousands were reading their brochures at the same time.

Very few were thrown away without being read. If a tract was thrown down anywhere, one of the students picked it up immediately. None became litter.

On the second night of the crusade, long-time Billy Graham associate **Cliff Barrows** made an announcement that gave much added publicity to the work we were doing outside. He told the people that the materials we were distributing were not authorized by them. Instead of feeling

obligated to take the literature, they should politely say "no, thank you," Barrows said.

Most of our literature distribution took place off the premises of the coliseum, but it was necessary to be on the premises to hand out brochures to those who arrived on buses that came directly into the stadium parking lots. We were told by the coliseum manager that we could not be on stadium property.

GRAHAM GETS STADIUM FREE

I told him that in fairness, if Billy Graham could be given free use of the coliseum for his preaching, we should be permitted to hand out brochures. At first he denied that Billy Graham was getting the stadium free. When I reminded him that *The TENNESSEAN* had reported that fact, he acknowledged it. I asked the manager and his associate if they would mind if I wrote to the newspaper about our discussion. They said they did not mind. Later that night I faxed the following letter to the newspaper:

During the first two evenings of the Billy Graham Crusade, some young men from churches of Christ distributed brochures outside Adelphia Coliseum. They were courteous in every way, nicely dressed in suits and ties.

On Friday evening stadium manager Mr. Bill Dickerson, along with his associate, Mr. Bill Wainright, said they could not hand out the brochures on stadium premises. This included even the parking lots.

This is private property, they said. That news comes as a total surprise to all of us in Nashville who had been led to believe from Adelphia's inception that it was going to be our stadium.

It seems there is a fairness issue. The Southern Baptists are given free use of the coliseum for their evangelist to present their point-of-view, along with free use of more than fifty Metro policemen. Yet the young men from churches of Christ were forbidden to express their convictions by handing out the brochures. Doesn't the First Amendment apply here?

All in all the events surrounding the June 1-4 Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville provided a wonderful opportunity to refute error and teach the truth; to provide a memorable and valuable experience for the *Memphis School of Preaching* students just two weeks before graduation day; and to make it clear to all that Rubel Shelly is not the spokesperson for churches of Christ.

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How to be Gay, Living Together Before Marriage, Express Worship Services, And More

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Next Fall, the *University of Michigan* will be offering "How to Be Gay: Male Homosexuality and Initiation," which will examine the general topic of the role that initiation plays in the formation of "gay identity" through gay literature, "muscle culture," Broadway musicals, and interior design (*The Federalist*, 4/7/00). [Another fine example of higher education... MTM]

.....

Vice President Al Gore has endorsed the world's first international homosexual celebration according to the organizers of the event in Rome this summer despite unease over the matter by the Roman Catholic Church. The Democratic Party's presidential hopeful sent a letter to the organizers of World Pride 2000 on March 23rd after the Vatican had expressed its displeasure about the week-long event that will culminate in a massive street demonstration (Maranatha email news service, 4/13/00). [Does Gore consider this his way of demonstrating foreign policy?? Regardless of what liberal Americans think, the majority of the world still does not accept homosexuality. They will see this as another weakness of American leadership.—MTM]

.....

Living together before marriage is more likely to end in disappointment than fulfillment, secular researchers are finding. A survey of recent studies shows that couples who live together have more conflict and less satisfaction with

their relationships than married couples do, and their eventual marriages often are less stable and more likely to end in divorce, *The Christian Science Monitor* said. The studies also show that fathers who cohabit are less likely to be involved with their children once the relationship ends than are fathers who were married to the mothers of their children. ...Conclusions by a number of researchers have been "sobering for me, and for a lot of others in this field," said William Doherty, director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Doherty, who reviewed the research for the federal government, said he used to think cohabiting was a good way for people to find out whether they would be compatible marriage partners, but now hopes his own adult children do not live together before marriage (Religion Today email news service, 4/11/00). [God's way is always the best way. But man continues to ignore His word and try it his way.—MTM]



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.....

A group that follows the teachings of **Joseph Smith** is changing its name to Community of Christ. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, based in Independence, Missouri, changed its name so as not to be confused with the Salt Lake City-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, news reports said. The name takes effect formally Jan. 1, 2001, although the church still will be known officially as the RLDS. ...RLDS followers, like the Salt Lake City-based Mormons, trace their history to Joseph Smith Jr., who believed he was chosen to restore the true church of Jesus Christ. The movement fragmented after Smith's death in 1844, with some choosing to follow Smith's son and others following **Brigham Young** to Utah. The group that followed his son became known in the mid-1860s as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Religion Today email news service, 4/11/00). [They should follow Christ instead of following man. Changing their name will not get them any closer to heaven.—MTM]

.....

Cornell [university] actually hosted, in one of their residential dormitories, what they termed a 'Roman orgy,' Myers said. "They used student fees to go out and buy incense, candles, snacks and a bowl of condoms" (Citizen link email news service, 4/13/00). [It is unbelievable that students would be mandated to monetarily support such

garbage. The administration should be called to account for the baseness of the activity.—MTM]

.....

A Florida church has come up with a novel way of reaching out to those who have no time for God — an express worship service. Family Bible Church in Eustis guarantees its 9:00 a.m. congregation songs, prayer, announcements, collection and a sermon all within 45 minutes (Religion Today email news service, 4/20/00). [It is sad that these people would bother to act religious. This is hypocrisy. They really only want to smooth their conscience in this fake attempt at bbeing pious.—MTM]

.....

Wesleyan University offered an undergraduate class entitled, Pornography: Writing of Prostitutes. Students were required to create their own work of pornography as a final project. The President of the school has demanded a review of the course (The Washington Times, May 31-June 6, 1999, p. 13). [It is amazing that such a course could be offered without the President having prior knowledge. It is unimaginable that a parent paying for the child's schooling would not want to know what they are studying.—MTM]

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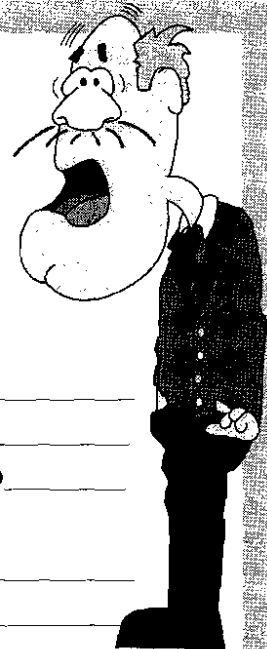
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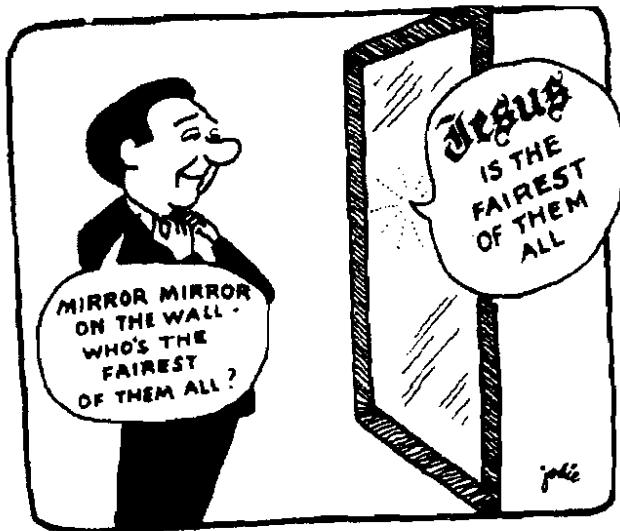
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Seeing It Helps Saying It...

Does Diotrophes Still Live?

Jodie Boren



The church of our Lord was built by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18), and he was (and is) divine and perfect. On earth, the church (or house of God—I Timothy 3:15) is comprised of Christians as lively stones of the house (I Peter 2:5). Christians are human beings who are imperfect and often show their weaknesses by allowing the devil to distract them from following in the steps of Jesus (I Peter 2:21). Thus, Diotrophes (III John 9) still lives, representatively, and unfortunately, in the lives of, some who claim to be gospel preachers.

TRUTH SACRIFICED FOR PREEMINENCE

It seems that some of these preachers are more than willing to depart from the truth and preach false doctrine that they may receive the praise of men. They sacrifice truth for preeminence. This is the very thing about which Paul warned the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:30-31). We do not want to be guilty of judging because only God can know what is in the heart of a man (I Samuel 16:7), but we can and must judge righteous judgment (John 7:24) because Jesus said we can know a man by the fruit that he bears (Matthew 7:20).

If all teachers of God's word would have the spirit of the apostle Paul, the world could be converted to Christ, Paul said: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:1-2), he sought to save men and became all things to all men that he might by all means save some (I Corinthians 9:22). His preaching was to save men—not to please them. Had he acted like Diotrophes he could not have been the servant of God (Galatians 1:10).

When the time of Paul's departure from this life was at hand, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..." (II Timothy 4:6-7). He could say that because he preached Christ as the redeeming one (Galatians 3:13); the reconciling one (Ro-

mans 5:10); the risen one (Romans 4:25 and 8:34); the residing one (Colossians 1:27 and Galatians 2:20); the returning one (II Thessalonians 1:9-10 and Titus 2:12-13); the receiving one (John 14:1-3 and I Thessalonians 4:15-18); the rewarding one (II Corinthians 5:10 and II Timothy 4:7-8); the rejoicing one (Psalms 104:31 and Luke 10:21); the obedient one (John 6:39 and Hebrews 5:8-9); our wonderful counselor (Isaiah 9:6); the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6 and John 14:27); and our intercessor (Romans 8:34). No wonder Paul was able to establish so many churches and convert so many people.



A LIFE OF GREATNESS

We need to tell our friends and neighbors about Christ and what a great life the Christian life is. Jesus said that he came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). An unknown poet expressed it beautifully.

In Christ We Have...

*A love that can never be fathomed;
A life that can never die;
A righteousness that can never be tarnished;
A peace that can never be understood;
A rest that can never be disturbed;
A joy that can never be diminished;
A hope that can never be disappointed;
A glory that can never be clouded;
A light that can never be darkened;
A happiness that can never be interrupted;
A strength that can never be enfeebled;
A purity that can never be defiled;
A beauty that can never be marred;
A wisdom that can never be baffled;
Resources that can never be exhausted.*

May we not desire the preeminence, but lift up Christ to a lost and dying world and sing with fervor, "Fairest Lord Jesus ruler of all nations—O thou of God and man of son—thee will I cherish."

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WHAT DOES "NOT UNDER BONDAGE MEAN?"

Noah Hackworth

The Corinthians had written Paul a letter in which they asked a number of questions (I Corinthians 7:1). These questions had to do with (1) whether one should enter into marriage, (2) whether the marriage relationship involving believers with unbelievers should be continued, especially in view of the current "present distress," and (3) whether or not a virgin should marry. Under the guidance of the Spirit (v. 40) Paul addressed these issues and imparts additional information relative to the so-called "Pauline privilege," contended for by such brethren as Neil Lightfoot, Burton Coffman, and the late James D. Bales. *The "Pauline privilege" avers that the believer who is deserted is free to remarry, without being guilty of adultery, even though the departing unbeliever is still alive.*

First, we shall list the text:

But the to the rest say I, not the Lord: if any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: But God called us in peace (I Corinthians 7:12-15).

Three things are perfectly clear already: (1) The Christian must give up the marital partner if need be instead of giving up Christ, (2) Paul's information relates to the marriage of non-Christians, one of which subsequently obeyed the gospel, and (3) God recognizes the marriage of non-Christians which proves that aliens are subject to the law of Christ.

Next, we must give attention to the word "bondage." What does it mean? To what does it refer? The believer who has been deserted is not under bondage (*ou dedoulotai*) if the unbeliever chooses to leave. Thayer (p. 158) says the word *bondage* means "to make a slave of, reduce to bondage; to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity, in some matter." The believer who has been deserted by the unbeliever was not, is not, never has been "a slave" to the unbeliever who departs. The relationship contemplated by the apostle has never involved the type of slavery indicated by the words *doulou* or *dehloutai*. The


believer is not held by constraint of law to the unbeliever who may not be pleased to dwell with him or her. *Doulos*, from *deo*, to bind, was "originally the lowest term in the scale of servitude, came also to mean one who gives himself up to the will of another" (*W.E. Vine*, p. 139). Surely this definition does not fit or apply to the believer who has been left behind by the unbeliever. The late, scholarly, Roy H. Lanier, Sr., pointed out that "The noun and the verb form occur 133 times in the New Testament, yet not one time, unless our text is an exception, is the word used to refer to the marriage bond" (*Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, p. 14). "Not under bondage" does not refer to the marriage relationship (bond). It therefore cannot be used to prove the validity of a second marriage.

Such a view would contradict what the Lord himself said in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9. The "not under bondage" doctrine does not authorize a second marriage.

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BROTHERLY LOVE

Tom Moore

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The changing power of the gospel is very evident when you look at the lives of the first century Christians
1. **Justin Martyr** wrote, "We used to value above all else money and possessions. Now we bring together all that we have and share it with those who are in need. Formerly we hated and killed one another because of a difference in nationality or custom. Now since the coming of Christ, we all live in peace. We pray for our enemies and seek to convert those who hate us."
 2. **Tertullian** wrote, "It is our care for the helpless, our practice of lovingkindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Only look,' they say, 'how they love one another.'"
- B. This kind of brotherly love helps to develop a very strong Christian pyramid as a Christian pyramid, we learn the need for relying on one another for strength and encouragement. But, if we are not careful, if we are not showing brotherly love properly, the pyramid can topple.
- C. Why is brotherly love so important?
1. John 13:35
 - a. The world will judge the church and us by how our brotherly love is manifested.
 - b. If we backbite and devour one another, how will the world view us?
 2. I John 3:14-15
 - a. If we do not show brotherly love we will not go to heaven.
 - b. It cannot get more critical than this!
 3. I John 4:20-21
 - a. There is now way we can love God as we ought if we do not love our brethren.
 - b. How can we love God whom we have not seen, if we cannot love our brothers who we have seen?

II. DISCUSSION

- A. BROTHERLY LOVE IS:
1. IMPARTIAL
 - a. This principal is taught in Deuteronomy 10:19.
 - b. Our love is not to be extended or withheld because of race, how we are treated, one's wealth, and the like.
 2. UNSELFISH
 - a. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39)
 - b. All too often we are more concerned about ourselves than we are our brethren.
 3. A PROOF OF DISCIPLESHIP
 - a. It is proof to the world ... John 13:35.
 - b. It is proof to God ... I John 4:20.
 4. SINCERE
 - a. Romans 12:9
 - b. I John 3:17-18
 5. ABOUNDING
 - a. I Thessalonians 3:12
 - b. Our love is to abound—True brotherly love will not try to love "just enough to get by!"
 6. FERVENT
 - a. I Peter 1:22
 - b. Diligence ... zealously ... boiling over

7. LOVING GOD AND KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENT.

- a. I John 5:2
 - b. The liberals talk so much about love, but they do not love God or their brethren if they do not stay true to the Book (John 14:15)
- B. BROTHERLY LOVE WILL:
1. TREAT ANOTHER BETTER THAN HIMSELF
 - a. Philippians 2:3
 - b. Romans 12:10
 2. SHARE
 - a. Galatians 6:10
 - b. I Timothy 6:18
 3. FORGIVE
 - a. Colossians 3:13-14
 - b. Brotherly love must and will forgive.
 4. BE KIND
 - a. Colossians 3:12 ... kindness is associated with love in this context
 - b. Ephesians 4:32...if we love one another, how can help but not be kind?
 5. RESTORE
 - a. Galatians 6:1...if we love this we will do.
 - b. James 5:19-20 ... how can be say that we love our brother if we do not try to correct him to the saving of his soul?
 6. NOT OFFENSIVE
 - a. I Corinthians 8:9
 - b. Romans 14:13
 7. HELP IN GROWTH
 - a. Romans 15:1 ... help others to bear their difficulties.
 - b. I Thessalonians 5:14
 8. ENCOURAGE
 - a. Hebrews 10:24
 - b. This is a must—we all need encouragement!
 9. NOT SPEAK EVIL
 - a. James 4:11
 - b. I Peter 2:1

C. EXAMPLES OF BROTHERLY LOVE

1. II Corinthians 12:15
2. Philippians 4:1
3. The perfect example ... John 15:12-13.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. It is all very simple:
1. If we want to go to heaven we must abound in brotherly love.
 2. If we want the church to be strong we must overflow in brotherly love.
- B. We all need to do our best to develop and improve on our brotherly love.



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Congregational Development ...

Lazy Preachers

Lynn Parker

There are a few folks out there that chuckle when they hear the words “preacher” and “work” in the same breath. The joke has it that preachers work two hours on Sunday and a third on Wednesday, with their remaining time each week spent watching TV, fishing, or vacationing. In fact, most gospel preachers love the Lord’s cause, are not at all afraid of hard work, and go far past the secular forty-hour work week. Our respected brother Robert Taylor wrote:

...I have never had a short work week and do not desire such. I have about decided that many brethren do not believe the preacher does anything because of one of two reasons: (1) They judge the preacher’s work for the Lord by what they do and this is practically nothing. (2) They judge the preacher’s work by what they would do were they in his place (*The Work Of A Preacher*, p. 30).

Frankly, the greater number of preachers are willing to “spend and be spent” to see the work go forward in any congregation. Their days are long and exhausting. Their weeks are filled with hours of Bible study and research. They teach the truth to others publicly and privately. They exhort and admonish the wayward. They pray with and accompany those who face life threatening illnesses. They write articles to teach and inform. They are called to referee family problems and sit in meetings to resolve conflicts between brethren. Tragically, many congregations expect their preachers to do the work of both the elders and every member. They pile every extra job on the preacher (things that others should be handling) and then wonder why his sermons and classes suffer. One preacher commented that if it were not for the errands and secretarial work expected of him, he could do twice as much Bible study and teaching. Still, we preach because we love to preach. There is a burning fire within God’s preachers—they would preach if it cost them their lives.

PULPIT BUMS

All of that said, there are a few preachers who seek an easy paycheck. Their slovenly discharge of this most precious work incurs criticism and reproach. It stirs up whispers in the local congregation, and the whispers soon grow into grumbling. Before long the work suffers and stagnation sets in like an attack of rheumatism. Lazy preachers kill congregations. They discourage brethren. Laziness effectively negates any good the preacher can do in the pulpit. To the evangelist Timothy, Paul wrote:

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching... Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee (I Timothy 4:12-16).

Paul sets forth a full-time work for Timothy. This is no “three hour a week” job pictured here. The preacher must be an example to those within the church as well as to those who are unbelievers. His manner of life is to be consistent with the faithful message he preaches. He is to give himself to the work with an urgency and devotion. A noted grammarian commented on verse 15, “It is like our ‘up to his ears’ in work and sticking to his task” (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol IV, p. 582). Every child of God—including the preacher—has the solemn obligation laid upon him: “in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11).



UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS

Preachers cannot waste hours and away at the gym or the lake while precious time flies (we are against wholesome recreation at either the gym or the lake—just against all play and little work). Preachers cannot approach the work as being merely a main performance on Sunday morning with matinees on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. Real Bible study is more than downloading sermon outlines from the internet, or opening up and re-typing a lesson from “Snappy’s Canned Sermons.” The work is more than arising from bed at 10 a.m. and heading home at 3 p.m. when the kids get home from school. It demands real energy, sacrifice, and especially self-discipline.

Lazy preachers may habitually drag in for services late or in the nick of time. Their appearance may be slovenly. This type of man does not initiate work and he is no self-starter. He has never heard of drive and his motor has no spark plug. He is the type of person you want to take to the zoo so he can watch the turtles whiz by. Others may push or drag him into work but he goes reluctantly. He may be chronically behind on paying his debts. It seems that all these symptoms go together. What do you do with such a man? Instruct and reprove him as you should any lazy brother. But if he fails to repent, do not long tolerate it lest his sluggishness spread to the whole church. And do not commend him for employment at another congregation. Tell them the truth when they check references—tell them that he is so lazy the buzzards congregate on his porch each day mistaking his lethargy for death!

We rejoice that our faithful preaching brethren—in the main—are energetic. Let one and all, those that preach and those that do not, serve our Lord with passion and urgency. Heaven will not house the lazy.

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Attitudes of Christians Towards the Issue of Dress

Jason R. Roberts

Realizing the gravity of modesty apparel, this article invites the honest Bible student to maintain an open heart and an open Bible (Acts 17:11). It is the purpose of this article to examine the attitude that shepherds, preachers, parents and members of the local congregation should manifest when approaching this vital Bible subject.

CONCERNED SHEPHERDS

God, in his infinite wisdom, has given elders the serious task of shepherding the local flock which is among them (I Peter 5:2). This peculiar responsibility which elders have is not to be treated lightly, but approached with the sobering reminder that each one of the souls entrusted to their care is infinitely worth more than the whole world (Matthew 16:26). When elders stand before God on that great and final day, before the precious souls over whom they watched (or were supposed to have watched) ever reach the hands of God, those souls will first pass through the hands of those elders. Every elder and every person who aspires to become an elder, needs to realize the seriousness of this above statement. How many elders can presently say and will be able to say on the day of judgment, that they **“are pure from the blood of all men”** (Acts 20:26)?

In what ways should elders demonstrate their concern as it relates to the issue of modest apparel. *First, shepherds need to be concerned enough to request the local preacher to preach on modest apparel.* One of the weighty responsibilities that elders have is to make sure their sheep are being fed a proper diet of God’s word (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28). Since the issue of modest apparel is part of God’s Word, it becomes a necessary part of the sheep’s diet. When sheep are not being fed a proper *diet* they will soon lose their *direction*. Sheep that lose their *direction* soon become *delinquent*. And *sheep that become delinquent* jeopardize their eternal *destiny*! All of this can be safeguarded when elders become gravely concerned about making sure the local preacher preaches the whole *“counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27).

Second, shepherds need to state clearly where they stand on the issue of modest apparel. This can be done a number of ways. One, when the local preacher finishes his sermon on the issue, an elder, representing the eldership, should support the preacher from the pulpit by making some public remarks regarding his sermon. There is no greater feeling than for a preacher to have an elder speak to the congregation immediately following a sensitive sermon of this caliber—voicing the eldership’s approval to the things he preached. The first time I preached on the issue of modest apparel, an elder did this very thing. I felt as if a tremendous burden had been relieved as a result. Thank God for elders who back their preachers! Also, shepherds

can clearly state where they stand, and what they expect of the local congregation regarding modesty by writing an article for their bulletin. By doing so, no one in the congregation can say that they were not aware of how their shepherds feel about the subject. Some members are just unaware of where their elders stand on this issue. Elders need to have the courage to inform the sheep about what God’s word expects of them. Contrary to what some believe, elders have just as much authority to set a dress policy for worship as they do in scheduling what time the saints are going to meet for worship. You show me a congregation where the elders do not take a stand on modest apparel and I will show you a congregation where people will be wearing some of the most ungodly things imaginable to worship.

Third, shepherds need to be concerned enough to confront the sheep who are dressed immodestly. This should not have to be done if the preacher is getting his message across. Unfortunately, some sheep tend to be stubborn at times and will persist in their rebellion regardless of what the preacher says. At this point, as difficult as it is, there needs to be loving confrontation given from the elders (Galatians 6:1-2). Those who love the Lord and love their shepherds will have no problem with their confronting them regarding these matters. Those who despise authority will get angry and probably leave. Let them go. Their rebellious attitude is not needed at the local congregation, lest it filter into the hearts of others.

CONVICTED PREACHERS

Preachers who are more concerned about pleasing the masses than they are about pleasing God are abusing the sacred privilege of preaching the gospel (Galatians 1:10). In so doing, they render themselves ineffective servants in the eyes of God. Many preachers will preach the truth regarding Acts 2:38, but will neglect the same truth regarding I Timothy 2:9. Is there any difference in the Lord’s mandate for one to be baptized for the remission of his sins, and the Lord’s mandate for one to dress modestly (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:3)? Preachers need to be convicted about preaching not what is popular to man, but rather what is pleasing to God. Why then is there a lack of conviction in the minds of some preachers regarding these matters? Anytime an issue is neglected by a preacher, whether it is from the pen or the pulpit, you can be sure that the underlying cause is fear. The fears of what others are going to say or do. When God called and commissioned the mighty prophet Ezekiel to speak to the rebellious children of Israel, He said,



And thou son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shall speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious (Ezekiel 2:6-7).

After preaching the truth on modest apparel, the preacher may be the subject of Sunday morning's lunch conversation among some of the disgruntled members. But if the conversation in heaven between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is pleasing, then this is all that matters. Furthermore, the preacher may receive a bad look or simply be ignored from a member who would normally shake his hand and tell him what a great sermon that was. But if the God of heaven looks favorably upon the message, then again this is what really matters. The Bible says that evil doers hate the light (John 3:19). It was true then. It is still true today. When the light of the gospel is shown lovingly and firmly upon those who are in sin, sometimes it will invoke a negative reaction from the hearer.

Preachers who are not convicted to herald the totality of God's inspired Word will be tragically convicted in their sins by God on the day of judgement and will have an eternity of regret for so doing.

CONTROLLING PARENTS

Parents have been given the tremendous responsibility in rearing their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). To a large measure, the eternal destiny of their children is in their hands. They can be either a force for good or a force for evil when it comes to the issue of modest apparel. God declared that he was going to bring judgment to the house of Eli because he restrained not his sons. Consequently, his sons were vile (wicked) (I Samuel 3:12-13). The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, commended Lois and Eunice for translating their faith into Timothy, and for making sure that he knew the holy scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:15). Parents have the choice of being like Eli, and thereby refuse to control what their children will wear, or they can be like Lois and Eunice and teach them from their childhood the sacred principles of decency and modesty. If a mother and father allow their daughter to wear skimpy outfits when she is little, then she will think nothing of wearing the same when she matures into her teenage years. Incidentally, the time to be training our sons and daughters regarding what the Bible says about modest apparel is not when they become teenagers.

Fathers need to shoulder their responsibilities in being the spiritual leader in their homes. Mothers need to set a godly example of propriety and modesty before their children because, "As is the mother, so is her daughter" (Ezekiel 16:44). Both mom and dad need to have the parental backbone to tell their children that they are not going to dress in a way that is unbecoming of a child of God.

CAUTIOUS MEMBERS

Individual members of the local congregation need to be extremely cautious in how they approach the issue of modest apparel. They need to avoid the extreme of setting their own standard as to what is modest and what is not. Additionally, they need to avoid the sin of looking disdainfully at someone who attends the worship service who may be immodestly attired. Why? First, this may be the first time that individual has visited the church of Christ and he or she may know nothing about the issue of modest apparel. You can be sure that it will be the last time he or she visits our services if some judgmental, Pharisical member is assigned as a door-greeter for that month! Second, the clothing that individual is wearing may be the best that he or she has. James addressed the serious nature of this matter when he discussed the two men who came to the assembly dressed differently. One man was dressed in fine apparel and apparently was wealthy. The other was dressed in tattered rags and was no doubt poor. You can almost see and hear some of the members immediately approaching and saying to the man dressed in fine apparel, "Welcome to the Church of Christ, We're so glad you are here today. Sit over with us. How about leading our opening prayer for us. What are you doing for lunch?" The man who is dressed poorly is neglected and becomes the subject of someone's conversation until the service begins. After all, what can that person offer us here at this church? For those of us who do not think that there will be souls lost over this sin, you need to read carefully James 3, specifically verses nine and ten! Some of our brethren who are guilty of the above-mentioned sin, are at the building every time the doors are opened. They are some of the hardest working members of the church, but they are going to miss heaven if they do not repent of this sin.

God is serious about the issue of modest apparel. May we, in view of eternity, address it with the same degree of seriousness.

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THE WATERPOTS LEFT BEHIND

Annette B. Cates

There are times for all of us when circumstances seem ordinary, but the implications of our everyday actions are far-reaching. Such was the case of a woman who, in the process of her daily routine, left her hindrances behind, and attained soul-saving blessings for herself and her people. Perhaps we, like the woman of Samaria about whom we read in John 4:5-30, have "waterpots" that we must leave behind in order more fully to benefit from the Living Water offered by our Saviour.

Jesus had been teaching in Judea, but was traveling through Samaria to Galilee. It was close to noontime when *Jesus and his disciples reached the town of Sychar, located near the ground given by Jacob to Joseph. Still in use by the people of the area was Jacob's well. It was at that well that Jesus stopped to rest. His disciples continued on into town to buy food. A woman approached to draw water from the well. Jesus spoke to her, "Give me to drink." The ensuing conversation between the two caused her to realize that she was talking with no ordinary person. This Jesus knew more about her than she knew about herself. While she could give him water from the well, He could give her Living Water. She had heard of the coming Messiah. When Jesus said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he," she left her waterpot and went into the city to tell others to come and see the Christ.*

THE WATERPOTS OF WORLDLINESS

One of the waterpots left behind in meeting Jesus is filled with worldliness. We go from being a slave of sin to being a servant of righteousness. We bury the old person of sin when we are baptized into Christ, and we arise to walk in a new lifestyle (Romans 6:4). We **"walk in the light..."** (John 1:7). Purity of heart and life takes the place of sin and shame.

Worldliness cares more for the immoral than for the moral. It emphasizes the material rather than the spiritual; the "here" is more important than the "hereafter." The Living Water offered by Jesus washes over the waterpot of worldliness.

THE WATERPOT OF OBSTACLES

A second waterpot left behind in meeting Jesus is filled with obstacles to Christian living and service. It is the seemingly "little things" that undermine happiness and spiritual well-being. These have more to do with attitude than with action, more with omission than with commission. The cause may be selfishness. In order to follow Jesus, one must deny himself and take up his cross (Matthew 16:24).

We may feel that we are too involved with daily activities to give attention to spiritual growth and service. We may be hindered by a lack of conviction brought about by ignorance or by fear of the consequences if we take a stand.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thy heart" (Psalms 27:14). The Living Water offered by Jesus washes over the waterpot of obstacles to Christian living.

THE WATERPOT OF BURDENS

A third waterpot left behind in meeting Jesus is filled with the burdens we bear. Fear and anxiety rob us of more than a good night's sleep. It can destroy us physically, mentally, and spiritually. Worry is like a sack of rocks that we carry around with us, dragging us down and draining us of energy that could be used in serving the Lord. **"When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shall lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.... For the Lord shall be thy confidence..."** (Proverbs 3:24, 26).

How much sweeter must the Samaritan woman's sleep have been after she left her waterpot! For us, too, the living water offered by Jesus washes over the waterpot of burdens.

BLESSINGS REPLACE HINDRANCES

Blessings resulted when the Samaritan woman left her waterpot. She learned the true meaning of the Old Testament and the nature of Christ. The little bit of knowledge she had prior to her encounter with Jesus at the well was corrupted by the traditions of her people. They worshipped, but they did so enveloped in ignorance. Does this not sound like the religious world of today? Further, she was blessed in that the gift of eternal life was hers. She had lived a life of sin and had been without hope. Her community was blessed because she was not willing to keep the message of the Saviour to herself but went straightway into the city to tell others. Thus, her blessings became theirs. We are blessed as a result of the Samaritan woman's actions, too. Through her, we can see that no matter how low she had been and no matter how low we can become, God's love and forgiveness await the truly penitent, obedient person. **"I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him"** (Hosea 14:4).

The Samaritan woman was an ordinary woman, not unlike women of today. She had, however, an extraordinary opportunity in her life that changed her existence forever. The same Living Water offered to her by Jesus is offered to all generations. Let us leave behind any waterpots that might keep us from drinking of that Fountain and say with the Apostle Paul as in Hebrews 6:1, **"...let us go on unto perfection..."**

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Restoration Reflections...

The Old Philadelphia Church of Christ

Paul Vaughn

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). There have been numberless Christians who have defended the church of Christ by contending that the "seed," God's word will only produce Christians and nothing else. The argument put forth is, if you plant corn you will get corn, plant beans you will get beans. One cannot plant corn and get beans. So plant the word of God in good honest hearts and you will get Christians.

The Old Philadelphia Church of Christ is an example of the seed principle at work. During a recent gospel meeting at the Sweeten's Cove Church of Christ, just a few miles from Jasper, Tennessee, Clyde Boyd, one of the elders of the congregation, familiarized me with the Old Philadelphia church meeting house. It was a delightful and educating trip. The Old Philadelphia meeting house is located in Warren County, Tennessee. The building is easily found. Take interstate 24 to Manchester, Tennessee and

then take the Hwy. 55 exit toward McMinnville, Tennessee. In about ten miles exit right on Hwy. 287 North toward Viola, Tennessee until you reach Vervilla Road. Turn left and the building is on the right in about two miles. The present building is of wood frame and was built in 1832. The trip from the interstate is only about twenty miles and well worth the visit.

SEED PRINCIPLE AT WORK

The early history of the Old Philadelphia Church of Christ is evidence that people can take their Bibles, follow the pattern given by God and establish the church from that pattern. In 1805, many pioneers and settlers traveled the road from Lexington, Kentucky to Alabama to establish communities in the South, while others came West over





In the history of the Restoration Movement it is recorded that the teaching of the New Testament on baptism was not fully understood in the beginning. It took **Barton W. Stone** and **Alexander Campbell** a few years to come to the conclusion that baptism was *immersion* and that it was for the remission of sin. The members of **Old Philadelphia** came to the same conclusion by just following their Bible. Thus, the "seed principle" works if man will only follow it.

the Post Road from Knoxville, Tennessee. The first settlers in Warren County, Tennessee arrived around 1800-1804. The settlement was "first known as Philadelphia, but the community was later known as Verville."¹ The settlers named the church "Old Philadelphia Church of Christ." This is very important because there were no preachers in the settlement and the members studied their Bible deciding to name the church following the pattern found in the scriptures. There appears to be no individual to be remembered as the founder of the Restoration Movement in Warren County, Tennessee.² Some date the beginning of the church around 1805-1806, though it is not exactly known.

It is believed that some of the settlers were introduced to the Restoration Principle by teachings of **James O'Kelly**. In August of 1794 James O'Kelly and a group of Republican Methodists decided to call themselves Christian and follow the New Testament, excluding denominational dogmas.

By 1810 the **Old Philadelphia Church** cleaved to no creed but the Bible and wore no denominational name. "They called themselves only Christians and the church only the church of Christ."³

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)

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- 8:00 PM "Evolution and Theistic Evolution"
Tracy Dugger

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- 9:00 AM "Creationism" Joe Cox
- 10:00 AM "If God Is All Powerful and Loving
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EARLY LEADERS

The early leaders at Old Philadelphia Church of Christ were John, William (Richard), and Elisha Price. William J. Price obeyed the gospel in 1811 and then moved to Northern Alabama near Bridgeport. The stability of Old Philadelphia, in the early years, is largely due to the influence of the Price family.

Other leaders and visiting preachers to the congregation, at different times, were William D. Carnes, Levi Nex Murphee, Robert Spicer, George Stroud, Jesse L. Sewell, Tolbert Fanning, and Marshall Keeble. Sewell is buried in the cemetery about 100 yards from the building.

In this short article, one cannot do justice to the history of the Old Philadelphia Church of Christ. The only thing left is the building in which the early Christians worshipped, the cemetery in which they are buried, and the influence they have left for all to see. What a powerful influence it is, a group of settlers studying their Bibles and restoring the church Jesus died for at Calvary.



The Old Philadelphia church is an example in teaching that the seed principle does work (Luke 8:11). All one has to do is trust in the Bible and obey it.

ENDNOTES

1. J. Lynwod Mathis, *The Restoration Movement In Warren County Tennessee*, unpublished manuscript, p. 1.
2. *Ibid* 2.
3. Norvel Young, *20th Century Christian*, Volume 28, Number 4, January 1966, p. 10.

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THE BONES OF JOSEPH

Daniel Denham

Genesis 50:22-26 records a most remarkable event. It tells us about the closing years and death of the great patriarch Joseph. The event that stands out in the text is the solemn charge he gave to his children shortly before his death. He declared unto them in verse 24, **"I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."** He then took an oath that bound his descendents to **"carry up {his} bones from"** Egypt and return his mortal remains to Canaan (v.25). Upon his death, his children **"embalmed him,"** without doubt after the Egyptian fashion, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (v. 26).

The book of Hebrews refers back to the event, when it recorded: **"by faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones"** (Hebrews 11:22). Thus, the event of Genesis 50:24-26 was a faith driven one.

Joseph was a great man of faith. This is seen in his conduct as a slave while in the house of Potiphar, the prison house into which he was unjustly cast, and in the royal palace as the prime minister of vizier of Egypt. However, it is never more evidenced than in his command concerning the preservation of his bones in anticipation of the return of the hebrews to Canaan-land. Several key lessons can be learned by taking a few moments to reflect on the account of the bones of Joseph.

TRUE FAITH LOOKS BEYOND DEATH

The text of Genesis 50 recorded the events surrounding the death of Joseph at the age of 110 years. He had lived a long and rich life. It had been one filled with intrigues, tragedies, and triumphs. His betrayal by his brethren, his temptation by the wife of Potiphar, his imprisonment, and ultimately his vindication were each tests of his character. Through all of this he was sustained by his faith. When it came time to die, that faith is evidenced in his final words.

The "last words" that men speak prior to death are considered of great importance. Often they reflect what is foremost in the mind of the one passing from this life. They can be pitiable or poignant depending upon the character and strength of the individual facing death.

As he faced death, Joseph the promise of God concerning Israel's then future exodus from Egyptian bondage. Showing his confidence in the goodness of God and in his word, Joseph declared it shall "surely" come to pass. He earnestly desired to share in some small way in the glorious entrance of his people into the promise land. He longed to have his body placed beneath the sod of his birthplace. This was a natural longing. He wanted to go home. He desired not the glorified houses built for the royal dead and their chief servants in Egypt. The pyramids held no special fascination for him as an eternal dwelling, as the Egyptian religion would encourage him to believe. He preferred the

temporal resting-place of his native land's soil. Though he could not see Canaan in life, his earthly remains would be there in death. He looked beyond death and by faith looked forward to the time when Israel would go forth by the mighty hand of God. He could see Canaan before him. I am also persuaded by the context of Hebrews 11:22 and the stress that is placed therein on "sojourning" in anticipation of the greater promise land that Joseph by the eye of faith even looked beyond the physical land of Canaan to that spiritual clime that awaits the righteous of all the ages!

In Exodus 13:19 Moses' fidelity to the charge of Joseph is clearly sent **"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel saying God will surely visit you: and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."** The ornate sarcophagus and the bones that it bore would remind Israel daily of God's providence and care for the nation, as well as remind them of the great faith of the patriarch. The funeral trains that bore the remains of **Abraham Lincoln** and **Franklin Roosevelt** had profound influence on their respective generations in our own country. Hundreds and even thousands lined the tracks and openly wept as the trains wound their ways through hamlets and towns and across country. The imagination of an entire people was captured by what these solemn processions symbolized. One can but imagine what effect the coffin of Joseph had upon the mind of any faithful, God-fearing Hebrew during the journey to Canaan.

Joshua 24:32 records the completion of the mission. **"And at bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."** The example of Joseph's faith calls upon us to look beyond death even to our own Canaan-land beyond the Jordan death, surrounding no more (II Peter 3:11-13; II Corinthians 4:18).

TRUE FAITH LEANS UPON THE PROMISES OF GOD

As noted earlier, the true faith of Joseph took God at its word. Jehovah had promised to visit the children of Israel in their affliction and lead them out of Egypt with his mighty hand. God would not do this until the time of Moses. Yet Joseph believed God, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

True faith takes God at his word! It takes careful note of what God has promised, as well as what he has not promised. It also recognizes that God cannot lie (Hebrews



6:13). Lying is incompatible with the holy and righteous nature of God. He cannot be God, and yet be able to lie. Were he to lie, he then could not by definition be God! This is an immutable fact. Faith bears confidence that what God has promised. **"He is able also to perform"** (cf. Romans 4:16-25). True faith *acknowledges* the promises of God and then acts upon them, while doubt or disbelief discounts and ignores them.

A key thought arises that one purpose of the Bible is to provide the sufficient, historically verifiable evidence showing the track record of God in his dealings with men so as to establish sufficient ground for confidence in God! This is why **"faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17). Without sufficient evidence, faith is no foundation. As one writer has said, **"Evidence is the very meat and marrow of faith."**

TRUE FAITH LEARNS TO EMPHASIZE THE GOOD

The great prophecy that God made concerning the visitation to lead Israel out of Egypt had its "downside." It meant that a time of brutal and bitter oppression was awaiting the *children* of Israel while in Egypt. There would be a period of suffering, affliction, and bitter bondage" (cf., Genesis 15:13-14). After the death of Joseph, there arose a *pharaoh* who "knew not Joseph." He did not remember nor care about all Joseph had done for Egypt. The new Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites, and forced them to build his treasure cities. Many Israelites perished beneath the taskmas-

ter's whip. Innocent babies were slaughtered. God had foreseen the evil that the Egyptians would do!

Joseph would surely be mindful of this in the waning hours of life, but he was powerless to prevent the coming storm. His was then upon the welcomed relief the visitation of deliverance and blessing that the prophecy pointed to ultimately. His faith caused him to stress the end of the prophecy, and to encourage his people not to despair, but to keep all things in proper perspective. The ultimate will of God cannot be thwarted by the evil that men do. All accounts will be squared. Truth and righteousness ultimately triumph, through dark be the day of conflict. The entire life of Joseph is assurance of this very thing. The solemn promise of Christ in Revelation 2:10 stands: **"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."**

Let us learn from the bones of Joseph the great lessons of faith. Perhaps, if we looked more beyond the temporal and leaned upon God's promises then we will learn, as Joseph did, to emphasize in life the good that will come by and by! God desires that we not believe in his existence but also that he is **"a rewarder of them who diligently seek him"** (Hebrews 11:6). Faith in God's provisionary good is needed. Romans 8:31 ought to be emblazoned upon the tablets of our heart, **"if God be for us, then who can be against us?"**

—405 Main Street
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The Last Word...

CLERICAL TITLES AND THE BIBLE

Eddie Whitten

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted"
(Matthew 23:12)

Judging the hearts of men is risky business. In fact, it is strictly prohibited in the Bible (Matthew 7:1-4). To say that people are not sincere in their religious beliefs would be totally out of order. It is possible, even required that judgments be made concerning doctrines that men believe and follow. If judgments cannot be made it would be impossible to tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong. If there were not a standard by which right and wrong can be determined, it would be impossible to make a judgment in that regard. The standard by which right and wrong can be discerned must be the Bible, otherwise there cannot be consistency in judgement. With this foundation, let us consider some of the titles men have conferred upon other men.

1. Pope. There is no such word in the Bible. This is a title men have chosen. We know it is applied to the head of the Catholic Church and means "Papa." He is supposedly the Holy Father on earth. He is the Vicar of Christ. Sadly, he is nothing more than a man who has been voted on by his peers to be their leader. He has no spiritual authority by which he can save men from sin, or anything else. He is human to the core. He will die just as all other "Popes" have. When John Paul II dies, another will replace him. Every man who exalts himself (or allows himself to be exalted) will be abased.



2. Father. There are several steps between "Father" and "Pope" that are being skipped in this short article for reason of space, such as "Monsignor," and "Cardinal," none of which are found in the Bible. "Father" is designated to

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THE OLD PATHS, SHALL WE CONTINUE IN THEM?

Curtis A. Cates

The Restoration Movement restored primitive Christianity; the pioneers led us back to the "old paths," and New Testament Christians have walked in them. How did the pioneer preachers react to movements designed to restructure the church and to sectarianize God's people?

EFFORTS TO TURN THE CHURCH INTO A SECT

First, the pioneers recognized that their "inflexible and uncompromising course" would provoke cries of "tyranny of opinion," 'fogy,' 'unwritten creeds,' 'iron bedsteads,' 'princes of walls,' etc." Some would begin "...to advocate the necessity of 'reforming the Reformation...'" (Rowe and Rice, *Biographical Sketches And Writings Of Benjamin Franklin*, pp. 43-44). **Moses E. Lard** wrote, "It is a peculiarity of the guilty that they always seek to cover their own crimes by imputing the same to others. He will certainly call us sectarian" (*A Review Of Rev. JR. Jeter's Book Entitled "Campbellism Examined,"* pp. 32-33).

Second, the pioneers stayed clear of sectarianism. **David Lipscomb** wrote:

There is no way in which we can so easily defile the church of God as by compromising these sacred truths for the friendship and favor of the world ... we must do away with this temporizing, compromising spirit which is generally falsely called "liberality," and sometimes almost blasphemously called "Christian charity" (*Gospel Advocate*, 1860, p. 73).

I. B. Grubbs warned against compromising with those who would "reform" the church with the following words:

...the only possible effect would be the degradation of ourselves to the level of a sect among sects or a 'branch' among branches ... But every effort to 'reform the reformation' will only end as such efforts have hitherto done, in demonstrating the folly of those who make the attempt (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1868, pp. 320-321).

John T. Lewis observed correctly that if sound brethren were to "...fall in with 'our progressive brethren,' accept all their innovations without protest, there would be no division — neither would there be any 'conservative brethren'" (*The Voice Of Pioneers On Instrumental Music And Societies*, p. 153).

Third, the pioneers refused to allow the church of Christ to be characterized as a sect, a denomination. **Tolbert Fanning** protested, "What do you mean, brethren? Are we but one of the 'denominations'? Prove this, and I will prove that God has no church, and that religion is a farce" (*Gospel Advocate*, 1860, p. 209-211). Fanning said further:

There is not a Baptist, a Christ, a church in the Scriptures: but we read of the Baptizer, the Christ, the church, the faith, the name of Christ; and we, therefore, consider it highly unbecoming for Christian men to talk of the Kingdom of God as a denomination (*ibid.*, pp. 273-275).

Fourth, the pioneers exposed such innovations as mechanical instrumental music, choirs, the Lord's supper on days other than Sunday, and missionary societies. **Alexander Campbell** well observed:

I wonder not, then, that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jew's harp should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else "hosannas languish on their tongues, and their devotions die"....But I presume, to all spiritual-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1851, pp. 581-582).

David Lipscomb noted that Campbell "...would not preach where one was used" (*The Voice of Pioneers On Instrumental Music And Societies*, page 117). **Isaac Errett** affirmed:

...as singing is the only part of worship in which the great mass of Christians can personally participate, no choir sing-

(Continued On Page 4)

those who have been ordained in the Catholic Church at the lowest level of the hierarchy. It is ironic that the very men who have been declared "Father" cannot be a father by declaration of their councils. The Bible condemns the spiritual use of "Father" except as it is directed toward God (Matthew 23:9).

3. Reverend. Most denominational churches employ this title to their preacher. Is this a viable title to confer upon man? It may come as a surprise to many that the Bible does not give this title to human beings. It is used only one time in the Bible and then it is applied to God. The psalmist said, in reference to God, "**He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name**" (Psalms 111:9). It is very true that all men must be reverent toward God, but to assume the title of "Reverend" is placing upon man a designation reserved for the Holy Father. It is just as erroneous to refer to a man as "Holy" as it is to refer to him as "Reverend."

4. Bishop. This is a Bible word. It is the title given to one who is qualified and has been chosen to serve in the capacity delegated to this office. It is proper to refer to a man as "Bishop" if he has been duly appointed to this service. The word, "Bishop," applies to one who is an overseer, or presbyter, or shepherd of a single congregation of the Lord's church along with other men of like qualification. He is also known as "Elder" or "Shepherd" of the congregation in which he serves. The three words designating this office are synonymous with regard to authority, but which signify various functions within that authority. There is not the elevation of one man over another inherent in this term, nor can one serve alone in this capacity. There must be a plurality of bishops, or elders, or shepherds to serve in the responsible office of oversight in a congregation.

5. Minister. Another Biblical term being misapplied to certain individuals, as a title is that of "Minister." In the application of this term, all Christians should be ministers. It is a term of description meaning merely one who serves as a representative of God to all people. Jesus said "**For even**

the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Men have chosen to exalt the preacher above the other members of the congregation by bestowing this designation upon them. In so doing, two errors are committed: (a) The preacher is given a title that is not exclusively his, and (b) the other members of the congregation can be deprived of the responsibility that is theirs as ministers.

6. Brother. All members of God's family (the church of Christ) are brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus asked, "**Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?**" His answer, "**For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother**" (Matthew 12:48,50). Many in the religious world have chosen to exalt the preacher as "Brother so-and-so," using the term as a title.

Unfortunate as it may be, some of these titles are applied to the preachers in the church of Christ. Many of the preacher's love to have it so. Paul said he was an "apostle" of Christ, and he was because he had met the qualifications needed to be an apostle. There are those in the world today who claim to be apostles. This title is impossible for men to claim today because two of the qualifications of an apostle were that they had to see and hear the Christ. No man living today can make that claim.

It would be wonderful if men could just be satisfied with the standard God gave for our conduct. There would be no charges of "judging" since we would understand the source of our authority. There would be no exaltation of one man, or men, above the level of God's designation for men. There would be no hierarchy of authority above that Paul gave in I Corinthians 11:3 which says, "**But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.**"

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

CHRONICLE Announces Policy For News Gathering

J. E. Choate

The February 2000 issue of the *Christian Chronicle* announces that the paper is changing its policy for gathering and reporting news from around the world pertaining to churches of Christ. No mention is made of amending its editorial policy. The editorial policy is— “to tell good news about churches of Christ around the world and, when necessary, to present good news in as constructive a manner as possible. It is our purpose to support evangelization around the world.” The *advertising* policy of the *Chronicle* is obviously selective and partisan: “We reserve the right to discontinue or decline any advertisement.”

BIASED JOURNALISM

The February 2000 *announcement* conveys the idea that the *Chronicle* uses the conventions of American journalism to tell the lives of Christians and congregations. The remark follows that it “has not always been so.” The *Chronicle* editors are guaranteed constitutional freedoms of speech and press. But this does not mean that the *Chronicle* is immune from the criticism of concerned brethren that all pertinent truthful facts shall be put on the table. I have studied in journalism classes in college, know, and respect the principles of free American journalism. I consider it to be a moral obligation to answer all email or letters about my writings without exceptions.

There are a number of peculiar contradictions in the *Chronicle*. Its advertising policy of refusing or accepting an ad to print is one of them. The *Chronicle* will run an advertisement for the Independent Christian Church soliciting teachers for the *Kentucky Christian College*, but refuse

to run an ad of Goebel Music because of his criticism of the *Easy To Read Bible*. I find it unsettling that the *Easy To Read Bible* people describe their mixed version of the Bible as a translation. It is no more so than the *Living Word Version*. We are not addressing brethren who do not know better.

The February 2000 *Chronicle* carries a peculiar assortment of advertisements. —*Herald of Truth*, Jubilee 2000, Harold Hazelip Biblical Preaching Seminar, and the “cute” announcement of the Tulsa Workshop that “we are still here.”

And how is to be explained that Bailey McBride in a March 2000 featured editorial criticizes unnamed brethren in harsh language that there is a “new hate” journal positioned to the “far right” which represents a new threat to the unity and love of the church. Which local church or local churches are threatened in this way?

There are major dilemmas facing the *Chronicle* editors. Would they explain the purpose for running the feature article in the February 2000 issue titled: “Is it possible to be hung by our tongues?” The writer, Stephen Clark Goad, drags up an assortment of *clichés* established during 200 year of the Restoration Movement. The article is replete with “snide” remarks which somehow pin an “onus” on brethren who use such expressions as “speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where it is silent,” pulpit and pew, gospel meeting, revival, growing up in the church, join the church, place membership, identify with a congregation, and such like.

I find no problem with the statements. I may not use them, but I am not hung up on them. I can read *Beowulf* in

(Continued On Page 3)

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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.

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Editorial...

RETURNING TO BABYLON

In our June and July issues for this year we focused the Bible spotlight on the Billy Graham - Rubel Shelly boondoggle in Nashville, Tennessee. Along with Nashville's apostasy party we also centered in on the Lubbock, Texas gaggle of heretics involved in the Franklin Graham religious escapade in that city.

In the future we will give needed attention to the recent joint "freedom and faith festival sponsored by" the Quail Springs Church of Christ and the Quail Springs Baptist Church. This event was publicized far and wide by Pat Gilliland, Religion Editor in *The Daily Oklahoman*. Their fellowship of one another is significantly sad in its on right. However, when the Quail Springs Church of Christ is home to a number of Oklahoma Christian University faculty and students including the President of OCU, it is a signal compromising move. Thus, it truly reflects the mentality and direction of certain "college" personalities.

Like voices in the wilderness a few brethren have openly declared their righteous disapproval of the shenanigans of these wolves in sheep's clothing. We commend them for their efforts. In the future we will give a fuller report of this sad event.

The front-page article of this issue of *CFTF* by J. E. Choate begins our present examination of events that encourage and promote the apostasy of the Lord's church in Oklahoma and elsewhere. Choate's article deals with the slanted and biased journalism of the so-called *Christian Chronicle*. Indeed, it is interesting to note the total lack of criticism of the previously mentioned happenings at Quail Springs by the *Chronicle*. Of course, since the *Chronicle* is owned by OCU and the President of OCU is a member of the Quail Springs Church of Christ, a lack of criticism from the *Chronicle* is not surprising. Moreover, since in recent months the *Chronicle* has advertised for a Christian Church College faculty position and some sort of a "minister" of something at a Christian Church, why should we not conclude that the powers that be at the *Chronicle* are not elated at the recent ecumenical events at Quail Springs?

Regardless of how many silly brethren desire the warmed over soup of sectarian denominationalism, the attitude of *CFTF* is found in the words of the late Guy N. Woods some 61 years ago. Woods wrote:

Denominationalism is the curse and bane of the age. So long as it remains to mislead and deceive the people, our work will not be finished. It is our duty fearlessly to unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, boldly go forth to battle, and plunge it into the very heart of sectarianism, until, mangled and bleeding, it is left to die in its own shame

(Guy N. Woods, "Christianity in a Changing World," *Abilene Christian College Lectures*, 1939, p. 57).

At the 1952 ACC lectures former President of OCC, **James Baird** made the following statement and plea.

As I stand here and apprehend the thousands of elders and preachers that have been here in previous years, and have come or would like to be here during the coming week; and I think of the thousands of churches from which they came, I am thankful...May we be humble and not proud; but resolute in our purpose of standing by the word of God by which Christ exercises his authority. Others before us have been unwilling to let the fires go

out; now the matter is in our hands. Let us be careful that the fires of our fathers do not go out (James Baird, "Authority in Religion," *Abilene Christian College Lectures*, 1952, pp. 166 - 167).

Let me emphasize that the Woods' and Baird quotes came from old ACC lectures. Evidently, these great and progressive institutions of higher education (ACU and OCU) do not stand where Woods and Baird stood in 1939 and 1952 respectively. And, of course they should not. Because, as everyone knows, the Bible reads completely different today from the way it did in 1939 and 1952.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-In-Chief*

THE CHRONICLE...

(Continued From Page 1)

Anglo-Saxon, and have read **Carl Sandburg's** "To A Contemporary Bunk Shooter" in American colloquial English. An end of language is the art of communicating ideas plainly both old and new.

What about our liberal brethren "tell tell" using of *Willow Creek Community Church slogans*, e.g., such as seeking the "unchurched," and "church growth" schemes. What about the invitations with such remarks as: "whatever your need, whatever your hurt, come forward, we'll handle it for you!" Goad, was not the *Chronicle* hung by the "tongue" the moment the decision was made to run your article?

Why is it that in thousands of words that the *Chronicle* editors cannot adequately describe the theology and practices of the *Willow Creek Community Church* whose concepts are adopted by churches of Christ. Why is it that no mention is ever made of the "Vineyard Christian Fellowship", the Toronto Airport Blessing, and the Kansas City prophets. The "search engines" carry my articles on the internet. I would that the *Chronicle* would do likewise.

CRAFTING A NEO-MODERN RESTORATION DENOMINATION

There is not the smallest doubt in my mind that our "Christian" schools, *Wineskins*, *Christan Chronicle*, lectureships such as the *Tulsa Workshop* and *Jubilee*, chief change-agents, e.g., **Harold Hazelip**, **Royce Money**, **Max Lucado**, **LaGard Smith**, and lesser change agents, e.g., **Jeff Walling**, **Steve Flatt**, **Mike Cope**, et. al, are engaged in creating a neo-modern Restoration denomination which will continue to wear the title **Churches of Christ**.

The most significant and revealing part of the February 2000 announcement are the sources cited to provide an understanding of the methodology for gathering newsworthy stories. **Richard Hughes** writings are chosen as an example of what is worth printing—*Reviving the Ancient Faith*. The *Chronicle* also alludes to the 1996 DCHS Forrest F. Reed lecture delivered by **Richard Hughes** titled "The Power of the Press" (as an example of "gathering news-

worthy stories"). Dr. Hughes imposing writings are loaded with disjointed and disrelated documentations to prove that Churches of Christ do indeed constitute a late modern Restoration denomination whose roots are traced to a narrow exclusivistic 19th century restoration sect.

EXAMPLE OF REPORTING A GOOD AND BAD STORY THE CHRONICLE WAY

Then there is the sensational story why **Douglas Varnado** left his position on the Lipscomb University Bible faculty. He was not dismissed, but resigned under a strange set of circumstances. As a matter of fact, he unwittingly engineered his own exit from the school. The reason reported in the news media was because he had departed from



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Church of Christ traditions. Varnado and the Hendersonville Community Church of Christ announced that the church would adopt instrumental music into the weekly formal church worship.

The Nashville *Tennessean* reported the story August 29, 2000. As a matter of fact, Varnado euchred himself out of a job. He just did not know to keep his mouth shut. He was by far the most popular Bible teacher on the Lipscomb Bible faculty. He had friends in high places. Harold Hazelip and Carl McKelvey, and Steve Flatt had preached from the Hendersonville Community Church pulpit. Dr. Varnado learned to his great dismay that he is not an "untouchable" and that he is "replaceable."

At the middle of the 19th century, Dr. L. L. Pinkerton boasted that he was the first to bring an instrument of music into the worship of the Christian Church. One thing is certain, that dubious honor will not go to Dr. Varnado to be the first to introduce instrumental music into churches of Christ.

LaGard Smith did not make it an issue to worship, or not to worship with an organ church. But he has done so six months out of the year with an organ church in the English country side. Mechanical music is occasionally used in the *Woodmont Hills Family of God*, as it is in the *Otter Creek Family* (Church of Christ). A total of 71 Lipscomb faculty and personnel attend worship in these two churches. Harold Hazelip presided over Jubilee worship session with instrumental music a part of the worship. Instrumental music has been used in a Lipscomb school devotional.

Steve Flatt informed the news reporter that the school expected the faculty to belong to traditional Churches of Christ. There is no definitive source for this statement. Flatt also said that the school has identified itself for the past 108 years with the *a cappella* tradition. This is a non-sense statement. The Lipscomb president said that the use of instrumental music in worship has been fiercely debated in churches of Christ for generations. Not so! Suffice it to say that Steve Flatt does not know his church history which would empower him with knowledge to address such matters of verifiable historical substance.

IT IS NOT BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IT IS SIN

The reason why instrumental music is not used in Lipscomb school worship is because David Lipscomb in the gift of his farm to the school that he founded stipulated as a binding contract that instrumental music would not be used in school devotions and worship. Furthermore, the land deed specifies that all Lipscomb directors must be members of the churches of Christ, and that any director or faculty who could not accept the conditions should resign or be dismissed from the school.

I have no problem with the reporting of the Varnado story in the *Tennessean* by its religious editor, Ray Waddle, who reported verbatim what he was told. I have no patience with the fawning manner in which the story was handled in the *Chronicle*. McBride compliments and ad-

mires Steve Flatt and the administration for standing firm on a *cappella* music, and terminating the services of Douglas Varnado. McBride writes that Flatt's statements to the press were cautious in citing the 108 year traditions of the school and churches of Christ. Such a body of traditions do not exist and have never existed. McBride writes that the Lipscomb University decision challenges churches of Christ to rethink the principles. This statement belongs to the theater of the absurd.

Lindy Adams is a member of one of a most respected churches of Christ families in Nashville. She knows a great deal about the contemporary churches of Christ scene in Nashville. She is now the assistant managing editor of the *Christian Chronicle* to gather national news of churches of Christ. Lindy knows first hand from informed members of her immediate family just what is going on today in Nashville churches of Christ.

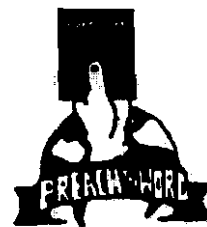
ADDENDUM

I have it in mind to spend no little time in looking into our religious journals in days ahead, and especially the *Christian Chronicle*. I have read most issues of the *Chronicle* since its founding. This paper has been, and continues to be perhaps the most influential paper in churches of Christ today. There is an immediate need for an outside reviewer to take a look into current editorial policies of the *Christian Chronicle*. I plan to be one of them.

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If the Diaper Fits—Wear It!

Buster Dobbs and The FHU Open Forum

Gary L. Grizzell

A preacher emailed me the other day and said that he thought I might want to listen to **Buster Dobbs'** comments from the 2000 Freed Hardeman University open forum. He said he would send me the tape. I have received it and listened to it.

Dobbs said, "It is true that all of life cannot be worship, probably, in any sense." Probably? Probably?

Though he started out saying that there is "probably" no sense in which all the Christian life is worship, he then ended up emphatically and inconsistently arguing that there is a sense (based on his erroneous interpretation of Romans 12:1) in which all the Christian life (minus two things) is worship. He argued in that open forum that the Christian life is worship, minus the mundane activities of life and acts of sins. In Dobb's ever evolving position, he exempted the mundane things from worship like mowing the yard, picking up dog scraps and diaper changing because (he argued) it would be carrying the definition of a metaphor too far.

DOBB'S VIEW OF ROMANS 12:1

In his comment about the interpretation of Romans 12:1 Dobbs stated in the FHU open forum, "There is such a thing as the worship of service." He then quoted **Guy N. Woods** (who is not alive to defend himself) and how that doing an act of benevolence for a needy person would be worship. Taking a basket of food to a widow is worship, we are told. (I would suggest that brethren read **Lynn Parker's** excellent article about Wood's writings in the September 1999 issue of *Contending For The Faith*, article entitled: "Did Guy N. Woods Really Say That?"). Therefore, Dobbs managed to angle around and teach a form of the Christian life is worship doctrine. It should be understood that when one teaches even a form of a fatal false doctrine, he has still taught fatal false doctrine. Why begin one's comments with the statement, "It is true that all of life cannot be worship, probably, in any sense," and then appeal to the Woods' quote in an attempt to show that there is a sense in which all life (minus two things) is worship?

Try this on for size—changing a baby diaper is an act of love. If it is the case that doing an act of benevolence for a needy person is worship, then a Christian mother changing her baby's diaper is worship (I Timothy 2:15). If not, why not? To those who argue for the one but deny the other as worship, may I say — If the diaper fits, wear it!

The young preacher who emailed me and sent the cassette tape of the open forum was concerned that some looked upon Dobbs in that setting as harmless in his comments. While certain things were said by him which were right, he did in other comments teach a form of fatal false teaching. If you doubt what I say, listen to the tape. It is on tape, brethren. (The tape also reveals that an argument was

put forth which refuted Dobbs' idea that the Greek word *latreia* (service) must refer to worship in Romans 12:1).

PROBABLY?

Consider the word "probably." Why would the editor of the *Firm Foundation*, experienced lecturer, gospel preacher, writer, ever make the statement that such a false doctrine is "probably" not true in any sense? Did he not know (does he not know) there is ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE in which all Christian life is worship? This is of particular interest since the editor considers himself to be an expert at language and skilled in using language. Therefore, we cannot assume that he simply misstated when he used "probably."

This article seeks to examine all the actual statements made by the brother. To see his leading statement in light of the rest of his comments, we might substitute sprinkling (as opposed to immersion for water baptism) for the doctrine/subject.

JUST IMAGINE

Imagine if Dobbs had said during the open forum at FHU: There is "probably" no sense in which sprinkling would pass for water baptism. If he had said such (which I do not think he would), would not this have implied that he was saying that there may be a sense in which sprinkling would pass for water baptism? Brethren would rightfully be up in arms saying, "Probably!" Many would want to take the floor in order to say emphatically — There is absolutely NO SENSE in which sprinkling may pass for water baptism and we can say this without a doubt!

To see his use of this word "probably" and in light of the context of all of Dobb's comments, imagine for the sake of illustration if other false doctrines are substituted: Imagine a preacher saying: There is "probably" no sense in which the doctrine of faith only is true. Would this not have implied that there may be a sense in which the doctrine of faith only is true? Yes.

Now imagine that very same preacher then proceeding to explain why he believes that there is in reality a sense in which the doctrine of faith only is true. We would call him a false teacher and we would be right to do so.

Imagine a preacher saying publicly: There is "probably" no sense in which the doctrine which allows instrumental music in worship services is true. Having said such, this would have implied that there may be a sense in which the doctrine which allows that instrumental music in worship services is true. Now imagine that same preacher then proceeding to explain why he believes that there is in reality a sense in which the doctrine of instrumental music in worship services is true. We would call him a false teacher and we would be right to do so.

Imagine a preacher saying publicly: There is "probably" no sense in which false philosophy is true philosophy. If he had said such, would this not have implied that there may be a sense in which false philosophy is true philosophy? Now imagine that very same preacher who led with such a comment then proceeding to explain why he believes that in reality there is a sense in which false philosophy is true philosophy. We would call him a false teacher and we would be right to do so.

Imagine a preacher saying publicly: There is "probably" no sense in which the doctrine which says that women may be scripturally appointed as elders is true. Such use of the word "probably" implies maybe. It implies the matter has not been settled. If not, why not? Imagine that same preacher then proceeding to explain to the crowd that there is in reality a sense in which the doctrine which says that women may be scripturally appointed as elders is true. We would call such a one a false teacher and we would be correct to do so.

DOUBLE TALK DOBBS

It gives me no pleasure to say that if anyone can listen to the tape of Buster Dobbs from the 2000 FHU open forum

and not see obvious, blatant double-talk, then that person needs to grow in his/her understanding on the subject of detecting slick talk. Please take this in the spirit in which it has been written, in dead seriousness. Why do I write with dead seriousness and in open name calling? Here is the reason:

Any teaching which perverts God's plain scriptural teaching with reference to how to worship God must be quickly, unhesitatingly exposed! Being exposed, such a doctrine must be as quickly rejected (and those who teach the same) as a faithful Christian would swiftly reject the false doctrines of faith only, instrumental music in worship, and the teaching that women may be scripturally appointed as elders. Let us "**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment**" (John 7:24).

Let us not forget that to devour the flock the wolf wears sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15).

—2128 Crystal Ct.
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501

Politically Correct or Biblically Correct?

Steven D. Cline

Some time ago I learned that the Crayola Crayon Company no longer feels that the name of one of its colors, "*Indian Red*," is appropriate, being afraid that the title may be offensive. The company wants to be "*politically correct*" and is going to change the name. It is the third time in the crayon company's history that this has been done. In the early 1960's "*Flesh*" became "*Peach*" and prior to that the name "*Prussian Blue*" was changed because school children were ignorant as to whom the Prussians were.

Today we are inundated with the term "*politically correct*" (hereby referred to as "P.C.") and the concept of being such. We are being conditioned to "*tread on eggshells*" as it were, lest we hurt someone's sensitive feelings with our lack of amenities. Our society is getting to the point where we are afraid to say the wrong thing or to speak something that may be taken as derogatory. We are told that, in this age of permissiveness and liberal enlightenment, we must not be offensive to anyone. Politically incorrect people are thought, by the New Age intelligentsia, to be crude, uncouth and socially unacceptable in their primitive Neanderthal blabbering. Of course, the P.C. people *themselves* have finesse, aplomb and social grace. They are quite the discriminating, refined and cultured souls.

(Dear me, I hope I have not upset any humanists. I should have been P.C. and refrained from using the word "souls", something the humanists do not believe in.)

But what is political correctness? It is merely an attitude of mind that is constantly changing depending on the general mood of the populace and the tenor of the time in which one lives. It is pragmatic (ie., whatever works for a given situation), relative and subjective. What is P.C. *now* may not be in the future. Something that is not welcome *now* may not be at a later time and *visa versa*. Political correctness is as unstable as water and as shifting as the desert dunes.

There are those in the Bible whose language would not be considered acceptable to the ones who are so adamant in being P.C. Jesus was not being thus when he referred to Herod as a "*fox*" (Luke 13: 31-32), when he called the scribes and Pharisees "*hypocrites*" (Matthew 23: 13ff) and when he warned of false prophets (Matthew 5:15). (Did Jesus not know that these disparaging remarks could lead to hurt feelings and a lowered sense of self-esteem in the ones he spoke of?) Paul was not being P.C. when he withstood Peter to the face in Galatians 2:11. John the Baptist was by far too politically incorrect for the delicate sen-

sitivities of the more genteel P.C. elite in his harsh and untactful habit of calling people vipers (Matthew 3:7). John the Apostle called a church troublemaker, Diotrophes, by name, which would cause the P.C. proponent to gasp in horror.... "mustn't do that, John. Diotrophes has feelings you know...okay the Golden Rule, John.... live and let live." Not only that but all four, Jesus, Paul, the Immerser and the Apostle John taught on and warned of Hell... a very politically incorrect subject if ever there was one!

The gospel preachers in the early church and the staunch Old Testament prophets were *not* afraid of the people to whom they preached (Acts 20:22-24; Jeremiah 1:8). Their sermons, whether positive or negative, *always* had a positive goal (i.e. to save souls). Whether the listeners appreciated it or not, the message was *always* for their own good and *never* for their detriment. But so many today, including preachers, have been intimidated and/or influenced by the P.C. crowd inasmuch that they modify their words as not to sound so crass. Therefore, a whore (Proverbs 23:27) or a harlot (I Corinthians 6:15) becomes a "lady of the night," "call-girl," or "playmate of the month". A soothsayer (Joshua 13:22) is now a "transchanneler"... A sodomite (Deuteronomy 23:17) has become a "gay". Lying is "fibbing". Pornography is "art for the discriminating adult" and fornication is now a "trial marriage," "the new morality," "living together," or "common law marriage". Adultery is seldom called that anymore (except from behind a faithful pulpit or in a divorce court). Now it is "having an extra-marital affair," Cold-blooded murder of the unborn is called "abortion," or to make it even *more* conscience-salving, a "terminated pregnancy" Drunkards are now

know as "problem drinkers". The one true living Jehovah God is often referred to as "The Force" or a "Higher Power" in order to accommodate the ones who do not believe in him. To appease the Feminists, God is often called "She" or "Mother". Some liberal, social gospel, brotherhood of denominations do not see militant Christian hymns as "Onward Christian Soldiers" as P.C., so they were removed from the songbooks. (Jesus is the "Prince of Peace" so "war-mongering" songs must be eliminated, you see).

This P.C. influence is even rife among certain members of the church. In the minds of some, it was not P.C. to have copies of the bold and uncompromising speech by H. Leo Boles, "The Way of Unity Between Christian Church and Churches of Christ" at the 1984 Summit in Joplin. It was said that Boles's language was "abusive and crude" and that his tracts would not "be in the best interests of the meeting." No wonder! The "Summit" was held right on the Christian Church's own "turf"...the Ozark Bible College. Some of "us" have apologized to the Christian Church for the likes of Lipscomb and McGarvey. Apparently it is not P.C. to esteem these valiant old stalwarts of the faith any longer. And decades before the term "P.C." came into vogue, the *conceit* was alive and well... witness for instance when the *Firm Foundation*, under the editorship of Showalter, refused to print the powerfully pointed articles of the inimitable J.D. Tant. just because some readers found him coming on too strong for their tastes.

While Christians should never *purposely* be offensive to anyone, while we should never try to alienate anyone (II Timothy 2:24-26), let us remember that we are all to please God and not man (Galatians 1:10), and we need to speak the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11), being *biblically correct* rather than *Politically correct*.

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LIPSCOMB SEEKS 150 MILLION DOLLARS

Jim E. Waldron

The Lipscomb News, April 2000, stated that "Lipscomb University officials have announced plans to raise \$150 million by the end of 2005 through Lighting the Way: Igniting the Future Campaign. A major point in the article was "One thing that will not change as a result of the campaign will be the university's dedication to its founding mission." Steve Flatt, president said, "In fact this campaign will enhance who we are. We have maintained a clear and concise mission for 109 years that involves educating the total student—spiritually, academically and socially."

FLATT'S STRANGE STATEMENT

This statement by Flatt is exceedingly strange in light of the fact that one of their professors in the Bible department, **Mark Black**, spoke twice on the "Jubilee" program (July 5-8) and **Gary Holloway**, who is dean of the "College of the Bible and Ministry" spoke three times. In so doing they were in harness with fellow speakers like **Jim Woodroof**, **Jeff Walling**, and **Rubel Shelly**, who are well known for their compromise with error and denominationalism. In fact Shelly just the month before (June 1-4) had served as a committee member for the BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE. Last fall Shelly published on the internet "that several of our shepherds wrote letters of invitation to Dr. Graham to encourage him to come to our city" (*Love-lines*, Vol. 25. No. 39, Sept. 29, 1999; www.woodmont.org.) Disregarding this fact, Walling and his elders a little over six weeks later (Nov. 7th) had Shelly as guest speaker for the church at Providence Road in Charlotte, NC (*Providence Road Bulletin*, Vol. XXVI, No. 21).

Billy Graham has for years taught truth interspersed with much false doctrine, including salvation by faith alone, the non-essentiality of baptism, once saved always saved, one church is as good as another, Jesus' kingdom is yet to be established and that it is right to use instruments of music with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The Woodmont Hills elder's played a prominent role in getting this man—this wolf in sheep's clothing—to Nashville (See

Matthew 7:15, 21; 15:9, 13-14; Acts 20:28-31; Galatians 1:6-9). Graham is guilty of adulterating the gospel. He therefore rests under a curse (Galatians 1:6-9). Shelly and the Woodmont elders are guilty of bidding Graham Goodspeed (See II John 9-11). Instead of rebuking Shelly for his compromise, Walling and his Charlotte flock gave him access to their pulpit.

THE DRAMA IN NASHVILLE

Ahab of Samaria (c. 918-897 B.C.) was one of the most wicked kings (I Kings 16:30) in ancient Israel. He and his wife, Jezebel, were notorious idolaters who killed and persecuted the prophets of God with a vengeance. Jehoshaphat king of Judah was a far better man than Ahab, but contrary to sound reason he made affinity with the king of Israel. When the latter asked him to join him in his fight against Ramoth of Gilead, Jehoshaphat said, "**I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war**" (II Chronicles 18:3). This good king of Judah was committing God's people to the work of a most ungodly man. The inspired historian tells us that Ahab was killed in the battle (II Chronicles 18: 33-34), but the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem (II Chronicles 19:1). Upon his return home we are told, "**Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore the wrath of the Lord is upon you**" (II Chronicles 19:2).

Beloved this is the kind of "drama" that is being played out in my hometown, Nashville. The Holy Spirit commanded "**have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them**" (Ephesians 5:11). Did Black or Holloway expose the duplicity of Shelly and the Woodmont elders for encouraging this false teacher to come to the state of Tennessee? Did Steve Flatt rebuke his two Bible professors for jointly participating with the teachers of error on the "Jubilee" program and with those from Woodmont Hills, who admittedly invited Graham to Nashville?

The same issue of the Lipscomb paper carried the list of those scheduled to speak on the 2000 WILLARD COLLINS SUMMER LECTURES (June 11-14). One of these was **F. LaGard Smith**, a lawyer and former professor from Pepperdine University who joined the Lipscomb staff a year ago. Some of the errors of this brother, such as a denial that the wicked will suffer eternal conscious punishment in hell, have been documented previously in *Bulletin Briefs* (Vol. 2: No.1, January 1999). See also **Wayne Jackson's** Review of LaGard's book *Who Is My Brother?* P.O. Box 55265, Stockton, California 95205, \$3.50 post paid. Smith's teaching, which denies the reality of the Biblical



description of hell (Matthew 25:46), is not liberalism. It is rank modernism! I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I want to go on record with the following statement: If this doctrine, no eternal conscious punishment for the ungodly, continues to be taught in what are termed *Christian universities*, we will see other and bolder examples of modernism being taught in their Bible departments. Steve Flatt's affirmation about maintaining the 109-year-old mission of David Lipscomb is not according to the facts.

RUNNING HARD TO THE LEFT

It is utter nonsense to pretend that men like **David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, E. A. Elam and H. Leo Boles** would have tolerated such compromise. Shelly and Walling repeatedly crack jokes at the expense of sound brethren and faithful congregations (Such things are on tape). Men like Lipscomb and Boles would have been like Jehu the son of Hanani. They would have gone out to meet these professors in the Bible department at Lipscomb because of their affinity with Shelly, Walling and Woodroof and rebuked them. Such professors would have never been allowed in the classroom where they could contaminate the minds of impressionable young men and women. Parents are greatly concerned about what their children will be taught when they go to college. Mothers and fathers are often perplexed concerning a higher education for their child in a state university or in one that is called a "Christian" university. It is true that state schools are filled with unregenerate and worldly professors, but at least in those one knows who the enemy is. Recently when the question was

asked, "Why is David Lipscomb University pulling so hard to the left?" **Freddie Clayton** of Dunlap, Tennessee allowed it was "because the college has a Flatt on that side up front."

Those who contribute to DLU are going to have to ask themselves if they want to support the kind of compromise described above. They will also have to give an account at the judgement for supporting such. For it is written, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

Another sad thing about the report in *The Lipscomb News* is that more than 170 congregations are listed as contributors to the University and thereby to the present path the Bible department is following. That Christians may build and support schools to educate their youth in a faithful manner we have no doubt—education is the responsibility of the home and family. Nor do we doubt that a congregation may support a faithful man to teach the word in a college that is sound, but where do the scriptures even hint at the creation of another body to take donations from the churches to do their work? The one body in which God is glorified is the church; for it is written, "to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and even Amen" (Ephesians 3:21).

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- 9:00a.m. David Watson “Indestructibility Proves Bible’s Inspiration”
 10:00a.m. Tommy J. Hicks “The Bible’s Word ‘Church’”
 11:00a.m. Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Jesse Whitlock “Does Evil’s Existence Prove Atheism?”
 3:00p.m. Jason Rollo “Genesis Creation Account, Fact or Myth?”
 4:00p.m. Gary Summers “Is Empirical Evidence the Only Evidence?”
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Joseph Meador “The Messiahship/Deity of Christ is a Fact”
 8:00p.m. Keith Mosher “The Bible’s Word ‘For’”

Monday, October 9, 2000

- 9:00a.m. Marvin Weir “Content’s Unity Proves Bible’s Inspiration”
 10:00a.m. Tim Ayers “The Bible’s Word ‘Faith’”
 11:00a.m. Kenneth Ratcliff “The Injustice of Christ’s Trials”
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Robert Dodson “The Gospels and the ‘Q’ Document”
 3:00p.m. Fred Riley “Did the Bible’s Flood Really Happen?”
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Tom Bright “The Bible’s Word ‘Evidence’”
 8:00p.m. Robert Taylor “Its Superiority Proves Bible’s Inspiration”

Tuesday, October 10, 2000

- 9:00a.m. Tim Nichols “Testimony of Christ Proves Bible Inspired”
 10:00a.m. Noah Hackworth “The Bible’s Word ‘Fellowship’”
 11:00a.m. Roelf Ruffner “The Doctrine of Uniformitarianism”
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Foy Forehand “Were N.T. Writers Duped or Dishonest?”
 3:00p.m. David Baker “Are Religions Basically the Same?”
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Tyler Young “The Origin of Life”
 8:00p.m. Ira Y. Rice, Jr. “The Gospel is for All Men”

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

- 9:00a.m. Daniel Denham “Archaeology Proves Bible’s Inspiration”
 10:00a.m. Tom Wacaster “The Bible’s Word ‘Substance’”
 11:00a.m. Randy Mabe “Is the Universe Billions of Years Old?”
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Toby Soechting “Are There Errors in the Bible?”
 3:00p.m. Richard Massey “Can Men Not Understand the Bible Alike?”
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
 6:30p.m. Dale Stone Congregational Singing
 7:00p.m. Jerry Murrell “True Science Proves Bible’s Inspiration”
 8:00p.m. Bobby Liddell “The Validity of the New Testament Canon”

Thursday, October 12, 2000

- 9:00a.m. Ted Clarke “Fulfilled Prophecy Proves Bible Inspired”
 10:00a.m. Neal Abbott “The Bible’s Word ‘Hope’”
 11:00a.m. Eddie Whitten “Christ’s Death, Burial, and Resurrection”
 12:00noon Lunch Break
 2:00p.m. Bob Patterson “The Bible, A Sufficient Guide for Today”
 3:00p.m. Kent Watson “Does the Bible Contradicts Itself?”
 4:00p.m. Dub McClish OPEN FORUM
 5:00p.m. Dinner Break
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 7:00p.m. B.J. Clarke “Theory of Evolution Cannot Be Proved”
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CAN WE KNOW WE ARE SAVED?

Noah Hackworth

To know for certain that we have been saved from past sins does not assure salvation in the future. Subsequent to the point when the remission of our past sins is realized through obedience to the gospel, we are presented with the task of living faithfully to the end; the instructions given by the apostle Peter to the Christians of his day prove this to be true (I Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:5-11). It is difficult to believe, though nonetheless true, that we have people within our brotherhood who do not seem to know whether or not they are saved from past sin. When asked if they know they are saved, they meekly express their personal doubts with the expressed hope that they are. Since salvation is the most important thing in the world, it is essential to know when it is obtained; of this there should be no doubt in our minds.

It is not with any degree of arrogance (I Corinthians 10:12) that we affirm that salvation is not to be decided by the "flip of a coin." There is definite information available within the pages of the New Testament to satisfy the desire to know that we are saved. Indeed, "the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ" will be ours if we continue in the word of the Lord to the end of life (cf. John 8:31; II Timothy 4:6-8).

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "KNOW"

There are those who foolishly affirm that we cannot "know anything" for sure. If this is the case, then we should not expect to know at what point our sins were forgiven much less if we presently possess salvation. Intelligence will not permit us to believe that since we cannot "know everything," we cannot "know anything." First John 1:1-1 John 5:21 prove that we can be in "the know," especially I John 2:3 where John affirms: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The tense of the verb *ginosko* (we know) is tremendously important here. Dr. J. W. Roberts says:

John plays on the tense of the verb *ginosko*, which means to perceive, to grasp the idea so that it becomes our own knowledge. He says that we may be sure ('have the knowledge,' present tense) that we know (literally, that 'we have known,' perfect tense of the same verb). This is a way of saying that perception may grow, may become surer and surer along the way. But how? If we keep his commandments (*The Living Word Commentary*, The Letters of John, page 40).

These observations simply mean, in our case, that we can know "when" we were saved from our past sins, and how to "keep on knowing" it. We have a "rule" or "standard" which enables us to know when salvation is obtained, as well as how it is maintained; that standard is the New Testament.

ROMANS 8:16

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," so affirms Paul. The Greek phrase

"*auto to pneuma*" is literally "himself the Spirit." This passage beautifully declares that (1) we are the children of God, (2) the Holy Spirit is a witness to this fact, (3) two witness are required to establish sonship, and (4) the Holy Spirit bears witness "with" our spirit not "to" our spirit. The simplest explanation that can be given to the phrase "beareth witness with" is that the Holy Spirit tells us what we must "do" and "be" in order to be God's children. How to become children of God is no doubt involved in this passage, but the fact that we are children, as confirmed by two witnesses, seems to be the main thrust of the passage. Moses E. Lard says, "Most of what is here said is certainly true, but it involves a misapplication of the passage. How we became children is not the subject in hand, but how we remain such. Continuing, not becoming, is the fact in question" (*Lard's Commentary on Romans*, pp. 166-167). Z. T. Sweeney stated:



In deciding whether we be children of God, we have two witnesses: first, the Spirit himself, and second, our spirit. The Spirit testifies as to who is a child of God; our spirits testify to what we are. If our spirits testify that we are the character which the Spirit says belongs to a child of God, then we have the testimony of the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God (*The Spirit and the Word*, pp. 132-133).

INSPIRED EVIDENCE OF SALVATION

It was the function of John the Baptist "To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by remission of their sins" (Luke 1:77). There can be no separation between salvation and the remission of sins. Apart from salvation there is no remission of sins. Apart from the remission of sins there is no salvation. Campbell lists several propositions by which we may be assured that we have obtained salvation, that we may know assuredly that we have been saved.

- (1) The Apostles taught their disciples, or converts, that their sins were forgiven, and uniformly addresses them as pardoned or justified persons;
- (2) The apostolic converts were addressed by their teachers as justified persons;
- (3) The ancient Christians were addressed by the Apostles as sanctified persons;
- (4) The ancient Christians, the apostolic converts, were addressed as 'reconciled to God;'
- (5) The first disciples were considered and addressed by the Apostles, as adopted into the family of God;
- (6) The first Christians were taught by the inspired teachers to consider themselves as saved persons;
- (7) A change of views, though it necessarily precedes, is in no case equivalent to, and never identified with, a change of state;
- (8) The gospel has in it a command, and as such must be obeyed;
- (9) That it is not faith, but an act resulting from faith, which

changes our state, we shall now attempt to prove; (10) Immersion and washing of regeneration are two Bible names for the same act, contemplated in two different points of view; (11) All the Apostolical Fathers, as they are called; all the pupils of the Apostles; and all the ecclesiastical writers of note, of the first four Christian centuries, whose writings have come down to us; allude to, and speak of, christian immersion, as the 'regeneration' and 'remission of sins' spoken of in the New Testament (*Christianity Restored*, pp. 185-231).

Not only can we know we have been saved, every one of us needs to know it. The biblical evidence testifying thereto is abundant; hence there is no need to live in doubt and ignorance. Entrance into that "upper and better" kingdom, however, is another matter. That comes only if we have persevered and remained faithful to the very end.

—4400 W. Tulare Avenue
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Current Events That Concern Christians...

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, Church Refuses to Baptize Infants, and Trial of Jesus Re-enacted

Compiled By Mark McWhorter

More than 700 educators, students and activists attended the fall of 1999 conference of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network entitled, Teaching Respect for All '99. Conservative News Service senior staff writer reports that leaders of the session on the 'Right Wing' assured attendees that, "If we do our jobs right, we're going to raise a generation of kids who don't believe [the claims of] the Religious Right." Strategies were presented to portray religious voters as extremists and homosexual activists as mainstream (Education Reporter, April, 2000, p. 4). *[Those who are religious are indeed being portrayed more and more as the extreme minority. As long as christians allow this to happen without speaking out, they will find themselves pushed into a corner. The results will be that they will indeed be the extreme minority. We must preach the gospel. We must be politically active.—MTM]*

A federal appeals court struck down Ohio's state motto, "With God, All Things Are Possible," saying it illegally shows a governmental preference for Christianity over other religions. The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a federal judge in Columbus, who upheld the motto, which was posted on the Capitol during the tenure of Gov. George Voinovich. Voinovich, now a senator from Ohio, said he got the idea to place the motto on the Ohio Statehouse during a trade mission to India where he saw a government building with the slogan "Government Work Is God's Work." The appeals court noted the Ohio motto is based on a quotation attributed to Christ in the book of Matthew. The court rejected the circuit judge's opinion that the Ohio motto was as generic as the "In God We Trust" motto on U.S. currency.

"While the words of the motto may not overtly favor Christianity, as the words of Jesus, they, at a minimum, demonstrate a particular affinity toward Christianity in the eyes and ears of a reasonable observer," the opinion reads. The

opinion was in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the Rev. Matthew Peterson, a Presbyterian minister from the Cleveland suburbs who challenged all uses of the motto (NewsMax email service, 4/25/00). *[This is truly outrageous. What is sad is that the lawyers for the motto sink to the realm of saying the motto is simply a generic term. An individual could look to any God with the motto. If this is correct, then the motto really means nothing anyway. There was a time when any "reasonable observer" in our country did indeed realize that these were the words of Jesus and were glad of that fact.—MTM]*



A cleric is telling unmarried couples he will not baptize their children because they are "living in sin," British newspapers said. "The Church has not changed its view that children should be born and brought up in marriage and not outside it," Church of England vicar Donald Allister said, according to the *Daily Mail* of London. A leaflet issued by his parish, St. Mary's in Cheadle, northern England, says, "the

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Bible says that such a relationship is sinful and baptism involves turning away from sin."

"... We are not going to stand up and say it's right to have children outside marriage because we don't think it is," Allister said. *The Daily Telegraph* said some parents were boycotting services because they were annoyed about the policy. A Church of England spokesman said it was unusual for a priest to refuse to baptize a child, but that the vicar has the final say in such matters. Allister allows single parents to have their children baptized because "a lot of single parents aren't single by choice. You can't penalize a mother because the father has run off," he said (*Religion Today* email news service, 4/27/00). [*If baptism requires a turning from sin, why is the baby being baptized?? There is nothing in the Bible requiring the parent of a baby to repent so that the baby can be baptized. Talk about not understanding scripture. He has the right definition but the wrong application.—MTM*]

Harvard Divinity School recently re-enacted the trial of Jesus Christ. Alan Dershowitz, a law professor and trial attorney famous for defending O. J. Simpson, was the attorney for Jesus.

"Think of all the trouble the world would have been spared if Jesus had had a good Jewish lawyer," Dershowitz told Harvey Cox, who arranged the exercise as part of a course he is teaching at the Cambridge, Massachusetts school. Cox said he wanted to jar familiar perceptions of Je-

sus and to "sharpen the issues" of justice and truth. ...Cox played Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea who ordered Jesus crucified, and New Testament scholar Allen Callahan was the prosecutor, the *Boston Globe* said. Callahan accused Christ of being a violent revolutionary who told his followers, "I have not come to bring peace but a sword."

"...How can we accept this hearsay evidence about my client?" Dershowitz responded. "Nobody has even seen Jesus with a sword. And whatever sword He may have been talking about, if indeed he was talking about one, was surely a metaphorical sword of God."

Dershowitz said that Jesus was merely an itinerant preacher, but "if you crucify him, you will make him into a martyr who will crumble your government. ...The student jury was split between those agreeing that Jesus should be killed and those saying there was no need to crucify him. "Jesus is the one client I've always wished I could have represented," said Dershowitz, whose former clients include Claus von Bulow and Leona Helmsley (*Religion Today* email news service, 4/28/00). [*To believe that one could represent Christ and get him "off" is to deny that Christ was on earth to sacrifice himself for mankind. And this is evident by the statements of Dershowitz.—MTM*]

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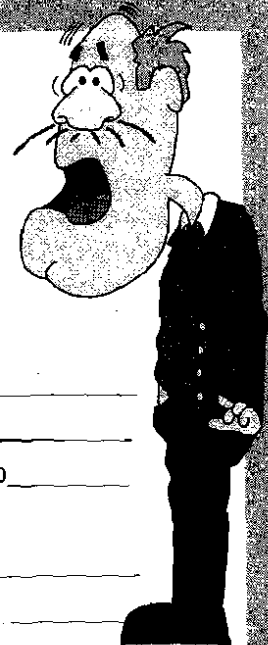
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Dysfunctional Elders

Lynn Parker

“Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (I Timothy 3:1-ASV, 1901). Implied in the inspired statement is the fact that elders have work to do. More than being merely the “Chairmen of the Board” or congregational nickel counters, there are weighty obligations and responsibilities laid upon bishops. What if the job goes undone? The work neglected? What if the elders at any congregation are primarily known for having their names on the bulletin masthead or signing the preacher’s paycheck? The consequences of having elders that do not do the work assigned them by God will be measured in souls.

ELDERS—QUALIFIED AND VIGILANT

In the wisdom of Almighty God, there are to be those men in the congregations who see to the work as shepherds, as overseers. God’s elders are both qualified and vigilant. Paul wrote Titus,

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; (6) if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. (7) For the bishop must be blameless, as God’s steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; (8) but given to hospitality, as lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; (9) holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers (Titus 1:5-9-ASV, 1901).

You do not find “good ol’ boy” listed as a qualification for elders in the New Testament, yet some men are chosen to be elders based on popularity. Choose men to serve as bishops based on man-made qualifications and you have a man-made eldership. Select a man to pastor the congregation who, by virtue of ignorance or timidity, cannot stop the mouths of false teachers and the congregation can expect to reap a bitter harvest. Once again, souls are at stake. When God wrote the qualifications for the elder, he really did not need or seek the input and advice of man. He knew what he wanted in those men who serve as shepherds, and it is non-negotiable!

But problems can also arise from men who otherwise are qualified for the work but simply do not get the job done. I would not for a moment suggest that elders must sleep in the church building and memorize the address and phone number of every sheep in the flock. On the other hand, realize that the work of an elder is more—much more—than a hobby or casual pursuit.

To be an effective, faithful elder will require time. Indeed, there is a sensitive subject! Time may be the most precious commodity of a new millennium. Still, God has set priorities for the child of God (Matthew 6:33). Busy schedules are no excuse for neglecting the spiritual work

God demands of elders. Every page of the calendar punctuates the brevity of life and urgency of elders’ work.

Our Lord has given more than an adequate picture of the elder and his work:



The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: (2) Tend (feed-KJV) 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; (3) neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away (I Peter 5:1-4-ASV, 1901).

“TENDING THE FLOCK”

One reference tells us that the word “tend” in verse 2 “...denotes all that is included in the office of a shepherd-guiding, guarding, folding, no less than feeding...” (*Vincent’s Word Studies of the New Testament*). Note that the elder is to do this willingly (verse 2). You do not have to twist the elders’ arms to get them to perform their work. Then also, consider also this pertinent verse:

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17-ASV, 1901).

Vine’s tells us that the word “watch” in Hebrews 13:17 means, “to be sleepless” and further, “the word expresses not mere wakefulness, but the watchfulness of those who are intent upon a thing” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*). Elders: are you sleepless in your care for the church, or just sleepy? Lethargy and laziness can afflict elders as well as any other member of the Lord’s body.

It will not do for elders to put off visiting the wayward until a more convenient season. A blind eye cannot be turned toward pressing spiritual obligations. Hoping the sheep will find their own way home in a few months is not an option (James 5:19f; Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 13:17). Fear of fallout cannot stifle church discipline at any stage, and faithful elders will not be intimidated by the weak or the rebellious. Faithful elders are men with more than good intentions—they do the work!

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Seeing It Helps Saying It...

TRANSFUSION NEEDED

Jodie Boren



Between the years of 1894 and 1914 the bubonic plague swept through India killing some 10,000,000 people. Today there is a plague sweeping through some congregations of the Lord's church that is far worse than the bubonic plague. That dread disease destroys the physical body but the plague of liberalism is leading thousands down the road to perdition. The picture looks bleak indeed as we see congregation after congregation and even our schools fall victim to the devastating liberal doctrines of men. We know the church will prevail but for now it seems that modernism is gaining the upper hand as brethren turn from sound doctrine to the doctrines of men so that they may be entertained and have smooth things preached to them. These congregations remind me of the church of Laodicea who said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing", but the Lord who knows their and our works responded "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). They do not realize it but they are weak and hurting because they have departed from God's word.

PREACH THE WORD

There is hope for God "is longsuffering to us-ward not willing that

any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). In order for these brethren to return to their first love, there will have to be a transfusion of God's word into their wayward hearts. Jesus said his word can make us clean (John 15:3)—cleansed of the vain doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9). Our hearts are cleaned and made pure when we obey the truth (I Peter 1:22) which is God's word (John 17:17) and this is what these congregations must do. This obedience to God's commandments—or his word—helps us to mature in our love for God and to know that we are in him (I John 2:4-6). There are many today who profess to know and love God "but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient" (Titus 1:16).

This transfusion of God's word into a congregation made weak by adding to and diminishing from God's word (Deuteronomy 4:2) can be revived by the pure and unadulterated word of God. In Acts 20:32 the apostle Paul says to the Ephesian elders, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you and inheritance among all them which are sanctified." The word is able to build us up because it

gives us all the instruction in righteousness we need to be perfect or complete (II Timothy 3:16-17). We are built up as we are "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith..." (Ephesians 3:16-17). Since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), it stands to reason that as we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16) our faith will therefore be strengthened.



THE RICH INDWELLING OF THE WORD

The worth of God's word is told us in Psalms 19:7-11:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

To the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2 and 3 our Lord emphasized three things. (1) He knew their work—as he does ours. (2) They needed to repent. (3) They needed to hear what the Spirit was saying to them in these letters. If these congregations that are preaching and practicing unscriptural things will repent and receive the transfusion of God's word into their hearts, it will make them well, wise, and anchor them upon the solid rock of Christ (Matthew 7:24-25). Our fervent prayer to God should be that they will do just this.

—2557 Campus Court
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Responsibilities of Elders

Tom Moore

INTRODUCTION

- A. The concept of spiritual shepherds over the flock of God did not originate in the New Testament.
1. That was a role the priests and prophets played in the Mosaic age, and some of them did not take their work seriously.
 2. Jeremiah 23:1-4
 3. Ezekiel 34:1-10
 4. John 10:3-5, 11-12
 5. From these passages, it follows that the Lord expected his shepherds to do the following:
 - a. Keep the flock together in fellowship with God— leading them in the paths of righteousness.
 - b. Attend to the spiritual needs of the flock with kindness and gentleness.
 - c. Feed the flock.
 - d. Strengthen the weak and attend to the sick.
 - e. Find and restore those who have wandered away and those who are lost.
 - f. Protect the sheep from evil influences that would harm or destroy them.
 - g. The good shepherd is personally acquainted with each sheep, is able to call each by name, and the sheep know his voice and follow.
- B. In this lesson we will discuss the God-given work of the eldership—their responsibilities as shepherds of the Lord's flock.

DISCUSSION

A. PRESBUTEROS

1. This Greek word is translated most times as "elder," but once as "presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14).
 - a. *Presbuteros* is translated as "elder" 67 times, and 16 of those times it has reference to the office of the eldership.
 - b. The translation "presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14) is used with reference to a combined group of elders over a local congregation.
2. Elders are those who are older in age, older in the faith and spiritually mature.
 - a. There are valid reasons why the Lord chose those who are older to be shepherds entrusted with oversight.
 - b. Those who are older generally have more endurance, experience, knowledge, maturity, seasoning, self-control, wisdom and wise counsel than those who are younger.
3. The responsibilities carried in the meaning of presbuteros are:
 - a. To give wise counsel.
 - b. To be a father figure to the young.
 - c. To be a mighty oak of strength in difficult times.

B. EPISKOPOS

1. This Greek word is found 5 times in our New Testaments and is translated as "overseer" and/or "bishop" and each time has reference to the eldership, except in I Peter 2:25—where Peter refers to Christ as our overseer or bishop.
2. The idea behind the term episkopos is:
 - a. To look out for.
 - b. To visit.
 - c. To organize and govern.
3. An episkopos then, is a man charged with the duty of:
 - a. Insuring that all things are done in accordance with God's will.
 - b. Watching over the welfare of the souls of the local congregation.
 - c. Overseeing the overall work of the local congregation.
4. Also, caught up in the meaning of episkopos is that of a guardian.



C. POIMEN

1. This is the most descriptive term in giving us information concerning the work and responsibilities of an elder.
2. Poimen is and can be translated as shepherd, pastor, tend and feed.
 - a. Acts 20:28 ... "feed" or shepherd the church of the Lord.
 - b. I Peter 5:2 ... "tend" or shepherd the flock of God .
3. Understanding what a shepherd did in biblical times will help us to understand to work of elders.
4. A shepherd in a local congregation, then is a:
 - a. Ruler.
 - b. Guide.
 - c. Protector.
 - d. Companion.
 - f. Feeder.

CONCLUSION

- A. There is great Great GREAT responsibility associated with being an elder.
1. Hebrews 13:17.
 2. Being an elder is serious business and an awesome responsibility.

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Truth For Teens. . .

THE QUINTESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY CAPTURED IN ONE VERSE

Jason R. Roberts

The word, *quintessence*, means “the most perfect embodiment or essence of something.” It carries the idea of something that has reached the very apex or pinnacle of its existence. Though the Bible contains 31,102 verses, all of which were written for man’s well being (II Timothy 3:16-17), the Proverbs writer captures, in just one verse, the quintessence, or very essence of Christianity. He stated, **“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding”** (Proverbs 23:23). Let us examine each one of these in greater detail.

TRUTH

Inspiration begins by stating the supreme value of truth—**“Buy the truth, and sell it not.”** The phrase, **“Buy the truth”** is not suggesting that truth can literally be purchased monetarily. Rather, it is accommodatively teaching us the high price of truth and the urgent quest for man to find it and to keep it. Jesus used similar language to convey the tremendous worth of the soul, when he stated, **“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”** (Mark 8:36). There are a few things worth noting with regard to truth.

First, truth is available. Jehovah is described as **“a God of truth”** (Deuteronomy 32:4). God, in his infinite wisdom and according to his eternal purpose to redeem lost humanity, sent his son to earth—**“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth”** (John 1:14). Jesus described himself as **“the truth”** (John 14:6). When Jesus walked among men, truth was manifested in their presence. When Jesus spoke, truth was being heard by his auditors. He was the personification of truth. And he has made his truth available to all men, by virtue of the life that he lived, the death that he died and the Bible he graciously left behind.

Second, truth is attainable. Contrary to what some are teaching, truth is not only available, but it is also attainable. Jesus said, **“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32). Jesus did not say that we shall assume the truth or guess at what truth is. Rather, he unequivocally stated the absolute certainty of one knowing what truth is. **“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself”** (John 7:17). Because of this, all men can and must see the objective standard of truth set forth in the Bible alike. Can you imagine our Lord finishing his divine legislation regarding marriage, divorce and re-marriage, and then stating to his audience, **“Now I want all of you to understand that none of us here can come to a clear understanding of what I have just said, so everyone is on their own to teach whatever they believe regarding mar-**

riage, divorce and remarriage?” The truth of the matter is when Jesus finished his sermon on the mount (which included his legislation regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, Matthew 5:31-32) his audience was **“astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”** (Matthew 7:28-29). They knew what the Lord had said, they understood what the Lord had said, and they were required to obey what the Lord had said or they would be lost (Matthew 7:21-23). The same truth applies to any other Bible issue, such as the organization of the New Testament church, the plan of salvation, how we worship, and so on. **Man has the responsibility to recognize that there is an absolute standard of truth that is available, that it is attainable and to which he is required to humbly submit** (cf. Hebrews 5:9).

WISDOM

Wisdom is defined as the careful application of knowledge or truth. Obviously then, true wisdom can only be gained by having a proper knowledge of truth (our previous thought). Therefore, a person who says that one cannot definitively know truth is by implication stating that one cannot access wisdom. The following nuggets of truth will help us see the supreme value of wisdom and how we can access it.

First, one must have the right attitude toward God. **“Attitudes determine altitudes.”** The book of Proverbs is replete in revealing the proper attitude one must have toward his God before he ever understands and attains the wisdom God desires him to have. (1) His attitude must be one of a willing heart. **“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels...My son attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge”** (1:5; 5:1-2). (2) His attitude must be of such that he reverences God. **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”** (1:7). The one who recognizes who God really is and seeks to reverence him is considered wise in the eyes of God.

Second, one must have the right attitude toward sin. **“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not...My son walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path”** (1:10,15). It is interesting that immediately following the Proverbs writer’s instructions regarding the importance of wisdom, he proceeds to mention an area in which this wisdom is desperately needed—the area



of sin. A proper knowledge of truth will assist one in overcoming sin (Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:1-10). (1) One must have the wisdom to recognize sin's enticement. "My son, if sinners entice thee..." (1:10). The word *entice* means "to deceive." If sin were not enticing, people would not be interested in it. Sin, on the surface, appears innocent and harmless, but in reality it is deceitful and dangerous. Paul commanded us to "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). (2) One must have the wisdom to recognize the difference between a servant of God and a servant of Satan. "My son, if sinners entice thee..." The way one wisely distinguishes between the two is for him to have a proper knowledge of what sin is and the ability to recognize it when it appears. A failure to do so will bring an untold amount of harm to one's life here and an eternity of the same in the hereafter.

INSTRUCTION

Generally speaking, most people do not enjoy being told what to do. However, God, who knows us best, knows what is best for us. Therefore, he has given us some divine instruction not to prevent us from being happy, but to prevent us from being hurt. The importance of heeding wise instruction can be seen by the following truths:

First, heeding wise instruction blesses the quality of one's life.

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck...My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee (Proverbs 1:8-10; 3:1-2).

Paul wrote, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother...that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3, emp. added).

Second, heeding wise instruction places one in good favor with God and man. "So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (3:4). Of all the things that could be said concerning man, having God's favor first and man's favor second tops the list. But this approval (favor) can only be attained by heeding wise instruction, whether it be from parents, preachers, elders,

Bible class teachers, etc. One of the sterling qualities found in the life of Jesus is that at the age of twelve he had already "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). We cannot overemphasize the necessity of listening to and heeding wise instruction.

UNDERSTANDING

Understanding is the ability to be aware or conscious of something. It is more than just recognizing something; it carries the idea of careful forethought, accurately assessing the matter.

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures; then shall thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 2:1-6).

Two truths are evident from the above passage regarding the value of understanding.

First, one must have an open heart. "...apply thine heart to understanding (2:2b, emp. added). A closed heart is not in a position to understand. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). The noble Bereans not only had open Bibles, they had open hearts (Acts 17:11), consequently they were able to accurately assess and understand what was truth and what was not.

Second, one must have a searching heart. "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding...then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (2:3,5). It is not enough for one to merely have an open heart. He must possess a heart that is eagerly searching for understanding. Jesus promised this earnest seeker that he would find the object of which he was searching (Matthew 7:7-8).

Truth! Wisdom! Instruction! Understanding! — the quintessence of Christianity!

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Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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. 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. David Dalton, 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 Barry Grider, Evangelist.

—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.

Bryan/College Station—Church of Christ, Sunday 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.: (979) 822-1539; Calvin Engledinger, 2109 Pebblebrook, Bryan, TX 77807 Email: CALENG@TCA.net.

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 Spring Bible Institute and the SBI Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

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

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) 638-0269. 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.

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Restoration Reflections...

The Oldest Church of Christ In Alabama

Paul Vaughn

The Rocky Springs Church of Christ near Bridgeport, Alabama dates its beginning from 1807. It was originally called the Antioch Church of Christ. There are written records of the congregation as old as 1811 with pages missing of earlier activity of the church. An article written by J. Porter Wilhite in the November 1955 issue of the *Gospel Advocate* states that:

Barton W. Stone began to preach at a place two miles west of Bridgeport, Ala., and two and a half miles south of the Tennessee state line at the foot of the mountain and the people called the place Antioch, so we find the first settlers of Jackson County called themselves Christians at Antioch.¹

WEST WARD EXPANSION

In the early part of the eighteenth century formidable pioneers and trailblazers moved along the Post Road

opened between Knoxville, Tennessee and New Orleans, Louisiana. Among some of those pioneers was **William J. Price**. He moved to Northern Alabama from Warren County, Tennessee. Before he moved, he was baptized at the Old Philadelphia Church of Christ in 1811. Price along with a slave named **Moses** followed a game trail to a spring near Bridgeport, Alabama. "They called it Rocky Springs and built there."² As the community grew "a Post Office was established there, along with an Indian Trading Post, a tavern and stables for changing horses on the stage coaches. On June 12, 1847, the congregation moved into a new building at Rocky Springs, abandoning the old one at Antioch."³ William J. Price gave the land for the church and the cemetery located just across the road from the





church building. Price died on January 26, 1868 and was buried in the cemetery he gave the church.

Another pioneer was **William D. Gains** who moved into the area and was baptized in 1811. He was later elected State Senator from that part of Alabama.

RACIALLY MIXED CONGREGATION

Some have called Sunday the most segregated day of the week, because generally people different races separate to worship God. The Rocky Springs Church had 82 members in 1847; of that number there were six black members.

The racial make-up of the Rocky Springs Church of Christ speaks volumes about the early Christians in northern Alabama. Southern people of different races worship-

ing God as one, following the one Book that leads to Heaven. Southern people have been and still are in many areas portrayed as bigots and racists. This was not the case in the Rocky Springs Church of Christ in 1847 and most of the Lord's churches today.

THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War had a devastating effect on the United States. It put brother against brother and yes in some cases Christian against Christian. "Generally, however, leadership in the church both North and South wanted Christians to remain aloof of the war while continuing evangelism and other aspects of Christian service."⁴

Near the beginning of the war a letter was written from the Rocky Springs church describing the hardship war had on women and children. There were ten widows and thirty-five children at Rocky Springs in extreme hardship as a result of the Civil War.

The army from the North overwhelmed and wasted the Rocky Springs Church of Christ meeting place in 1864, burning it to the ground, scattering the members. By 1865 the church was worshipping again and rebuilt a building in 1870.

CONCLUSION

The building in which the Rocky Springs Church of Christ meets today was built in 1912. It has had some remodeling and an addition added on the back. This congregation is listed as the oldest continuous church of Christ in America.

If you are ever in Northern Alabama, a visit to the Rocky Springs Church of Christ would be a delightful experience. The members have taken great care of their present building. In a hand-out given at their 185 year homecoming in 1992, they said that they were doing their best "to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent."

(In writing church history there are so many people that help by collecting valuable papers over the years, preserving them for years and generations to come. In writing this article, much of the material came from **Preston and Georgia Cox** who have spent their lives serving God in Northern Alabama and Southern Tennessee. I thank brother and sister Cox for their willingness to share material about the Rocky Springs Church of Christ).

ENDNOTES

1. J. Porter Wilhite, When Did We have Our Beginnings in America? Gospel Advocate Volume XCVII, Number 44, November 3, 1955. P.992
2. Ibid.
3. Ernest Clevenger Jr, Alabama's Oldest Church of Christ, (An article written for the church) Parchment Press, Birmingham.
4. Earl West, The Trials of the Ancient Order 1844-1865, Religious Book Service, Germantown, 1993, p.359.

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EMERSON J. ESTES

June 17, 1903 - July 19, 2000

Garland Elkins

From a background that includes: a manager of an insurance company and working in the funeral business, emerged a "giant" among the preachers and leaders of this generation. Emerson J. Estes was born June 17, 1903, in Tippah County, Mississippi. He attended the schools of his day, and later he studied at the Montgomery Bible College (now Faulkner University) in Montgomery, Alabama. However, his formal training was only a part of his education. He was exceedingly well educated in "life's experiences." Estes became a Christian in 1923. He preached for sixty-four years. From the time of his first sermon until his death, he preached "The Old Jerusalem Gospel" in a most effective manner.

PREACHING TO THOUSANDS

He preached the gospel to thousands, and he converted thousands of people to Christ. He preached in twenty-five states, Canada, and the Bahamas. The phenomenal success of his preaching can be explained only on the ground that his sermons were sound, fearless, and scriptural. Through the years he was in great demand, and seldom has one man preached to so many, over such a long period of time. Estes preached "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). He knew that the gospel of Christ "Is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Therefore, he followed the instructions of the inspired apostle Paul to "Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2).

His command of the English language was marvelous indeed. His preaching was simple, yet profound. He opposed with all of his being those who would seek to corrupt minds, "from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (II Corinthians 11:13). He always preached the truth. He both knew and believed the following scripture: "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). He did not pervert the gospel of Christ, for he was well aware that those who do so, will bring a curse upon themselves (I Corinthians 9:16, Galatians 1:8, 9).

Estes served as one of the Board of Directors for Montgomery Bible College, Childhaven Orphanage, and Mid South Christian Nursing Home. In 1983, he was made an honorary Lt. Colonel on the staff of George Wallace, then the governor of Alabama. For years, he wrote articles for



newspapers, and he also published a gospel paper entitled, *Way of Life* for a period of four years.

He did his first full time preaching in Birmingham, Alabama, and followed that with preaching in Montgomery, Alabama. He subsequently became the first full time evangelist of the Getwell Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, in which capacity he served for eight years. While working with Getwell, he began the *Truth In Love* radio program on WHBQ. This program is likely the oldest continuous radio program in the area. During his years as speaker; he received and answered hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of questions about the Bible, and what it teaches. On more than one occasion, he invited preachers who opposed what the Bible teaches to

appear on his program. He allowed them to state their views, and then kindly, gently, but firmly, refuted their error. He conducted one of the most unique, interesting, and informative radio programs to which I ever listened and perhaps, one of the most unusual, and distinctive ever aired. Tremendous good resulted from Estes' radio work.

Emerson J. Estes was of the "Old School" of evangelists. He believed the Bible and preached it. Like William Jennings Bryan, he is "a silver tongued orator," though he moved his audience to obedience, and action, through a sincere, fervent, earnest appeal to the scriptures. He spoke "as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). Sometimes reference is made to "a southern gentleman." He symbolized that description, but more importantly, he epitomized a truly great "Christian gentleman." His physical appearance was striking and commanding. He stood as erect as an arrow. His beautiful gray hair immediately attracted one's attention. He had a wonderful sense of humor. He served as one of the elders of the Merton Street Church of Christ. He preached for the church for many years.

Emerson J. Estes was married for sixty-five years to Mildred Sams Estes. Through the years she stood by his side, and was truly a great "help meet." Their two lovely daughters are: Mrs. Sylvia Estes Harville of Memphis, Tennessee, and Mrs. Wanda Estes Kindred of Burlington, Kentucky. Brother and Sister Estes have three grandchildren.

When David was giving his final charge to Solomon he said, **“Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man”** (I Kings 2:2). The poet wrote: “Lives of great men remind us we can make our lives sublime, And departing leave behind us footprints on the sands of time.”

The life of Emerson J. Estes is a most excellent example of the foregoing beautiful sentiments. Men of his type and character are far too few. We are made to wonder whether those of fewer years will measure up to the high standard set by his kind. To fail to appreciate such men while they live, and to perpetuate their memory after they are gone, would be an injustice, not only to such men, but to many

yet unborn who may be encouraged and motivated by reading the stories of their lives. Emerson J. Estes was one of those great men, and it is our great, and exalted privilege to give, **“honor to whom honor”** (Romans 13:7) is due!

The funeral was conducted by Garland Elkins and Bobby Liddel, Saturday, July 22, 2000, 10 AM, at Memorial Park Funeral Home. Memorials may be sent to The Memphis School of Preaching, 3950 Forest-Hill Irene Road, Memphis, TN 38125-2560.

*—3950 Forest-Hill Irene Rd.
Memphis, Tennessee 38125-2560*

One Woman's Perspective

BRIDGES OF OUR LIVES

Annette B. Cates

We have all crossed bridges in our travels from one place to another. We are fascinated by the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and charmed by the few remaining covered bridges in the rural areas of our country. We are overwhelmed by the massive spans over the major rivers of the world and amazed at footbridges that swing across mountain chasms and by train trestles that seem to perch precariously at the edge of a canyon and above roaring streams. Some of us experience a degree of fear as we approach a bridge while others feel the excitement of nearing a destination. Just as these physical bridges affect our journeys, there are figurative “bridges” that influence or alter how we live our lives, some negatively and some positively.

We can burn bridges as soon as we cross over. Impetuous acts and false pride keep us from being able to return to the other side. Solomon wrote that **“Pride goeth before destruction. And a haughty spirit before a fall”** (Proverbs 16:18). Some destroy relationships with family and close friends, burn their bridges, and cannot bring themselves to mend the broken ties. Some get involved in sin and, even though they know they will be lost in their error, will not repent and make things right. Any time we find that we think we cannot return to that which is right and good, then we know that we have burned our bridges behind us. The damage can be repaired, but it will not be easy. It is easier to burn down bridges than to build them.

We can cross bridges too soon. How often we spend sleepless nights in worry about something that may never come to pass! Our worries may be over material things such as job security and finances. Or, we may be concerned for the physical or spiritual well-being of loved ones. We may struggle with health problems. Depression may darken our vision for the future.

Early in the development of the English language, the word for “worry” was the same as for “to strangle.” Anxiety takes a toll on us mentally, physically, and spiritually.

We are literally “strangled” when we allow worry to consume us. The situations that cause us to be anxious may be quite valid. However, many of our concerns may be over things that we cannot control, that are inevitable regardless of the worry that we expend. Many others are over things that will never come to pass, and all of our worry is a total waste of our physical and spiritual resources. However, any care that keeps us from normal functioning is crossing a bridge too soon. As Christians, we can be assured that God knows and will care for us (Matthew 10:29-31; I Peter 5:7). Instead of focusing on crossing bridges too soon, let us rather cross our bridges one at a time and let God take care of the rest!

We can get on bridges that go nowhere. Many drift through life, aimlessly and fruitlessly. When we have no hope, no ambitions, and nothing to which to look forward, we find ourselves in a downward spiral. We are all too aware that even a dead fish can go downstream. If the stress of job-related pressures brings about “burn-out,” we need to examine our situation. Is there an aspect of our work that would be stimulating, but is being overlooked or lost in the shuffle, that could be re-emphasized to bring fresh enthusiasm to the situation? Would an adult-education class help secure a better or more varied working environment? If our hopelessness is the result of isolation, perhaps we can focus on someone else who needs our attention. We can always send cards or notes to someone who is homebound, thus brightening their days as well as our own. There was a point in Job's life when all seemed as bleak as it could get. In fact, he stated, **“My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope”** (Job 7:6). In the end, God restored to him double what he had before his misfortune began. In an article on hope, B. L. Whitaker wrote, “What a great factor hope is: connecting time and



eternity, measuring distances, rising above obstacles and lifting the soul of man within reach of God..." (*Knight Arnold News*, January 15, 1985). When the bridge seems to go nowhere, put hope on the other side and head on across!

Bridges are intended to span time and distance, bringing two sides together. How much easier it is to cross the Mississippi River on I-40, or any of the other great bridges that link east and west, than it was to be ferried across! Just so, we must build bridges to bring our families and friends together. Relationships with our loved ones take work. While we do not get to choose our relatives, we can actively cultivate the love that should bind us together. We must build bridges among Christians and between faithful congregations, supporting and encouraging one another in good works. We build these bridges through service to others. We build them by walking the two-way street of forgiveness, then putting the past behind. The Apostle Paul

told us to have "...all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2, 3). It is so much easier to stand against the trials and temptations of the world when we are bonded together with the same aims and purposes facing a common enemy. Whether we build bridges or destroy them is up to us.

Bridges are never barriers. Barriers arise when bridges are destroyed. Barriers arise when bridges are misused. All of our experiences in life should help us to become more mature adults and stronger Christians. Let us use the bridges of our lives to draw us closer to God and to one another, spanning time and distance, uniting us.

—9194 Lakeside Drive
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38654

The Last Word...

THE STORM OF APOSTASY

Eddie Whitten

Some years ago the danger of the "social gospel" heralded the gathering storm which was destined to beat upon the church. Faithful brethren began to warn the brotherhood of the impending danger of compromising faith for fantasy. The swing from worshipping God to satisfying "felt needs" seemed slow, but in reality it was bearing down upon the church with lightning speed. The purpose of worship changed in less than one generation.

Without a rudder, the ship is bound to flounder in the sea. The church, without the Bible as its standard, will flounder in the sea of human judgment. Oh, most of those who have abandoned the Bible claim to follow it, but their actions belie their claim. The "social gospel" has produced the fruit of its nature: Departure from the Living God. The catalyst: "An evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12).

THE GATHERING STORM

The skies darken, the clouds are ominous in their appearance, the winds begin to blow, nature's warning to prepare for the storm. The seeds of apostasy were planted in the minds of vulnerable, gullible and trusting brethren urging a "more spiritual" worship experience. Emotionalism (not to be confused with emotions) became the watchword of acceptable worship. That which produced an emotional rush became more important than a "Thus saith the Lord." The clouds of spiritualism produced winds of dissatisfaction with the rational, logical, "traditional" view of worship. The church began to shake with the inner turmoil that threatened its infrastructure. The storm of the "social gospel" was beginning to undermine the superstructure of the local congregation.

Still, the time for the storm to actually break upon the scene was not yet. It takes time for error and apostasy to

yield its harvest. Earnestly going about its divisive work, the leaven of the "social gospel" was working like termites eating at the very vitals of truth. It would be a while before the storm reached its fury.

THE BREAKING STORM

Like the spring thunderstorms in Texas, we see them coming, and usually have some time to prepare for them, but we are never quite ready for its force. It is fierce, dangerous, and usually does damage in some quarters. It is frightening at its peak and one wonders if he will suffer from it. The seeds of apostasy grow in many directions developing tentacles of varying stripes. The imagination of man is prolific and the means of placating the desires of the physical seem to be inestimable. The breadth of human invention is absolutely amazing. There seems to be an unending stream of thought emanating from the minds of those bent on introducing new ideas to thrill the brotherhood.

As the thunderstorm breaks, there is lightning. Lightning is very dangerous and often causes great damage. The breaking storm of apostasy is not without its own lightning. These are the lightning bolts of the intellectuals and the sensationalists who are responsible for bringing into the church novel and challenging thought. Of course, no one before has ever thought of these intriguing ideas. It makes one wonder how anyone in the past could be saved until the revelations of the current intellectuals. The lightning bolts of intellectualism are just as damaging spiritually to the church. Striking at the very foundation of the future, this lightning is aimed at the university student.



Generally, what the university professor can teach the receptive minds of eager students will formulate the practice of those students for life. The lightning of intellectualism will victimize families. Parents, who have taught their children to love the Lord and do his will, will see them depart from the faith under the teaching of so-called Christian professors. The lightning of intellectualism will victimize local congregations. Elders will see the leaven of apostasy infiltrate the congregation through graduates of Christian universities who will sway their parents and others who are weak spiritually. Preachers who come from the influence of such teachers will lead entire congregations into spiritual suicide.

Thunderstorms produce hailstones that can damage. Hailstones are produced by change: change in temperature and condensation. Change in Bible authority and principle produce spiritual change. Hailstones can damage or destroy healthy crops. Change in the principle of worship and the authority by which the church exists will result in the people going about to please themselves. This is precisely the situation in the church of our Lord today in the breaking storm of liberalism and apostasy. The individual can be protected from the hailstorm by seeking safe haven. The individual Christian can also be protected from spiritual hailstones by seeking safe haven in the true church.

Thunderstorms also produced loud and scary thunder. Booming claps of thunder disturb and startle, but do no damage. They make a lot of noise. The church is filled with mouths, and pens, that make a lot of noise, but that is all. They want the brotherhood to be awed by their great presence, but what they say is as clouds without water. They are described thusly: **"Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain"** (Proverbs 25:14). Jude, speaking of those who reject the Lord and go about directed by their own lusts, said:

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit

withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 12-13).

Do not be afraid of the clouds, they can do you no harm!

THE PASSING STORM

As with every thunderstorm, there comes the silver lining. As fierce and scary as the worst storm can be, it also passes. It leaves destruction in its path according to how much preparation, or lack thereof, has been made. The church has since its beginning (indeed, since the beginning of man) experienced times of apostasy. Long, and short, periods of time have been spent separated from God. Our span of time tragically is seeing another of these apostasies. Even though we are in the "breaking storm" there will be an end to it. This storm of apostasy, as all the others, will pass. There will again be the light of the Son. There will be again the **"peace of God, which passeth all understanding"** (Philippians 4:7). There will again be the time of love of God and the desire to be obedient to his will. There will be again a time when preachers will mount the pulpits to **"preach the word"** (II Timothy 4:2), and be careful that they do not go beyond that which is written. There will come again a time of devotion to God's word and a desire to do the will of God. There will be love in our hearts for God, for his word, for the church Jesus purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28), and above all, there will be harmony among the faithful in worship and in service in the Kingdom of God.

Until the time comes that the storm has passed, it is vital to the continuing existence of the church that faithful brethren hold fast to the doctrine which was once delivered to us (Jude 3) through the medium of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

An Open Letter to Lindell Mitchell & H.A. (Buster) Dobbs

September 21, 2000

Mr. Lindell Mitchell & Mr. H.A. (Buster) Dobbs
P.O. Box 316
Livingston, TX 77351

Dear brethren,

I received your unsigned letter of May 5th. First, it is self-evident that you brethren do not genuinely wish to study the worship issue that divides us, but are intent on doing "damage control." While you resort to every sort of invective against other brethren and me, you try to hide behind the smokescreen that you do not like, what you term, my "disrespectful language." Brethren, I have all of your letters. You are on record. I also have seen Buster's misuse in the May 2000 issue of *Firm Foundation* of a quote extracted from my letter to you of March 28, 2000. Due to these two developments I have chosen to answer you with an open letter for concerned and interested brethren.

DOBBS AND MITCHELL MISHANDLE THE FACTS

As to the latter development, *you know that I do not believe that all service is worship.* Yet you deliberately have stated that I do. I demand a full retraction on that matter. I have maintained in my letter to you of April 4, 2000 and in my very first article at the onset of this problem the truth of the following sentence. *"The truth is that technically all worship is Christian service, but not all forms or expressions of service are worship!"* Also, in the two sentences immediately following the quote Buster used from the March 28th letter, concerning the Greek word "latreia" in Romans 12:1, I expressly and unequivocally stated what you have not done. I wrote, *"I have answered all of your attempts to try to establish a basis for rendering the word as 'worship' in Romans 12:1. You have not even begun to commence to start to controvert the counter-arguments that others and I have set forth against your view."* Buster,

why did you omit those sentences that show, as the rest of my letters to you have demonstrated abundantly, that I do not believe that "latreia" means "worship" in Romans 12:1? Are you so desperate for proof for your notions that you have to fabricate it from someone else? Romans 12:1 is not a case where "latreia" means "worship" in any real or proper sense.

I also have your joint letter of April 6, 2000 in which you implicitly admit that I do not hold that all service is worship. Why have you sought to suggest in the May, 2000 *Firm Foundation* what you know is not true?

Unlike some folk who change according to whom they are talking or writing, I have always held the position that Romans 12:1 does *not* involve the notion that Christian service is worship. On April 4, 2000 I wrote the following to you.

We {you and I} are not in agreement, unless Buster is now ready to declare that he recants all that he wrote in his letters, faxes, and e-mails to Eddie (Whitten— Editor) and in his editorials in which he defended the 'all life is worship' heresy. Am I now to conclude that Buster is repudiating all of that material as being in error? Buster contended that service is worship. He did not contend that worship is 'a part of service' as I maintain, but rather that all service is indeed worship. He is still on record. It has not miraculously disappeared. Nor are we in agreement on latreia and Romans 12:1. You have not proven your case concerning that text that 'worship' is demanded as its meaning there.

Buster and Lindell, you knew this. Why did you not tell the truth on the matter in the May, 2000 issue of *Firm Foundation*? Buster, therein you stated, *"If Denham is right and 'worship is a part of service,' then service, according to Denham, is worship."* No, it is not "according to Denham." It is according to Buster's warped logic that all "service is worship." Buster is the one who tries to make the part equal to its whole! I know the difference. I also am quite aware that the language involves a metaphor. Buster,

(Continued On Page 4)

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Editorial...

WILL THE REAL BUSTER DOBBS PLEASE STAND UP?

At the Fleetwood Church of Christ, Houston, Texas, on February 22, 1998 Jess Hall, Jr. preached a sermon in which he taught that all Christians do in life is worship. On June 23, 1998 in a meeting that included the Fleetwood elders, Hall and his son Eric strongly defended the doctrine that "all of life is worship". On June 30, 1998 in a private meeting with certain brethren Buster Dobbs presented a four-level concept of worship. He stated that the fourth level of worship is what we commonly call service. On July 5, 1998 at the Fleetwood congregation Dobbs presented a sermon entitled "The Call of Abraham." In that sermon Dobbs taught:

And we in this life, in this world, give ourselves completely and totally in His service. In the opening verse of the twelfth chapter of the book of Romans Paul says: "I beseech you by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Him, that's your reasonable service." So he tells us that we are to lay our very souls upon the altar of this present existence, that we are to give all that we have, our hearts, our strength, our mind, to the service of the Lord. And that is a total commitment. **SOMETIMES PEOPLE THINK OF THAT AS SERVICE, AND SOMETIMES THEY THINK OF IT AS WORSHIP** (Caps and bold mine—DPB)

Furthermore, in the same sermon Dobbs declared:

We of course sometimes do wrong things and that's not worship. The Bible tells us in the book of First John that if we say we have no sin, then we're a liar and the truth is not in us. And furthermore, we make God a liar and his word's not in us. And that's in the first chapter, verses six through ten. Now I don't care who you are or how hard you try, sooner or later, there is going to be some failure. You need to get that right. And the sin that we do (we all do sin—I do and you do as well)—**THE SIN WE DO IS CERTAINLY NOT WORSHIP — IS IT? AND SO THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING IN LIFE THAT'S NOT WORSHIP** (Caps and bold mine—DPB). And yet, the main tendency of our life must be toward God. And so we live our life with a reference to God, and we live all of our days with the thought of the judgment before us, and the knowledge that God sees and knows every particular of our life. **AND THAT OUR PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE IS TO MAKE COMPLETE COMMITMENT. AND WHEN WE'RE DOING THAT— THAT'S WORSHIP** (Caps and bold mine—DPB).

Due to the foregoing events most of the August 1998 issue of *Contending for the Faith* dealt with the false doctrine of "except for sin, all of life is worship" as set out, defined and propagated by Hall and Dobbs. To say the least this infuriated Dobbs. Accordingly he faxed Eddie Whitten on August 28, 1998, declaring:

Based on David Brown's past performance, I am going to insist that:

1. We remove David's name from the masthead of the Firm Foundation and notify him.

2. We refuse to advertise any activities at Spring—the lectureship, the school, etc.

3. Use neither David Brown nor Bob Berard on any future Foundation lectures.

Bob Berard was then working with the Spring Church of Christ. Although not fully perceived by the Spring eldership, the other Spring preachers or the church at that time, he was in the process of converting to the view of the personal indwelling and direct work of the Holy Spirit that **Mac Deaver** propagates. In order to further his own agenda he was also willing to deceive whomever he needed to by with holding information. Therefore, because of such things and Berard's continued attempts to lead the Spring church into believing his views the church withdrew fellowship from him.

Why in this discussion bring up these matters pertaining to Berard? Simply this: 1) Berard never was a viable part in the discussion of the "all of life is worship" doctrine as Dobbs assumed. 2) Dobbs evidently believes in practicing some kind of deception that he thinks is acceptable to God. Indeed, the Deavers and Berard are poles apart from Dobbs and Mitchell regarding the personal indwelling and direct work of the Holy Spirit on the Christian. However, not only are they poles apart regarding the Holy Spirit's direct work on the Christian's heart, Dobbs and Mitchell are strongly opposed to the Deavers and Berard's Holy Spirit doctrine. 3) Evidently they are in full agreement on practicing deception by with holding information from their brethren if they determine such to be beneficial to their cause.

EDDIE WHITTEN IS MADE AWARE OF DOBBS' DOCTRINE

In late August or early September of 1998 Eddie Whitten became aware of Dobbs' July 5, 1998 sermon at Fleetwood. He, therefore, began to discuss the "all life is worship" doctrine with Dobbs. By way of explanation and defense of his doctrine on September 4, 1998 Dobbs faxed the following information concerning the matter to Whitten. By the time he faxed Whitten the following material Dobbs had added two more levels of worship to the four levels he revealed to certain brethren on June 30, 1998. He wrote:

There are various levels of worship, including the following:

1. Public worship of the entire church (when the whole church comes together in one place to observe the 5 acts of worship commanded in the New Testament). All of life is not worship in this sense.

2. Public worship when less than the 5 acts of worship commanded in the New Testament are observed (Sunday p.m. when the Lord's Supper is not taken by all who are present, nor do all give—Wednesday evening, which could consist of only one act of worship such as praying or singing, though usually more than one act is observed). All of life is not worship in this sense.

3. Individual private worship (praying in the closet, giving alms, fasting). All of life is not worship in this sense.

4. The complete dedication and commitment of the child of God, as required in Romans 12:1. This is clearly wor-

ship—present your bodies a living sacrifice suggests priesthood, offering, altar and is unquestionably worship. It is something we are told to do all the time, though we sin and when we sin we are not offering our bodies a living sacrifice. The scholarship of the world says the Greek word translated "service" in most of our English New Testaments means the service of worship. It is continual. **THIS INVOLVES ALL OF LIFE AND IN THIS SENSE ALL OF LIFE IS, OR SHOULD BE, WORSHIP, BUT IS NOT WHEN WE SIN** (Caps and bold mine—DPB).

5. We are to pray without ceasing. That is all the time. This is not the prayer of supplication, thanksgiving, and requests, but it is still prayer. **It is the prayer of always keeping God, the judgment, and eternity in mind. It is living with a reverence to God in all things. It is continual and embraces all of life, except when we sin. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP** (Caps and bold mine—DPB). We may not worship (pray) without ceasing but we ought to and are commanded to do this without let up — no stopping. **ALL OF LIFE SHOULD BE WORSHIP IN THIS SENSE, BUT IS NOT WHEN WE SIN** (Caps and bold mine—DPB). Prayer is worship. We are told to pray without ceasing.

6. Whatever we do in word or deed we are to do all in the name of the Lord. **THAT IS CONTINUAL—ALL OF LIFE. WE WASH BABY DIAPERS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. WE MOP THE FLOOR IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP IN THIS SENSE, BUT NOT WHEN WE SIN** (Caps and bold mine—DPB).

NOW, IF A PERSON SAYS, "IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?" THE ANSWER HAS TO BE WHAT LEVEL OF WORSHIP ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? (Caps and bold mine—DPB) It is obvious that all of life is not collective worship of all the saints were (sic) the 5 prescribed acts are observed; it is not the more limited worship were (sic) less than the 5 acts are observed: it is not worship when we sin. So, in that sense all of life is not worship. However, all life is to be dedicated to the service of God and our very bodies are to be offered as a living sacrifice (worship) to God. That is un-get-overable. Paul even called his death an act of worship (Bold mine — DPB) when he said, "I am already being offered."

When we define worship as falling down before God, do se (sic) mean that literally? When we say it is kissing the hand toward the object of our devotion, is that literal? There are occasions when we are fully focused on the throne of God and there are other times when we may offer petition or thanksgiving while involved in other activities (such as driving on the freeway) when are (sic) concentration is less than total.

There is a sense in which all of life should be worship—though it never is in fact. There is a sense in which all of life is not worship....

On September 7, 1998, in reply to Dobbs' "levels of worship" concept, Whitten wrote to him. In part he said, "I never heard of "levels of worship." Where did that come from? The Bible has nothing to say about levels of worship." Also, on September 12, 1998 Dobbs faxed Whitten. In the fax he wrote the following, "Your (sic) are to live in the fear of God at all times — you may not do so, but you should — therefore, if living in fear of God is worship, your worship should be continuous" (Bold mine, DPB). (Continued On Page 6)

An Open Letter...

(Continued From Page 1)

you and Lindell admit it does, but in your practice each of you conduct yourselves as though it does not.

Following this paragraph you will observe 35 specific questions. Some of these questions are appropriate follow-ups. They address the key issues existing between us. Furthermore, they also contain the salient points I have already made to each of you—points that you have repeatedly ignored. Indeed, Buster and Lindell, you have not dealt with these matters at all in our correspondence. I believe good brethren will be very interested in seeing how you deal with these points. Will you confirm or allay the fears of many regarding where you brethren are headed on the worship matter? You have refused to answer the majority of these questions in our correspondence to date. Indeed, you have not answered even one of the arguments arrayed against your position on worship.

1. Do you believe there are more than five items, acts or avenues of New Testament worship? If so, list it or them.
2. Do you believe that all of a Christian's life, except for sin, is service?
3. Do you agree with the position taken on worship in the **Jess Hall** book? If not, with what do you not agree?
4. Do you concur with **Eric Hall's** depiction of your position as teaching that "in some sense, all life is worship"?
5. Has either of you ever said or written that such acts as changing dirty diapers, playing golf, cleaning up after the dog, and such like are worship?
6. Was everything the Old Testament priest did, except for sin, worship?
7. Is Matthew 4:10 a case of "synonymous parallelism," as **Jess Hall** contends? Do the Greek words, *proskumeo* and *latreuo*, mean the same thing in that text?
8. Buster, when you sleep is it possible for you to worship in your sleep through the avenue of prayer? Have you ever said that you are doing so while sleeping?
9. Does worship happen by accident? Must one know (understand) that the specific act in which he is engaged is worship in order for it to be acceptable with God?
10. Do you believe that for the Christian all service is worship?
11. Has either of you ever said or written that "all life, except for sin, is worship"?
12. Has either of you ever said or written that all of life is not worship, "but it ought to be"?
13. Has either of you ever said or written to the effect that there are different "levels" of worship, at least one of which implies that all life is to be worship in that sense? If so, then how many "levels" of

worship are there and which one(s) implies (imply) that "in some sense, all life is worship"?

14. Has either of you ever said or written to the effect that if one is a priest and the temple of the Holy Spirit, then it must be the case that he is worshipping all of the time, except when he sins?

15. Are acts of benevolence worship? What about changing diapers or mowing the lawn for someone as an act of benevolence?

16. In our correspondence you have affirmed A) All life for the Christian, except for sin, is service, and B) All service, according to Romans 12:1, is worship. What is the conclusion demanded by these premises?

17. Buster, Lindell has admitted that *latreia* and *latreuo* do not mean or refer to worship in the same sense, to the same degree, and in the same relationships as *proskumeo*. He has said, "Everyone knows this." Yet **Jess Hall** contends that they do mean or refer to worship in the same sense and in the same relationships according to Romans 12:1 and Matthew 4:10. Do you concur now with **Jess Hall's** position or with Lindell's?

18. Do you believe that the New Testament has specified the nature and extent of worship?

19. Has either of you ever maintained that all "worship is a form and part of singing, and (all) singing is a form and part of worship" and yet all "worship is a form and a part of prayer, and (all) prayer is a form and part of worship"?

20. Do you believe that Romans 12:1 must involve a perpetual offering in which every act is "in some sense, ... worship" to God and that any view to the contrary is sinful?

21. Do you believe that the brethren who oppose the "all life is worship" doctrine are the ones who have caused division over this matter?

22. Buster you have quoted approvingly from **Lindsey Garmon's** material. In that material **Garmon** states his conviction that "all life is worship." Buster, you have stated in writing to me that you accept **Garmon's** "premise but not the conclusion" from his attempted argument from typology. That being the case, would you and Lindell be willing to accept the implications of the **Garmon** doctrine if they were demonstrated?

23. If all "singing is a form and part of worship, and all worship is a form and part of singing," as you seemed to argue in a previous letter, then when a Christian sings a secular song, like "Home on the Range," is he then worshipping? If yes, then you imply that secular songs can be worship. If no, then your quibble (if all "worship is a form and part of service" then all "service is a form and part of worship," which is what you have argued in our correspondence) is false! You implicitly admit that the one set or category is larger than the second set or category. Take either horn of the dilemma that you

wish. Or you may wish simply to repudiate the two positions.

24. At the *Open Forum* during Freed-Hardeman University's lectureship, Buster stated that "probably, not in any sense is all of life worship." Why did you use the word "probably," Buster? Why not expressly state that it is not worship (period)? Was the word "probably" used as a cover in view of the fact that you seemed to argue on the same occasion that Romans 12:1 teaches that all life is service and that such service is worship?

25. Has either one of you ever said or taught that the act of driving a car is itself worship for the Christian? Or, put another way, that the Christian is constantly worshipping (though not as intensely as at other times) while driving the car, except when he sins? Buster, have you ever said or taught that you are perpetually praying while driving the car?

26. Does Romans 12:1 teach that all of the Christian's life is worship in any real, concrete, or proper sense?

27. Has either of you ever said or written that to object to changing diapers as worship is to imply that "we vacillate and oscillate in offering our bodies a living sacrifice," and that such an implication is "false on its face"? Are we given to a "herky, jerky" – stop and go – existence, if we reject the notion that "all life is worship, except for sin" or that "in some sense, all life is worship"?

28. Has either of you ever said or written that "{t}o suppose that we are to switch sacrificial-worship-life on and off results in the confusion of thinking we are spiritual at one moment and unspiritual at another"? And that "You should have God, the judgment, and eternity in mind while mopping the floor"?

29. Has either of you ever said or written explicitly or implicitly that acts of benevolence (e.g., almsgiving) do not constitute proof that all life is worship?

30. Recently I received a copy of the Hall book in the mail. It bore a Houston postmark, though it had no return address affixed to it. Several other preachers and members of the Lord's church have received the book in like fashion. Has either of you been involved in sending out – whether directly or indirectly – cop-

ies of the Hall book? If so, did you do so to endorse the contents of the book or to discourage brethren from accepting what the book teaches? If the latter, then what do you find wrong with what it teaches? If the former then why not be above board and simply state that you do endorse the book? Why all the clandestine nonsense?

31. Buster, did you send anyone a copy of the chapter titled "A Workman that Needs to be Ashamed" from the Hall book, even before the book was published? In that chapter Jess Hall seeks to answer the material of Gary Workman refuting the "all life is worship" doctrine. It is clear, even from a cursory reading, that Jess Hall believes that in "some sense, all life is worship" for the Christian. Do you endorse fully the Hall position as stated in that chapter?

32. Buster, have you ever said, taught, or written that it depends upon what "level" of worship one is talking about as to whether or not all life is worship?

33. Lindell, have you ever admitted that the aorist tense can be used of punctiliar or point action if the context warrants? What if the aorist is used in contrast with the present tense? Does the adjective "living" which modifies the noun "sacrifice" demand linear action on the part of the verb infinitum "to present" in Romans 12:1? Do adjectives modify verbs and other verb forms?

34. Lindell, Jess Hall admits on Romans 12:1 that if the aorist tense were involved in a verb that it would indicate punctiliar action. However, he contends that the use of the infinitive, which is technically a "verbal noun" or a verb-noun, negates the force of the aorist. Do you agree with his position? Further, does the verb tense have any force as to kind of action for infinitives?

35. Does Romans 6:13-19 have any bearing on the force of Romans 12:1? Does the same word which is used as an aorist infinitive in Romans 12:1 have the same force as to kind of action as it does in the aorist imperative in Romans 6:13 and the aorist indicative in Romans 6:19? If punctiliar action is understood in Romans 6:13-19, then what kind of action is demanded by the use of the same term in the similar construction found in Romans 12:1?

Buster and Lindell, please do not try to hedge on the questions. Please, do not try to pass them off as "irrelevant." Brethren know the difference between things relevant and irrelevant! I await your reply, but I will not hold my breath until it comes.

Yours in Christ,
Daniel Denham
CC: Eddie Whitten
David Brown, Contending for the Faith

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Will the Real Buster Dobbs...

(Continued From Page 3)

A detailed and lengthy written exchange between Whitten and Dobbs continued for some time in the form of faxes. During this period Dobbs wrote what became the first draft of an editorial he was (at that time, September 14, 1998) determined to print in the November 1998 *FF*. He ended the article with: **"IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP? NO, OF COURSE NOT! ALL OF LIFE IS NOT WORSHIP...BUT IT OUGHT TO BE"** (Caps and bold mine, DPB). On September 18, 1998 Whitten responded to Dobbs in a fax, a part of which follows:

The problems I have with your editorial is (sic) because I have read it critically. I have answered before why I object to it. I do not believe it is Biblically right. I have specified clearly that I believe the Bible teaches a difference between service and worship; that service is what we do that is in accordance to the word of God (*latreuo, latreia*) and which even involves our worship. That Worship (*proskuneo*) is the mental, conscious obeisance, honor, homage we give to God as we bow before him either collectively as a congregation or individually in our devotionals. I also pointed out that we cannot worship accidentally. That is what would be happening if all we do in life is worship, because we cannot be consciously aware of worshipping God while we are *grocery shopping, playing golf, or whatever*. Besides that, if there was (sic) no difference between worship and service, different words would not have been used to identify the difference.

Due to Whitten's strong objection Dobbs decided not to print his article in the November 1998 *FF*. He also decided to revise his proposed editorial. He ended up revising it a second time. Dobbs continued in his determination to print the article, but now determined to do so in the December 1998 *FF*.

In the first revision faxed to Whitten on October 30, 1998 Dobbs stated in the last third or so of the article, **"Is all of life worship? No, of course not! All of life is not worship and service ... but it ought to be"** (Bold mine, DPB). Notice that the last sentence differs from the original draft in that it contains the word "service". In his second revision (I have no date on this revision. However, he still intended it to be his December 1998 editorial) Dobbs again set out his levels of worship. He cited (as he has from the beginning of the controversy and continues to this day so to do) Romans 12:1 as his proof text for his "level of worship concept". It involves, according to Hall, Dobbs and Lindell Mitchell, all of the Christian's life. This Dobbs calls "the worship of a committed life." In this second revision Dobbs attempted to set up a syllogism based on Romans 12:1. I say attempted to set up a syllogism because what he calls a syllogism needs help. On page two he wrote:

1. All sacrifice offered to God is worship.
2. Christians are to continually offer their bodies as a sacrifice to God.
3. Therefore there is a sense in which worship is continual.

On page three, after quoting Colossians 3:17 and referring the reader to 1 Corinthians 10:31 to show that we must have biblical authority for all that we do, Dobbs gave his views of what the passages meant. He then wrote:

SUCH DEVOTED SERVICE TO GOD IS CLEARLY WORSHIP. IT INVOLVES ALL THAT WE DO. WHETHER WE ARE EARNING A LIVING FOR OUR FAMILY, OR SEEKING LAWFUL ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION, IT IS TO BE DONE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD (Caps and bold mine—DPB). As holy, royal priests we make an offering to the Father through the Son in everything we do. This does not require the intense concentration of formal assembly-worship, though at times it may provoke a deeply felt and profound emotion, but at other times is less ardent. It is an exercise that may be done while involved in other activities and we may not always have it uppermost in our conscious thought. Still, it is something we are told to do without let up.

Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). **IF PRAYER IS WORSHIP AND IF WE ARE TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING, THEN WE ARE TO WORSHIP IN SOME SENSE WITHOUT CEASING** (Caps and bold mine — DPB). ...

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 praying without ceasing. **IF IT IS, THEN OUR WORSHIP OUGHT TO BE UNINTERMITTENT — UNFAILING** (Caps and bold mine — DPB).



























As in the original and the first revision, on page four of the second revision Dobbs once again included, **"Is all of life worship? No, of course not! All of life is not worship ... but it ought to be"** (Bold mine, DPB). These comments are back in the form found in Dobbs' original article and once again toward the end of it. In the second revision following his propagation of "except for sin, all of life is worship" Dobbs then attempted to deal with certain objections to his doctrine.

DOBBS THE BIBLICAL INTERPRETER

It is also interesting to note that from Dobbs' previous comments we learn that he does not believe that Paul's statement, **"Pray without ceasing"** (1 Thessalonians 5:17), refers to the literal act of prayer. He reasons in the following manner. Dobbs teaches that in reality one cannot petition God each second of the day. Thus, according to Dobbs, Paul's statement, **"Pray without ceasing"** must be figurative. Hence, Dobbs draws the conclusion that the word "pray" means a continuous life of service to God. Therefore, according to Dobbs, since the word "service" is synonymous with the word "worship," to "pray without ceasing" means "all of life is worship, except when we sin."

Dobbs' unique "logic" reminds me of the old preacher who only preached on the subject of baptism. Of course, in time, the elders asked him to preach on some other subject. Thus, at the beginning of his next sermon the old preacher announced that it would be about "The Pearl of Great Price". He pointed out that pearls came from oysters, oys-

NINETEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES
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STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS
NOVEMBER 12-16, 2000
NINETEENTH ADL SCHEDULE

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12
 Philippines and Colossians—An Introduction
 Looking at Things to Gain Christ (Ph. 3:1-17)

8:00 AM David Watson
 10:00 AM Dub McClish
 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
 2:00 PM Tim Nichols
 3:00 PM Joseph Meador
 4:00 PM Lester Kemp

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13
 Preaching on "Toward the Goal" (Ph. 3:12-21)
 Holding Fast the Head (Col. 2:13-25)

6:00 AM Don Trickett
 10:00 AM James Meadows
 11:00 AM Michael Hatcher
 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
 2:00 PM DEBATE
 Jeff Morik
 Mac Deaver
 4:15 PM Questions from the debaters
 7:00 PM Tyler Young
 8:00 PM Robert R. Taylor
 9:00 AM Tim Ayres

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14
 Answering False Doctrines: Is it sinful to depite spiritual le-
 gues (should we remain passive and silent in the face of error)?
 (Ph. 2:14-15)? Is it sinful for Christians to possess any of this
 world's goods (is Paul urging a vow of poverty)? (Ph. 4:7-8)?
 Should we bring the past sins, sins, and offenses to origin.
 How do we bring our sins to origin? (Ph. 4:3-7) Are we to bring our
 sins to origin? (Ph. 4:3-7) Are we to bring our sins to origin?
 (Ph. 4:3-7) Are we to bring our sins to origin? (Ph. 4:3-7)
 Two Festal Comparisons (Ph. 2:14-30)
 Answering False Doctrines: Were the Colossians the "elect"
 of God unconditionally by predestination? (Col. 3:12)? Is our
 longevities of others to be unconditional? (Col. 3:17) Does long-

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15
 Translated into the Kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:1-14)
 Difficult Passages: In what sense was the "bond written in ori-
 ginals" "against us" and "contrary to us"? (Col. 2:14)? By what
 means and when did Christ openly triumph over the "principal-
 ities and powers"? (Col. 2:15)? How can one have their peace
 when one has a "bond written in originals" and "contrary to us"?
 (Col. 2:14)? To what does the "epistle from Laodicea" refer? (Col.
 4:16)
 Ammonitions, Announcements, and Greetings (Col. 4:2-18)

8:00 AM Ted J. Clarke
 10:00 AM Tom Hiese
 11:00 AM Tom Wacaster
 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
 2:00 PM DEBATE
 Mac Deaver
 Jeff Morik
 4:15 PM Questions from the debaters
 7:00 PM CURS A CURS
 8:00 PM Bobby Lobell
 9:00 AM Robert Dodson

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16
 Answering False Doctrines: Does God impute sinners into
 Christ's kingdom with no effect on their side? (Col. 1:13) Was
 Jesus merely the "image" or "reflection" of God, rather than
 Deity Himself? (Col. 1:15)? Was Jesus the first Being God
 created? (Col. 1:5)? Does the "bond written in originals" that
 was against us" refer to the record of our sins (Col. 2:14)?
 Paul's Thanksgiving for Their Support (Ph. 4:10-23)
 Difficult Passages: In what sense are we to be in "fear and
 trembling" as we "work out" our salvation (Ph. 2:12)? Why
 does Paul say, "Finally, near the middle of his letter to the Phi-
 lippians (Ph. 3:17) was Paul uncertain about his salvation and
 his position (Ph. 3:17)? How can we "become" "not al-
 ready made perfect" with us (Ph. 3:12) as he (Ph. 3:12,
 15)?

10:00 AM Carl Garner
 11:00 AM Marvin Weil
 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
 2:00 PM DEBATE (same proposition as Wednesday)
 4:15 PM Questions from the audience to the debaters
 8:00 PM DINNER BREAK
 9:00 PM Ken Rabliff
 9:00 PM Derral Conroy

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17
 "Do All in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:16-4:1)
 Philippians and Colossians—A Summary

10:00 AM Carl Garner
 11:00 AM Marvin Weil
 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
 2:00 PM DEBATE (same proposition as Wednesday)
 4:15 PM Questions from the audience to the debaters
 8:00 PM DINNER BREAK
 9:00 PM Ken Rabliff
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**LINDELL MITCHELL—DOBBS'
LOYAL SERVANT AND APOLOGIST**

An example of desperation, “grabbing at straws” and a willingness to do about anything but repent of false doctrine and sinful conduct is Lindell Mitchell’s letter to Joseph D. Meador, Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies. It is dated “10/29/98”. He, as his mentor Dobbs did, wrote before he checked his facts. He evidently trusted in gossips and talebearers rather than verifying for himself what he had heard. Besides pleading for Meador to come to Dobbs defense he saw fit to attack Bob Berard and me. We had resigned our work with Southwest in the winter (Brown) and spring (Berard) in 1993. Mitchell wrote:

The very men who were fired and run out of Southwest in disgrace are stirring this controversy. They are men your elders have no respect for and want no association with. These brethren are demonstrating the same recklessness that led to their dismissal at Southwest. My brother, I implore you not to allow this sort of mean-spirited, underhanded, wrong-headed, shallow, political maneuvering to hold sway at Southwest. If you do, control of the school will effectively be granted to those dismissed from it. I have worked with these brethren and still will, but I will not participate in a lynching, nor should you. (As far as I am personally concerned, the first phrase of the preceding sentence is wishful thinking on Mitchell’s part until and unless he repents. — DPB)

MITCHELL WITHSTOOD TO THE FACE

Having been made aware of the false information of the preceding paragraph several of us withstood Mitchell to his face at the 1998 Denton Lectures regarding the wrong information and “charitable” labels said about and placed upon us. In that meeting he continued to declare that anyone who opposed Dobbs’ view of “except for sin, all of life is worship” was “mean-spirited, underhanded, wrong-headed, shallow, (and) engaged in political maneuvering.”

When it was pointed out to him that Berard and me were not fired nor allowed to resign before we were fired, he did not desire to believe us. Regarding this matter he later wrote each one of the Southwest elders separately. The date on the letter to Southwest elder Marion Taylor is “11-13-1998”. Among other things he wrote the following concerning Berard and me:

In the course of the letter (the October 29, 1998 letter to Joseph Meador — DPB) I said the controversy against brother Dobbs was being stirred by men who were dismissed at Southwest.

For a number of years it has been my understanding that David Brown and Bob Berard were dismissed at Southwest. During our confidential discussions in Livingston, I thought this was confirmed. Did I misunderstand? If so, please inform to this effect so that I can formally apologize to David Brown and Bob Berard for my misunderstanding.

In a letter from the Southwest elders dated November 20, 1998 and signed by Bill Siebert “for the elders” the dates of Berard and my resignations are given as well as the fact that our resignations were accepted on the dates they were tendered. Why that is all the Southwest elders desired to write to Mitchell about our resignations is their business. Moreover, I do not know whether Berard wrote a letter of

resignation or not. However, I did write a letter of resignation. In that letter I made it abundantly clear that I was resigning because I did not care to work with **Perry Hall**, the Southwest preacher of that time. Moreover, the Southwest elders knew exactly the reasons no faithful preacher would long work with Hall. Unless they have lost or discarded it they have the copy of my resignation letter I read to them on the night I met with them to resign.

Having received the letter from the Southwest elders by Bill Siebert, under the date of “11-23-1998”, Mitchell wrote Berard and me. He sent copies of his letter to Meador, the Southwest elders and Dobbs. Except for an introductory sentence the following is what he wrote.

I am still unclear concerning the circumstances of your leaving Southwest. Since you have raised doubts about the events, I am happy to give you the benefit of the doubt.

I apologize for mentioning the disputed circumstances of your departure from the Southwest church of Christ in a private letter to Joe Meador. I deeply regret that brother Meador chose to spread that letter around rather than correct any mistake with me personally. I sincerely regret any distress the disputed statement may have caused.

HONORABLE MEN

It is the policy of the Southwest elders not to write much of anything concerning matters controversial. Hence, when Mitchell supplied me with a copy of Siebert’s November 20, 1998 letter from the Southwest elders in answer to his inquiry, I was somewhat surprised that they responded in writing to Mitchell at all. I worked with the Southwest elders for seven and one half years. I know how they despise such matters. Furthermore, knowing how honorable the Southwest elders (Marion Taylor, Bill Siebert, **Charles Cauley** and **Bert Powell** are), can those who really *know* how they operate imagine any of them allowing anyone to believe a falsehood? If the Southwest elders had in mind firing me if I did not resign, why on the day following my resignation when it was announced to SWSBS did Bert Powell (who was present when I announced my resignation to SWSBS) tell me that he was surprised at my resignation? Moreover, he expressed to me that he thought I would be at Southwest indefinitely? Indeed, in announcing my resignation to the Southwest congregation, why did Powell compliment me on my work with SWSBS? Does anyone think that the Southwest elders would speak out of “both sides of their mouth” as some people are determined to do, while with the same breath denying such sinful conduct? Why would the Southwest elders engage in “spinning” a story to the hurt of another person, congregation or preacher school’s reputation? Would they attempt to build up the Southwest congregation and SWSBS at the expense of other brethren and their work? Indeed, if I had *proof* that such were true (or if others conducted themselves in such a way), does any sane person think that *Contending for the Faith* would accept advertising from Southwest School of Bible Studies as well as have Joseph Meador as a member of its “Editorial Staff”.

Regarding such things consider the following biblical account. The Philipian magistrates violated Roman law

ters were found in the sea, the sea was composed of water and water is the element into which one is baptized. He then proceeded to preach another sermon on baptism. Indeed, sometimes we must laugh to keep from crying at what some people call valid reasoning.

The meaning of I Thessalonians 5:17 is simple and clear. A Christian should always be in the frame of mind to pray. Moreover, a Christian must routinely and with regularity engage in prayer. Wherein lies the difficulty in understanding the passage?

YOUR WHOLE LIFE, YOUR WORK, AND YOUR RECREATION IS WORSHIP

While the previously noted events were transpiring, on November 15, 1998 Dobbs again preached a sermon on the subject of worship at the Fleetwood Church of Christ. Once again towards the end of the sermon while in the process of explaining his perception of the meaning of Romans 12:1 he declared:

What Paul is talking about there in Romans 12:1 is not something that is sporadic and intermittent, but something that is ongoing and continual. He is saying that the greatest influences of Christ and the gospel are to permeate the whole of your life. Even in the common things—the ordinary. Things that someone might consider to be trifle. Even in these things you are to lay them before the Lord, making of your body a living sacrifice. “Whatever you do in word or deed you do all in the name of the Lord giving thanks to God the Father through him.” That is what he calls upon you to do. That is what the table of showbread prefigured, it was saying that the labor of our hands, the activities of our lives, the pedestrian things; all of these are spread out before God and we make of ourselves a living sacrifice. That is a beautiful and powerful thought, and that lifts us to new heights of understanding in the service. It helps us to understand what a price was paid for us, what a gift we ought to bring before God. **THAT IS YOUR WHOLE LIFE, WHATEVER IT IS—YOUR WORK—THAT IS WORSHIP, YOUR RECREATION, EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO, WHEREVER YOU GO, WHATEVER YOU SAY, WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU BRING IT BEFORE GOD** (Caps and bold mine, DPB).

On November 22, 1998 in the morning worship assembly of the Fleetwood congregation **Jim Dearman**, the preacher with the Fleetwood church at that time, in his sermon answered Dobbs’ November 15, 1998 sermon. Dearman’s sermon was transcribed and appears in the December 1998 issue of *CFTF*. In this issue we also printed the second revision of Dobbs’ intended, but never printed, editorial. However, Dobbs made the material contained in each article public as he circulated it far and wide in his many attempts to defend his false doctrine on worship. Copies of the August and December issues are available in the 1998 bound volume of *CFTF*.

DOBBS BALKS AT ACCEPTING THE RESIGNATIONS OF “ADVISORY STAFF” MEMBERS

By December of 1998 Dobbs doctrine on worship was well known among many in the brotherhood. Accordingly, Dobbs found himself under fire from various quarters. A number of the *FF* “Advisory Staff” sought to distance themselves from the paper due to Dobbs’ worship doctrine. Most of those desiring their names to be removed

from the “Advisory Staff” learned that Editor Dobbs is very slow to honor such requests.

I found it rather amusing (though very sad) that in the beginning of the controversy concerning worship, Dobbs rushed to remove my name from the “Advisory Staff” (a misnomer if ever there was one). Of course Dobbs did this because of *CFTF*’s opposition to his false doctrine. Yet, when things took a turn he did not expect (His defense of it backfired in his face.), he did not desire to see all those names removed from the “Advisory Staff” at all, especially in quick succession.

It was always interesting to me that I was put on the “coveted” “Advisory Staff” without ever being contacted, so why should I mind being removed from it without being notified (though Dobbs wrote to Whitten that he intended to do so)?

When things of this nature happen I am reminded of what the late **Guy N. Woods** told me many years ago. He said, “One of the first qualifications for being a gospel preacher is to have skin about one inch thick.” The other word of advice from him was: “Once you have done what you should, assume a great air of indifference toward the unjust criticisms that come your way.” I have jokingly remarked to some who, after numerous requests to have their names removed from the *FF* “Advisory Staff”, which requests were slow to be honored, that they must not know what they are doing, I never had to request that my name be removed. I assure our readers that if one desires to be removed from anything pertaining to *CFTF*, it will be removed post haste — members of the “Editorial Staff” included.

A MORATORIUM

As the Dobbs’ position on worship became more fully known by many more brethren, he began to feel the growing pressure coming from faithful brethren’s opposition to it. Therefore, he informed Whitten that he would place a “moratorium” on the printing of his second revision of his advocacy and defense of his worship doctrine. Yes, this is the same man who early in the dispute informed Whitten that he thought the controversy would be good for *FF*. Whitten, however, informed Dobbs that a moratorium simply meant a postponement. Therefore, as Whitten pointed out to him, Dobbs was actually saying that if and when he deemed it the thing to do, he would print the article or something like it.

At approximately this same period **Joseph Meador** and Whitten met with Dobbs to discuss their concern about Dobbs, his doctrine, and their association in *FF*. During the meeting a number of things were said by Dobbs that indicated he was not about to change. In fact, he blamed others for the problem (as he continues to do). However, he made the most ridiculous and absurd comment regarding I Thessalonians 5:17 I have ever heard. Because Dobbs does not believe that “**Pray without ceasing**” means for one to actually petition God, but means all of one’s life is to be dedicated to God, he literally said to Meador and Whitten that one could pray while asleep. All I can say to such a comment is, may God deliver us from such Bible interpreters.

in beating and imprisoning Paul and Silas. These “noble” magistrates tried to “sweep it under the rug” to save their own necks. To accomplish this they tried to get Paul and Company to leave town quietly. Of them Paul declared, **“They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out”** (Acts 16:37). To Dobbs, Hall, Mitchell and Company we declare the same sentiments from this standpoint. They got themselves into hot water by their own premeditated and purposed decisions. No one made them teach and act the way they are teaching and acting. Now, let them face the music and “pay the piper”. Of course, they ought to repent of their false doctrine and sinful conduct. Such continues to be my prayer and I know it is the prayer of many others.

Before Hall and Dobbs advocated their false doctrine on worship, Mitchell preached numerous times on Spring’s lectureship as well as other sound lectureships with other brethren whom he now considers in a bad light. We, along with many other brethren, counted him as a personal friend and especially a friend to the truth. Throughout that time Mitchell never saw fit to raise any questions to us personally about such things as previously mentioned in his letter to Meador. He only did this when he thought he could use it against us. Indeed, Mitchell is really one to call others “mean-spirited, underhanded, wrong-headed, shallow, and political maneuvering”. As one can tell from Daniel Denham’s article beginning on the front page of this issue, Mitchell continues to involve himself in an on going effort to advocate and defend at all costs Hall, and especially Dobbs in this matter.

Dealing with these brethren reminds me somewhat of my recent debate with the Catholics. Over and over we had to tell the Catholic priest to, **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (I Thessalonians 5:21). The same admonition we offer to Dobbs and company.

We are not playing a child’s game in the shade of a tree. Neither are we engaged in an academic collegiate debate with the outcome being some sort of letter grade. Furthermore, we are not interested in allowing some false teacher to save face because his pride has “gone to seed.” **“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate”** (Proverbs 8:13). I intend to the best of my ability to follow this course without fear or favor.

AN UNSIGNED AND UNDATED DECLARATION

Several months ago an unsigned and undated document titled “A Statement” was distributed. In that document the statement is made: “Dobbs and Mitchell emphatically say, ‘The Bible Does not teach all of life is worship, except for sin.’” This is an *explicit* (in just so many words) denial. Yet, later in the same “undated” document the “unknown” writer(s) state: “Still, Paul did insist that every Christian’s whole life be offered up to God as a holy living sacrifice, which is spiritual service.” Now note the first part of the closing paragraph of the document titled “A Statement”. The “unknown” writer(s) declare:

The discussion should center on the words: (1) present, (2) sacrifice, (3) holy, and (4) spiritual service. The scholarship of the world testifies that these words refer to **WORSHIP** (Caps and bold mine, DPB).

Now if service is synonymous with worship, and all of the Christian life should be lived in service to God, then it does not take a Solomon to see that Dobbs and Mitchell are continuing to propagate their doctrine of “except for sin, all of life is worship”. They do it *implicitly* and not *explicitly* (in so many words). Thus *explicitly* they deny what *implicitly* they teach. Remember Dobbs’ so-called syllogism earlier noted. That “syllogism” is what the “unknown” writer(s) spent almost two pages explaining in the “unsigned” and “undated” document titled “A Statement.” A valid syllogism with the premises being true is the way one determines what is implied. This is the reason that Dobbs early in his writing on this subject attempted to form a syllogism.

DOBBS AND MITCHELL SPEAK OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF THEIR MOUTH

Dobbs and Mitchell continue to defend their “all of life is worship” doctrine. In that material they continue to *explicitly* deny that they believe “except for sin, all of life is worship”. However, unless one understands Dobbs’ false view of “levels of worship,” one will never understand how Dobbs and Mitchell can *explicitly* deny that they believe “all of life, except for sin is worship”. Here is how they attempt to do it. *Dobbs declared that unless the level of worship is specified by the one who is asking if he (Dobbs) believes “except for sin, all of life is worship”, he will answer that he does not believe it.* This is deceitfulness in the extreme. Remember Paul’s words: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; AND BY GOOD WORDS AND FAIR SPEECHES DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE”** (Caps mine, DPB—I Corinthians 16: 17, 18).

TO SPEAK PLAINLY IS TO BE FOUND OUT

Why do Dobbs and Mitchell not speak plainly about these matters? *It could be that they do not want to be found out.* Please consider the following regarding being understood.

And we are also reminded of Lord Darlington’s remark to the Duchess in *Lady Windermere’s Fan*. The Duchess; “Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean.” “I think I had better not,” answers the Lord; “nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out” (Lionel Ruby, *The Art of Making Sense*: New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1954), p. 57.

Indeed, “me Lords” Dobbs and Mitchell, along with others, need to follow Paul’s admonition to **“use great plainness of speech”** (2 Corinthians 3:12). It would also expedite the whole situation if they believed Luke 8:15.

**JESS HALL'S BOOKLET
AND THE DOBBS—TRIMBLE EXCHANGE**

Jess Hall Jr.'s booklet appeared in late 1999 and is published by Hall Publications. Jess Hall Jr.'s son, Eric Hall, Ph.D., J.D., wrote the Preface to the booklet. Following his name it bears the date of June 15, 1999. Over several weeks the booklet was mailed without return address to various persons throughout the brotherhood. In view of the many people all over the country that received it, one cannot help but wonder, how Hall obtained all of those addresses. Did Dobbs assist him in obtaining them?

From late 1998 till August of 1999 Dobbs and Earl Trimble of El Paso, Texas had an exchange of letters on the subject of "except for sin, all of life is worship". It is rather interesting to note a comment made to Trimble by Dobbs. Dobbs' letter is dated "Thursday, July 29, 1999. In it he writes to Trimble, saying:

Enclosed are two articles (*Prokuneeseis*, by Buster Dobbs, and *A Workman That Needs to be Ashamed*, by Jess Hall). The Hall article is to be published at a later time (not in the Firm Foundation) and should not be copied or distributed but is for your eyes only.

Remember that Hall's booklet is dated 1999. No month or day is specified. The preface is dated June 15, 1999. Dobbs sent Trimble a copy of Hall's article accompanying a letter dated July 29, 1999. Hence, Dobbs had seen, read, studied and agreed with Hall's article by July 29, 1999. QUESTION: Did Dobbs assist Hall in anyway in producing the booklet under consideration? Along with Dobbs' article (previously mentioned in the quote in his letter to Trimble) is the following statement from Dobbs. "The two pieces should be sufficient to put this squabble over worship to rest. My article answers all objections and all questions that are relevant to the discussion. There is really nothing more to be said." Now guess where Hall's article ("to be published later" and sent to Trimble by Dobbs) makes its public debut. **It is on page 45 of Hall's booklet.** That being the case, how is it that Dobbs continues to this present hour telling those who are ignorant of his shenanigans that he does not believe that "except for sin, all of life is worship." The Halls (father and son) are adamant in their defense of the doctrine that "except for sin, all of life is worship.

Dobbs' knew about the book while it was in production. Early in 1999 in their exchange Dobbs sent Trimble an article titled, "COMMENTS FROM RESPECTED MEN ON A LIFE OF WORSHIP." That article also finds its place in Hall's booklet on page 93 under the same title with "Appendix D" preceding it. Indeed, Dobbs' name should have been on the booklet along with Jess Hall's as co-author, advisor, co-conspirator or some other appellation to show that Hall and Dobbs are, at least regarding worship, like "two peas in a pod". Does anyone honestly believe that Dobbs had no part in its production and distribution? If you think he did not, I hope you do not end up owning the Brooklyn Bridge or lakefront property in the middle of some desert.

Also, Dobbs has not been bashful in declaring to particular brethren that under certain conditions they could be sued in Federal court for attributing to him the implications

of his doctrine. I wonder if such a legal proceeding could be classified as some "level of worship" according to the Halls, Dobbs and Mitchell's view of Romans 12:1?

By the way, Workman's article was not too lengthy for the late Bill Cline to put in the 1986 *FF*. I wonder why Dobbs did not publish Hall's booklet in *FF*. It is certainly not because of its length. I remember that there were several issues of *FF* in which Dobbs exposed Jimmy Allen's false doctrine on baptism. Just think of how many more people could see what Dobbs and Hall really believe if Dobbs would print Hall's booklet in *FF*. It would do a far better job of revealing where Dobbs and Mitchell stand on "except for sin, all of life is worship", than all the e-mails, letters, telephone calls, faxes and even those three articles under the Dobbs "moratorium" could ever do.

**DOBBS' "AFFIRMED THAT, IN SOME SENSE,
ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP"**

In his preface E. Hall gives a brief of the events that transpired at the Fleetwood congregation following his father's sermon on February 22, 1998 in which his father affirmed that all of life is worship. In the preface he states, **"THE NEXT ERUPTION OCCURRED WHEN BUSTER DOBBS PREACHED A SIMILAR SERMON AT FLEETWOOD IN WHICH HE TOO AFFIRMED THAT, IN SOME SENSE, ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP"** (Caps and bold mine — DPB). Hold on a minute! I have before me an "unsigned" and "undated" document titled, "A Statement". As noted earlier, in the one sentence second paragraph is the emphatic explicit statement, "Dobbs and Mitchell emphatically say, "The Bible Does not teach all of life is worship, except for sin." As Foy E. Wallace, Jr. used to say, "O, that my opponent hath written a book." Indeed, Hall and Dobbs (also Mitchell) have written too much on the subject for their own credibility to remain on a sound footing.

The remainder of Hall's booklet is an effort to advocate and defend the doctrine "except for sin, all of life is worship" as well as refute those who oppose it. Hall gives special attention to Jim Dearman and Gary Workman because these men have spoken and written against the "all of life is worship" doctrine. Indeed, in what paper was Workman's refutation of the false doctrine "all of life is worship" published? It is found in the January 28, 1986 issue of *FF*, Bill Cline, Editor. Cline prefaced Workman's article with the following remarks.

In the recent Fort Worth Lectures, January 12-16, Gary Workman delivered a masterpiece on the subject of worship. His work on this material is an indepth (sic) study of worship and service. Brethren in many places have been disturbed by the false doctrine that everything one does is worship to God. The following article proves this doctrine is not in harmony with God's word. Because of the tremendous value of this material, we have chosen to reprint brother Workman's lecture as it appeared (sic) in the FORT WORTH LECTURES—1986, "EXEGETICAL STUDIES OF GREAT BIBLE THEMES" edited by Eddie Whitten. The article is much longer than standard, but we believe the content warrants it being printed in one installment. Permission for reprint has been graciously granted by both the editor and the publisher.

QUESTION: Where were Hall and Dobbs when this material was printed in *FF* in 1986? Who knows what important matters caused Hall to ignore the article? However, Dobbs was closely associated with *FF* in 1986. Indeed, in June of 1988 on page 7 of *FF* he wrote the following material.

My prayer is that we will quit this carnival atmosphere, and get back to the deep sincerity of true devotion, with the emphasis where it belongs. We must teach our young about the greatness of God, and the strength of self-sacrificing service.

The flimsy and foolish notion that everything we do is worship is so obviously wrong it should not be hard to refute. As simple rebuke ought to be enough! When we keep in mind what worship is, we will have no trouble understanding that many things we do cannot possibly be worship, we degrade worship.

I do not wish to be crude, or rude, but, if everything we do is worship, then picking your nose is worship! We do a lot of things in private that are not worship. Think for a moment of the details of your intimate life, and ask yourself if it is worship. You know it is not! Only those who have an inadequate idea of worship would make such a claim.

We must do everything we do with reference to God. "And whatever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). To do a thing in the name of the Lord is to do that thing by his authority, and with his approval. Everything we do is to be in keeping with the instructions of God's Word (H. A. "Buster" Dobbs, "Fall On Your Face," *Firm Foundation*, June, 1988, p.7).

Nine years later, now editor of *FF*, Dobbs wrote the following material.

Worship must be only that which is due to a sovereign God. It must edify the worshiper. It must consist only of that which is clearly taught in the New Testament.

The holy kiss is not worship. It is a greeting. Paul says so. It edifies no one. It is not something due a reigning God. It is not clearly taught in the New Testament as worship. It is all right for saints to greet one another with a holy kiss if they desire to do so, but it is not an item of worship. To say at the close of a letter, "Salute (Greet) one another with a holy kiss" is a request and not a command. It is like saying, "give my regards to your family." The five times the holy kiss is mentioned in the New Testament it occurs at the close of an epistle. It is a salutation—a polite expression of greeting or goodwill. It is optional. It is not a command. To attempt to promote this gesture to a law and an item of worship is sophomoric.

Foot washing is in order when it helps and benefits our fellow creature but it is not worship because, like the holy kiss, it is directed to humans and not deity (H. A. "Buster" Dobbs, "O Worship the King," *Firm Foundation*, May, 1997, p. 4)

However, about a year and a half later Dobbs wrote the following material.

The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, defines spiritual service. In view of the mercies of God (John 3:16), he tells us to offer our bodies a living sacrifice, which is (now, he is about to tell us what the living sacrifice is...of what it consists...of its nature) which is spiritual service. The living sacrifice is service. Sacrifice connotes worship. The presenting our very souls to God as a sacrifice is worship. That is what it

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Saturday, November 4

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10:00 a.m. In God's Providence We Trust.....Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
11:00 a.m. In God's Establishment of the Kingdom We Trust.....Lee Davis
12:00 p.m. Lunch provided at the building
1:30 p.m. In God's Plan of Salvation We Trust..... Garland Elkins
2:30 p.m. In God's Model for the Church We Trust.....Kris Groda
3:30 p.m. In God, Not Men, We Trust.....Marion Fox

Sunday, November 5

- 9:30 a.m. In God's Pattern for the Home We Trust.....Wayne Price
10:30 a.m. In God's Giving the Increase We Trust.....Eric Lyons
11:30 p.m. Lunch on your own
2:00 p.m. In God, As Others Have, We Trust..... Bob Patterson
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is! Paul said so (H. A. "Buster" Dobbs, "Holy and Unholy," *Firm Foundation*, February 1999, page 4).

Why did Dobbs not give us a fuller explanation of his views on "levels of worship," Romans 12:1 and so forth in his articles in 1986, 1988 and 1997? Was the brotherhood not worthy of the spiritual benefits to be derived from Dobbs' wise biblical, theological, hermeneutical and logical acumen? Surely during those years he had nothing to hide. And, of course he had no reason to change his views regarding "all of life being worship" between May of 1997 and February of 1999—did he? Moreover, why is it that Hall in his booklet is forthright and clear in his defense of his doctrine, but Dobbs and Mitchell *deny explicitly* (while they *affirm implicitly*) what Hall *explicitly and implicitly affirms*?

STOP THE PRESSES!

Now comes an article in the September, 2000 issue of *FF* by "Jack P. Lewis, Ph. D." of Harding Graduate School fame. (By the way, Dobbs left off one of Lewis' doctorates. He has one from Harvard in New Testament and another from Hebrew Union in Old Testament.) The article is entitled "Spiritual Service" and is found on page 23. Do we dare suppose that Dobbs asked Lewis to write the article? Also, I wonder if Lewis has seen all that Dobbs and Hall have written on the subject of "except for sin, all life is worship." Since Dobbs has used Lewis several times in *FF* lately, I wonder if he could get him to prepare an article on the *authority of elders* or maybe the use of *modern versions of the Bible*.

Now back to Lewis' article on worship. The article does not teach what Dobbs and Hall believe regarding worship. It is a smoke screen that Dobbs is putting up to try to appear as if he never did affirm, propagate and defend what we have proven that he has. He simply practices duplicity. Notice what Lewis concludes toward the end of his article on page 24.

A person should not allow the limitations of the English words worship and serve and the variety translators have used in translating these words to confuse him. Though all of life should be *latreia* when conducted in obedience to God, **THERE WERE PERIODS OF WORSHIP DESIGNATED BY OTHER TERMS THAT ARE A PART OF LIFE BUT NOT ALL OF IT** (Caps and bold mine — DPB). Abraham was going to a place to worship as he went to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:5).

Of Abraham's offering of Isaac at the Fleetwood congregation, July 5, 1998, Dobbs declared: "sometimes people think of that as service, and sometimes they think of it as worship." Then in his September 4, 1998 fax to Whitten he set out six levels of worship. Of level four wherein he expresses his views on Romans 12:1 he writes, "This involves all of life and in this sense all of life is, or should be, worship, but is not when we sin." Regarding the sixth level of worship, he states concerning the meaning of Colossians 3:17, "That is continual—all of life. We wash baby diapers in the name of the Lord. We mop the floor in the name of the Lord. All of life is worship in this sense, but not when we sin." In the same fax to Whitten, Dobbs also declared, "Now, if a person says, 'Is all of life worship?'"

the answer has to be what level of worship are you talking about?"

From the beginning of this controversy those of us who have opposed Dobbs' doctrine as it has clearly been set out in his and Hall's own words have *emphasized that while all of one's worship to God is a part of his service to God, not all service to God is worship*.

Following his example of Abraham, Lewis continues to list "worship designated by other terms that are a part of life but not all of it." He continues with the list.

Elkanah went to Shiloh each year to worship (1Sam. 1:3). People entered the gates of Jerusalem to worship (Jer. 7:2; 26:2). Greeks came up to worship (John 12:20). The Ethiopian came to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8:27; *proskynein*). Paul came to Jerusalem to worship God (Acts 24:11).

If Lewis is teaching Dobbs' doctrine concerning worship, then Elkanah in the very process of going to Shiloh, must have been worshipping God on some "level" other than the worship he intended to perform at Shiloh. Also, when the People "entered the gates" such entering must have been on some "level of worship" to God different from the worship they were going to do later in Jerusalem. Furthermore, when the "Greeks came up to worship", whatever was involved in their coming was on some "level" of worship. It must have been different from the worship in which they intended to engage after they "came up". Indeed, in the process of the Ethiopian coming to Jerusalem, was he worshipping on some "level" different from the "level" on which he would worship after arriving in Jerusalem? Was their some "level of worship" in which Paul engaged in the process of his coming to Jerusalem that differs from the worship he intended to perform when he arrived in Jerusalem. Is Lewis saying that if Paul took a bath on his way to Jerusalem that such is on some "level of worship"? Remember, Dobbs' sixth level of worship "is continual—all of life. We wash baby diapers in the name of the Lord. We mop the floor in the name of the Lord. All of life is worship in this sense. But not when we sin." Is this what Lewis means? That is what Dobbs means.

Lewis' final paragraph reads:

In my understanding, the person who argues that all of life is worship, and that he can be just as well off at the lake or on the golf course as he can be when assembled with his brothers is not taking Scripture and his relation to God seriously.

I can only say a hearty "amen" to Lewis' last paragraph. However, it does not touch top, side or bottom of what Hall, Dobbs and Mitchell teach regarding worship. Does Lewis allow (as Dobbs does) for some level of worship wherein one washes baby diapers or mops the floor in the name of the Lord—thus, in so doing engages in some "level" of worship?

WHERE IS HUGO MCCORD'S ARTICLE PERTAINING TO THE "ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP" DOCTRINE?

On page 11 in the March 2000 issue of *FF* Dobbs sang the praises of McCord and Perry B. Cotham, a very good friend of McCord's. Also, McCord holds a doctorate. Indeed, Dobbs routinely uses McCord's articles, as he did in the September 2000 edition of *FF*. However, Cotham sent

me an article by McCord regarding his views of the "all of life is worship" doctrine. It seems only appropriate, fair and right that Dobbs' print McCord's article in *FF*. Moreover, why does not McCord send his article to Jack Lewis to see if Lewis approves of McCord's article? Better than that, just maybe they should quiz Dobbs and Hall about what they really believe about the doctrine of "except for sin, all of life is worship" and "levels" and "intensity" of worship, about "picking noses," "mopping floors" and "changing baby diapers" along with other "acts" of worship. It just may be that Dobbs and Hall could enlighten the good brethren doctors on these matters.

ALL THINGS THAT ARE RIGHT TO DO ARE NOT PLEASANT

It gives me no pleasure at all in having to deal with these matters. Over thirty years ago the late **James D. Bales** was one of my teachers when I attended Harding College. I counted him one of the best teachers I had while there. I had the privilege of working in his files. I helped him sometimes in reading proof on his galley sheets. I consulted with him often. After I left Harding I stayed in contact with him. Hence, when he advocated the view that the alien sinner is not amenable to the New Testament's teaching regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage as well as other errors regarding marriage, I was greatly saddened. However, my respect and love for and friendship with him did not mean that I was going to be quite regarding his false teaching. Indeed about twenty years ago, along with a sister congregation in Visalia, California, the Eastside Church of Christ in Muskogee, Oklahoma where I was preaching at the time offered to host a debate between Bales and the late **Thomas B. Warren**. Bales declined because of his health. Those things were not pleasant things

in which to be involved. However, they were right and necessary.

Do I find it pleasant to oppose Dobbs and company's doctrine of "except for sin, all of life is worship doctrine"? I certainly do not. However, all things that are right to do are not always pleasant. Certainly that is the case with our Lord's willingness to die on the cross that our sins could be forgiven. Was it a pleasant thing for him to do? Did he do the right thing? Did he do it with the right motive? To ask those questions is to answer them. I will grant that one may do right things with wrong motives, wrong things with wrong motives and wrong things with right motives. However, God says that persons can do right things with right motives—even oppose brethren who teach false doctrines. If that is not the case, then there is no use for any of us to follow Jesus. Indeed, if I can remember Christ's vicarious death on the cross as an example for me to follow, I can also remember our Lord's opposition to false teachers, done in the right way and with right motives. Such is the case in our opposition to 'Dobbs and company' on the subject herein discussed. It is also true regarding our opposition to other errors that arise from time to time and that will continue to appear to do so until the end of time. Yes, you too will oppose some person for some reason in your lifetime. When that time comes, will you do it? And, will you do it with the right motive (Galatians 2:11)? If you are faithful to the Lord you will so do or you will err from the truth regarding the defence of the faith (Jude 3). If you do err in refusing to defend the truth, maybe some one will love you enough to attempt your correction. Such opposition to false teaching and teachers is as much a part of the practice of Christianity as is scriptural worship.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

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Restoration Reflections...

JOE BLUE: A FAITHFUL SOLDIER

Paul Vaughn

In his second letter to Timothy the apostle Paul said, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 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 2:2, 3). From these two verses it is easily seen that Christians are at war. This war is not fleshly, but spiritual. The children of God are at war with the devil and those who follow his wicked ways. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

One of the brave and faithful soldiers in the battle against evil was Joe Blue from Viola, Arkansas. I first heard of brother Blue when my wife and I were attending a funeral at Salem, Arkansas. The burial was at Morriston, Arkansas. Keith Cozort, a faithful gospel preacher from Calera, Alabama, was at the funeral and he showed me Joe Blue's grave. Joe Blue was Keith's great-uncle.

Joe Blue was born on September 18, 1875 in Izard County, Arkansas. When he was eleven, Joe's father bought a farm near Salem, Arkansas. Blue had six brothers and five sisters. When he was sixteen years, old Joe obeyed the gospel; he was baptized by J.M. Billingsley.

EDUCATION

Growing up in the Ozark Mountains of North Arkansas in the later end of the 1800's gave little opportunity for a good education. As a child Blue along with his brothers and sisters attended a local school that lasted about four months of the year. When he was eighteen, Joe attended school at Agnos, Arkansas for ten months. He was taught by W.R. Chestnut. While at Agnos he worshiped with the local church of Christ and received many important lessons that helped him throughout his life.

When Blue was nineteen years old, he desired more education so he "traded a long-legged mule for a year's schooling at Viola, Arkansas."¹ Blue's father was a little disappointed at the trade and said, that Joe "had lost a good mule."² The only material things Blue had when he attended the school at Viola was a change of clothes. His teacher at Viola was E.M. Perkins. When Blue was twenty, he went to school at Salem, Arkansas, studying under J. H. Caldwell.



FIRST STEP TO PREACHING AND MARRIAGE

It was October 1, 1896 when Blue began to travel with two gospel preachers, Willie H. George and S. C. Garner. They did the preaching and Blue would read a chapter out of the Bible and pray. When Blue left on the trip to travel with George and Garner, the only things he had were a horse, saddle, and a change of clothes. His father gave him a pair of saddle bags and a Bible.

Joe Blue preached his first sermon on November 1, 1896 at the Lebanon Schoolhouse near Poughkeepsie. During his tour with George and Garner, Blue received his first pay as a worker in the church. He received seventy-five cents for his efforts.

Blue was married to Mary Montgomery on November 9, 1897. He was a man with good humor and would say after he married Mary that this was the best trade he ever

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made. "She had a mare and saddle, one cow, one sheep, and \$25.15."³ Joe and Mary started farming. She worked long days by his side. He would farm during the week and preach on Sunday.

PREACHING IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS

When one travels around this nation, one comes upon pockets where the church of Christ is very strong. This did not just happen by chance. Faithful Christians who were willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ created such situations. Traveling in Northern Arkansas, you find a great number of congregations. Some of these are the legacies of Joe Blue.

In 1897 Blue began to preach in the rural communities of Northern Arkansas. He preached in homes and schoolhouses. The only possessions he had was a change of clothes, his Bible, and a copy of T.W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*. In that year he baptized 75 people and established one church of Christ.

NO SECTARIAN SERMON PREACHED

When Joe and Mary married, there were six members of the church in Salem, Arkansas. In that neighborhood there was a Baptist church, Methodist Church, Holiness Church, and a Presbyterian Church. During the life of Joe Blue, the denominations moved out of the area and there was not a denominational sermon preached in the area for 35 years.

This did not come easy. Joe Blue went through much suffering for the message he preached. Blue said,


I have been stoned, beaten with green walnuts, and with eggs. I have had dynamite put under the pulpit where I was preaching. I have had to be guarded while I preached. I have been threatened to take me out of the pulpit and 'fix' me so I would never be able to get into another one. I have had them threaten to hang me. I suffered all this for the cause of our Lord, and yet have not begun to suffer what our Lord suffered, or the apostles.⁴

Joe Blue was truly a champion for New Testament Christianity! He departed this life in September 1954, about six months after the death of Mary, his wife. They had three children and one girl they raised from a child. During his life he baptized thousands, held 870 gospel meetings, and had over 100 debates. He did all to the glory of God! Today we need more gospel preachers of the character and quality of Joe Blue.


ENDNOTES

1. Boyd Morgan, *Arkansas Angels*, College Press, Paragould, Arkansas, 1995, p. 79.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.* p. 80.
4. Eugene Britnell, editor, *The Sower*, Little Rock, Vol. 32, #2.

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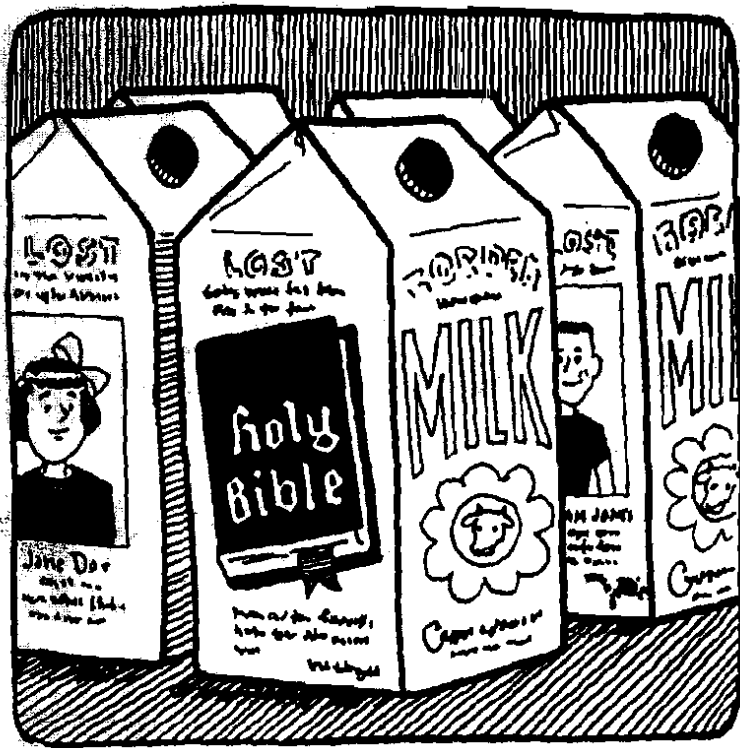
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Seeing It Helps Saying It...

REWARD OFFERED

Jodie Boren



In II Kings 22:8 an astonishing event takes place. Josiah, king of Judah, was in the 18th year of his reign in Jerusalem. He was a good king and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. Josiah ordered the temple to be repaired and in this work the book of the law was found! God's will had been lost? Lost in the house of God? It is unbelievable that this could happen! This book is called the book of the covenant in chapter 23:2. In II Chronicles 34:14 it called the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.

GOD'S WORD—LOST IN THE CHURCH

As incredible as it may sound, God's will, to a great extent, has been lost in the church today. Some time ago the *Christian Chronicle* printed a survey taken by Abilene Christian University's Center for Church Enrichment in Abilene, Texas. Notice just a few of the findings of the 348 pulpit preachers of the churches of Christ that were polled. A little over six percent do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. A little over five percent do not believe the resurrection is a historical fact. Over 21 percent do not believe the scriptures prohibit women preachers. Some 70 percent do not believe churches need common doctrine. There are other revealing findings of which all are very important for our consideration. There is, however, one other that must be mentioned because it is most significant. Almost 11 percent do not believe the scriptures are inerrant!

If the Bible is not inerrant, then which part of it, if any, is free from error? With this type of fallacious reasoning it would be impossible to know what to believe and what not to believe. Who would make the decision as to what part is accurate and what part is not?



LYING PREACHERS

Where do these preachers get such ideas? Jesus plainly declares that his word is truth (John 17:17). If it is truth, and I believe this with all my heart, then it is free from error. We are begotten by this word of truth (James 1:18). We are built up by this word of truth (Acts 20:32). This word of truth instructs us in all things (II Timothy 3:16,17). We could go on and on but this will suffice. Did Jesus not say that we can know the truth (John 8:32)? Are the apostles and Jesus misleading us?

Go with me back to II Kings 22. Verse 13 tells us that the wrath of God came to those who hearkened not unto his will. We worship the same God as they did. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Also, we know that he is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Why, then, should we think he will treat us differently if we fail to heed his word as they did in our text?

ELDERS LOVE TO HAVE IT SO

These preachers who deny the virgin birth, who do not believe in the inerrancy of the scriptures, et. al, have forsaken God (see vs. 17) by teaching these false doctrines just as surely as did the people in Josiah's day. They have lost God's word, so to speak.

And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book (II Kings 23:3).

May we determine that this will be our response to God's will. We must walk as Josiah did as he walked in the way of David, his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left (II Kings 22:2). If we do, God will reward our faithfulness with a crown of life. *We must not lose God's book.*

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THOMAS B. WARREN

Darrell Conley

Thomas B. Warren is dead. He passed from this life in the second week of August. So ends the earthly life of one of the most brilliant and productive preachers of the gospel since Alexander Campbell. Although I did not agree with every position brother Warren took, I learned much of what I know from him.

AN HONOR TO KNOW HIM

It was my honor to know him most of my life. I first met him when I was twelve years old. I went with my father from Texas City, where he was preaching, to the Lyons and Majestic church in Houston, where **J. Porter Wilhite** preached, to practice for a debate which he had coming soon with a Baptist preacher. Along the way we stopped at the Galena Park church building where we picked up the young Tom Warren, who was to serve in the debate as one of my father's moderators along with Wilhite. This was my first meeting with brother Warren. I remember how proud I was when brother Warren motioned me to come over during one of my father's speeches that night, pointed out a passage in a book, and asked me to take it to my dad and point it out to him. I did and could hardly wait for him to refer to it. He never did. After we dropped off brother Warren, I asked him why he ignored the book. He said, "Oh, it was filled with a bunch of Greek and stuff."

Warren was one of the two true geniuses I have known. In addition to being a master of Greek and the Bible, he held a Ph. D. from Vanderbilt University in Philosophy. He was a great writer, preacher, debater, radio speaker, and teacher. In addition he was an artist and worked here in San Antonio as a commercial artist before becoming a preacher. He illustrated many of his own books and charts. If he had one failing, it was that he was so much more intelligent than the average person, that he was unaware when he was above our heads.

A GREAT DEBATER

I attended all three of his major debates: the Warren-Flew Debate in 1976 in Denton, Texas, on the existence of God; the Warren-Matson Debate in 1978 in Tampa, Florida, on the existence of God; and the Warren-Barnhardt Debate in Denton, Texas, in 1980 on Utilitarianism. After suffering a severe heart attack and undergoing bypass surgery, his doctor told him he had to give up many of his activities, debating being one of them. He reluctantly did so. He devoted himself to teaching, preaching, and writing.

It is a very small thing and something that likely neither man would remember, but I am the one who put the two men that I consider geniuses together. The other man is my friend in Atlanta, **Bob Camp**. In a conversation years ago with Bob Camp, he was lamenting the fact that so few preachers were interested in discussing logic. Brother Warren happened to be in town holding a meeting at the



Avondale congregation. I told Bob that if he was really interested in talking about logic with someone, he ought to call **Tom Warren**. I later heard brother Warren tell the story of how he was in a motel in Atlanta in a meeting at Avondale and got a phone call from someone named Bob Camp who said he wanted to come over and talk about logic. He thought that this is probably someone who does not even know what logic is, but he told him to come over anyway. Thus began one of the closest associations in brother Warren's life. Many of the

things that I heard brother Warren say in his debates and lectures in later years, I first heard from Bob Camp. He also served as one of the moderators during the Warren-Matson Debate in Tampa, Florida.

HIS WORK LIVES ON

Through the years Thomas Warren produced works on many important subjects: anti-ism; denominational false doctrines; marriage; marriage and divorce; the existence of God; logic and Biblical hermeneutics; bereavement; gospel obedience; and much more. He was a gospel journalist, editing the *Spiritual Sword* for many years, and the Getwell Lectures along with Garland Elkins. He did much more writing that has not yet been published. Many books were in the last stages of completion. It is my hope that perhaps his son will put them in finished form and release them. He will be missed, but he leaves behind a rich legacy—richer than most. He deserves his rest. Thank God for Thomas B. Warren.

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One Woman's Perspective...

"YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS"

Annette B. Cates

When our granddaughter Maggie was two years old, I overheard her respond to correction from her mother with, "Mommy, you're not serious." Her mother, as she well should have, let Maggie know in no uncertain terms that she was indeed serious. It seems to me that this is the same attitude that the world and even many in the church have toward God and his word. The Apostle Paul warned, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

In many areas we can see the same relationship between humanity and God as between parent and child. For example, Maggie's reaction to her mother was not unlike that of Eve in the Garden of Eden. According to the second and third chapters of Genesis, God told Adam and Eve specifically—"commanded" (2:16)—that they could freely eat of every tree in the Garden except from the tree of knowl-

edge of good and evil. But, Satan readily convinced Eve that God was not serious. She, in turn, brought Adam into disobedience. We know the result of their actions. They were put out of the Garden, Eve's sorrow and pain were multiplied, Adam toiled by the sweat of his brow, and the world was introduced to the destruction of sin.

RATIONALIZING SIN

Like Eve, we may know what is right, but when we WANT to do wrong, first we rationalize the temptation, then we justify our participation. Looking at it another way, we compromise, then we move into outright disobedience and error. Or, we are exposed to, then tolerate, then accept sinful lifestyles. This progression is outlined in Psalm 1:1 as first walking with the ungodly, then standing



with the sinners, and finally, sitting with the scornful. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15). Decisions to do wrong are made by our flesh and not by the spiritual aspects of our lives. It is when we want to do wrong that we are really saying, "God, You're not serious." From then on, we place our wishes above God's will, making ourselves vulnerable to temptation and deception.

**DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE
GOD IS SERIOUS?**

The vast majority of people in the United States will say that they believe in God. But, how many of this majority actually live lives of obedient faith? How many claim ANY church membership? Of that number, how many attend services with ANY regularity? An even smaller number have any ties to the church for which God gave his only begotten son, and even fewer actively engage in worship and service. Why? They do not believe God is serious. "God, You're not serious when you tell me that there is only one church. After all, we're all headed to the same destination; we're just taking different roads to get there." Yes, it is true that there are many different denominations that claim to be following the Bible. However, they have their own man-made creeds that guide them while they give lip service to God's word. This is the kind of thinking that Jesus condemned in Matthew 15:8,9,13, "This people...honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. ...Every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Yes, God is indeed serious. After all, he gave his only begotten son to die for the one church, and he gave us his word for us to know how to access the blood of Christ and be added to the church.

"God, You're not serious when you tell me there are commands to be obeyed. After all, my conscience is a sufficient guide." Yes, there is a tendency to put feelings over obedience. This attitude is well described in Proverbs 30:12, "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." True, our consciences can help us in making our decisions, but the conscience must be taught to do right in the first place. Paul summed up the role of a properly trained conscience with these words that contrast those who are spiritually

weak with those who are strong in faith: "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 5:13,14). Yes, God is indeed serious. We cannot leave our spiritual welfare to doing whatever makes us feel "religious" and disregard the commands of God.

"God, You're not serious when you tell me I must live a faithful Christian life. After all, I've been baptized." While it is true that baptism puts one into Christ (Acts 2:38; Colossians 2:12), this is just the beginning of one's new life. Many are baptized, but never continue in faithfulness. To be a Christian, one must be Christ-like. This includes growing spiritually (II Peter 1:5-8), praying without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17), studying God's word (II Timothy 2:15), worshipping regularly (Hebrews 10:25), and maintaining a high standard in morality and ethics (Galatians 5:13-26). Yes, God is indeed serious. Those who remain faithful are the ones who have a heavenly home awaiting them. "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

**GOD MEANS WHAT HE SAYS AND
SAYS WHAT HE MEANS**

"You're not serious" is a phrase that diminishes the authority of the one who has given the command, whether God or parent. How dare we mere mortals presume to be the judge of God's seriousness! He has given us his word. Do we believe it? Do we dismiss it as something not relevant to our lives today? Do we think that God meant what he said in the Old Testament, but not in the New Testament age? Yes, God is indeed serious. His judgment is as sure today as it has been from the day of creation.

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Biblical Questions...

"IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A 'SECT' OR A 'CULT'?"

Noah Hackworth

I have been reading the Bible for more than forty years and have never uncovered any information that would classify a person or persons as cultists who believed and practiced things authorized by Christ (Colossians 3:17). The church of the Lord could have "sects" develop within it, but believing and practicing what is authorized by the Lord could never make us a cult. I am aware of the fact that Paul was accused of being a part of a sect (Acts 28:22), but this poses no problem once we know the meaning of "sect" and understand the context in which it is used.

WHAT IS A SECT?

"A choosing," according to W.E. Vine is the translation of the Greek word "hairesis." It properly denotes a predilection either for a particular truth, or for a perversion of one, generally with the expectation of personal advantage; hence, a division and the formation of in a party or sect in contrast to the uniting power of "the truth," held to; a sect is a division developed and brought to an issue.

The Greek word translated 'sect' in the Common Version, is Hairesis, which occurs, in all its inflections, but nine times in the New Testament, and is translated in the Common Version 'heresy' four times, and 'sect' five times, which shows that the translators used the words 'sect' and 'heresy' interchangeably, as both signifying the same thing, and no one uses the term 'heresy' in a favorable sense (Elijah Goodwin, *New Testament Christianity*, Volume 1, Edited by Z.T. Sweeney, p. 31).

The word used in the remarks made to Paul in Acts 28:22 would refer to "a party cut off or separated from the true church of Christ." "The people who classified the movement with which Paul was associated regarded him and those with him who embraced Christianity from among the Jews, as a sect, a party cut off from the great body of the Jewish nation" (Ibid, p. 32).

WHAT IS A CULT?

Defined by a dictionary, a cult is:

"1. a system or community of religious worship and ritual, especially one focusing upon a single deity or spirit. 2. a. Obsessive devotion or veneration for a person, principle, or ideal. b. The object of such devotion. 3. An exclusive group of persons sharing an esoteric interest." The important thing to be remembered here is that dictionary definitions are not always completely true or reliable. The above definitions are fraught with difficulties, especially when attempts are made to apply them to Christians and New Testament Christianity. Two better definitions of cults are: "A cult, then, is any religious movement which claims the backing of Christ or the Bible, but distorts the central message by 1) an additional revelation, and 2) by displacing a fundamental tenet of faith with a secondary matter" (Edmond G. Gruss, *Cults and the Occult* in the

Age of Aquarius, quoted by Curtis Cates in "Some Modern Cults, Sects, Movements And World Religions" in "What is a Cult," *Sixth Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship*, Getwell Church of Christ, Memphis, TN., p.22).



A cult is a movement of social protest and personal affirmation. It offers a total way of life to those who are alienated from their families and the attitudes by which their families prepare them for successful adulthood. Cults attract the dispossessed, the bored, the lonely. Neither poverty nor youth is a necessary precondition for feeling the lure of a cult (Lowell D. Streiker, *The Cults Are Coming*, Ibid).

Cults usually practice mind control (brainwashing), by taking away a person's free will. Cults usually insist that individuals practice a rigorous schedule with no aberration, which will obviously call for an absolute retreat from the family and the outside world. This procedure is as different from New Testament Christianity as day is from night, and this is because New Testament Christianity is not cultish.



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RECENT DEFINITIONS OF CULTS AND CULTISM

Not all statements and/or quotes we receive from different sources are reliable. One must be careful when using statements thought to be quotes of another person or persons when there is insufficient verification, unless it is made perfectly clear that the "statements" or "quotes" are "alleged" or "reported" statements and/or quotes. To act contrary to this policy is not acceptable journalism. We are never at liberty to misrepresent anyone, especially our adversaries. I did not see "60 Minutes" reportedly aired by CBS on June 26, 1999, but **Janet Reno**, Attorney General of the United States was reportedly interviewed on this popular television show during which she is said to have given her definition of cultism. But who is Janet Reno? To many she is (1) disgusting, outspoken and short of sound judgment. Anyone who orders the troops to storm the place where a small, innocent boy is living to take him by force, which was totally unnecessary, needs to be "watched;" (2) obviously prejudiced against any form of religion that calls for a disciplined life; (3) totally unqualified to speak about morality and/or religion; (3) an ultra-liberal politician who marches to the beat of the tune played by the current feminist movement. If the Attorney General did give "her definitions" (which will follow) of cultism, where did she get them? Did they originate in her mind or in the mind of someone else?

Or to put it more bluntly: did she think of that herself or did someone tell her? However, if civil authority should issue certain mandates in the future relative to what, in its opinion, is cultism, it would create the immediate need for New Testament Christians to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). If the following definitions of cultism, whether or not given by the Attorney General, are true, we who are members of the churches of Christ have been cultists all along and we never even knew it. According to our Attorney General a cultist is one (1) who has a strong belief in the Bible and the Second Coming of Christ; (2) who frequently attends Bible studies; (3) who has a high level of financial giving to a Christian cause; (4) who home schools their children; (5) who has a strong belief in the Second Amendment, and (6) who distrusts big government. Whoever gave these definitions also suggested that "any one of these may qualify a person as a cultist but certainly more than one of these would cause us to look at this person as a threat, and his family as being in a risk situation that qualifies for government interference."

OUR ANALYSIS

A strong belief in the Bible and the Second Coming of Christ does not make one a cultist. If this were the case, some of the greatest scientists, outstanding philosophers and best men of all ages have been cultists, for they believed the Bible. How about the following? **Dr. William Lyon Phelps**, noted educator; **Sir Walter Scott**; **Dr. Schurman**, President of Cornell University; **Andrew Jackson**; **Thomas Jefferson**, **Abraham Lincoln**; **John**

Quincy Adams; **Daniel Webster**; **Theodore Roosevelt**; **Woodrow Wilson**; **Napoleon Bonaparte**, Emperor of France; **Lord Roberts**; **Isaac Walton**; **Jean Rousseau**; **Charles A. Dana**, American Journalist; **John Ruskin**; **Immanuel Kant**, German metaphysician; **David J. Brewer**, U.S. Supreme Court; **Thomas Henry Huxley**, English biologist; **Isaac Newton**, **Patrick Henry** (George DeHoff, *Why We Believe the Bible*, DeHoff Publications, Murfreesboro, TN: 1956, pp. 13-15). Our Attorney General, or whoever attempted to define a cultist needs to proceed with caution lest they find themselves without support, plus worse things that could come upon them (cf. John 5:14).

Next, a person who frequently attends Bible classes is not a cultist. We agree that if a person who teaches a Bible class is a nit wit, or half wit, or someone who takes biblical passages out of context and misapplies them, he or she may be a cultist. Such people may very well wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:16), but the Bible accurately taught makes better people who are able to live together in a better world, plus the fact that the Bible teaches Bible believers to be obedient to civil law (Romans 13). This is conducive to a lawful, peaceful, society. Believing the Bible makes a cultist? Never! Next, providing generous support for a Christian cause does not make one a cultist per se, unless the cause being supported is subversive and undermining. If a Christian cause is designed to help people provide for themselves physically, stand on their own feet emotionally, contribute to the education of society, as well as acknowledge the God of the universe, it will not lead to cultism. It could not because of the very nature of the case.

Next, "home schooling" children does not a cultist make. Home schooling has become necessary in some cases because of the corruption of today's educational system, school violence, and the moral "standards" of those who stand in front of children. Any one of the above, says Attorney General Janet Reno, may qualify a person as a cultist, and more than one of these things would cause the government to look at such a person as a threat to his or her family and prompt government interference.

OUR RESPONSE

Many of us are reminded of the bug that flew head-long into a street light because he resented light. The next morning, however, the street light was still there and the bug lay dead on the ground. Too, we will definitely take the attitude of the youthful David toward the giant Goliath: "**Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God**" (I Samuel 17:26)? We have respect for the office of Attorney General, but as far as the woman who occupies it is concerned we say: Who is Janet Reno that we should be moved into the wrong direction by her "daffynitions"?

—4400 W. Tulare Avenue
Visalia, California 93277

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Eddie Whitten

The Apostle Paul gave an important principle when he wrote to the churches in Thessalonica to **"Pray without ceasing"** (I Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is a blessing effectively opened only to those to whom the blessing has been given. Prayer is a spiritual blessing and Paul tells us that **"all spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus"** (Ephesians 1:3). One **"gets into Christ"** through the medium of baptism (Galatians 3:27). In that passage, Paul wrote: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The Apostle Peter wrote that all who are baptized are added to the church (Acts 2:38-47). The logical conclusion then is that all who are baptized for the right purpose and upon the right premises are added to the church which is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). Peter also stated that in the act of scriptural baptism we become saved (I Peter 3:21). We become disciples of Christ, children of God begotten by the gospel (I Corinthians 4:15), justified by faith (Romans 5:1), heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:29). We also read what Luke recorded in Acts 11:26, **"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."**

With this background, we are able to discern that prayer is a spiritual blessing reserved for Christians. Christians are those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ (Hebrews 5:9; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). The admonition of Paul in our text is that Christians are to pray without ceasing. What did Paul mean by that? Is this a literal command that every Christian is to go about every minute in prayer? It would be a physical impossibility for every Christian to pray constantly, without interruption, and be able to do anything else like eat, sleep, work, play, rest or worship. Also, the fact that this is a command makes it something we have no

choice but to do; not to obey a command of God causes one to sin. If God has given a command that we cannot keep and if not keeping the command constitutes sin, then God, through this command, causes us to sin. We know by other teaching of the Bible that this cannot be. James says, **"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man...."** (James 1:13).



To falsely assign constant, uninterrupted, continuous prayer to the Christian raises other false interpretations. Colossians 3:16-17 addresses the subject of acceptable music in worship and the authority for such. Paul recorded by inspiration: **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."** "In the name of" always suggests "by the authority of." God is saying that whatever we do, we do only because Jesus has granted the authority to do it. Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are sung by the authority of Jesus, and this authority is given to the church. The "giving of thanks" is an expression of worship as we offer thanksgiving unto God for whatever he has authorized us to do.

Another false interpretation arises in connection with Philippians 4:6. Here Paul says, **"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."** With the erroneous supposition that prayer is continuous without interruption, the false assumption is made that our lifestyle becomes one of prayer. Let us notice that Paul mentions "prayer," "supplication," "thanksgiving," and "requests" in this passage. It is assumed that "prayer" is something different from "supplication, thanksgiving and requests." Since supplication, thanksgiving and re-

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quests are things expressed, then prayer must be something else. That something else is "lifestyle," it is said. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Supplications, thanksgiving and requests are "differentiated parts of prayer," according to Dr. J. E. Choate, an imminent authority on the English language, a retired professor from David Lipscomb University, and a beloved author of many sound, Biblical and beneficial articles in our brotherhood publications. When one is trying to prove a text taken out of context, he runs the risk of generating a gigantic pretext.

BIBLICAL TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER

Psalms 72:20: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

Matthew 6:6: "But thou, *when thou prayest*, (emp. Mine, EW) enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret...."

Matthew 6:7: "But *when ye pray*, use not vain repetitions."

Acts 9:9: "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter *went up upon the housetop to pray* about the sixth hour...."

These are only a few of the passages of the Bible that clearly teach that prayer is an activity in which the Christian is engaged at particular times. Teaching in the Bible

about a certain subject must be in harmony with all the other teaching in the Bible on the same subject. Therefore, all passages that refer to prayer or praying must be considered in view of having a beginning and an ending. When James said "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16), he had to mean that prayer had to have a beginning and an end. When Paul said "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us...." (Colossians 4:2-3), it could not mean constant, uninterrupted prayer and remain in harmony with the above illustrations of prayer.

Prayer is a blessing precious beyond description. For anyone to adulterate God's grace to man to approach his majestic throne just to prove an unjustifiable position is tragic to say the least.

We should cherish every opportunity we have to approach our Heavenly Father in prayer. We can never repay the price paid for our salvation. The sacrifice Jesus made on the cross of Calvary made us a kingdom of priests, and as priests, we have the signal honor of approaching God's throne. Let us be satisfied with truth and reject error.

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Editorial...

RUNNING FROM CONTROVERSY

"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

No faithful child of God believes that Christians should seek controversy for the sake of controversy. Jesus taught the apostles to "have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50). Paul directed us to do our best to live in peace with our brethren and all others. He wrote to the Thessalonians saying, "be at peace among yourselves" (I Thessalonians 5:13). Furthermore, he penned, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). Moreover, Paul directed Timothy to pray with thanksgiving concerning and for civil authorities as well as all men "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (I Timothy 2:2, 3). Many other scriptures explicitly and implicitly teach the same regarding the Christians' desire for peace and harmony in and out of the church.

THE SCRIPTURES HARMONIZE

With the sacred writings placing so much emphasis on the peaceful coexistence of men, to some it may seem strange and to others contradictory to hear Jesus, the "Prince of Peace", declare:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matthew 10:34, 35).

Of course the previously quoted passages harmonize. They are, therefore, not strange or contradictory. When one believes and obeys the gospel of Christ, peace with God is established. Furthermore, men obtain peace (and the resulting fellowship) with one another in the family of God (the church of Christ) by the same belief and obedience. As brethren continue to do only what is authorized and leave undone what is not or what is forbidden, they continue to have peace with God and all others who do the same (Acts 2:47; Colossians 3:17; I John 1:7; I Corinthians 15:58).

NO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN THE OBEDIENT AND DISOBEDIENT

However, where the gospel of peace has not gone or when the gospel is rejected, peace (and the resulting fellowship) cannot be established with God. Without that peace with God such persons cannot be at peace (spiritually) with those who have believed and obeyed the gospel (Acts 10:36; Romans 3:17; 5:1; 10:15; I Corinthians 7:15; 14:33; Ephesians 2:17; 6:15; John 12:48).

Those who reject the gospel stand in opposition to those who are obedient to it. Also, when persons have obeyed the gospel and they engage in sin of which they refuse to repent, peace (along with fellowship) is destroyed with God and faithful brethren (Luke 17:3; Acts 8:22; Galatians 6:1; II John 8 - 10; I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6; Matthew 18:15-17; I John 5:16, 17).

Disagreement, strife, conflict, and disputes will develop between those who will not compromise the gospel of peace and those who disbelieve it. Hence, when people seek to bind on men what the Bible does not or loose men from what the Bible binds on them, controversy results. We are, therefore, not amazed at the fact that Jesus Christ, the "Prince of Peace", was the greatest of all controversialists! It is truly amazing to me that those who wear the name "Christian" (meaning "of Christ"), especially gospel preachers and elders, do their best to avoid controversy of the kind herein discussed.

PREACHER TRAINING SCHOOLS HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO TEACH THEIR STUDENTS TO BE CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSIALISTS

Preacher training schools need to be turning out men who not only can exegete the scripture in their expository sermons, but who also know the issues that have caused and are causing trouble in the Lord's church as well as how to refute them. Recently I became aware of two new graduates of a preacher training school who knew almost nothing about present problems in the Lord's church regarding the Holy Spirit. However, from the time they started to school and for some years before, the particular controversy about the Holy Spirit of which they were ignorant has caused all sorts of problems throughout the brotherhood. In their alma mater is it possible that somebody was running from controversy—at least on that subject?

How many of the preacher training schools are teaching their students about "antism"? On certain occasions recent graduates of certain preacher training schools have spoken with me about how to handle the "anti" doctrines. When they were in school, were they absent on the days that such issues were discussed or was the school derelict in not teaching such things? Or, did they fail to give attention to their instructors when the subject was being taught? From what they said (or the lack of it), *very little was provided for them on the subject.*

For a few years now I have talked with a number of bright graduates of preacher training schools who simply did not know how to deal with false doctrines on marriage, divorce and remarriage, women's role in the church, how to ascertain Bible authority, worship

and several other subjects that are tremendously important if they are going to stand for the truth and refute false doctrine. Surely, the elders who oversee such schools and those involved in the day to day operation of them want their students to be controversialists as Christ and his apostles were. The best example of what preachers need to learn and how they ought to live in order to be faithful preachers of the gospel of peace is Jesus' example before and teaching done to the apostles. Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and note closely the controversy to which the apostles were exposed during the three and one-half year ministry of Jesus? Furthermore, consider Paul's example to Timothy. Think about what Timothy witnessed as he accompanied Paul on his preaching tours (II Timothy 3:10-12). In view of what Timothy had learned from Paul's life imagine what was in Timothy's mind when he read the following words—**"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"** (II Timothy 2:3). Preacher training schools do well to have as their theme II Timothy 2:2, but it is worthless without 2:3.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Is it possible that in years to come certain preacher training schools will be turned into accredited graduate schools? Will such changes be made under the guise of offering students a better Bible education? If history has anything to teach us, the answer is that such will happen. When and if that happens, such schools will be no better off than the weak and insipid Bible departments of the colleges, which weakness served as one of the reasons for faithful brethren, over a third of a century ago, to begin preacher training schools.

Let us be Christian controversialists. Like Paul, let us not be ashamed of any aspect of the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16). Let us preach all the council of God, controversial or not (Acts 20:27). Like Jude, let us admonish other brethren to **"contend for the faith"** (Jude 3). Let us ever cast a wary eye toward those who want to be known as New Testament Christians and gospel preachers, but in reality are afraid to be controversial. Moreover, such persons are fearful of marking and avoiding those who seek to make shipwreck of the faith—those who desire to be non-controversialists (I Timothy 1:19, 20). **"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest wage a good warfare"** (I Timothy 1:18). Indeed, what a war there is—we can only hope, pray and work to the end that certain brethren will come to realize it.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

The Old Paths...

(Continued From Page 1)

ing or instrumental music should ever be allowed to interfere for a moment with this privilege and right of the saints (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1861, pp. 558, 559).

Fanning condemned those who would "...rob the church of her honor by the adoption of human schemes for the execution of the Lord's work" (*Gospel Advocate*, 1860, p. 6). Lard warned regarding congregations who brought in innovations:

I have no sympathy with them, no fellowship for them, and, so help me God, never intend knowingly to put my foot into one of them. As a people, we claim to be engaged in an effort to return to the purity, "simplicity, freedom from ostentation and pride, of the ancient apostolic churches." Let us, then, neither wink at anything standing in the way nor compromise aught essential to this end. The moment we do so our unity is at an end and our hopes are in the dust (*Lard's Quarterly*, Vol. 1, p. 333).

Fifth, the pioneers were "set for the defense of the gospel." The "prince of scholars", J. W. McGarvey, affirmed:

The loudest call that comes from heaven to the men of this generation is for warfare—stern, relentless, merciless, exterminating—against everything not expressly or by necessary implication authorized in the New Testament. Such is my un-

wavering conviction; and my only regret is, that I cannot fight this fight as it should be fought.

In conclusion, let me add, that if any brother who reads this sees fit to style me intolerant, dictatorial, or self-consequent, I say to him that I claim to be nothing more than one plain disciple of Christ, and to exercise a prerogative which belongs to us all. It is my duty to find fault with everybody and everything that is wrong, and it is equally the duty of every other brother. In the full and free performance of this task lies the only safety for the truth. Error alone can suffer in such warfare, and she alone is afraid of it (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1868, p. 219).

Some supposedly in the ranks of Christ do not hold to the convictions of the previously mentioned pioneers, whose convictions are congruent with biblical teaching. Instead of fighting in the trenches, some are warming by the fires of sectarians, aping their terminology and "theology" and seeking their approbation. The "Old Paths"—shall we continue in them? It is felt, sadly but strongly, that left to many, the battle would be lost.

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WE NEED TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT OBEYING GOD!

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THE SCRIPTURES DEMAND IT

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Peter 3:9-10). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because 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 17:30-31). “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

THE NATURE OF OPPORTUNITY DEMANDS IT

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:11-12).

“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation)” (II Corinthians 6:2). “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). “Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and

sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:13-17).

THE QUALITY OF LIFE DEMANDS IT

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (By grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:1-7). “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14). “Wherefore he is able also to save them to

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the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

THE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS DEMANDS IT

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

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:14-17). "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23). "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance

among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

THE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES DEMAND IT

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:20-22). "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

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Christ in Prophecy

Barry Grider

Jesus Christ is the greatest individual who ever lived. Yet, when speaking of Jesus we cannot refer to his beginning for he had no beginning. Long before his birth in Bethlehem, he existed. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, he existed. Jesus is eternal—part of the divine Godhead, which created all things (Hebrews 1:2).

PROPHECIES FULFILLED

The purpose of this article is to show the Christ as he is revealed through the holy prophets. One of the reasons I know the Bible is the word of God is because of the amazing fulfillment of divine prophecy, particularly as it relates to Jesus. These prophecies begin to unfold very early in the book of Genesis when God the father, speaking to Satan, says, **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel”** (Genesis 3:15). When one studies the scriptures, he will find that Jesus’ virgin birth, sinless life, redemptive cross, empty tomb, glorious kingdom, and better covenant were all foretold hundreds of years before they were fulfilled, and that their fulfillment was with amazing accuracy and precision. How could this be accomplished? **“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”** (II Peter 1:21). What did they speak or write about? Remember Jesus’ words to the two men on the road to Emmaus, **“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”** (Luke 24:27).

Consider some of these prophecies regarding the Messiah and see their amazing fulfillment. *First*, his virgin birth is foretold. In Isaiah 7:14, we read, **“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”** We know this is fulfilled through Jesus Christ, because the gospel writer Matthew states clearly that this is the one whom Isaiah was speaking (Matthew 1:21-23). When an inspired man says this is the fulfillment of prophecy, you can depend on it being so. Sometimes the enemies of Christ say he formulated the prophecies to fit himself. Well, how did he arrange his virgin birth?

Second, the place where Jesus was to be born is identified. **“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting”** (Micah 5:2). Again, Matthew records this fulfillment (Matthew 2:1ff).

Third, his suffering is foretold. Perhaps the zenith of Messianic prophecy is Isaiah 53. In this passage we learn that Messiah will be despised, rejected, stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, bruised, chastised, oppressed, and killed. One who is familiar with the New Testament knows

these words accurately describe the life and death of our Lord.

Fourth, his cross is prophesied. When reading Psalm 22, one would almost think the writer was standing at the foot of the cross. Notice:

His words (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46).

His humiliation (Psalm 22:6-8; Matthew 27:39).

His suffering (Psalm 22:16; Matthew 27:35).

Also, it should be remembered that crucifixion was a Roman form of execution and was not used until hundreds of years after this psalm had been written. Yet, verse 16 states, **“they pierced my hands and my feet.”** Such amazing prophecy!

Fifth, his resurrection is foretold. Hear the words of the Psalmist, **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”** (Psalm 16:10). Peter quoted these words of the psalm and made clear David was speaking concerning Christ (Acts 2:31). Indeed, Jesus arose triumphantly from the tomb (Matthew 28:6), just as the prophets said.

Sixth, a new covenant is prophesied (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This passage again is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-15 and refers to the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Many in the religious world do not understand that the Old Testament is no longer binding today (Colossians 2:14). Yet, if they had properly studied the prophets, they would know.

Seventh, the Kingdom of Christ is prophesied (Isaiah 9:6,7). Isaiah spoke of the establishment of God’s house (Isaiah 2:2) and the house of God is **“the church of the living God”** (I Timothy 3:15). Daniel spoke of a kingdom that would stand forever (Daniel 2:44). Jesus used the term church and kingdom interchangeably and said he would be the one to establish such (Matthew 16:18,19). The record states that on the day of Pentecost this prophecy was fulfilled just as the prophets and Jesus had proclaimed (Acts 2).

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD

These are but a few passages that relate to Jesus Christ in divine prophecy. Many others could be mentioned. However, there is enough evidence given in these scriptures that the greatest skeptic and unbeliever should be convinced that Jesus was and is who he claimed to be. Jesus said to his disciples, **“these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me”** (Luke 24:44). With all confidence, Jesus was indeed the Christ whom the prophets saw and in him man finds salvation.

—3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, Tennessee 38125

Pornography the Tip of the Iceberg

Brock Hartwigsen

Our society is drowning in a deluge of pornography. Many in the church have been lured by this evil influence. We have had our consciences “**seared with a hot iron**” (I Timothy 4:2). We now read about and gaze upon things that our forefathers, not just our Christian forefathers but even our non-Christian forefathers, would have properly denounced and condemned as indecent, immoral and sinful!

ART OR PORNOGRAPHY

A problem in speaking out against pornography is differentiating between what is art and entertainment and what is pornographic. The word pornography comes from two Greek words *porno* which means prostitute and *graphie* which means to write. Webster defines pornography as “obscene or licentious writing, painting, or the like.”

To understand what pornography is, why it is dangerous not only to Christians but to society in general, and how to identify it, we must look at that of which it is a part. Pornography is just the visual tip of the iceberg. It is just a small part of something far more dangerous and widespread. The problem with discussing this greater evil is that there is no one word for it. At least I know of no such word. Since pornography is made up of two Greek words I have taken the liberty of using three Greek words to describe this greater evil; *Dikaios* - *Hamartia* - *Marturia* (DMH). *Dikaios* means righteous or right, *hamartia* means sin and *marturia* means record or testimony. By DMH I mean any testimony or recording which depicts sin either on film, stage, book, CD, the Internet or any other media in such a manner as to try to persuade the viewer that sin is righteous. By righteous I mean depicting sin as enjoyable, fun, funny, innocent, or justifiable.

The Bible, of course, does not mention DMH anymore than it mentions pornography, but DMH is condemned in the Bible. In the first chapter of Romans Paul speaks out against many sins and states in verse 32 “**they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**”

We all, of course, agree with the first part of this quotation “**they which commit such things are worthy of death.**” This is plainly taught throughout God’s word, but what about the last phrase “**but have pleasure in them that do them?**” The word “pleasure” is translated from the Greek word *suneudodeo*. This word translated as “have pleasure” in this text is translated as “allows” in Luke 11:48-50, “be pleased” in I Corinthians 7:12-13 and “consent with” in Acts 8:1 and Acts 22:20. Paul says that *suneudodeo*, taking pleasure in sin, allowing sin, being pleased by sin, or consenting to sin is just as sinful as engaging in sin.

Do we by viewing, reading or hearing DMH commit *suneudodeo*? Do we allow, consent to, take pleasure with sin when we view it, read about it or listen to it?

ALLOW OR CONSENT

Do we financially support DMH? No one of us, I trust, would think of hiring and paying a man and a woman to commit fornication or at least get naked or semi-naked and act as if they were committing fornication so that we could get some kind of perverse enjoyment out of watching them. Why, if a brother did that the rest of the congregation would be horrified. Yet, when we pay to see such a thing, that is exactly what we are doing. We are reimbursing the producer who paid the couple to do the sinful act. In fact, we are even paying him a profit and encouraging him to do it again. We are paying a profit to the distributor and the exhibitor of this sinful exhibition. Yes, when we financially support DMH, we are guilty of *suneudodeo*, we are allowing and consenting to sin. In fact, we are doing even more than that. We are encouraging and supporting sin. We are making it financially profitable.

TAKE PLEASURE

Does DMH excite us, please us, bring us enjoyment? If we find a drunkard funny, depicted fornication arousing, vengeance and murder exciting then we are guilty of *suneudodeo*, taking pleasure in sin.

If the answer to these two questions is yes, then we are in trouble! Paul wrote to Timothy and warned him “**neither be partaker of other men’s sin**” (I Timothy 5:22). To be a “partaker” does not just mean to be physically involved in another man’s sins. When we financially support a sinful act, then we become partakers in it.

In I Thessalonians 5:22 we read, “**abstain from all appearance of evil.**” The Greek word for “appearance” is *eidos* it is translated as “fashion” in Luke 9:29, “shape” in Luke 3:22 and as “sight” in I Corinthians 5:7. Surely DMH has the “appearance,” “fashion,” “shape” and “sight” “of evil” and thus we are commanded to “abstain from” it.

Is it always wrong to film or to write about a sin? No! The Bible records many various sins. It is DMH when the sin is put in a favorable light. A TV show that depicts the consequences of sin and shows it as degrading and evil is not necessarily DMH. But, if during the filming of the show they have actors engage in sinful behavior such as immodesty or profanity, then the producers, and actors have sinned no matter how truthful their message may be.

Is it always sinful to view, read about or hear about sin? No! It is not wrong to read about David and Bathsheba’s act of adultery and David’s subsequent murder of her husband Uriah. It becomes wrong when the things we view, hear or read depicts sin as a righteous or justifiable act and thus can cause us to take sin lightly. It is wrong when we support the teaching that sin is fun, funny, wholesome or sometimes justifiable. It is wrong when we financially encourage lascivious acts to be performed or profanity to be uttered for our entertainment and enjoyment.

SPEAK AGAINST AND ABSTAIN FROM

We should speak out against and abstain from DMH which would include pornography. The idea that sin can be good, funny, wholesome, justifiable, et al., is wrong. We need to repent of the sin of DMH and follow Paul's teaching to the Corinthian brethren.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they

shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

It is not enough for Christians to refrain from sin. We must also not vicariously engage in it by viewing, reading or listening to it when it is presented in a sinful way. We should not support and encourage such sin with our time or money. Instead of thinking about sin and thus polluting our minds, we should heed Paul's plea to the church in Philippi (Phillipians 4:8).

—12521 Holly Springs New Hill Rd.
Apex, North Carolina 27502

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

G.K. Wallace

All Christians believe in the providence of God. David Lipscomb well said, describing the age in which we now live, "The Bible draws no distinction between special and general providence, as the terms are generally understood. God is always present in his laws. What is done through these laws, God does" (*Questions and Answers* by Lipscomb and Sewell, page 518).

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND GOD'S INDWELLING SPIRIT

In the age of miracles there were no doubt many special providences manifested. Jesus conferred special blessings on certain individuals and groups. The apostles exercised special powers on certain occasions. These miracles did not interrupt the laws of nature. They demonstrated a power of God over and above the laws of nature. These miracles were *confirmatory* and *temporary* (Mark 16:20; Ephesians 4:11-13; I Corinthians 13; Hebrews 2:3).

Providence, whether special or general, was unrelated to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Christ raised Lazarus from the dead but not as a result of the prayers of Lazarus nor the fact that the Holy Spirit dwelt in him. Christ showed special providence to many who were not even children of God. Balaam's ass spoke in an "unknown tongue." God's general providence is manifested toward the birds (Matthew 6:26). The Christian farmer asks God to bless his fields. However, we know that the Holy Spirit did not dwell in Balaam's ass, a bird, nor a corn stalk. It is not correct to expect special providence to accomplish what may be gained through the ordinary channels of blessings.

TESTIFYING

That special providence was exercised in the case of miracles both in the Old Testament and the New is apparent even to the casual reader of the Bible. That God overruled circumstance in the life of Esther, Daniel, Joseph, or Paul, et al., cannot be denied. However, there was an *inspired interpreter* to certify the providence of God in these

Bible characters. Today, we have no *divine interpreter*, and, therefore, we cannot relate our experiences as the leadings of God. There have been things in my life, as in yours also, that appear to be providential. They may be, but I cannot preach such since I have no divine interpreter.

I shall not and I cannot scripturally relate my experience as an act of God. Paul said, "**We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake**" (II Corinthians 4:5). When you hear one of my brethren testifying, he is *preaching himself*, he is not preaching Jesus. I will not and cannot preach myself. Let me preach Jesus. All actions of the holy men of the Bible have certified to us by divine revelation. My message is a certified Gospel and not a *human experience*. I have no right to relate my experience as the leadings of God. Every false teacher makes the same claim and all have the same proof—their tongues. I know a man who claims that the Holy Spirit has directed him all the days of his life, but he now preaches the exact opposite of what he preached yesterday. Is his tongue reliable? It is high time that we quit preaching ourselves and start preaching Jesus Christ.

The testifying among us cannot be justified by referring to *reports* of work done. It is good to report, but to relate an experience and claim it is a leading of the Holy Spirit is a different thing altogether. Since the only evidence one has of a special providence is his own experience, he has no right to relate it as an act of God. No one now has a *divine interpreter* of his life, and any interpretation of his life is *purely human*. To preach such experiences is to preach oneself and thus to violate the instructions of the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 4:5). We have a complete message revealed in the word of God, and we should proclaim it and not ourselves.

—Deceased
(1903-1988)

WHERE IS MAN AFTER DEATH?

Kenneth E. Ratcliff

Peter tells us in II Peter 2:4 that God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. He goes on to explain that God did not spare the old world, but destroyed it by water and overthrew the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then, in verse 9, he states, "**The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.**" The language is clear with regard to both the angels that sinned as well as the unjust. That is, they are being reserved unto the day of judgment. To "reserve" means to keep back, set aside or save for future use or a special purpose. The judgment, therefore, did not take place at the time the angels were cast down nor at the time of the death of the unjust. It has been reserved for some future date.

WAITING TO BE JUDGED

Jude 6 states it in this manner: "**And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, be bath reserved in everlasting chains under the darkness unto the judgment of the great day.**"

The language, with respect to those reserved to the day of judgment, tells us something of their status while they wait. Granted, it is more specific with regard to the angels who were cast down. But, with both angels who were cast down and the unjust, it is not a picture of nothingness nor of a pleasant existence. Rather, it conveys the idea of separation and of being in chains and darkness while waiting to be judged. This description would seem to have little, if any, significance unless there is a conscious existence!

Throughout history, many can relate to this picture. Being arrested for an offense, and while waiting for trial, could easily mean being chained and locked up in a cold, dark dungeon. Consider the situation of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:16-29. Though having done no wrong, and without being tried and convicted, they were beaten and put in stocks in the inner prison. When there was a sudden earthquake, the jailer first called for a light. It must have been dark inside. Remember also how Paul was kept prisoner in Caesarea by Felix for at least two years (Acts 24:27). The authorities could not determine what charge had been or should be rightly made against him. Ultimately, he might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar (Acts 26:32). In spite of this, Paul remained in prison and was sent as a prisoner to Rome, though there had been no trial or judgment.

The same situation can occur today. In fact, in some nations, those arrested may be treated much the same as Paul. All nations do not have the same system of justice as this country. But even in the United States, those arrested for serious offenses may be locked up while they wait for their trial. Nor would most people have it any other way! The offense is so serious, and the potential for the accused to flee

or to do ourselves or others harm is so great, that the only reasonable recourse is to leave them incarcerated *pending* their trial.

TO BE JUDGED IS TO BE SENTENCED

Should it seem "unreasonable" for God to reserve those who are lost to await a day of judgment? In life, those who are locked up awaiting trial are nevertheless without freedom and separated from society, even if they are not housed with those who have been convicted and sentenced. There are others who have committed wrongs but are allowed to remain free pending their trial and will later be acquitted. Nevertheless, they must also wait for a judgment to be rendered. Men will at times make mistakes in such matters, but God will not. It should not seem unreasonable that at death every individual is reserved by God for the day of judgment. Considering the nature of sin and of righteousness, we should be able to anticipate the manner in which man will exist while waiting for the day of judgment. While alive, sin separates us from God and makes us unsuitable for his company or those who faithfully serve him. The same separation continues in death. Does it even seem reasonable that the saved and the lost would exist together after death? *We, in fact, see one group reserved as in chains and darkness, while others are in the loving care and keeping of the Lord.* Is this not the picture portrayed by Jesus when he told of the rich man and Lazarus? Nor does it suggest that the righteous go directly to heaven. All are to be judged and are appropriately *reserved* until that time in their proper place.

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Near To The Heart Of God

Lennie Reagan

The internal evidence of the book of Habakkuk reveals that the book was written just prior to the Babylonian invasion of the southern nation of Judah. There is, however, something quite different about this three chapter book in comparison to the other books considered to be minor prophets. Instead of Habakkuk taking God's message to the people of Judah, he takes the complaint of the people to God.

Basically, the book consists of two questions asked by Habakkuk of God. The response of God to each question is recorded. The book then closes with Habakkuk reaffirming his trust and confidence in God.

As we consider these questions and the response of God, please place yourself in the midst of the conversation. Let us carry ourselves back 2600 plus years and study the book of Habakkuk.

THE PROPHET

We know very little about Habakkuk other than what is revealed in the text. His name means an embracer. The reformer, **Martin Luther**, wrote of Habakkuk: *"He has a right name for his office. For Habakkuk means a heartener, or one who takes another to his heart and his arms, as one soothes a poor, weeping child, telling it to be quiet."*

In Habakkuk 1:2-4, the prophet poses his question to God. As we read these verses we will have no problem seeing the frustration of Habakkuk as he represents the faithful few in the nation of Judah.

Oh Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

HARDNESS OF HEART IN JUDAH

The writings of Habakkuk reveal to us the deep gloom in Judah's long apostasy and their peril before the Babylonian captivity. Wickedness was on the rampage. Violence spread like a runaway train. Great injustices toward the poor and helpless were occurring on every hand. The majority of the nation had closed their eyes to sin. They had heard but did not heed the powerful pleading of Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Nahum, who were contemporary prophets with Habakkuk. They refused to hear the loving plea of God who called for their repentance from idolatry and their other sins.

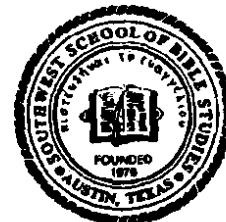
Habakkuk and the faithful remnant did indeed possess a burden because of Judah's sin. However, they were also burdened with what seemed to them as a delay on God's part in responding to the righteous. In his agony, Ha-

bakkuk cries out, **"How long Lord, do we have to wait before you do something about all this trouble?"** The question asked by Habakkuk is a question which has been asked by men of all times and in all places.

Gideon had asked: **"If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?"** (Judges 6:13). Job inquired: **"Wherefore do the wicked prosper, become old, yea, are mighty in power?"** (Job 21:7). It was Jeremiah who wept before the Lord: **"Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?"** (Jeremiah 12:1). You will remember the plea of the souls beneath the altar who cried out: **"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"** (Revelation 6:10).

We observe from this study of Habakkuk that sin and evil are a part of this life. However, the greatest conclusion is that God will, in his own good wisdom and time, punish the wicked. As he did with wicked Judah, so he will do to all the wicked when he ends this world (Matthew 25:41, 46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

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Donald Z. Underwood

In Acts 11:4 we read, "But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them saying." In this verse Peter reports to the brethren concerning the conversion of the Gentiles to his brethren in Jerusalem.

MANY IN ATTENDANCE

Hence, I am reporting on the debate between David Brown and Gene Cook, Jr. that took place in Chula Vista, California. The debate lasted four nights—February 14, 15, 16, 18. We had an average attendance of 382 people per night. There was a Catholic priest present two of the four nights. Several Baptist preachers attended throughout the debate. We had a representative of Catholic Answers, a Catholic apologetics organization. We had a representative from a Pentecostal church that is involved with debating, who was interested in the Brown/Cook debate. There was a minister from the denomination called the Christian Church. In addition to these differing religious leaders, we had several prominent San Diego families represented throughout the four nights of the debate.

The live Internet broadcast extended our audience significantly. From Monday night to Tuesday night our Internet viewer sites tripled! In addition, there were ten denominational organizations viewing the debate live during the week. The demand for the debate grew as the week progressed.

SOME RESULTS

As a result of the debate effort:

There were three baptisms, one in Chula Vista and two at one of our live distant site locations. After the debate, there were several Bible studies with Cook's younger brother. Unfortunately, he discontinued the studies.

In addition, there is a new study being conducted from a visitor who attended three of the four nights of the debate. He is of the Baptist church persuasion. This study is ongoing. We covet your prayers concerning his soul and his obedience to truth.

Our church office has received well over 100 audio tape orders via fax, telephone and email. We are weekly receiving requests for audio copies of this debate.

This debate accomplished a tremendous amount of good. This debate stirred the hearts of many Christians to do more for the cause. This debate did not allow the listener to settle his heart in neutral or apathy.

The members of the church were awakened to the hideous doctrine of denominationalism when Cook stated several times that "little babies were going to hell." This false doctrine stems from the concept of "Original Sin."

Many religious groups who believe in "Original Sin" will sprinkle water on their little babies to save them from sin and the eternal torment of hell. Cook's statement clearly demonstrates how heinous denominationalism is. We must NOT embrace for a moment the enslaving and soul condemning doctrines of man. Paul wrote, "(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). Cook's words opened the eyes of many within the church of our Lord. May we never seek to extend the precious fellowship of the Lord to false teachers and doctrines. We must hold precious the doctrine of Christ.

THE DEBATE—A SUCCESS

On this side of life, this debate was a great success! Deep appreciation goes to David Brown and his tenacity to present the truth boldly and to those who worked as his moderators, Lynn Parker, Daniel Denham and Roddy Covington. In addition, we are thankful for the efforts of Gil Yoder and Ron Cosby from the *Online Academy of Biblical Studies* who accomplished an incredible task—live transmission of a debate, a first! These brethren worked with the cause of Christ always in view.

Personally, I am indebted to the Chula Vista Church of Christ who worked behind scenes in so many ways in preparation of this debate and during the debate. Many little things were done by these loving and giving people. They truly represent the immortal words of Romans 12:1-2,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Gratitude is also extended to the many congregations of the Lord's body in the immediate San Diego area, that helped and supported the effort of this debate in so many different ways.

In addition, we are thankful to our teenager Stephanie Moore who initiated this debate by telling her friends at a local high school about God, the church and salvation. From the efforts of this teenager, a new Christian, this debate had its beginning.

—470 L Street
Chula Vista, California 91911-1113

HELL IS TRUTH SEEN TOO LATE

Jason R. Roberts

Some years ago, I saw the following words encased within a church marquee—"HELL IS TRUTH SEEN TOO LATE"—and this is tragically true.

There is no greater joy for one to know the truth, believe the truth, obey the truth and ultimately die with the truth so he can live eternally with Jesus Christ who described himself as "...the truth" (John 14:6). However, the greatest tragedy one could ever come to know is to come unto a knowledge of God's truth... in hell.

In the sixteenth chapter of the book of Luke we are introduced to a man who did this very thing—he saw the truth of God's word in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Bible says that the rich man "...in hades lifted up his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom" (v.23). At this point, the rich man has opened his eyes, and to his surprise, he sees an entire ocean of truth in front of him. And the truth he sees from the hadean realm, we today need to see while upon earth lest we join him tomorrow (cf. Proverbs 27:1).

First, he saw the truth of providing for the poor (v.20-22). The rich man is not lost because he was wealthy; nor is he lost because he accumulated his wealth and prosperity by dishonesty. He is lost because his *possessions possessed* him, so much so that his physical prosperity blinded him to the physical needs of poor Lazarus. Materialism is the gateway to apostasy. It always has been and it always will be. The late Andrew Connally once said that, "*Our nation is a gadget-filled paradise suspended over a hell of insecurity.*"

Rather than being "...ready to distribute" and eager "...to give to him that needeth" the rich man neglected the needs of Lazarus. And his failure to consider the poor was one of the reasons why he was lost (I Timothy 6:18; Ephesians 4:28; Psalms 41:1).

Second, he saw the truth of practicing a persistent prayer life (v.24, 27, 30). The horrible scene is one of utter hopelessness and despair. Here is man praying in hell! How many times did he pray while upon earth? How many times did he thank God for blessing him so abundantly? How many times did he pray for the physical condition of Lazarus to improve? I wonder how many of us are practicing a persistent prayer life? I am convinced that for some brethren the only time they pray is when they are in the church building. The Bible teaches the importance of praying on a regular basis (Luke 18:1; I Thessalonians 5:17). It is the will of God for men to pray, and those who do not the will of the father will be lost (Matthew 7:21-23). A *prayerless* life is a *Godless* life. Hell is a place where all prayers go unanswered and where you will never hear the word "*Amen.*" Truly, and sadly, millions there today are praying without ceasing!

Third, he saw the truth of performing personal work (v.27-28). While in Hades, the rich man now becomes soul-conscious. Not only has he realized the tremendous worth of his own soul, he has now realized the tremendous worth of the souls of his family members. He is now interested in the eternal destiny of his loved ones and is eager to do something about it. It is interesting that the rich man makes no mention of his wealth, his lovely estate, or his royal apparel he customarily wore. Instead, he is only interested in warning his family members not to come to this awful place of torment. He has now become a full-time missionary from hell! The old saying, "*Misery loves company*" is not true. The rich man did not want the company of anyone. **Ted Turner**, CEO of *Turner Broadcasting Systems*, said years ago that "*if hell is reserved for bad people, then I want to go there so I can have one big long party with all of my friends.*" If Turner has any "*friends in low places*", then we are certain that not one of them is in torment getting ready for his arrival via making party arrangements! Rather, the piercing cry from the flames of torment for Turner and others is "This is not a party down here!"

The time for us to start thinking about converting our children who are lost is not after we die or after they die—the time to do so is now. The time to be thinking about converting our husbands and wives is not after we die or after they die—the time to do so is now. The time to be thinking about converting our mothers and fathers is not after we die or after they die—the time to do so is now. The time to be thinking about restoring the delinquent members of the church is not after they die or after we die—the time to do so is now (II Corinthians 6:2; Mark 16:15, 16; James 5:19, 20).

Fourth, he saw the truth of persuading others with the word of God (v. 29-31). The rich man is convinced that if someone is raised from the dead, and then presented to his five brethren that this will cause them to amend their ways. The answer given, in essence, was "They have the Bible, this is sufficient." What a monumental lesson our denominational friends need to learn today. The rich man thought



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a miraculous event, a resurrection, would be the convincing proof that would bring about the salvation of his family members.

And there are millions of religious people today who attribute their own salvation and the salvation of others via a miraculous encounter with the Lord, or some other mystical event such as "seeing the light at the end of the tunnel." The rich man saw the light, but he saw it too late. He saw the truth of the conviction and conversion of sinners being through and only through the power of God's word (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12).

Fifth, he saw the truth of God's perpetual punishment (v.26). It is interesting that at the beginning of this story the

two men are separated by a *gate*, and at the end of the story they are separated by a *gulf*. The word "gulf" (*chasma*) means an "ungetoverable chasm or barrier." The Bible, in no uncertain terms, teaches the perpetual nature of God's punishment (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 14:11, 20:10). The rich man learned that there was no escape from this terrible place of suffering-but he learned it too late.

In his famous poem, "The Inferno," Dante said a sign should be hung over hell's doors which reads, "Those who enter this door leave all hope behind." Most definitely, hell is tragic truth seen eternally too late!

—1601 E. Park Ave.
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Rejecting & Receiving

Preston Silcox

"I believe the Bible to be God's word." So is the normal response of the Christian when asked what he thinks of the "Good Book." Scriptures might then be quoted and interesting facts given to back up such an answer. Altogether different, however, is one's actual response to the demands of scripture. It is somewhat easy to memorize verses that speak of the Bible's inspiration or to quote what the preacher said during his sermon on external evidences of the Bible's "Higher Source". However, it can be rather difficult to live by the commands God has given in that same book. Consider two reactions people have when faced with a demanding obligation from the word of God.

Some individual's react by *rejecting* the Bible. Yes, they might keep every other part of Christ's law, but when it comes to that one tedious command, they will not bring themselves to submit. These might ignore the command altogether or come up with some "wild interpretation" in order to maneuver around it. The Pharisees were known for such foolishness and Christ condemned them for their actions (Mark 7:1-13).

Other individuals react by *receiving* the Bible. Of such character were those on the day of Pentecost. They had been convicted of their sins and, instead of denying or distorting the facts, they admitted their wrong and sought how

to obtain forgiveness. Also, when told what to do, they complied with the commands rather than attempting to circumvent them. Thus, we read that they "gladly received" the word (Acts 2:41). Of the same caliber were the Bereans of Acts 17:10-12. Inspiration records that these "received the word with all readiness of mind."

Not every demand placed upon the Christian by God is easy to obey. Compliance with some commands will call for abrupt changes of lifestyle, the giving up of things thought precious, and even the division of close friends and families. It is when the Christian is faced by these kinds of circumstances that one finds out what he *really* thinks of the "Good Book."

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COUNTING THE COST

Luke 14:25-33

Tom Moore

INTRODUCTION

- A. In Luke 14 we see a great multitude following Jesus (v.25) — his popularity was at a high point.
 - 1. The crowds were gathering to hear him and follow him from place to place.
 - 2. It seems that excitement and short-term discipleship were on the minds of the people.
 - 3. Because of this Jesus says ... Luke 14:26-27.
- B. The Lord wants them to know that there is a price to be paid and is emphasizing the commitment and determination expected of disciples.
- C. Luke prefaces the two parables we are going to center our attention on with the parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14: 15-24).
 - 1. Jesus said ... Luke 14:18.
 - 2. It is clear that those accepting the invitations are expected to have the determination and dedication to follow through.
 - 3. These excuses that are offered or any other excuses will be unacceptable.
 - 4. Luke 9:62.

DISCUSSION

- A. **BUILDING A TOWER**
 - 1. Luke 14:28-30.
 - 2. Becoming a Christian is illustrated by anyone wanting to build a tower.
 - a. The building of a tower would not be a luxury, but a necessity for protecting a field or vineyard.
 - b. The owner would be concerned about saving his crop. He must consider, is the crop worth saving and at what cost?
 - 3. Jesus says that the first order of business is to sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it.
 - 4. Here is the question: "How much are you willing to pay?"
 - a. When we consider the terms of salvation, how much is the salvation of your soul worth to you?
 - b. Jesus asks ... Luke 9:25.
 - c. What effort are you willing to go through to be saved and remain so?
 - d. What would you be willing to pay for others to hear the saving message of the gospel?
 - 5. Now consider another question: "How much will it cost you?"
 - a. The cost of a man building a tower will vary.
 - b. What does it cost to follow Jesus?
 - c. Jesus is telling the multitude that it will cost them to be his disciple.
 - 6. The cost for spiritual life with Jesus is the same for everyone—EVERYTHING.
 - a. Jesus talked about losing one's life (Luke 9:24) and then deny himself, take up a cross daily and follow him.

- b. Notice again ... Luke 14:26-27.
- c. Paul says it this way ... Romans 12:1-2.
- d. What is your Christianity costing you?

B. THE KING GOING TO WAR

- 1. Luke 14:31-32
- 2. In the parable of the man building the tower, the man must decide whether to build or not. In this parable, the king's land is being invaded and he has to do something.
 - a. This depicts that he does not have the choice of doing nothing - the situation has to be settled with the invading king.
 - b. The king has two alternatives:
 - 1) Fight - make up his mind to go to war, or
 - 2) Make a settlement - send a delegation and make terms of peace.
- 3. The cost is going to be great! But, can he afford not to go?
 - a. The first order of business is to sit down and take counsel as to whether he is strong enough.
 - b. It seems he is not strong enough.
 - c. Jesus is saying to the multitude that they must recognize who the opposition to their salvation is and that they cannot afford to ignore Christ or fight him.
- 4. Those following Jesus must no longer be caught up in the excitement of a crowd, but recognize what is at stake.
 - a. We must pay the cost to have peace with God.
 - b. Romans 5:1.
 - c. Colossians 1:20.



CONCLUSION

- A. Luke 14:33.
 - 1. Jesus says, "So therefore," in other words he now draws his conclusion to what he has just been saying.
 - 2. My hope of heaven was costly for Jesus.
 - a. Romans 5:8-9.
 - b. John 3:16.
 - 3. My hope of heaven will be costly for me.
 - a. I John 2:15-17.
 - b. Acts 14:22.
 - 4. There is great reward in paying the cost.
 - a. Mark 10:28-31.
 - b. Hebrews 13:5.
- B. There are valuable lessons to be learned from Luke 14:25-33.
 - 1. There is a great cost to be paid to be a child of God.
 - 2. There is a great cost in not being a child of God.
 - 3. The ticket to heaven has a price tag on it.
 - 4. Christ will help one pay the price.

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ONE MUST BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SIN

Paul Vaughn

The New Testament is very plain about baptism being required to have sins removed. Peter said that immersion, baptism, was for the forgiveness of sins in the first recorded sermon on the day of Pentecost at the very beginning of the church. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Paul was told by Ananias that he must be baptized to have his sins washed away. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). There is no salvation apart from being baptized for the remission of sins!

In the late 1700's and the early part of the 1800's men began to respect the authority of Christ and the scriptures by turning their backs on denominational creeds for primitive Christianity found only in the New Testament. They were willing to lose all they had to have the purity of the scriptures taught and obeyed. Yet, some of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ they did not fully understand at the beginning of their journey to return to the pattern for the church found only in the New Testament. When a question arose about something being taught or practiced, they would read their Bibles to search out the truth on the matter. In this they were much like those from Berea who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). One of the basic principles they did not understand at the infancy of their backtracking to the authority of Christ was baptism for the remission of sins.

BARTON W. STONE

When Barton W. Stone moved to Bourbon County, Kentucky, he began to see the error of creeds and confessions of faith. They were an imperfect standard for Christianity that brought division and set aside the Word of God. In 1804, Stone along with Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, John Thompson, and David Purviance signed the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery. It was at this time that Stone began to study the subject of atonement. Stone said, "I determined to divest myself, as much as possible, of all preconceived opinions on this subject, and search the Scriptures daily for the truth."¹ A few years later the subject of baptism began to unsettle many of the churches. Earlier Robert Marshall "ceased from the practice of pedobaptism."² Stone thought that Marshall was going to take the view of the Baptists on the subject and wrote him a letter to convince him of his error. Marshall's reply was so powerful and strong, Stone ceased from the practice of infant baptism. It was about this time some distraction arose and the

questions over "baptism was for a while, strangely, almost forgotten."³

In 1807, the subject of baptism began to rejuvenate again. Seeing the need to be immersed, a major problem materialized. Who should baptize them? There was no elder among them that had been baptized, immersed, and the Baptists would only baptize them if they joined their denomination. "The work then commenced, the preachers baptized one another, and crowds came, and were also baptized."⁴ The sad part of all of it is that Robert Marshall who rejected pedobaptism, infant sprinkling, from the beginning, lost his faith and returned to the Presbyterians and pedobaptism along with John Thompson in 1811.



THE CAMPBELLS

In 1809, when Alexander Campbell arrived in America to meet his father Thomas, both men agreed to chart their course by the "old paths" found only in the scriptures. It was not until 1812 that Alexander and Thomas saw the need to be immersed. The subject did not come up until Alexander's first child, Jane, was born. She was born on March 12, 1812. After a few months of Bible study, Alexander came to the conclusion that the Greek word "baptizo" could only be translated as immersion. Alexander then contacted Matthias Luce, a Baptist preacher, to immerse him. On June 12, 1812, not only was Alexander Campbell immersed, but also his father, mother, a sister, and two other members of the Brush Run Church. Campbell's only prompting was that Luce baptize them according to the pattern given in the New Testament.

Did the early restorers fully understand everything about New Testament Christianity when they first began to seek out the "old paths?" No! When a question arose they would go to their Bibles to find the scriptural answer. What a tremendous example for all who profess the Restoration Plea to follow.

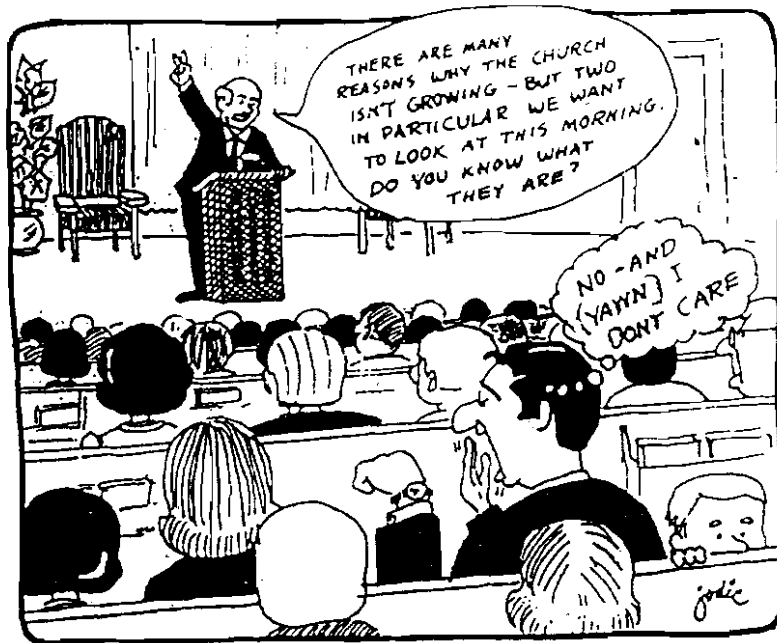
ENDNOTES

1. Barton W. Stone, "Biography of Barton W. Stone," *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed Hoke Dickerson (Cincinnati, Ohio) p. 56.
2. *Ibid.* p. 60.
3. *Ibid.* p. 60.
4. *Ibid.* p. 61.

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Ignorance and Indifference

Jodie Boren



expressed a willingness to sacrifice himself if it would mean the salvation of his kinsmen in the flesh (Romans 9:1-3).



Because the Lord had saved him from his sins, Paul felt he was a debtor to all men (Romans 1:14) to share with them the saving gospel of Christ. In fact, he felt it was a necessity that he preach the gospel (I Corinthians 9:16). Wouldn't it be great if we had this kind of spirit today! Our indifference to the lost has made us at ease in Zion. When was the last time you led anyone to the Lord? Have you ever? According to most calculations, it takes about one hundred Christians working (?) one year to baptize one soul! What a sad commentary on our zeal. Indifference is one of the most effective tools of Satan.

The originator of the cartoon dialogue is unknown to me, but whoever said it first, really hit the nail on the head. Ignorance and indifference have plagued the church almost from its beginning. Our Lord saw the church at Laodicia as having very little zeal. They were indifferent! Jesus told them they were neither cold nor hot. Their indifference was an attitude that was nauseating unto our Lord. Therefore, he admonished them that he would rather they were either cold or hot, but since they were just lukewarm he would spew them out of his mouth unless they repented (Revelation 3:15-20). This indifference—this complacent and smug attitude—was repugnant to the Lord then and it is now.

NEGLIGENCE

When the church first began, it grew rapidly because the converts to Christ were on fire for the Lord and **“went everywhere preaching the word”** (Acts 8:4), **“daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”** (Acts 5:42). For the most part, this kind of zeal is not to be found today. Today, we build beautiful buildings with the finest furnishings for our every convenience and comfort—and what do we do? We open the door and feel God must be pleased with us because of our **“faithfulness”** in observing his day. If an alien sinner should chance by and come in — great! If not —well, the doors were opened, they could have come in.

Our Lord lamented over Jerusalem because the people would not come unto him (Matthew 23:37). Epaphroditus, **“for the work of the Lord was nigh unto death”** (Philippians 2:30). Paul manifested this same spirit of Christ as he

WILLING IGNORANT

Ignorance of God's word and ignorance of the dangers facing the church constitute another reason the church is not growing. The devices of Satan are nowhere better seen than in the false doctrines that are coming from our own brethren (read Acts 20:29-31 and II Timothy 4:1-4). There are several good books by faithful brethren that expose these false doctrines. When you ask brethren if they have read them, most have not even heard of them. We have some great brotherhood publications that hold fast to the sound word, but few Christian homes subscribe to them. There are many sound and inspiring lectureships, but, again, these are sparsely attended. When God said, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”** (Hosea 4:6a), it wasn't because his will was not available, but because they had rejected it. Because of their refusal to be enlightened and to serve him, God rejected them! We serve the same God as they did. Can we expect to be treated any differently? Remember, **“God is no respecter of persons”** (Acts 10:35). We can know the will of God and that will says **“go teach.”**

Indifference and ignorance has no place in the Christian's life if he/she is to follow in the steps of Jesus. The church will grow when these two sins are eliminated.

—2557 Campus Court
Abilene, Texas 79601

Current Events that Concern Christians... Character Forming Music, the Fall of America, and The New Spirituality

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

In 1968, nearly 30 percent of students were interested in what went on in politics, but the number has now dropped to 14 percent—and only 21 percent even voted in student elections. **John Witherspoon**, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, stated, "There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost and religious liberty preserved entire." **Daniel Webster** stated in a 1840 speech, "(Parents should) tell their children that neither in political nor in any other concerns of life can man ever withdraw himself from the perpetual obligation of conscience and of duty.... They will impress upon their children the truth that voting is a social duty of as solemn a nature as man can be called to perform; that a man may not innocently trifle with his vote; that every voter is a trustee as well for others as himself; and that every man and every measure he supports has an important bearing on the interests of others as well as on his own" (*The Wallbuilder Report*, Fall, 1999).

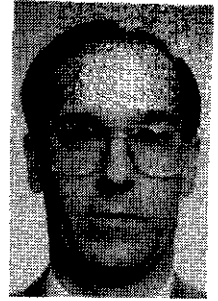
"While most people claim to be religious, they are also not comfortable with those whose faith is strong enough to affect their public behavior."—**Robert Bork**, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah* (as quoted in *Christian Chronicle*, October, 1999, p. 23).

Nobody who understands the experiences of melody, harmony, and rhythm will doubt their value. Not only are they the distillation of centuries of social life, they are also forms of knowledge, providing the competence to reach out of ourselves through music. Through melody, harmony, and rhythm, we enter a world where others exist besides the self, a world that is full of feeling but also ordered, disciplined but free. That is why music is a character-forming force, and the decline of musical taste a decline in morals. The anomic of Nirvana and REM is the anomic of its listeners—**Roger Scrutton** (quoted in *Credenda Agenda*, Volume 11, number 5, 1999). (see blurb below)

The key to better things in Christian music is the habitual hearing of greatness in music not only in school, not only in college and Bible Institute, but in Sunday School also. For the music that younger children hear exercises a formative influence on their taste. Not even the smallest child may safely be fed a diet of musical trash. — **Frank Gaebelin** (quoted in *Credenda Agenda*, Volume 11, number 5, 1999). (*The music that you allow your children to listen to does most certainly aid in developing not only their likes and dislikes but also their character. Do not believe that the child is not listening to the words of the songs. Do not believe that the inclinations of the child are immune to the force of music.*—MTM)

Alexander Tyler, a Scottish historian, wrote about the fall of the Athenian republic. He stated that most nations

progress through a specific sequence from rise to power and then to collapse. He itemized these stages as (1) from bondage to spiritual faith (2) from spiritual faith to great courage (3) from courage to liberty (4) from liberty to abundance (5) from abundance to selfishness (6) from selfishness to complacency (7) from complacency to apathy (8) from apathy to dependency (9) from dependency back to bondage (As given in *Eagle Forum of Alabama* mailout, Nov/Dec 1999, p. 4). (*Where do you suppose America falls on this sequence? IF you really do not care, then you personally are at least at number 7.*—MTM)



Pollster **George Gallup, Jr.** just released a report entitled, "The Next American Spirituality." Some characteristics stand out: For baby boomers, "the spirituality" first emerged as a therapeutic tool. One in three Americans defines spirituality without reference to God or a higher authority. Spirituality is what half of Americans say they would definitely engage in each day if their lives were not so hectic. The new spirituality has moved American religion away from "what is beyond us to what is within us." It has no use for doctrine, and picks and chooses from various Scriptures. It is as likely to quote from **Lao Tzu** and **Bob Dylan** as from **Jesus Christ**. Spiritual seekers are part of the small-group movement, which often meets in homes for Bible study. Seventy percent of American parents tell pollsters they give their children religious training, but only one-third of teens say this is so. (*Human Events*, April 17-23, 2000, p.). (*Does this just sound exactly like the change agents and their followers? It should be pointed out that the pollsters say this started with using spirituality as a therapeutic tool. There is a difference in using the scriptures to counsel and using scriptures to support secularly based counseling. Many of our young preachers should take note of the difference when trying to gain psychological and counseling degrees.*—MTM)

The National Security Agency published a glossy newsletter in March on the theme of Women's History Month. The cover featured likenesses of 11 notable women including "Mother Teresa" and **Maya Angelou**. But the cover also had **Hillary Clinton** with the phrase, "Now imagine the Future" next to her picture (*The Washington Times*, April 10-16, 2000, p.6). (*It is interesting that Angelou is a known leftist who is very sympathetic to communism. I guess it is only fitting that Hillary would be pictured with her. One has to wonder why our top-secret NSA would be spending money on such journalism.*—MTM)

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

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Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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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Cartersville—Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1146, 1319 JFH Pkwy (US 41 NW) Cartersville, GA 30120. Tel: (770) 382-6775. E-mail: Cartersville-cocf@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

News Release...

19TH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES PLANNED

The Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, Texas, will host the NINETEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES November 12-16, 2000, devoted to a study of the books of Philippians and Colossians. Twenty-seven speakers from all parts of the nation will cover a wide variety of materials relating to these epistles. A special feature of this year's lectureship will be a four-day debate concerning the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of Christians. A constant aim of this lecture series is to provide fundamental, sound Biblical teaching so as to edify both those who attend and those who will have access to the lectureship book and tapes. The book (approx. 650 pages) will be a fitting companion to those of previous years. Another major aim is to combat and expose religious error.

This year's speakers will be Tim Ayers, Curtis Cates, B. J. Clarke, Ted Clarke, Darrell Conley, Daniel Denham, Robert Dodson, Garland Elkins, Carl Garner, Noah Hackworth, Michael Hatcher, Tommy Hicks, Lester Kamp, Bobby Liddell, Dub McClish, Joseph Meador, James Meadows, Tim Nichols, Kenneth Ratcliff, Gary Summers, Don Tarbet, Robert R. Taylor, Tom Wacaster, David Watson, Marvin Weir, Jesse Whitlock, and Tyler Young.

As mentioned above, a full-fledged debate will be conducted Monday-Thursday from 2:00-4:30 p.m. Brethren Mac Deaver and Jerry Moffitt will discuss the following propositions:

RESOLVED: The Bible teaches that, in the process of perfecting a holy character in the Christian, the Holy Spirit always operates indirectly on the heart to sanctify it, and only through the medium of His indwelling, abiding, and active Word. Moffitt will affirm; Deaver will deny.

RESOLVED: The Bible teaches that, in addition to His sanctifying influence through His Word, the Holy Spirit operates directly to sanctify the heart of the faithful Christian. Deaver will affirm; Moffitt will deny.

Space will be available for both commercial and non-commercial exhibits, subject to invitation and/or approval by the Pearl Street elders. Housing in the homes of local Christians will be provided as long as it is available. Discount rates have been arranged at several major motels in Denton (for information on housing, contact Pam Morse at 940.321.1677 or morse4@juno.com). Hookups (including a dump station) for RV units are available at no charge on the church parking lot by advance registration.

For further information, you may contact the church office, 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201, 940.387.3531, pearlstreet@pearlstreet.org, or contact Dub or Laverne McClish, 908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76201, 940.387.1429.

VOTING ON DOCTRINAL MATTERS

Lynn Parker

In an election year the parties are scrambling for a platform that will attract the most adherents while maintaining at least some distinctiveness. Commercials emphasize the need to vote. One ad exclaims, "Every vote counts!" While the right to vote for the next President and the Christian's obligation to be the "salt of earth" go hand in hand, it is deplorable to bring the idea of majority-rule into doctrinal matters affecting the church. Would it surprise you to hear that some congregations settle matters of doctrine by a count of hands? Might some congregational business meetings resemble party conventions? Tragically, that is the case in some churches.

Recently we heard of a congregation (without elders) that was torn by strife, division, and carnality. Although there has been no "split" there, practically speaking, there have been two congregations meeting under one roof for some time. One group wants to hold to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16). The other group is represented by the idea of one of its proponents who stated, "We don't want to be the church of 30 years ago." This latter group wants change in regard to teaching. So there you have two very distinct, very opposite groups.

How do you accomplish the business and work of the church under such circumstances? Well first, you could compromise. Each group could give a little on particular points of disagreement. That would bring the groups closer to a central point from which to work together. Now compromise would be fine if we are discussing carpet color but damnable if we are contemplating compromise on a matter of faith. Paul had Timothy circumcised for expedience (Acts 16:1-3) but refused to submit to Judaizing teachers when they sought to enforce circumcision as an element required for salvation.

But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (Galatians 2:3-5).

No, compromise on doctrine is unacceptable. Compromise is essentially disrespect for God's word. It places man's "wants" and "think so's" on a par with heaven's will. It is the adulteration of the faith once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3) with the philosophies of men (Colossians 2:8). A gospel diluted or altered is no gospel at all (Galatians 1:6-7).

What about voting on a doctrinal matter? Then, the majority rules. In the secular world this appears to be noble. Let us examine how this might be practiced in the Lord's

church. One brother wants a known false teacher to speak to the congregation. Another opposes him. They present the issue to the men's business meeting and it is settled by a majority vote. Seven for, and five against—the false teacher gets the pulpit. In another instance, one brother says that a person may continue in an unscriptural marriage after baptism. Another opposes him. Again, it goes to a vote with the adulterous "marriage" winning. So does the truth change because it lost the vote? What if the majority votes to bring instrumental music into the worship? What if the majority says that we will not obey Christ's commands on church discipline (II Thessalonians 3:6)? Does a vote by a dozen or even a thousand overrule the words and teaching of Jesus the Christ? Shall the sound brethren continue on peaceably and submit to the will of the majority? The Lord's church is not a democracy. It is a theocracy. **"Christ is the head of the church..."** (Ephesians 5:23). He has **"all authority"** (Matthew 28:18). His words are the standard for judgment (John 12:48). If you are determined to have a vote, why not say this: "All of those in favor of obeying Christ's will on this matter, say 'aye.' All opposed to obeying God's will, say 'nay.'"



The late **Robertson L. Whiteside** wrote, "Majority rule in the church was never resorted to as a means of helping the Lord's cause" (*Doctrinal Discourses*, p. 89). Amen! So then how are the issues settled when disagreement arises on doctrinal matters? There must be a sincere study of God's word. Every heart must be humble and open to the truth. There must be no sacred cows or hidden agendas, no party lines or partisan politics, no respect of persons and no craving for power. Open discourse and even debate in the proper spirit must bring the truth to the surface and clear away smokescreens. The attitude of the Bereans must live on (Acts 17:11).

If there be no willingness to study, no real hunger for truth, then there will not be agreement and unity. The faithful will never compromise, and they cannot yield to a majority vote when the Lord has already legislated to the contrary. All that is left in such a sad situation is for the faithful to realize that some divisions are necessary (I Corinthians 11:19) and **"come ye out from among them"** (II Corinthians 6:17).

—Post Office Box 39
Spring, Texas 77383

DOES DISAGREEMENT BREAK FELLOWSHIP?

Noah A. Hackworth

It is the will of God that unity prevail among his people. Paul instructed the Corinthians to (1) speak the same thing, (2) put away divisions among them, and (3) be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10). Paul and Titus walked in the same spirit (II Corinthians 12:18). Amos said, **“Can two walk together, except they be agreed”** (3:3). Paul taught the Ephesians to **“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”** (4:3). Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one (John 17:21), and the Psalmist said, **“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”** (133:1). Even though there was strife between the herdmen of Abraham and Lot, there was no real disagreement between the two of them. Abraham did not insist on “having his way,” which he could have; to him the fact that he and Lot were brethren outweighed by far the possession of a few miles of real estate (Genesis 13:1-8). It is tremendously important for brethren to enjoy the comforts of unity, but there are times when it is needful to call upon them to account for their beliefs and practices. Unity at any price is not a desirable or acceptable alternative. However, whenever possible, and whenever there is an option, wise brethren will try to maintain a bond of fellowship even though they disagree; and there have been, and still are, situations where this is possible.

PAUL AND PETER

Paul disagreed with Peter because of his inconsistency. Peter had formerly been eating with the Gentiles, a thing no orthodox Jew would ordinarily do; but when the Gentiles came, Peter withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. Paul could not endorse Peter's actions, and the disagreement was a little more than mild. In fact, Paul **“withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed”** (Galatians 2:11-12). In verse 12, the phrase “he ate with” expresses an habitual action of the past, i.e., **“he (Peter) used to eat regularly with Gentiles.”** Peter stood condemned by his own contradictory actions as well as his conscience. Peter's actions did not affect him alone; others were also affected by what Peter had done; there were others who were not **“walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel”** (Galatians 2:14).

Paul's rebuke of Peter had to do with his inconsistency. Since Peter was not teaching false doctrine, fellowship between the two of them did not have to be broken. There is no evidence that Peter's pride was injured, or that he developed an “attitude of resentment” toward Paul, or that he later spake disparagingly of him. Later, in one of his own epistles Peter referred to Paul as the **“beloved brother Paul”** (II Peter 3:16).

PAUL AND BARNABAS

On the first preaching trip of Paul and Barnabas, which began from Syrian Antioch, they took John Mark with them (Acts 13:1-5), but when they reached Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem with no explanation for his action. The two veteran gospel preachers continued on their journey, finished their course, and eventually returned to Antioch (14:26). Sometime later, Paul expressed the desire to **“go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do”** (15:36). At this point a disagreement occurred between these two brethren. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul thought it not good to take him; a sharp contention ensued between these two great men (v. 39). In verse 38, Barnabas determined (wished, Nestle) to take John Mark. **“Determined”** (KJV) translates a word which means “to will, to want, to wish.” The imperfect tense of the word indicates Barnabas “stuck to” his decision. Even though it is stated that the contention between Paul and Barnabas was “sharp,” it is suggested by some that Paul may have merely “requested,” and not even “pressingly”, that Mark not be taken. At any rate the point is that these two great soldiers of the cross did not become



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enemies over their disagreement about John Mark. It is later stated by Paul in some instruction given to Timothy that he bring Mark, "for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (II Timothy 4:11).

CURRENT SITUATIONS BETWEEN BRETHREN

Everyone who has not buried his head in the sand knows that there are false brethren among us who are dedicated to the complete restructure of the church of the Lord. We know who they are, where they are, and how to handle them. But there are a few brethren who are not unhappy with the church, and yet they cling to "points of view" which many other brethren who are sound, stalwart, wise and scholarly, think foolish, unnecessary, and divisive. If I had a particular conviction I thought was right and wanted to share it with my brethren, it would be my privilege to do

so; but if some of my colleagues who thought well of me and supported me saw fit to caution me against "airing my view," I believe I would listen to them rather than forging full speed ahead with the feeling that everybody else was ignorant of the scripture except me. It is rather shameful to be stubbornly inconsistent, prideful and arrogant, and anyone who does this is usually determined to be the author of a new or leading school of thought. We must always be willing to learn and react the way knowledge dictates, but God forbid that we follow an unnecessary course that will alienate us from the camp of good brethren who have fought to keep us on solid ground.

—4400 West Tulare
Visalia, California 95277

One Woman's Perspective...

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Annette B. Cates

If the messages on the billboards around our cities are any indication, this nation is in dire straits morally. Consider the following advertisements that I see on my daily commute into work: (1) "Want to know who the father is? Call #####-####-##### for information on DNA testing." (2) "Need an abortion? Call #####-####-##### for your choices." (3) "Is a divorce in your future? The law offices of xxxxxxxxxx & xxxxxxxxxx will handle it for you." (4) "For fun and excitement visit xxxxxxxxxx Casino. Our slots are the loosest." (5) "Can't pay your bills? Take out bankruptcy. Call ###-#### to get the best settlement." Looks like the advertising agencies have life all set for us. Immoral lifestyles appear to be acceptable, and there are "easy solutions" that will get us out of (and into) any kind of mess we can make of our lives. Advertisements such as these were not seen just a few years ago. What has happened to life in the United States?

FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES

I am certain that the fundamental causes for this decline are the lack of spiritual values brought about by the disrespect for the authority of God's word. The consequences have led to many other errors that before our eyes are destroying us. When my husband and I first went into full-time preaching in the early 1960's, we had to convince potential converts of the oneness of the church and the necessity of obeying the Gospel. They had a basic belief in the existence of God and in the Bible as his word. That infrastructure is no longer there. Our children are taught evolution from the time they are old enough to watch a television program. The Bible has been reduced to "good literature" on a level with Shakespeare, Milton, and Dante. The teachings of world religions get equal or higher billing. We are in an age in which we are like the Israelites at one of the lowest points in their history. They had no king; thus,

"... every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judge 21:25).

BACK TO BASICS

When we are confronted with yet another news-making, horrendous murder(s), or other crime-spree, there is a great outcry of public anguish. Talk-radio programs and letters-to-the-editors of our newspapers are filled with outrage and with the plea, "We've got to do something!" "Why?" and "What is happening to us?" are the questions asked. A few days pass, all is forgotten; we are right back in our apathy until the next tragedy. There IS something we can do, one by one. We CAN get back to the basics! We do it through our congregations and our homes and our personal spiritual growth and study. We do it by no longer following after a "multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23:2), and by not loving that which is shameful and abominable (Hosea 9:10).

Congregations can get back to the basics by making certain that the unadulterated word is preached from the pulpit. Leaders of a congregation (whether or not there are elders) must be aware of the necessity of feeding the flock (I Peter 5:2). Preachers must present Bible-based sermons that are well-balanced in subject matter, covering the broad spectrum from first principles to moral issues and daily living (II Timothy 4:2). Well-planned activities and fellowships draw people together, but we cannot lose sight of their overall purpose—to strengthen the congregation and to spread the borders of the kingdom. When our congregations are stronger, our homes and the individual Christians will be stronger.

Homes can get back to the basics by making certain that the Bible is upheld as the supreme authority. It must rule husband/wife/child relationships. When we go by God's



Word in the conduct of the home, we will have an answer for the moral problems that arise. When a child asks, "Johnny's parents let him. Why can't I?" we can look at what the Bible says and the principles that are derived from that teaching. When evolution is presented as fact on a television program or by a teacher, we must have the answers. There is a great deal of good material on the subject of creation/evolution, but we must take the time to read it. This is too important to be pushed aside because we think we are too busy. The day will come when "Because I said so" does not answer a child's question. The only thing that can adequately answer is found in the knowledge of God's word. The importance of teaching our children cannot be more expressly stated than in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In other words, God's word must be a part of our every waking moment. If so, we can say with Joshua, "... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). When our homes are stronger, our congregations and the individual Christians will be stronger.

Individual Christians can get back to the basics by studying God's word and applying it to our everyday lives (II Timothy 2:15). There is no magic potion that makes us grow spiritually. We cannot do so if we indulge in sinful practices and make sensual and material gain our goal. Further, we have to be aware of the issues before us; we must stay informed on world, national, and local affairs and be ready to let our voices be heard. We have to speak up on community issues, and we must have a Biblical foundation on which to do so. From the Sermon on the Mount, we know that "... where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" and "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:21, 33). When each of us is stronger, our congregations and our homes will be stronger.

My answers to today's moral decay may sound simplistic, but I believe that the only way there can be a turnaround is by each Christian, each home, each congregation doing everything possible to accomplish change. We must bring the authority of the Bible back into the forefront, or be swallowed up by the evil around us.

—9194 Lakeside Drive
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38654

The Last Word...

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Eddie Whitten

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might," (Ephesians 6:10). Bodybuilding courses are designed to enhance one's strength. There are several exercise machines on the market for strengthening this muscle or that. It is big business! Millions of dollars are spent each year seeking the most effective method of enhancing physique and health. Good health is to be desired and exercise makes one feel better and stronger. All of this is fine, but not everyone can benefit from this kind of bodybuilding exercise. There are those who for reasons of health do not and/or cannot have physical strength. Elderly people are not candidates for the body building salesman. There is another kind of strength to which Paul alludes in our text. The kind of strength that is needed and that is available to all comes from another source entirely.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH IS NEEDED

Physical strength is essential for many secular works. It is amazing to observe the great strength demonstrated by so many as they go about their jobs. Paul, in our text, is referring, however, to another kind of strength that involves a person's character and integrity. Spiritual strength far surpasses the physical in the matters that count. In a land inundated with unbridled immorality, dishonesty, selfishness, unethical values, and such like, there is urgency for spiritual strength. Spiritual strength recognizes a standard

separate from self. It emanates from beyond the mind of individuals. It relies on premises far superior than our own wisdom.

Spiritual strength is designed to aid a person in having a lifestyle that benefits not only his own self, but others also. Living, to some, is nothing more than drudgery to be endured rather than experience to be enjoyed. It is so sad to see the misery reflected in the life of one so deprived of happiness and contentment. Suicide is often the tragic solution to such helplessness.

Spiritual strength is also designed to help fashion the conscience of people in their dealings with one another. Without spiritual strength human relations are shambles. Treachery and distrust characterize the conduct of those without it. Friendships are fragile, dependent upon agreement rather than upon principle.

Without spiritual strength, we have no hope either in this life and certainly not in the life to come. Even to those who deny the existence of God, an unrecognized dependence exists on the presence of spiritual strength on the part of those with whom he has to do. No one can truly claim positive benefits of life apart from spiritual strength.



THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

The apostle Paul admonishes us to take the armor of God to fight against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18). The wiles of the devil are the components of the arsenal of sin Satan uses to fight against God. When the Israelites rebelled against Samuel naming his sons to succeed him and demanding a king (I Samuel 8:5), Samuel prayed to God about it. God told Samuel to **"Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them"** (I Samuel 8:7). One of the abiding lessons of the book of Zechariah is that Satan is the chief assailant of the church. That is a lesson that is just as true today as it was in the days of Zechariah, and will always be until the end of time.

Human, physical strength is no match for the wiles of Satan. Satan does not use the physical to attack man. He uses the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life to do so (I John 2:16). Therefore, in order to combat evil effectively, we must use the power of spiritual strength.

The source of spiritual strength is found in the pages of the Bible. David wrote: **"Thy word have I bid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"** (Psalm 119:11). The apostle Paul, writing to his son in the gospel, Timothy,

said, **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Timothy 2:15). He also wrote, **"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 3:16-17). To the Ephesians, Paul stated: **"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"** (Ephesians 4:15-16).

It is difficult to distinguish between the physical and the spiritual. The strength of one is not the strength of the other. The question we must ask is, "Which one is the most important to me?" The answer is individual, but the consequence is universal, and eternal. Physical strength can allow us to live a little longer, but spiritual strength can permit us to live eternally.

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FOR ELIMERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN CHRISTIANITY

APOSTATE QUAIL SPRINGS CHURCH FELLOWSHIPS BAPTIST CHURCH

David P. Brown

In the August 2000 edition of *Contending for the Faith* the joint "freedom and faith festival sponsored by" the *Quail Springs Church of Christ* and the *Quail Springs Baptist Church* was noted. The event took place on July 1, 2000. The Religion Editor of *The Daily Oklahoman*, **Pat Gilliland**, was the first to publicize it. Her article may be read in the Saturday, July 1, 2000 edition on page B-1.

SHARING SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP

The preacher for the 1000 member apostate Quail Springs church is **Mark Henderson**. His denominational Baptist buddy is **Brian Waite**, the pastor of the Quail Springs Baptist Church. Some of what Gilliland reported about the duo follows.

The pastors said Churches of Christ and Southern Baptists have a history of saying they were the only ones bound for heaven.

"Both Mark and I...were explicit to our congregations in coming to them, that that was not our personal views or feelings," Waite said.

Still, they admit how they were somewhat surprised by how readily their congregations supported the idea of sharing not only food, fun, fellowship and a fireworks display this Sunday evening, but also worship.

On July 5, a free paper called *Penny News* referred to Gilliland's story. *Penny News* is circulated across western Oklahoma from Buffalo in the north to Vernon and Electra, Texas across the Red River in the south. It has a circulation of 18,000 and a readership of 70,000. The author of the article, who signed with the initials "els", praised the "fellowship" of the two churches. "Els" stated,

Personally, I have always had trouble with anyone who wanted to be 'the only ones in Heaven', or those who could believe in a God that would condemn any person simply because of what it reads on the front of the building. God must be smiling now!

In *The Daily Oklahoman* on July 8, 2000, page B-2, another article addressing the "freedom and faith festival" from Gilliland entitled "Storm Can't Stop Meeting" appeared. She wrote:

Members of the *Quail Springs Church of Christ* and *Quail Springs Baptist Church* must have wondered whether rain would dampen the response to plans for the two congregations to meet together for a festival. But the clouds gave way to a picnic-perfect evening. Smiles abounded, even as name tags and potato chips ran short and lines for burgers and hot dogs ran long. I made the 30-mile drive from Norman out of curiosity. I was especially interested in seeing how the two congregations—with a history of rivalry—could unite for worship. I joined in the singing of "Amazing Grace," with instrumental music accompaniment and no fire from heaven. Then, the jovial buzz of chatter resumed as people walked across the parking lot, sidewalks and wet grass to find a place to view fireworks. Sunday night, I was a believer in faith, freedom, fireworks and America. You cannot persuade me to believe God wasn't there—and smiling. I also know there are people of devout faith who are certain such a gathering of people calling themselves Christians is not biblical....

FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH

Although in the minority, a number of faithful churches did not let this apostasy and ecumenical party pass without opposing the shameful event. A response was made in *The Daily Oklahoman*. Letters were written to churches of

(Continued On Page 3)

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Editorial...

May One Church Extend Fellowship to Another Church?

The word "church" finds three different usages in the New Testament. (1) It means the one church Jesus built. It contains all those saved from their sins by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:38, 47; I Timothy 3:15). (2) Also, the word "church" means the Lord's church in any geographic location, designated or not (I Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16). Such is the largest and smallest organized entity of the realm of the saved. (3) "Church" also designates an assembly of Christians convened for religious purposes (I Corinthians 11:18, 20; 14: 5, 23, 28). The context of the passage will determine in which sense the word "church" is used. We may correctly conclude that in the question under consideration the word "church" means the largest and smallest organized entity of those saved by Christ—a church in any geographic location.

It must be understood that fellowship between churches must respect and adhere to the authorized organizational structure of each church as it is revealed in the New Testament (Colossians 3:17). One church has no authority over another church.

The first church of Christ on earth was the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2). All others came into existence after it. It is a matter of record that the Jerusalem church extended fellowship to the church in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:1)? The church in Jerusalem did so only on the basis that the church in Antioch "continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine" or put another way, they were walking in the light as Christ was in the light (Acts 2:42; I John 1:7). Each church continued "in the doctrine of Christ", thus they had "both the Father and the Son" (II John 9; Colossians 3:17). Neither church was going "beyond the things that are written" (I Corinthians 4:6-ASV, 1901). All other things being scripturally equal, there is no other basis on which one church may extend fellowship to another church. If there is, please tell me what it is?

Question: If it is the case (and it is) that the only grounds by which one church may extend fellowship to another church is that each one must be functioning only on the basis described in the preceding paragraph, then what if one church adopts a policy that causes her to go "beyond the things that are written"? Does the authority for scriptural fellowship remain? Is it "once in fellowship, always in fellowship"?

regardless of what either church believes and practices? No, faithful children of God may not fellowship unfaithful children of God, whether they are organized or not. If that is not the case, then churches of Christ remain in fellowship with the Christian Church—because at one time we were all one in belief and practice. However, if, as some teach, it is a sin for one church to withdraw fellowship from a sister congregation, then every church of Christ that is not in

fellowship with the Christian Church has sinned. There is no use advocating a doctrine and then rejecting the implications (consequences in this case) of it. Such is implied by those who teach that once fellowship is extended from one church to another both are forever in fellowship with each other and God regardless of what each believes.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

Quail Springs...

(Continued From Page 1)

Christ in Oklahoma City and its suburbs urging them to protest this unscriptural conduct by contacting the Quail Springs Church of Christ and registering their objection to such activities with the congregation. These brethren are to be highly commended for their efforts to stand for the truth and expose error. The problem—not many churches of Christ in the Oklahoma City area were concerned enough to expose the erroneous conduct of the Quail Springs congregation. This seems to be the problem among churches of Christ nation-wide.

While I do not know all the churches of Christ and brethren that had a part in exposing such error, the following congregations and persons were instrumental in opposing the Quail Springs catastrophe—*Barnes Church of Christ*, Oklahoma City, *Broadway Church of Christ*, Drumright, Oklahoma, *McCloud Church of Christ*, McCloud, Oklahoma and the *Northeast Church of Christ*, Elk City, Oklahoma. We commend **Marion Fox**, **Robin Haley**, **Dub Mowery**, **Wayne Price**, **Jack L. McLean** and **Jerry Brewer** for their early and continued efforts to confront and expose the evil behavior of the Quail Springs brethren.

I realize that there are many faithful brethren unknown to me who had, in one way or another, a part in this necessary effort to confront error and extol the truth. *Contending for the Faith* commends all of those who walked up to the firing line to oppose such sad departures from the New Testament pattern.

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY'S CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE—SILENT AS AN OYSTER

The Christian Chronicle via Editor **Bailey McBride** was contacted regarding the apostasy incident at Quail Springs. True to *The Chronicle's* ecumenical stance, it did not oppose the unscriptural conduct of the Quail Springs brethren. Faithful brethren are not surprised at *The Chronicle's* support of such sectarian denominationalism. Indeed, in his March 2000 editorial entitled "Journalism of Hate", McBride attempted to paint any and all faithful papers that oppose and expose error as hate mongers.

The Christian Chronicle is a "whited sepulcher". Outwardly she appears pious, loving, fair, just and supportive of good works, but inwardly she is full dead men's bones and all manner of corruption. In reality, *The Chronicle*

stands for everything that is opposed to primitive, pure, New Testament Christianity. The paper hates the New Testament pattern and the church of Christ produced by a faithful adherence thereto. Please understand that *The Chronicle* is owned by Oklahoma Christian University. Thus, *The Chronicle* reflects the policy of OCU and vice versa.

I understand that approximately 20 teachers and staff of OCU are members of the *Quail Springs Church of Christ*. Letters were written to OCU President **Jacobs** to learn if he and other faculty and staff were members of the Quail Springs congregation. In these letters President Jacobs was also urged to oppose such wrong activities as the "freedom and faith festival". I ask, where is the university's public protest of the *Quail Springs Church of Christ's* sinful fellowship of a Baptist church?

"A 'NEIGHBORLY' EVENT"

As recorded from his own pen in the following letter, OCU President **Kevin E. Jacobs** states that he is a member of the Quail Springs congregation. In response to letters of inquiry, he wrote the following August 14, 2000 letter.

Thank you for your concern about me and Oklahoma Christian University. I appreciate your integrity in contacting me directly.

Yes, I am a member at Quail Springs Church of Christ, but I am not an elder or a deacon. I learned with the rest of the congregation of the joint 4th of July celebration. I then met with one of my elders to find out how this joint celebration came about. Quail Springs Baptist Church approached us and since their property adjoins ours it was viewed only as a "neighborly" event—not an effort to merge the two churches.

Concerning the article in the newspaper, I was surprised by the coverage. Although some of the statements quoted were unfortunate, it was clear to me that the differences between Baptist doctrine and our positions in the churches of Christ were highlighted. Although the list of differences was not complete, I thought the coverage, for a daily newspaper, was pretty good.

Oklahoma Christian University was not a part of this event and, in fact, I deliberately chose not to attend. I hope you can see my position that we, as a university, have no scriptural authority for "policing" the activities of our congregations.

On a personal note, please be assured that my personal convictions are sound. I believe in the one church. I believe in the essential nature of baptism in the work of salvation. I am proud to be a member of the Church of Christ, and I sincerely want to share the Good News with my community and those with whom I come in contact.

I hope this letter will give you an understanding of my position. Again, thank you for your concern.

Sincerely,
Kevin E. Jacobs, President
Oklahoma Christian University

PRESIDENT JACOBS' LETTER EXAMINED

Jacobs not being "an elder or a deacon" in the Quail Springs congregation does not relieve him of his individual Christian responsibility to expose and have no fellowship with any conduct unauthorized or forbidden by the New Testament (Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 5:11). Certainly this includes the sinful conduct of erring brethren.

After meeting with the Quail Springs "elders to find out how this joint celebration came about," he concluded that since the "Quail Springs Baptist Church approached us and since their property adjoins ours it was viewed only as a 'neighborly' event—not an effort to merge the two churches." In other words, Jacobs is affirming that as long as a church of Christ does not intend to "merge" with a denomination, the New Testament authorizes said church to participate in activities such as those of the "freedom and faith festival." What were some of those activities? As noted, *The Daily Oklahoman's* Religion Editor, Patricia Gilliland, said that she drove thirty miles "out of curiosity" because she was "especially interested in seeing how the two congregations—with a history of rivalry—could unite for worship." She then reported: "I joined in the singing of 'Amazing Grace,' with instrumental music accompaniment and no fire from heaven." It is obvious that Gilliland thought that this "'neighborly' event" involved the two churches worshipping together. If those involved in the "freedom and faith festival" were not fellowshiping each other, what would have to be changed in order for fellowship to take place? Moreover, Gilliland knew well the significance of members of any church of Christ engaging in singing with "instrumental music accompaniment." If that is not the case, why did she note that such was done without "fire from heaven" falling upon them? Indeed, the Religion Editor understood full well the reason for the "freedom and faith festival", but the President of OCU thinks it was only a "'neighborly' event". Also, since Jacobs has a very difficult time seeing the obvious I must point out to him that the two churches on that occasion did "merge" for the purpose of worshipping and fellowshiping one another.

Even Religion Editor Gilliland could see that they did. If her description of the "festival" is not to publicize a "merging" of two different churches in fellowship and worship, please tell me what she would have to write to say that it was? Deliver us all from the lack of intelligence and perception of college and university presidents, especially those that are chief executives of such institutions operated by members of the church of Christ!

OCU TOOK NO PART

President Jacobs wrote that "Oklahoma Christian University was not a part of this event and, in fact, I deliberately chose not to attend." If it was only a "'neighborly' event", why did he refuse to be "neighborly"? Since President Jacobs chose not to be "neighborly" by absenting himself from the "freedom and faith festival", did he inform the other OCU faculty and staff who are members of the Quail Springs Church to follow his example? Does he and said OCU faculty and staff believe that it is scriptural to worship with denominational churches and sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" accompanied with mechanical instruments of music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)? Do they believe that the scriptures authorize them to remain members of a church whose elders approve of its members worshipping with denominational sectarian churches and who sing in worship to God with the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music? To anyone who can see through a ladder it is obvious that the Quail Springs elders have no problem with the events of the "freedom and faith festival". These are the men who are charged with the responsibility of watching after the spiritual well-being of the souls under their oversight—of which President Jacobs is one (Hebrews 13:17). Such as it is, Jacobs is evidently happy with their care of his soul along with all the other members of the Quail Springs Church. Also, as noted at the beginning of this article in the quote from Religion Editor Gilliland's July 1 article in *The Daily Oklahoman*, Mark Henderson, the preacher for the Quail Spring Church of Christ, does not believe Baptists are lost in sin. Jacobs is evidently content with being in a church under elders who are happy with a preacher who thinks that Baptists are saved.

NO AUTHORITY?

As the chief administrative officer of OCU, Jacobs has all the authority he needs to tell anyone working for OCU not to participate in anything that is not authorized by the New Testament. Why did he not order the faculty and staff of OCU to stay away from the "freedom and faith festival"? Does the President of OCU mean to tell the brotherhood that he does not have the authority to restrict his faculty and staff from participating in unscriptural acts? Has the Board of Trustees of OCU not delegated such authority to the President of the University? Where does the New Testament authorize any one to remain a member of a church that believes it can engage in worship that is acceptable to God with a Baptist church or, for that matter, any other denomination?

President Jacobs had no problem saying that he had "no scriptural authority for 'policing' the activities of our congregations." Who ever said he did? However, since in his

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August 14, 2000, letter he brought up the necessity of having scriptural authority for one's beliefs and actions, and since he thinks, no doubt, that he had scriptural authority for absenting himself from the "freedom and faith festival," then he should know that he would not be "policing" any church of Christ in telling anyone connected with OCU not to attend the "festival". Moreover, if President Jacobs can understand the previous points regarding biblical authority, then he should be able to understand that he can forbid any one under his authority to be members of churches that engage in false worship and who fellowship denominational churches. As Paul declared:

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (II Corinthians 6:17, 18).

However, if President Jacobs does not understand these fundamental points regarding such matters, then the Board of Trustees of OCU has an obligation to the New Testament pattern to see that he learns to abide by them. If he or any of the staff and faculty of OCU continues to fellowship apostates, they should be given their "walking papers". However, if anyone thinks such will happen at OCU they are simply "whistling in the dark".

PERSONAL CONVICTIONS?

President Jacobs said, "...please be assured that my personal convictions are sound." Does anyone think that he would say otherwise? Even if this man understands how to ascertain Bible authority, he has by his actions proven that he has no convictions. That is the case or he simply does not have the courage of his convictions.

Jacobs writes that he believes "in the one church." If he really understands and believes the New Testament's teaching regarding the church, then he should understand the New Testament's teaching regarding the persons the church may fellowship. Indeed, if that were the case, he would not hold membership in a church that fellowships a Baptist denomination in a merger of both churches in a worship festival. Moreover, President Jacobs would not touch top, side or bottom of a church that does not abide by New Testament teaching regarding singing songs of praise to God or anything else.

President Jacobs stated that he desires "to share the Good News with my community and those with whom I come in contact." If by the word "share" he means to preach, teach and defend the gospel of Christ, it is obvious by his actions that he has little or no correct concept of the gospel and the church revealed on the pages of the New Testament. I know this because he did not rebuke the Quail Springs elders, preacher or anyone else who decided, encouraged and participated in the "freedom and faith festival". Moreover, unless something has changed recently, he remains a member of the Quail Springs congregation.

President Jacobs also wrote that he believes "in the essential nature of baptism in the work of salvation." If that is the case, does he believe that the members of the Quail Springs Baptist Church were saved by faith only before

they were baptized? Indeed, that is what they believe and teach. Moreover, as already noted the Quail Springs preacher, Mark Henderson believes Baptists are saved as practicing Baptists. Does Jacobs believe that Baptist baptism is scriptural? Remember, President Jacobs appealed to Bible authority when he sought to point out that OCU had no business "policing" the churches, which "policing" no one advocated. According to him he does not have the authority to "police" his own faculty and staff! If Bible authority is that important to him, then where is there Bible authority for the Lord's church to "merge" with a denominational church in a worship festival wherein fellowship is extended to those who teach that one is saved at the point of faith only and before baptism for, unto, in order to the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21)? Where is President Jacobs' authority to hold membership with a church that fellowships people who have not been baptized for the remission of sins? Of course there is no such authority.

WHITED WALLS

It will not do to attempt to persuade the brethren that the President of OCU would not have been a welcome speaker at such an event if he had requested to speak. If Jacobs genuinely desired to teach the truth on the church and baptism that he says he believes, why did he not stand up and be counted on the side of New Testament Christianity? The reason why is a simple one. Jacobs is a hireling and a compromiser. He, along with certain others in the church, are not about to hazard their own necks to make sure that the truth of the gospel may continue with anyone. This disposition of mind characterizes many in leadership positions throughout the Lord's church. Paul's response to the high priest Ananias because he had commanded Paul to be smitten on the mouth is very appropriate for such insipid, weak and "politically correct" characters. "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall:" (Acts 23:3).

President Jacobs' closing remarks include the sentence, "I hope this letter will give you an understanding of my position." I can only respond with, it certainly does. Indeed, it causes me to remember a secular quote as well a sacred one. Edmund Burke stated, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Of his dealing with false teachers the apostle Paul wrote, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 2:5). President Jacobs does not live according to the previously given secular quote, much less the sacred one. Of course my remarks are made with the assumption that he thinks himself to be a "good" man.

Among the conclusions that may be reached regarding President Jacobs' letter of explanation is the fact that he reveals far more about himself than he ever realized. His administrative letter is a placating, cowardly "take no position" (which itself is a position) communiqué. It is no wonder that the church is in the mess it is when we have men in leadership positions whose backbones compare best with wet limp noodles.

WHAT CONFUSION!

Look at the line-up and connection of certain brethren, churches, OCU and *The Christian Chronicle*. Kevin Jacobs is president of OCU. Jacobs is a member of the Quail Springs Church of Christ. *The Christian Chronicle* is owned by OCU. As chief administrative officer of OCU, Jacobs is head of the institution that publishes *The Chronicle*. Thus, OCU is the policy maker for *The Chronicle*. Bailey McBride is the editor of *The Chronicle*. He is also member of the Edmund Church of Christ. **Glover Shipp** is the Senior Editor of *The Chronicle* and one of the elders of the Edmund Church. The Edmund congregation sponsors the television program "In Search of the Lord's Way". **Mack Lyon** is the speaker on the program and is a member of the Edmund congregation.

If Jacobs, McBride, Shipp, Lyon, the Quail Springs elders, the Edmund elders and others with the same type of connections do not act in concert with each other, they will set off a chain reaction that will jeopardize their whole fraternal association. For example, if McBride were to oppose the "freedom and faith festival" on the pages of *The Chronicle*, he immediately collides with his boss, President Jacobs, who is a member of the Quail Springs Church. If Jacobs were to back McBride in such a hypothetical stand, he would be in opposition to the elders of the Quail Springs Church who have his oversight. The same kind of trouble would arise if the Edmund Church opposed the "freedom and faith festival". Editor McBride is a member of the Edmund Church. Senior Editor Shipp serves as one of the Edmund Church elders. Thus, the Edmund Church, McBride and Shipp would find themselves in opposition to OCU President Jacobs as well as the converse being true. Yet, McBride and Shipp are accountable to Jacobs, while Shipp is one of McBride's elders. Imagine the confusion! Where would Mack Lyon be in this hubbub? If I may answer this question on the basis of his past performance, he would be found trying to agree with every one involved. He would also have a difficult time knowing whether he was at a certain place at a certain time or not. But whether there or not, he would defend his being there. He would then get angry because someone pointed these obvious facts out to him.

I assure you that those herein named and others who are involved directly or indirectly in this convention of confusion clearly see the trouble that would have arisen among and between themselves if anyone of them had decided to oppose the "freedom and faith festival". Thus, they ignore any semblance of consistency in standing for the right and opposing the wrong as defined in the Bible. Yet, gullible brethren continue to pour money into and give all sorts of support to this parasitical tribe. Furthermore, to one extent or another, the same kind of connections exist among brethren in the same positions as just set out in Nashville, Tennessee, Abilene, Texas, Searcy, Arkansas and so on. And to think, some of us get so concerned about the political corruption of secular politics.

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Enthusiasm For The Work Of God!

Bill Jackson

That English word, "enthusiasm," does not appear in any of our standard translations, but some synonyms do. Immediately the word "zeal" comes to mind. We have been created in Christ Jesus, and called into him by the gospel, to be a people zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). In that same connection, the apostle Paul made use of the expression "maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). God determines the area of good for us, and his children then must be zealous to learn of the good, do the good, and keep on doing the good!

But we often show we do not understand real, scriptural zeal (or, enthusiasm). A showman can get in the pulpit, use virtually no Bible, but wave his arms, do handstands, and use the platform as a running track, and brethren marvel at his "enthusiasm for God!" Some of the same type behavior exhibited by one called a "youth minister," when appealing to our young people, results in parents turning the souls of their youngsters over to the man, for he has "such zeal!" Really now, do not we confuse showmanship, or bragging, etc. with zeal and enthusiasm?

We need enthusiasm in the work of God, but where do we get it? How do we come by it? First, we do not get it from denominationalism! **Norman Vincent Peale**, in his enthusiasm for promoting error, will not give the child of God enthusiasm for truth! And a preacher who is also a good gymnast will never build enthusiasm for truth! Well, where does it come from? What is its base? Back we come to the permanent theme: The word of God, and our own personal dedication to it. More than that, real enthusiasm—one that does not have such a short life—is based on true conversion!

If I am truly converted, I can be, and will be, enthusiastic in the work of God. If I am truly converted, I love the Lord, love the word, love the kingdom, value my own soul and I love the souls of others—and enthusiasm is thus rooted. No one then will have to whip me to get my participation in the things of the kingdom. And, I will not be fooled by entertainment passing for "spiritual enthusiasm!" Here is real enthusiasm: "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God...**" (Matthew 6:33). And here is more of it: "**...be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord**" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

—Deceased

IS THE NIV RELIABLE?

Gary L. Grizzell

When **Clem Thurman** stated in his *Gospel Minutes* that the NIV is a reliable translation, he *implied* that the false doctrine of the NIV is reliable. [August 15, 1997 issue]. Would you say that the NIV's translation of Romans 10:10 (which teaches the doctrine of faith only) is reliable? I hope that you would agree that the NIV's "translation" of Romans 10:10 is *not* reliable!

Would you say that when a NIV "preacher" read Romans 10:10 to his audience and then told them to simply *believe* that Jesus is the son of God and they "are" saved, that he would be preaching the truth? Of course, he certainly would not be preaching the truth! Suppose that same "preacher" simply read aloud the Romans 10:10 passage out of the NIV and then said nothing to his audience (that is, suppose he simply refrained from telling his audience that the NIV had mistranslated (perverted) the text. Would you not agree that such a "preacher" is a teacher of error?

If an individual follows Romans 10:10 as translated by the NIV, he will not obtain salvation and will one day lose his soul in Hell! Why is this the case? This is true because the NIV here teaches the false, Calvinistic doctrine of Faith Only!

The man who advocates that Romans 10:10 (as translated by the NIV) is reliable, reveals *he* is unreliable himself as a teacher of God's word. Someone may object and say, "Oh, but every man should be allowed to express his opinion concerning the translation issue." The real issue is that no man has the right to advocate false doctrine either explicitly or by implication. To state that the *New International Version* is a reliable translation is to *imply* that what is taught in the NIV (for example, the false doctrine of faith only) is reliable. If not, why not? So, when Thurman stated in his *GOSPEL MINUTES* that the NIV is a reliable translation, he *implied* that the false doctrine of the NIV is reliable. If not, why not? Yet, many brethren today cannot be warned about such error in *Gospel Minutes*, but insist on bringing bundles into the church on a weekly basis for the members to take home. As one brother as said, **SOME BRETHREN JUST CANNOT BE WARNED!**

THERE IS MUCH MORE ERROR IN THE NIV

The NIV not only teaches the doctrine of faith only but also a number of other doctrines which violate **PLAIN SCRIPTURAL TEACHING**.

it allows for premillennialism, being "included in Christ" just by hearing the gospel, miraculous gifts for today, and Sabbath observance as a scriptural practice for today. It even perverts the inspired text of Psalms 51:5 to teach **John Calvin's** inheritance of sin by babies. Read Psalm 51:5 in the NIV and weep! It has David saying, "I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Guess Jesus did not know what he was talking about when he said that the kingdom of heaven

is for the little children. Did Jesus mean, *Let the little sinners come unto me?* (Matthew 18:1-4). According to the NIV he must have meant this.

Those who so pervert God's word will answer to God at the Judgment (Galatians 1:7-9; 6:7-8). The NIV is nothing more than a commentary and a poor one at that! A commentary does not deserve to be called the "Holy Bible." Let us contend for the faith once delivered, not a corruption of the faith due to a corrupt translation (Jude 3).

Thurman was requested by letter to retract his damaging statement, but in his response he refused to do so. Though he responded with a letter he did not make a retraction. My Bible, as well as yours, says:

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

The Bible says to mark false teachers, not bring them into the flock!

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THE NEW NAME

ACTS 11:26

Wayne Price

A number of years ago, a denominational preacher for the Second Methodist Church in Waco, Texas, wrote chiding me about his belief that the "name 'Christian' was given by God." The man stated that the "name 'Christian' was given in derision, just like the name 'Campbellite' was given to your group." Such derision not only might describe the alleged attitude of first century adversaries of Christians about whom he wrote, but also describe his own caustic, sarcastic attitude in the letter he penned. But just what is the evidence that this name "Christian" was not given derisively, but instead was given by God?

THE PROPHECY

Isaiah prophesied that **"another name"** (Isaiah 65:15) would be given for those who were servants of the Lord. Without identifying WHEN this would be done, he further records that God said: **"I will give...a name better than that of sons or daughters...everlasting..."** (Isaiah 56:5). Finally, in Isaiah 62:2, the prophecy is given that **"the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness... and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."** The promise is clear: This new name would be given by God (56:5), and that it would come from the mouth of Jehovah himself (62:2). Was that promise fulfilled or not?

In Acts 11:26, some seven hundred years after the time of Isaiah, Luke records that **"the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."** Note the timing of this event as recorded by Luke. The Gentiles had just **"seen the righteousness"** offered by God in that the household of Cornelius had just obeyed the gospel (Acts 10-11:21). Barnabas was sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem, and having requested that Saul come join him, they assembled with the church in Antioch for a year (Acts 11:22-26). Then we read the statement that **"the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"** (v.26).

"CALLED"

The word "called" here in the Greek is an interesting term and is more than just another synonym for the verb "call". The verb used by Luke in Acts 11:26 is found nine times in the New Testament. A quick look at those occurrences of this word, and how it is rendered by the translators, is quite revealing.

In both Matthew 2:12 and 2:22 (ASV), it is translated **"being warned of God."** In Luke 2:26, the translation "it was revealed" is followed by the statement "by the Holy Ghost". In Acts 10:22 this same verb is again translated as **"warned of God."** In Romans 7:3, it is recorded that **"she shall be called an adulteress...."** The writer of Hebrews uses the expression three times. Hebrews 8:5 says that **"Moses was warned of God...."** Hebrews 11:7 once more

translates it as found in Matthew when it says that **"Noah, being warned of God...."** Finally Hebrews 12:25 renders it **"spake"**, referring to Moses as God's spokesman back in the days of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, and concludes that we must listen to Christ today who speaks from heaven. Though the word God is not actually a part of the Greek text, yet the word itself carries such a meaning. For example, the *Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon* says the verb is used of God imparting **"a revelation, or injunction, or warning"** (page 893). The evidence is strong that the word suggests a divine oracle back in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), especially in the prophet Jeremiah (cf. Jeremiah 25:30 **"shall roar"**, Jeremiah 26:2 **"speak"**, Jeremiah 29:23 **"spoken"**, and in Jeremiah 36:2,4 **"have spoken"** [*Codex Alexandrinus*]). The context in each of the above illustrates that it is God who does the speaking.

The verb "call" could (yea, should) be translated as a divine calling in every New Testament passage in which it is found, not just in the Matthew citations, in Acts 10:22, or in Hebrew 8:5. Hence, the use of it in Acts 11:26 could well be rendered as a **"divine call."** The word likewise suggests a divine response, an oracle (*Abbott Smith*, p.484) and is so translated by the King James Version and the American Standard Version in (1901) Romans 11:4 as an **"answer of God."**

WHO DID THE "CALLING"?

But there is another fascinating feature about this reference in Acts 11:26. The verb is translated as passive, but the fact is that the word is ACTIVE, not passive at all. Instead of **"were called,"** how should it be translated to give the active idea that is suggested by the original language? Since it is active voice, what is the subject of the verb, i.e., who did the pronouncement, or calling of the disciples as Christians?

The context of Acts 11:26 lets us know that the word **"them"** in the majority text refers to Barnabas and Saul. There are three infinitives found in the verse which are construed with the word **"them"**: (1) to assemble, (2) to teach, and (3) to (divinely) call. The first infinitive is middle voice, and means to **"assemble themselves"**; the second is active voice, and means **"to teach."** The third is also active voice, and means to **speak an oracle, or "speak from God"**. Hence, it was Barnabas and Saul as prophets of God (Acts 1:24, Acts 9:17, Galatians 1:1) who are to be understood as the subjects of this sentence, and as prophets who were speaking for God.

Hugo McCord recently informed this writer that in the next edition of his translation, this part of the verse will be translated into English as follows: **"...and it came to pass, even for a whole year, they were gathered together with**

the congregation, and they taught a large multitude, and, first in Antioch, by a divine revelation, they called the disciples 'Christians'."

Certainly God made good on his promises in the book of Isaiah of a new name which was to be given (as we now know over 700 years after it was first prophesied). This prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 11:26. It was done at the appointed time (after the Gentiles had seen his glory), it was done by the Lord himself (Isaiah 62:2), within his walls

(Isaiah 56:5), and accomplished through the agency of inspired men, Barnabas and Saul. Far from being a name given in derision by antagonists of the Lord's disciples in the first century, the Bible teaches that the name was God-given, and therefore "if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Peter 4:16, ASV).

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JUST ASK MOSES

Alton W. Fonville

In the course of human history, we sometimes learn valuable lessons from those who have gone before us, which keep us from some of the same bad consequences. Other times, we read of things which happened before and shrug it off with some trite expression like, "it won't happen to me that way." And even though we may not express it quite so bluntly, our actions show it to be "our thinking."

We use the statement Paul made in Romans 15:4, regarding "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning", in so many instances, but it seems we never really learn from the examples, or at least "take it to heart."

You would think that the great leader which God chose to lead his people from Egyptian bondage would be the perfect example in following God's will to the letter. After all, it was Moses who saw firsthand the miracles God worked in Egypt, and the crossing of the Red Sea on dry land, the feeding of the multitude, the unusually long wear of their clothing, and many other great miracles. It was Moses also who saw his brother Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, burned with fire from the Lord because of their "slight" disobedience, and who made that important statement to Aaron recorded in Leviticus 10:3, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people, I will be glorified."

And it was Moses who wrote the words of God for all to hear and learn: "Do not add to God's word, Do not take away from it. Do not change it in any way, either to the right hand or to the left hand" (Deuteronomy 4:2; 28:14). In addition to that, we have his great message to the people, recorded in Deuteronomy 11, which includes this statement:

Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway. (18ff) Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul. Teach them to your children [at all times available]. I set you a blessing if you obey and a curse if you disobey.

But, from a study of God's word, we see that Moses, in all his greatness, did the very thing he warned others not to do. He displayed his **unbelief**, and he failed to sanctify

God in the sight of the people, in the incident of the water of Meribah, found in Leviticus 20.

In our estimation, the incident was quite small and insignificant, like many feel today about the perverted word of God as in the NIV version of the Bible. Much teaching has been done regarding the false doctrines taught in it and they still uphold it to the death. Many excuses have been given for its continued use, and many souls are being led into error and eventual condemnation. They just will not learn from those who went before us. Yes, they had better learn from these powerful examples which we can read about in God's word. Moses paid a terrible price for his folly. We will pay a high price for loose handling of the very word of God? God has not changed. "Choose you this day....me and my house will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

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THE TRUTH AND LOVE

Russell M. Kline

The apostle John is one of the most fascinating figures in New Testament history. According to tradition, he was born in the northernmost province of Galilee and raised in Bethsaida on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. His parents were Zebedee and Salome, and he appears to have been a first cousin of the Lord on his mother's side of the family. Evidence suggests that his family operated a very successful fishing business in which he worked until he was called to follow Jesus. He was one of the first followers of Christ and was part of what has been called the "inner circle" of disciples, who were privileged to be with Jesus when he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Luke 8), when he was transfigured (Matthew 17), and when he was in Gethsemane (Mark 14). Indications are that he had a close friendship with Jesus. He was the only disciple to accompany Jesus to the cross, and he was selected by Jesus to take care of Mary upon his death. When news of the Lord's resurrection reached the apostles, John outran Peter to see the tomb. When the church was established, evidence suggests that John was willing to go wherever he could be useful in the establishment of Christianity. He is believed to have been the youngest of the apostles, and he is believed to have been the only one who died of natural causes.

HE LOVED AND THEREFORE WARNED

John wrote five books of the New Testament: the account of the life of Christ, which bears his name, three epistles, which bear his name, and the book of Revelation. A close study of John's epistles reveals that their primary purpose is to warn faithful Christians of false doctrine that was sweeping through the brotherhood late in the first century. He wrote about those who denied the divinity of

Christ (I John 2:22) and those who denied his humanity (John 4:2, 3), calling them "antichrist." He warned faithful brethren not to offer aid and comfort to false teachers (II John 5-11), and he condemned by name those who would not support teachers of the truth (III John 9-11). John was a staunch defender of the truth, yet he is still known today as the "apostle of love." Indeed, all of his writings had a great deal to say about love (John 3:16; I John 4:8; II John 5; III John 1; Revelation 2:4), and his life was a reflection of those teachings. John was a man possessed of both the truth and love. Yet, if a man in this day and age stands in affirmation of the truth and opposition to error, he is called "unloving" by some of his brethren. The truth and love are not mutually exclusive. Not only is it possible for a Christian to be possessed of both, it is absolutely necessary.

Some Christians do not possess the truth, or love. They are those who teach and practice false doctrine with impunity, and without regard for their own souls or for the souls of those whom they influence. They are the first to accuse others of being unloving and devious even as they ridicule and make a mockery of the church of Christ and those who seek to maintain its purity. They are those who appear at the *Nashville Jubilee*, the *Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop*, and other venues in which false doctrine is celebrated. They are those who do not love the truth and who do not practice the principles of Christian love toward others.

Some Christians possess love, but do not possess the truth. They are called "fence riders" and "wishy-washy" by some of their brethren. They love the Lord and his church, so they are not totally committed to liberalism, but they are not possessed of the truth, so they are not totally against liberalism either. They are those who attend the *Nashville Jubilee*, and the *Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop*, and who applaud the talent of the men who speak at those events while admitting that they sometimes say "controversial" things. They are more numerous than one might imagine and could easily be possessed of the truth if sound brethren will take an interest in exposing them to a positive influence.

Some Christians possess the truth, but do not possess love. They are considered to be sound brethren because they teach and practice the truth, but they do not practice the principles of Christian love for their fellow men. It may be because they have been "burned" in previous encounters with liberalism or because they have received an unbalanced diet of nothing but sermons about the evils of false doctrine. They are suspicious of everyone they meet, and are reluctant to extend the "right hand of fellowship" to anyone that they do not know lest they find themselves in fellowship with error. The paranoid behavior exhibited by these brethren keeps them from growing spiritually and numerically, and it damages the reputation of the Lord's church with the chill that exists in the absence of love.

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Some Christians possess the truth and love. They are men and women like the apostle John who stand steadfastly for the truth of God's word while proudly displaying Christian love as their badge of discipleship. They do not teach or practice false doctrine, and they do not support those who do. They take no pleasure in exposing false doctrine, but they weep with bitter tears over the condition of their lost brethren. They love the truth and will defend it without compromise, and they love their fellow men with equal veracity. They live the embodiment of the teachings of the New Testament, and they serve as fine examples for all Christians.

John was fanatically devoted to the cause of Christ. He and his brother, James, were nicknamed "Boanerges" by Jesus, a term which literally means "sons of thunder." This was a testament to the zeal and conviction with which John advocated Christianity. Polycarp, a Christian historian

who lived in the first and second centuries, told of an occasion when he and John entered a public bathhouse in Ephesus and spotted Cerinthus, a false teacher of the day. John said, "Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." Jerome, another ancient church historian, tells us that, when John was a very old man and no longer able to walk, others would bear him to the services of the church, where he would stand, leaning on a cane, and in a quivering voice would repeat, "Little children, love one another, love one another, love one another...." John was a man possessed of both the truth and love. We should all aspire to same greatness. As Paul wrote, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

—1035 N. Main Street
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IF IT'S NOT A CHILD... YOU ARE NOT PREGNANT

Toney L. Smith

Friends of abortion like to say that it is not murder because the tissue which is aborted is not human life. According to the U. S. Supreme Court, the word "person" does not include the unborn, therefore, they can be legally killed without penalty. In fact unborn babies are killed with the sanction of the President, his staff and every one of his supporters. There are over 1.5 million abortions every year. That amounts to 4,200 abortions per day and one abortion every 21 seconds. Do you know what that means? It means that each year there are more deaths from abortions than there were Americans killed in all its wars since 1776! I was appalled at the deaths of our young men who laid down their lives for a cause they held dear. But I am exceedingly appalled at the murder of little innocent babies who are being slaughtered for NO GOOD REASON AT ALL!

LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION

Arguments are being made by ungodly minds that declare that the unborn child is not living, that it is nothing more than a mass of tissue. Careful thought and study will affirm that life begins at conception. Psalm 51:5 states that David began to exist at conception, not a blob of matter that later became life. All that is added after conception is oxygen and nourishment. Over twenty years ago, the first International Conference of Abortion was held in Washington, D. C. The first question the medical group discussed was, "When does life begin?" Their unanimous conclusion was that they "could find no point in time between the union of sperm and egg and the birth of an infant at which point we could say this was not human life. The changes occurring between implantation, a six-weeks em-

bryo, a six-months fetus, a one-week old child, or a mature adult are merely states of development and maturation." Also read these Bible verses: Exodus 21:22-23; Psalm 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:40-41; Exodus 21:22-25; Job 3:3.

Recently I saw the most amazing bumper sticker. It's message was so clear and true. It simply read: IF IT'S NOT A CHILD - YOU ARE NOT PREGNANT. This simple statement strikes at the heart of the abortionist arguments. Many need to wake up to the fact that our government has condoned and passed laws that "shed innocent blood," which God hates (Proverbs 6:16-17). How shall we face eternity with this carnage on our heads? Every Christian must do all within his/her power to remove these influences from positions of power. Remember that making a thing legal does not change God's view of it. We must not be silent. Silence or compromise is one vote for the devil.

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February 25 - 28, 2001

David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

Sunday, February 25

9:30 A.M. "Mormon Doctrine of Apostles".....Daniel Denham
10:30 A.M. "God's Infallible and Only Source Book for Man's Salvation is the Bible".....Keith Mosher
4:00 P.M. "Direct Revelation of God is Unnecessary Today".....Jason Rollo
5:00 P.M. "We Love the Mormons, but Oppose Their Fundamental Doctrines"..... Michael Hatcher
6:00 P.M. "The 'Two Sticks' of Ezekiel Thirty-Seven"..... Clifford Newell

Monday, February 26

9:00 A.M. "The Account of the Origin of Mormonism Proves it False".....Jim Nash
10:00 A.M. "Sidney Rigdon and Mormonism".....Paul Vaughn
**10:00 A.M. "Keep Yourselves in the Love of God" (Jude 21).....Anita Hochdorf
11:00 A.M. "A Review of the Gatewood-Farnsworth Debate".....Lester Kamp
1:30 P.M. "A Study of Joseph Smith".....Jesse Whitlock
2:30 P.M. "Literary and Historical Characteristics of the Book of Mormon".....Gary Summers
3:30 P.M. "A Study of Doctrines & Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S"....Tom Wacaster
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 P.M. "Mormon Doctrine of Miracles Versus the Bible".....Michael Wyatt
8:00 P.M. "Mormons and Plural Marriages (Polygamy)".....Don Walker

Tuesday, February 27

9:00 A.M. "Mormons and Zion".....Wayne Blake
10:00 A.M. "Mormon Doctrine of the Priesthood Versus the Bible".....David Baker
**10:00 A.M. "Snatching Them Out of the Fire" (Jude 23).....Anita Hochdorf
11:00 A.M. "The Mormon View of Eternal Life Versus the Bible".....Michael Light
1:30 P.M. "Miscellaneous Mistakes of the Mormons".....Darrell Conley
2:30 P.M. "The Absurdities of Joseph Smith's 'Prophecies'".....Gary Grizzell
3:30 P.M. "A Study of Brigham Young".....Noah Hackworth
DINNER BREAK - 5:00 P.M. SBI BANQUET
6:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 P.M. "The False Claims of Mormon Inspiration".....Paul Sain
8:00 P.M. "The God of Mormonism".....B. J. Clarke

Wednesday, February 28

9:00 A.M. "The Bible Warns Against False Teachers".....Monte Evans
10:00 A.M. "Mormons and Baptism for the Dead".....Marvin Weir
11:00 A.M. "A Review of Mormonism Exposed by G. B. Hancock".....Don Tarbet
1:30 P.M. "A Study of the Pearl of Great Price".....Kenneth Ratcliff
2:30 P.M. "Mormons and the New Covenant".....Eddie Whitten
3:30 P.M. "The Virgin Birth and Mormonism".....Danny Box
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 P.M. "The Mormon Doctrine of Man, Sin and Salvation Versus the Bible".....Jason Roberts
8:00 P.M. "God's Temple versus the Mormon's Temple".....Bobby Liddell
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ART THOU HE WHO TROUBLETH ISRAEL? (I Kings 18:17)

Tom Moore

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, a drought, started by God through the mouth of Elijah, has now been handcuffing Israel for three years.
 - a. I Kings 18:1, 18:7-17
 - b. Imagine that, Ahab is blaming Elijah for this drought!
 - c. Consider Elijah's reply ... I Kings 18:18.
- B. This would not be the last time God's servants would be branded troublemakers.
1. 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 lesson let us point out those who are really troubling the church today.

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.
 - b. Hosea 4:6.
2. Thus, to keep from troubling the church we must:
 - a. II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13; Ephesians 3:4
 - b. Deuteronomy 17:19; Isaiah 34:16.
 - c. John 5:39; Acts 17:11.

B. COWARDLY CHRISTIANS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. Cowardice has always done great damage the Lord's cause and his people.
 - a. The ten spies (Numbers 13:33).
 - b. The followers of Gideon (Judges 7:3).
 - c. Saul feared the people (I Samuel 15:20-24).
 - d. Israel before Goliath (I Samuel 17:24).
 - e. The children of Ephraim in battle (Psalm 78:9).
2. Today we have many that do not stand for right and truth because they are afraid of:
 - a. Persecution.
 - b. What someone might say or think.
 - c. They might hurt someone's feelings.
 - d. Not being popular.
3. To keep from troubling the church we must be brave and courageous.
 - a. Deuteronomy 31:6; Ezra 10:4.
 - b. Matthew 10:28; I Corinthians 16:13.

C. LUKEWARM CHRISTIANS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. Lukewarm Christians do much harm to the church.
2. Notice how God views lukewarmness or halfheartedness.
 - a. Revelation 3:15-16.
 - b. 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 falling away from the church.
2. Parents have the obligation to:
 - a. Teach ... Deuteronomy 6:5-9.
 - b. Train ... Proverbs 22:6.
 - c. Provide for ... II Corinthians 12:14.
 - d. Love them ... Titus 2:4.
 - e. Discipline them ... Proverbs 19:18.
 - f. Provide a good influence ... II Timothy 1:5.
3. When parent fails in their duties, then will be true of us what was true of those in the time of the Judges... Judges 2:10.

E. FALSE TEACHERS ARE TROUBLING THE CHURCH

1. False teachers are doing great damage to the church. These false teachers:
 - a. Lead men astray ... Jeremiah 50:6.
 - b. Teach the doctrines of men ... Matthew 15:9.
 - c. Speak lies ... I Timothy 4:2.
 - d. Do not consent to wholesome words ... I Timothy 6:3.
 - e. Destroy homes ... Titus 1:11.
 - f. Bring in false doctrines secretly ... II Peter 2:1.
 - g. Are insensitive ... Isaiah 56:10-11.
 - h. Scatter God's people ... Jeremiah 23:2.
 - i. Prey on God's people instead of feeding them ... Ezekiel 34:2-3.
2. Faithful teachers of God's word must:
 - a. Not conceal it ... Psalm 40:10.
 - b. Preach in love ... Ephesians 4:15.
 - c. Preach the truth on all subjects, keeping proper balance ... Acts 20:20, 27.
 - d. Teach to please God - not men ... Galatians 1:10.
 - e. Be persistent ... II Timothy 4:2.
 - f. Sincere ... II Timothy 1:12.
 - g. Contend earnestly for the faith ... Jude 3.
 - h. Students of his word ... I Timothy 4:13.

CONCLUSION

- A. What is your 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?"

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Current Events that Concern Christians...

Religiosity, Getting Back to Basics, Al Gores' Book

Compiled By Mark McWhorter

Americans are a deeply religious people, but they are not a theological people, according to sociologist **Alan Wolfe**. Wolfe, who interviewed a cross-section of Americans to determine their spiritual "temperature," said public opinion polls show that more Americans believe in heaven than believe in hell. "They don't think that the specific doctrines of specific denominations are all that important to them," he said. "That's one reason why they often switch from one religion to another."

This "religiosity" promotes tolerance and has become increasingly hostile to evangelical Christians, according to **Tom Pedigo**, who heads the National Association Against Christian Discrimination. "When I say 'evangelical Christians,' (I mean) those of us who believe the Bible and have a set of absolutes and believe in right and wrong," Pedigo said.

Wolfe also discovered that many who consider themselves religious today are "simply too nice to see Satan everywhere around them."

"They do acknowledge that there are evil people in the world, but they tend to think of people who are evil as historical figures or as distant figures — **Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic**" he said. "They don't want to think that evil is near them."

"I think the struggle is, what does the salvation message become then in the light of that perspective within our culture?" said the **Rev. Eldon Fry** of *Focus on the Family*. Fry said today's "feel-good" culture tends to minimize the reality of evil, personal sin and a need for repentance — concepts at the core of evangelical belief.

This tension, he said, leads to persecution of believers and is the paramount challenge facing the Christian church today (*Citizenlink* email news service, 6/1/00). *[This is what gospel preachers have been saying. Our own liberal brethren are a part of this slide into anti-nomianism. Just say you love Jesus and that is enough. No specifics are required. Just have your "heart right". But God says to love him is to keep his commandments.—MTM]*

The Senate Judiciary Committee, **Orin Hatch** presiding, is considering **Bonnie Campbell**, a Clinton nominee for the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Campbell had this to say about Christian conservatives at a teachers' union event:

I hate to call them Christian because I am Christian, and I hate to call them religious, because they're not.... These are the people that get their orders from God, which is funny because I get contrary orders from God. Maybe there's more than one God (*The Federalist* email news, 6/2/00).

[She cannot get contrary orders if she is getting her orders from the Bible. But the evangelical, charismatic conservatives have a problem if they try to argue against Campbell getting orders from God. They claim to get direct inspiration in addition to the printed word of God. If this is so, they are

hard pressed to tell us how they know Campbell is not getting direct revelation. How would they explain that one of them is actually being deceived by a demon? And how can we tell the difference? The true solution is obeying what God has told us from the Bible and repudiating direct inspiration today.—MTM]



Lutherans are concentrating on the basics. The 11,000 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are emphasizing seven key practices: prayer, study, worship, invitation, encouragement, service, and giving. The yearlong "Living Faith: A Call to Discipleship" initiative begins in September, the denomination said. Congregations received a planning guide and a Bible study. "...Discipleship is something we haven't been very good at in the past" said **Lori Strang** of Grace Lutheran Church in Luckey, Ohio. "It's high time we focus on being disciples — those who follow the Lord and learn continually in an active way" (*Religion Today* email service, 6/5/00). *[One can only hope that they are genuine in getting back to the Bible. If they are, then they will throw away all their man-made rules and regulations.—MTM]*

In **Al Gore's** book, *Earth in the Balance*, he makes the following statement:

Human evolution, of course, is responsible for our very long period of childhood, during much of which we are almost completely dependent on our parents. As **Ashley Montagu** first pointed out decades ago, evolution encouraged the development of larger and larger human brains, but our origins in the primate family placed a limit on the ability of the birth canal to accommodate babies with ever-larger heads. Nature's solution was to encourage an extremely long period of dependence on the nurturing parent during infancy and childhood, allowing both mind and body to continue developing in an almost gestational way long after birth (as quoted in *Answers Update*, May, 2000, p. 2).

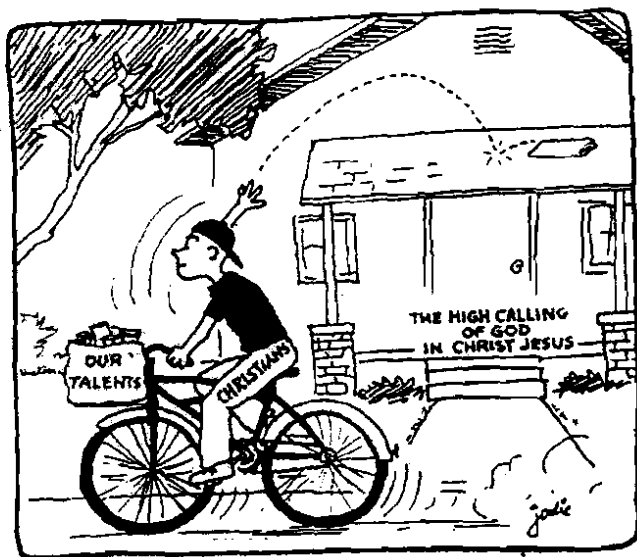
*[And how did nature come to this solution? Was there a time when all of the "too-large-of-headed" died during birth? Why did nature not choose a larger birth canal? How did nature decide on a 9-month gestational period? How did nature decide at what point to make human babies need a long "after birth gestation period"? Gore's attempt at thinking is what is amazing here. I suppose now that we are also to believe that nature is telling **Hillary Clinton** it takes a village instead of the parents...—MTM]*

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Seeing It Helps Saying It...

FAILING TO DO OUR BEST

Jodie Boren



Phidias was born in Athens about 490 BC and, according to the connoisseurs, was the greatest artist of antiquity. Once in his brilliant career, the great sculptor was carving a statue of Diana to be placed in the Acropolis. He seemed to be taking an unusually long time on the back side of the head. He was meticulously bringing out every strand of hair as far as possible, when someone remarked, "That figure is to stand a hundred feet high, with its back to the marble wall. Who will ever know what details you are putting there?" Phidias replied, "I will know" and continued with his painstaking detail.

Phidias was not willing just to do a good job. He pushed himself harder and harder to do the very best he could. Today, many are satisfied with mediocrity. Sad to say, this is even true in the church. When Jesus was upon this earth, he lived a perfect life. John says that in him was no darkness at all (1 John 1:5b). It was because of this beautiful and sinless life of Jesus that Peter admonished us to follow in his steps (1 Peter 2:21). Since Jesus is the personification of all that is good and holy and beautiful and righteous, to walk in his steps is to strive to attain the highest ideal known to man. Being our leader, he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). While we can never attain perfection, this command of our Lord certainly conveys the idea that he expects—yea, demands—our very best as we strive to follow in his steps.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said to his disciples, "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Notice that this demands the denial of one's self. We are to crucify ourselves to the world, as did Paul (Galatians 6:14), that we might glorify

God (1 Corinthians 10:31) by letting Jesus live in us (Galatians 2:20). Peter knew the cost of discipleship—that is, Jesus expects our very best. This is why he dedicated his life to serving the Lord and was able to say, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee" (Matthew 19:27). Will the Lord be satisfied with anything less than our best?



The great apostle, Paul, knew that bearing the cross of Christ was a daily part of living the Christian life (Luke 9:23). Therefore, he writes in Philippians 3:13,14,

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.

The word *press* in verse 14 means to "pursue after" or "to follow earnestly." More than anything, Paul wanted to go to heaven and he knew he must do his very best in order to appropriate God's saving grace to his life. In verse 15, Paul says all who are spiritual will be like-minded.

The parable of the talents in Matthew 24:14-30 teaches very clearly that the Lord considers those who fail to do their best as unprofitable. To do our very best as Phidias did—as Peter did—as Paul did, et al., we must have the right attitude. To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his very best—and, nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."

At the close of our worship services, we often sing the invitation song, "Just As I Am." With the above thoughts in your mind, could you stand before our Lord in judgment just as you are, feeling you had served him to the very best of your ability? Think about it!

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THE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF THE MAYSLICK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Paul Vaughn

The church of Christ began on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Acts 2: 1-47). From that time forth churches of Christ have been established according to the pattern given in the New Testament and sadly churches have died.

In this article we will look at the short history of the Mayslick Church of Christ. Mayslick is a small community located in Mason County, Kentucky. The Ohio river flows on the northern end of the county and the southern boundary is only about sixty miles from Lexington, Kentucky. U. S. Highway 68 goes through the middle of the county and Mayslick is located on U.S. 68 south of Maysville, Kentucky.

Mason County, Kentucky is rich in Restoration history. About three months before the Cane Ridge Revival led by Barton W. Stone in Bourbon County, Kentucky, a revival took place in Mason County. Richard M'Nemar was an eye witness to the strange things that took place during this revival. He later described the episode as "awful beyond description."¹

CAMPBELL-McCALLA DEBATE

In 1823 Alexander Campbell debated W. L. McCalla at Washington, Kentucky. Washington was the county seat of Mason County at that time. It is located about halfway between Maysville and Mayslick along Highway 68. After the debate the Baptist Church at Mayslick invited Campbell to speak. The debate enabled Campbell to reach far into the Baptist Church with the teachings of the Restoration Plea. In trying to point people back to the Bible, Alexander Campbell crusaded against creeds. He taught that baptism was equal to faith and repentance in God's plan of salvation.

The Mayslick Baptist Church had between 500 and 700 members during this time of their history and about half began to follow the teaching of Campbell. The loyal members of the congregation to the Baptist doctrines developed a resolution that all members had to sign; this was designed to force the "reformers" to leave.

THE ALPHA OF THE CHURCH

In 1830 between 250 and 350 members established the church of Christ at Mayslick. This congregation has a rich history of Restoration leaders speaking from its pulpit. John T. Johnson, John Allen Gano, and J. W. McGarvey are a few of the men who had proclaimed God's word at this church.

The first full-time preacher for the congregation was Walter Scott. He was engaged to work with the church full-time on April 1, 1850. They paid him \$550.00 a year. It

was at Mayslick that Scott met his second and third wife, Nannie B. Allen and Eliza A. Sandidge.

THE OMEGA OF THE CHURCH

The church at Mayslick followed the liberal element and accepted the Missionary Society and mechanical instrumental music. Isaac Errett often spoke at Mayslick in behalf of the American Christian Missionary Society.

The church began to use the organ in their Bible classes and at weddings. When the young people from the Bible classes became the leaders in the church, they brought the organ into the worship service. The organ was kept out until 1898 by one member of the church, Mrs. Julia Longnecker. It was not until after her death that an organ was purchased for the worship services of the church, about 1898.

Today the church is a member of the very liberal Disciples of Christ denomination. They have a baptistry in the building but it has not been used in years. They covered the baptistry with plywood and put flowers on it for display. During a visit to the building a few years ago, I met the preacher of the congregation at that time. He was setting in his office smoking his pipe, and was not very interested in the history of the church.

What can be gleaned from the Mayslick Church of Christ? It took only about sixty years from its beginning until it suffered spiritual death. One can also note that elders must be aware of what is taught in Bible school classes, because once those young people become adults they will bring whatever they have been taught in the worship of the church. Perhaps the most noticeable lesson that one can learn from this church is that it began to follow men and leave the Bible behind. Once this takes place the end of a congregation, in the eyes of God, will soon follow. The history of Christianity can help congregations remain faithful and overcome the evils faced today, if they only look and learn the lessons from the past.

ENDNOTES

1. Richard McNemar, *The Kentucky Revival* (Joplin, College Press, 1808), p. 23..

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Biblical Questions...

"WHO ARE WE?" A REVIEW

Noah Hackworth

While attending the *Southside Lectures* in Lubbock, Texas recently, someone put in my hands a copy of an article which contained some interesting statements as well as some forthright admissions. The title of the article is "WHO ARE WE?" While the title is reminiscent of previous attempts by people to inform the public relative to their beliefs and practices, it is also a declaration of apostasy. The article reflects what a local congregation, supposedly in Texas, though it matters little, believes and practices. The complete article is herein set forth and followed by a review.

"WHO ARE WE?"

"Our sign says, 'Church of Christ, 16th & D,' designating this as a meeting place for Christians, which it is. We want all believers to feel at home whether they be lonely or depressed or driven out. They are welcome here...

"We are as much a family as we are a church, the family of God. We are babies, school teachers, school children, teenagers, young couples, middle-aged persons, and older folk. All of us are loved, respected, and received because Christ loves us all. We all recognize our need for help outside ourselves, our need for Christ and for each other...

"We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We believe the Bible is the written word of God. Each person is encouraged to read it for himself without binding the deductions he derives on others...

"We believe that men and women are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and that justification is by faith alone. We believe that baptism is a validation of one's faith and commitment to him. Baptisms here are performed by immersion in which one is buried in the likeness of the death of Jesus and raised in the likeness of his resurrection. We observe the Lord's Supper each Sunday as a visible token of the fellowship which exists. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances we keep. The first is an introduction into the fellowship of Christ's body and the second is a constant reminder of that fellowship with each other and the Lord...

"We must admit that sometimes we do not measure up to our own standard of living. We try, but as humans, we often fail. We thank God he knows our human condition and that we can ask for and receive his forgiveness. We are deeply appreciative of his marvelous grace and thankful to the Holy Spirit who acts as our companion and help even when we grieve him...

"We are often in prayer..."

We are resolved to try to help those in need both at home and abroad without regard to race, color, or religious inclination. We try to act out of compassion following the example of our Lord...

"We are firmly resolved to resist every sectarian tendency and to be God's people only. We make no claim to be the only people of God and we celebrate our ties with all others who

reverence Christ as Lord. Our only enemy is Satan. We do not wrestle against 'flesh and blood.' It is our intention to regard every child of God on earth as our brother or sister, to treat them as such, and to receive them just as God receives us. So we invite all who had been driven before the lash of this world for any reason to come and find a home with us...

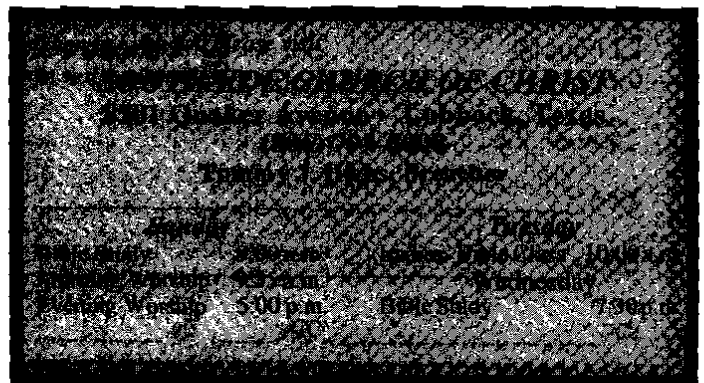
"We exist to follow our Lord and to be instruments of his peace. We exist for those who need us. We invite you to come and work with us, committing yourself to his cause in and through this redemptive fellowship of his people."



REVIEWING THE ARTICLE

First, the article says, "We want all believers to feel at home here whether they be lonely, depressed or driven out." To welcome the lonely and depressed is good; this is surely the responsibility of us all, but what is meant by "all believers" is unclear. However, the tenor of the article leads us to believe that people from any church is meant. The phrase "driven out" could be taken a number of ways, worldly persecution possibly, but more probable is that the driven out refers to those who have chosen not to "walk uprightly according to truth" (Galatians 2:14). Like the inspired penman of the Lord said, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us..." (I John 2:19). The folks of whom we speak have chosen not to walk in truth. By their actions they have told us that they are not "of us," and obviously one cannot believe, teach, and practice false doctrine and remain in fellowship with God.

Second, "We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God". That Jesus is the Christ does not admit of doubt. The greater number of people in the so-called "Protestant world" believe this also. That the Bible is the written word of God falls a bit short of what the Bible actually is: the inspired written word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17).



Third, regarding the binding of personal deductions on others, truth does not have to be lost in interpretation, but sometimes it does. The Bible does have to be interpreted according to accepted rules of interpretation, and all of us, with no exceptions, are bound by truth to accept truth, because what is bound on earth is already bound in heaven (Matthew 18:18). [That which is implied by the scriptures is just as binding on man as that which is explicitly stated.—Editor]

Fourth, the folks at 16th and D are correct in believing that people are justified by faith in Christ (Romans 5:1), but their affirmation that justification is by faith alone has “missed the mark.” With this declaration they join the Calvinists who believe the same thing. Their belief that “baptism is a validation of one’s faith and commitment to him” (Christ) is what liberal religion has taught for five hundred years. Too, this “commitment” is a considerable distance from Acts 2:38 which declares the real purpose of baptism. Too, it is foolish to declare that baptism is by immersion while denying its true place in the Scheme of Redemption.

Fifth, the observance of the Lord’s Supper every Sunday is of no consequence to those who see nothing in it save an existing fellowship between participants. What must be seen in the Supper is the proclamation of the Lord’s death until he come (I Corinthians 11:26).

Sixth, the admission that one does not always measure up to one’s own standard is a valid admission; but such characterizes all of us and should not be used as an excuse

for failing to do all things in the name of the Lord (Colossians 3:17). Not any of us can “perfectly” measure up to the Lord’s standard, but by his grace and our obedience we can walk in truth (John 14:15; II John 4; III John 3).

Last, the folks at 16th and Avenue D say, “We make no claim to be the only people of God.” This is a regrettable admission, because the only people who can make a valid claim to be God’s people are those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ (Romans 6:16-17). Too, this is an admission that there are Christians in other churches. This is impossible to believe because there is but one church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4). Such a statement is reminiscent of the **Karl Ketcherside-LeRoy Garrett** teaching. The only Christians are those who have obeyed the gospel plan of salvation: faith, repentance, confession and baptism for the remission of sins, and they are Christians only.

The people at 16th and Avenue D, wherever that is, have done an honest thing: they have stated what they really believe and practice, and this is far better than following a course of deception. Truthfully speaking, this kind of action would be good for all “churches of Christ” who have decided they can no longer keep their true feelings hidden. They all need to tell us the truth so we will not have to wonder anymore what their intentions are.

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Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), tel. (734) 422-8660. <http://www.garden-city-coc.org> 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. 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. David Dalton, 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, Barry Grider, Evangelist.

—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.

Bryan/College Station—Church of Christ, Sunday 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.; (979) 822-1539; Calvin Engledinger, 2109 Pebblebrook, Bryan, TX 77807 Email: CALENG@TCA.net.

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 Spring Bible Institute and the SBI Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

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

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.

Truth For Teens. . .

SLOUCHING TOWARDS SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Jason R. Roberts

As Judge Robert Bork's book aptly put it, America is "Slouching Towards Gomorrah" (Bork, 5). Evidence of such seems to be escalating with regularity in our beloved nation. Several months ago, an article appeared in the Memphis, Tennessee *Commercial Appeal*, entitled, *Homosexuality Not Wrong, Group Says*. The article stated that the agenda of the *Just the Facts Coalition* is to infiltrate 14,700 public school districts with a booklet informing them that there is "no support among health and mental health professional organizations for the idea that homosexuality is abnormal or mentally unhealthy." The hidden agenda behind the homosexual movement is obvious—to attack the impressionable minds of our children via the classroom. It is without gainsay that the homosexual agenda is much more than a cry for tolerance—they want endorsement. They want to impose their morality on every child in this nation. After all, heterosexuals *reproduce*, but homosexuals can only *recruit*. They have even been suc-

cessful in getting some public schools to teach homosexuality in kindergarten classes (Innerst, 1)! It is ironic that the homosexual activists who tell society to "stay out of the bedroom" are the very ones militantly bringing the bedroom to society. Using the American Civil Liberties Union like a queen on a chessboard, they will fend off any "enemy" who dares to lift a voice against their agenda. Hiding under the blanket of "freedom of expression," they can say whatever they want, wherever they want, as long as they want, and as loud as they want! But the moment someone speaks out against their pernicious propaganda, they are immediately labeled as a "religious crank" or a "homophobic tyrant" who has violated their rights. Truly, the legs of the lame are unequal! They want our society to "tolerate" everyone and everything. The fact is, we are "tolerating" our-



selves to death! It is inconsistent for them to tell us to tolerate everyone when they themselves do not tolerate those whom they believe are intolerant. Furthermore, we do not tolerate good, we only tolerate evil. So, the "tolerance" argument is an implicit admission that homosexual practices are evil. After all, whoever heard of tolerating good behavior? We only need to be asked to put up with homosexual acts because there is something intrinsically wrong with them. They seem to forget that tolerance is a *virtue* if you are talking about *listening* to other points of view. But it is a *vice* if you are talking about *letting* evil behavior overrun your society. The truth is, if we do not fight evil—behaviors that destroy lives—our society will not survive.

TWISTED LOVE

In addition to the tolerance argument advanced by the homosexuals, they also say that love should be our goal. Tolerance says, "Hold your nose and put up with them." Love says, "Reach out and help them." To say that we need to reach out and help them is undoubtedly true. As Christians, we must hate the sin, but love the sinner (cf. Psalm 119:104)—gently attempting to lead him from his soul-destructive behavior (II Timothy 2:24; Jude 7). But love is not necessarily giving people what they *want*. It is giving them what they *need* for long-term health and prosperity. In other words, love means defining the boundaries in which one must live to prosper and maintain good health.

In the final analysis, the most loving thing we can do for ourselves and our fellow citizens—homosexuals included—is to discourage and, if necessary, outlaw behavior that will devastate them, their families, and the community at large. Look at it this way: If a foreign government imposed a disease on us that cut our life-span to the age of forty, we'd go to war. We surely wouldn't "tolerate" it. Likewise, when it comes to dealing with evil behavior in our society today—behavior that destroys—tolerance is the one thing we can't tolerate. Love requires better (Geisler & Turek, 143).

ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR

It does not take a professional, wearing a white laboratory coat, and having more degrees on his wall than a thermometer, to realize that homosexuality is indeed abnormal behavior. The following lines of evidence will support this: *First, homosexuality violates God's physical laws regulating sexual activity.* It is an indisputable fact that offspring are brought into the world via the procreative union between males and females. Homosexuals do not qualify to beget offspring. They cannot produce and raise children on their own—no wonder they want the minds of our children! If every person vowed to become a homosexual and was sexually "faithful" to only their mate, then our very existence as a human people would extinguish within 100 years. "What community could survive economically, medically, or physically if all of its children grew up and adopted the homosexual lifestyle" (Geisler & Turek, 138)? Incidentally, the median homosexual life-span is about forty years—a little over half that of the general population (Geisler & Turek, 150). How can something that dramatically reduces one's life-span be considered as normal and

healthy behavior? Homosexuality is not a *lifestyle*. It is a *death style!*


Second, homosexuality violates God's spiritual laws regulating sexual activity. I realize that whenever the Bible is mentioned as the standard by which one should conduct his or her life, the homosexuals cringe (John 12:48). They cannot stand the Bible, because it repeatedly condemns the activity in which they are engaged. However, the same Bible that condemns their wicked activity offers them a glorious hope if they will turn from their vile behavior (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Jesus will save them *from* their sins, but He will not save them *in* their sins (Matthew 1:21).

Sir Edmund Burke succinctly said, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." It is high time for the good people in America to stand up and to become a voice rather than an echo—speaking out against the evils associated with the homosexual agenda. Or we can remain silent and allow them to corrupt the minds of our children and slowly to corrupt the minds of the succeeding generations to come. Indeed, the sight and smell of fire and brimstone is on the horizon!

—1601 E. Park Ave.
Valdosta, Georgia 31605

SOURCES

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Congregational Development... Should We Pay The Preacher?

Lynn Parker

"How much should a preacher be paid? After all, he only works three hours a week." Sound familiar? Unfortunately, there are some ignorant brethren who still make that rash allegation and there are some lazy preachers who seem to invite the criticism. Check with any number of congregations and you will probably discover that at some time the subject of the preacher's pay has come up for discussion. There are extremes in most every walk of life, and just a bit of research would probably show that the preacher's salary is no exception. Some preachers make colossal salaries and hire armored cars for transportation to the bank every Monday morning. OK, maybe not. Some are paid well, and some are underpaid for the work they do. Others are paid a fair, reasonable amount for the work in which they are engaged, commensurate with their ability and their training. Their level of support also fairly reflects the financial ability of the congregation with which they work.

AUTHORITY FOR SUPPORTING THE PREACHER

The authority for financial support of the preacher is evident. Inspiration gives us teaching on the matter:

7 What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8 Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, 10 or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, (to thresh) in hope of partaking. 11 If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? 12 If others partake of (this) right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13 Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat (of) the things of the temple, (and) they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? 14 Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel (I Corinthians 9:7-14).

What kind of living should the preacher and his family enjoy? As a preacher, you would invite criticism to drive a Rolls Royce when everyone in the congregation owns a Chevrolet. At the same time, does the congregation really want a man to sputter along in a Yugo held together by balancing wire? Any number of preachers will tell you that brethren can be very demanding of them. Let us say for a moment that a congregation wants a sound man with years of experience, adequate training and education, the ability to preach well, a good personality, and a family that compliments his work. The congregation wants him to preach,

teach, study, visit, exhort—all without regard to hours on a clock. That is not far-fetched, now is it? Then the same congregation may offer to pay him a salary that looks good—if we turn back time to the 1970's! Workers in secular employment receive increases to keep up with the cost of living. Have you made sure to compensate your preacher with at least a yearly cost of living increase?



One member of a congregation stated that he did not feel the preacher should make any more than any member of the church. He just limited the number of the preachers that will ever work at that location. What if the particular preacher is better prepared, qualified, and devoted to his work than at least some of the members are with their secular works? What if some members are retired and on a fixed income? What if some members have "punch-clock" jobs and rush out of the door at 5:00 p.m. sharp? Do you really want a preacher who would do that? One elder, while interviewing a preacher, actually asked, "What's the least amount of money you can get by on?" Such a question does not deserve an answer! The late and respected Bobby Duncan wrote:

In many congregations there are those who seem to think it is their special assignment to be doubly sure that the preacher is not overpaid. After all, the money belongs to the Lord, and it would be a sin to waste it. While we are sure that no worthy preacher wants to be overpaid, we can think of worse crimes than overpaying a man who spends his life in preaching the glorious gospel of the Son of God. One that comes to mind at present is underpaying him (*The Work Of A Preacher*, p.37).

Might it be in order for brethren to assess the preacher and his salary? Talk with brethren at other congregations. Ask them about preachers' salaries. Consider medical insurance and retirement. These benefits are often provided by secular employers. And while you think about the work you will expect of the preacher, consider a car allowance to assist him in that work.

PAYING THE VISITING PREACHERS

It seems appropriate to discuss here what might be paid to a visiting preacher who comes in for a meeting or lectureship. I am a firm believer in such efforts and know that they do indeed serve as tools (when done right) for edification and evangelism. For many years the average seemed to be \$100 per day plus expenses. Of course, that was some ten years ago at this writing!

What if the church cannot afford to pay the preacher? Most preachers are glad to help wherever they can and to whatever extent they can. They would not set a "fee" for preaching even if you asked. As a matter of fact, many will

be glad to volunteer their time and expense if the church cannot pay anything. But let the preacher make that decision. One congregation hosted a lectureship involving several speakers who traveled hundreds of miles to arrive. The local brethren did not give them even one cent for their expenses, and did not tell the speakers ahead of time. One preacher said, "I don't mind volunteering my money for meals, my vehicle, my gasoline, and my time—I'd just like to know that I'm volunteering." Keep in mind that preachers have expenses and bills, too. Their cars burn high-priced gasoline like yours. They have travel expenses associated with out of town trips. Remember too, there is a difference between the church that cannot (out of poverty) and the church that will not (out of stinginess). And take

care of expenses in a timely fashion. Slovenly handling of such affairs reflect badly on a congregation.

CONCLUSION

No one is to serve God for sake of filthy lucre (I Timothy 6:5). Covetousness is no part of the Christian life (Colossians 3:5). We do not need money-motivated men as preachers. At the same time, congregations must not be negligent in taking proper care of the preacher. If he is worthless, anything paid to him is a waste. But if he is faithful and dedicated, support the preacher with consideration and thoughtfulness.

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One Woman's Perspective...

WHOM SHALL WE ADMIRE?

Annette B. Cates

We are accustomed to seeing "top ten" lists and popularity polls, especially toward the end of the year, or decade, or century. Magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *People* feature an annual listing of most admired men and women. The people included are well known, and obviously have admirable traits. Most are famous for their beauty, athletic prowess, status in government, wealth, and a few for their benevolent works. We seem to admire those who we think "have it made," not the ordinary people who spend their lives serving others, living on a shoe-string in order to be able to give, and facing life's difficulties with obedient faith in God. However, this is man's thinking, not God's. His ways, thoughts, and wisdom are far higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8,9; I Corinthians 1: 18-25; 3:18-21). God's list of most admirable people would be quite different from that of the world. He looks on the heart, seeing that which man does not see, and places a value on it that is eternal in nature (I Peter 3:4).

God's list would include those who place service of others above self. In coming to earth to dwell among men, Jesus denied himself; we are to do likewise (Matthew 16:24; I Peter 2:21). The Christian life is to be one of good works. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). In Proverbs 3:27, 28, Solomon tells us to do our good works while it is within our power to do so, and not put it off until it is too late. We have no guarantee of tomorrow for ourselves or for the one(s) in need of our service. There are no boundaries as to who can serve. Our admiration should go to those who overcome personal difficulties in order to do for others. The shut-in who sends letters of encouragement to the weak will not make any top ten lists on this earth. They are the ones, who, in spite of their frailties, continue to serve the Lord. Also not included will be the person whose good


works are "behind the scenes," never observed by others but necessary to the work of the church. There are young parents rearing their little ones in the Lord who are serving the church of the future, but the world does not recognize this valuable work. They struggle to balance their lives and provide the spiritual guidance and family stability so necessary to the development of a child. Would any of these servants be featured on a most admired list?



God's list would include those who see the value of spiritual investments over material gain. Of course, we are to be good stewards of our income, using it wisely to provide for our families and our future well-being (I Timothy 5:8). But, we are commanded to make provision for giving of our means as a part of our worship and service to others. The widow of Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4 understood the difference and the importance of giving back to God. In return, she was commended by Jesus, "For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, all her living" (Mark 12:44). In reality,

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all that we are and have belongs to God (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). In contrast, those who receive the world's recognition are like the rich of Jesus' day. If they give to any cause, it is a relatively small portion of their abundance. Few of us really know what it means to sacrifice for the cause of Christ. Few of us exhibit the faith that God will take care of us (Psalm 37:25). The few who seek **"first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"** (Matthew 6:33) are not likely to be on a most admired list.

God's list would include those who continue to be faithful to him, even though their lives are fraught with difficulties. There are Christians whose mates are unbelievers who attempt in every way possible to hinder them in their faithfulness. In due time, some of these spouses are won to Christ by the very strength shown in the face of adversity (1 Peter 3:1, 2). Those who never obey the Gospel have been given every opportunity to do so by the Christian. There are Christians in secular workplaces who face subtle persecution for their beliefs. Some are pressured to participate in unethical practices, to give to causes that are in conflict with God's Word, and to join in with compromising activities. Not doing so often results in negative consequences for the Christian, financially and in advancement opportunities. However, not giving in to these pressures may be the only way one's light can shine in a worldly environment.

Closely related is the peer pressure undergone by young Christians. Saying "No" to drugs, alcohol, smoking, premarital sex, dancing, immodest clothing, and filthy language is often seen by youth as a sure way to non-acceptance by the "in-crowd." The psychological need for acceptance within this age group is almost as strong as the physical needs of the body. With few exceptions, young adults lack the self-confidence and maturity to see the implications of their actions and are vulnerable to making mistakes that will haunt them for the rest of their lives. Those who withstand the trials and temptations of life are not likely to make a most admired list.

Where do you and I fit in on these lists? Whom do we most admire? Do we look to and emulate the "beautiful people," the "jet set," the entertainers, the athletes, the politicians, and the wealthy? Or, do we recognize that **"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain"** (Proverbs 31:30)? Do we look to the characters of the Bible and learn from them (Romans 15:4)? Are our role models those Christians whose lives are examples of the beauty of holiness? Are we living in such a way that others will see Christianity in us and that God will be glorified and pleased?

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The Last Word...

WHY? JEHO SHAPHAT!

Eddie Whitten

"And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses" (1 Kings 22:4).

The brevity of God's word is amazing. In this one little question of only nine words, we find an enigma of mammoth proportions. Jehoshaphat enjoyed a relationship with God that was very favorable. **"And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel"** (II Chronicles 17:3-4). Ahab, the king of Israel, contrarily was one of the most, if not the most, wicked kings in the history of the Northern Kingdom. Ahab was the king when Elijah slew the 450 prophets of Baal. Jezebel was Ahab's wife. Ahab worshipped Baal, a pagan god. There was no common ground upon which Ahab and Jehoshaphat could meet. Yet, when wicked Ahab determined to wage war against Ramoth-gilead, he turned to Jehoshaphat for help, and righteous Jehoshaphat agreed to join with him. In spite of the warning of Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord, Ahab went up against Ramoth-gilead with his newfound friend (1 Kings 22:29). Fortunately, Jehoshaphat was recognized

by the foe and was spared. Wicked Ahab died in disobedience to God.

MISDIRECTED MOTIVATION?

It is easy, sometime, to let our emotions rule our actions. Could Jehoshaphat's motivation to assist Ahab have been political? Probably so, but was this an acceptable motivation? He rejected the counsel of God's prophet, Micaiah. An unwise decision to say the least. It was a foolhardy thing to do to allow himself to be targeted as the enemy, and it was most fortunate he was not killed in the battle being mistaken for Ahab.

What are some of the lessons we learn from Jehoshaphat's folly? We suggest these at least:

1. Evil companionships corrupt good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33—ASV, 1901). Good conduct does not make others good even though the influence can have desired results. Evil is not good part of the time and bad part of the time. It is evil all the time (Genesis 6:5). One of the salient lessons we learn from the prophet Haggai is that if anything unclean touches that which is clean it makes it unclean (Haggai 2:12-13). Solomon wrote, **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"**



(Proverbs 14:34). The apostle Paul admonished the brethren in Thessalonica to "**Abstain from all appearance of evil**" (I Thessalonians 5:22). John warns, "**Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out unto the earth**" (I John 4:1).

2. "**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing...**" (Matthew 7:15). It is difficult to detect false teachers if they have hitherto been faithful. Change agents are subtle, working slowly, tirelessly and persistently to persuade the trusting and unsuspecting. Ahab feigned to agree with Jehoshaphat to enlist the counsel of Micaiah. If Jehoshaphat had not been there, Ahab would never have called upon Micaiah for advice. False teachers will give an inch if they can gain a foot in exchange.

Notice again, Ahab gave orders to have Micaiah put in prison and fed the "**bread of affliction and with water of affliction**" (I Kings 22:27). The change agents and other false teachers do not want to hear the truth, or be exposed, but will try their best to destroy those who oppose them. Loving liberals!

Ahab suggested to Jehoshaphat that he wear his own (kingly) robes so he would be easily seen while he would disguise himself so that he could hide among the troops, a

mark of a real coward. That is how the false teachers and change agents work today. They hide behind their cloaks of anonymity and push their dupes into the fray much as did David to innocent Uriah. There are many other lessons which space does not allow.

The question still arises: Why did Jehoshaphat align himself with Ahab with whom he had nothing in common? It was certainly not for spiritual gain; he already had favor with God. It could not have been for power; he was already the king of Judah. It could not have been for wealth; he already had everything he could ever want as the king. Perhaps no one can answer this dilemma. The one thing that is certain; it was not an authorized, wise or an approved move. As will happen to all the wicked in judgment, they, like Ahab, will perish. The faithful will be raised unto everlasting life (John 5:28-29).

A word to the wise: Get off the bandwagon of the false teachers and change agents. Return to the fold of the faithful. As Jeremiah wisely implored: "**Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls**" (Jeremiah 6:16).

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UNLEAVENED BREAD

Gary W. Summers

A few weeks ago I was handed a document on the subject of unleavened bread. Its thesis was that unleavened bread cannot contain any oil or salt but must consist of flour and water only. However, the data and the rationale do not establish the case. This article will examine the claims and the "proof" offered in those pages. It is not intended to be the "final word" on the subject; additional information could prove helpful.

Let us begin with the oft-repeated claim this document makes, which is that the Jews in the Old Testament used *only* flour and water in making the Passover bread, that these are the only elements specified, and that therefore to add anything else would be sinful. If this assertion could be proven, the argument would be valid, based upon the authority of the scriptures (Colossians 3:17). Certainly, we want to do only what we are authorized to do. However, there is not a single verse in the entire Bible that stipulates using flour and water, let alone water and flour *only*.

While it is true that God did specify certain ingredients of some offerings, even stating the exact amount of flour to be used, it is not the case that such specifications are always given. God gave the instructions for the Passover feast first to Moses and Aaron in Exodus 12. The bread is mentioned first in verses 15-20. Below is repeated the portion of the text pertinent to the preparation of the unleavened bread; you are encouraged to study the entire text of each passage that relates to the Passover.

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel (15).

So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread... (17a).

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be

found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations you shall eat unleavened bread (18-20).

Notice that nothing is said about the ingredients of the bread when God instituted this feast. There is one *and only one* stipulation—no leaven. Exodus 12:8 actually introduces the phrase, *unleavened bread*, but no other limitations are presented. (Genesis 18:6 mentions that Sarah made "cakes," but Genesis 19:3 is the first verse to mention either leavened or unleavened bread, which Lot made for his unexpected guests.)

Other passages list the same restriction that is recorded above—without adding any additional information (Exodus 13:6-7; Numbers 9:10-11; Leviticus 23:5-6; Deuteronomy 16:3-4, 8). No amount of flour is specified to be used. Not even the kind of flour (wheat, barley, oats, or rye) is given. There is one overriding purpose in all of God's instructions; he wanted no leaven to be used.

UNWARRANTED ASSUMPTIONS

Now we want to notice several statements in the aforementioned treatise with an appropriate response.

[When making or using a recipe, everyone understands that it is both inclusive and exclusive. You never add ingredients not specified. If you do, you get something else, not the item about which the recipe speaks.]

This statement is absolutely true, but in this case it is irrelevant because the scriptures do not anywhere specify the precise ingredients for unleavened bread.

Deuteronomy 16:3. "Unleavened Bread" referred to as the "bread of affliction." It was made from flour and water.

Neither flour nor water is mentioned (sometimes milk was used) in this verse; the writer has expressed an *opinion*—not a biblical truth.

(Continued On Page 3)

Contending FOR THE Faith

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Editorial...

Another year is about to be included in the history books. As with preceding years the masses have used the year 2000 in the pursuit of vain things. While not using life as God intended is bad enough for anyone, many in the Lord's church are as materialistic, selfish, lethargic, lukewarm, unruly and worldly minded as those outside the church. The problem of brethren binding where God has not bound and loosing where God has not loosed is as much of a problem as ever. Hobby riding continues to trouble the church. Brethren routinely prove that they have little (and some no) respect for Bible authority. The average member of the church continues to be ignorant of how to ascertain Bible authority for what they believe and practice. The present apostasy is proof positive of such a vain disposition of mind.

With the preceding thoughts in mind I want to express my deep appreciation for and to all those who are not as those described in the preceding paragraph. They cheer us in their stalwart stand for the truth of the gospel in the face of much opposition. Thank you for your help in extolling God's good truth as well as exposing and opposing all error and those who teach it on the pages of *Contending for the Faith*. Please pray for us that we will always be faithful to the truth of the gospel. Also, please work to expand the distribution of the paper. After all of its years of publication I continue to come across brethren who have never heard of it. Will you help us to get this paper to as many members of the Lord's church as you possibly can?

—Editor-in-Chief

"FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?"

Writing from the perspective of a worldly person who places his hope in this present world Solomon declared, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). "Vanity" means pointless or worthless. Without God there is simply nothing worthwhile about life.

In contrast to the sentiments of the preceding verse the successful life is one that uses this life in the flesh among material things to find God, learn his will and obey him (Matthew 6:33; 7:7; Acts 17:27; Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14). Such conduct is the only genuine proof of one's love of and faith in God and his system of salvation (John 14:15; James 2:24-26).

Thus, the apostle Paul wrote, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). What did

Paul actually desire for us to understand from the preceding verse? *First*, since the Bible teaches that faith comes by hearing (understanding, knowing) the word of God (Romans 10:17), then it should be obvious to anyone that to walk by faith is nothing more or less than being guided and directed by the word of God. *Second*, the Christian's faith in and service to God is not based upon or directed by what is discernable only through his five senses (tasting, touching, seeing, hearing and smelling). To the contrary, Christians are guided by the adequate evidence and credible witnesses that compromise the verbal and plenary inspired word of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17, Colossians 3:17; John 12:48; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). This is the point made by the Hebrews writer when he taught it was **"By faith" Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"** (Hebrews 11:10). Indeed, with all of God's faithful we understand we are **"strangers and pilgrims on the earth"** (Hebrews 11:13). Christians look beyond this vale of tears to the glory of the eternal life to come. Thus, by looking into the future with earnest anticipation for our eternal home in heaven we are able to endure our uneven journey through this present world. This is how "hope" saves us (Romans 8:24). Therefore, we heed Paul's warning to Timothy regarding our involvement in things that pertain to the flesh. **"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). While I am in this life the **"affairs of"** it concern

me, but I am not to be so concerned and involved (entangled) with them that they hinder me from faithfully serving God. Life in the flesh in a material world is complete for preparing our souls for eternity with God. By being **"stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"** no matter how bumpy and uneven life's road becomes, we are thereby molding and making our souls fit for an eternity with God (I Corinthians 15:58; also see II Peter 1:3-12; Revelation 2:10). However, it is amazing to me that so many members of the Lord's church have never learned that lesson. They continue to be **"entangled"** in the affairs of this world. Yet they want to be considered as great pillars in the church. The Lord willing in the New Year we will continue to put the spotlight of truth on such pious frauds. **"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"** (Philippians 3:18, 19). There will never be a time that such action will not be timely and relevant. **"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you"** (I Corinthians 11:19). To live a faithful Christian life one must accept the reality of the preceding verse and conduct one's self accordingly no matter what the outcome in this present world. To do otherwise is vanity compounded.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

UNLEAVENED BREAD...

(Continued From Page 1)

So Unleavened bread was flour and water [a conclusion drawn after studying Exodus 12:34, 39, GWS].

These verses are not discussing the Passover feast; they are explaining that because of the instructions about the Passover feast that Israel therefore had no leaven when they left Egypt. Dough and unleavened cakes are mentioned; water is not specified.

Unleavened bread being made with flour and water. Exodus 12:18.

Neither water nor flour are mentioned in this verse; Again, the writer sees what is not mentioned and then concludes that these are the only two ingredients.

Unless something more than flour and water is specified, then the unleavened bread could only be flour and water.

Again, this is predicated on the erroneous notion that water and flour are mentioned in the first place.

So, the Lord would have had only flour and water bread to use to represent his body. Can we add anything? If we can add anything, where do we stop adding. That's the problem with the religious world. They began adding and cannot stop.

The religious world *does* have a problem with adding things that lack biblical authority, but no one has demonstrated that anything has been added.

This would be a good time to ask the question, "How did the Israelites generally make regular bread?" The scriptures, of course, do not provide this information; they furnish no daily bread recipes. Do we assume that their common bread was made without salt and oil. Perhaps it was, but at some point, these were added.

However they made regular bread, God knew his people's practice (present and future). The ONLY stipulation the Lord gave was that no leaven could be used. If they did not use anything but flour and water in their *regular* bread, then it might be argued that he did not need to forbid any other elements. If they did use other ingredients, then it is remarkable that he did NOT say flour and water only. But clearly the emphasis of *unleavened* bread is not upon what is included but upon what is excluded.

If God had wanted to be certain that no other ingredients would ever be used in the Passover feast, he could have specified ONLY flour and water. Regarding certain other sacrifices, he was not bashful about the ingredients. Consider the following:

This is the offering of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer to the Lord, beginning on the day when he is anointed: one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a daily grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it at night. It shall be made in a pan with oil. When it is well mixed, you shall bring it in. And the baked pieces of the grain offering you shall offer for a sweet aroma to the Lord (Leviticus 6:20-21).

Examples such as these could be multiplied, but the point is obvious—the Lord knows how to give detailed instructions. It is all the more significant, therefore, that the only thing he ever emphasized about the Passover feast is that the bread must be *unleavened*.

JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIAS

The document under consideration includes two pages each from *The Jewish Encyclopedia* and *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*. Part of a paragraph from the first of these is underlined:

Mazzah (plural *Mazzot*): Bread that is free from leaven or other foreign elements. It is kneaded with water and without yeast or any chemical effervescent substance, and is hastily prepared to prevent the dough from undergoing the process of spontaneous fermentation... (393).

This definition also emphasizes the absence of leaven or any substance similar to it. Unfortunately, the writers did not specify what they meant by “other foreign elements.” But even if they had said “no salt” and “no oil” could be used, they would not have gotten that information from the scriptures—but rather from their own traditions. Jesus commented on many traditions that the Jews had which were not authorized by God (Matthew 15:1-9, for example). These traditions consisted primarily of someone’s *opinion* becoming *law*. The encyclopedias can tell us what the current Jewish practices are or what has been a long-standing tradition, but they cannot provide more information than the Bible does, as the second source (cited above) acknowledges:

The Bible gives no details as to how Matzoth are prepared, but the Talmud (Pes. 35a-38b) gives details as to the materials used, the proper thickness of the cakes, and similar directions (414) (emph. GWS).

Here is a clear admission that the information supplied is from *tradition*—not the scriptures. Notice that even the proper thickness is delineated. Obviously, God did not issue these details, but some rabbi apparently legislated concerning the matter.

INVALID ASSERTION

It is stated that “salt is a leaven.” If it were, it would be wrong to use it in making unleavened bread. But who has determined that salt is leaven? Who is the authority for this statement? The scriptures do not so declare, and in fact they prove otherwise.

The document under discussion neglected to mention Leviticus 2:13 (although 2:1-3, 4-8, and 11 were cited). This verse reads as follows:

And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

This verse is not invoked to prove that salt was used in the Passover bread, but rather to demonstrate that salt is not leaven. Concerning this verse, Adam Clarke wrote (the emphasis is his):

Salt was the opposite to *leaven*, for it preserved from *putrefaction* and *corruption*, and signified the *purity* and *preserving* fidelity that were necessary in the worship of God (1:515).

Neither salt nor oil was commanded to be removed during the Passover week—only leaven. The *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* records the following thoughts:

The honey is also forbidden because it had a leavening force.... On the same principle of symbolism, God prescribes that *salt* shall always constitute a part of the oblations to him (Levi ii, 31 [sic, it should be 13, gws]), on account of its antiseptic properties.... (5:308).


If all offerings must include salt, then “**the offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days**” during the Passover week involved the use of salt (Leviticus 23:5-8, esp. v.8). But the Israelites were not to keep any leaven in their houses (Exodus 12:15, 19-20). Does it make sense to use in an offering leaven, an ingredient that had been specifically and strictly forbidden during this time? Salt is not leaven; not one authority can be cited to establish such a claim. Any professional baker will acknowledge that salt and leaven are opposites and that too much salt will render leaven ineffective.

Most current recipes for communion bread include a little oil and a little salt—but NO LEAVEN. No ingredients are ever used besides those found in regular bread. Such recipes do not add to the word or corrupt the worship. Correct precedents are being kept.

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What Do We See?

Brock Hartwigsen

When God puts a challenge before us what do we see? Do we see our physical limitations or do we see our spiritual possibilities? When God told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let his people go, Moses responded **“who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”** (Exodus 3:11). Moses saw his physical limitations and not his spiritual possibilities. When Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive and bear God’s son she replied **“How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”** (Luke 1:34). Mary also saw her physical limitations and not her spiritual possibilities.

When Jesus commanded the apostles to take the gospel to every nation (Matthew 28:20) and to every person in each nation (Mark 16:16), they could have been blinded by their perceived physical limitations and thus not have been able to see their spiritual possibilities. They could have responded **“But we are only eleven men!”** Yet, just a little over twenty years later Paul wrote to the churches in Rome and in Colosse and stated that the great commission of Jesus had already been fulfilled (Romans 10:18; Colossians 1:5-6, 23).

What about the church today? What about individual Christians today? Are we sometimes blinded to our spiritual possibilities because of our perceived physical limitations? When a congregation questions her ability to proclaim the gospel to the people of her community much

less all the people of the world, then the answer is **“Yes.”** When individual Christians question their ability to teach their neighbors, coworkers, relatives and friends the gospel message, then the answer is **“Yes.”** The Hebrews writer stated that the Christian recipients of his letter **“ought to be teachers”** (Hebrews 5:12) but they were not. That applies to all Christians today. We all ought to be, or to become, teachers but many of us see our perceived physical limitations and thus do not live up to our spiritual possibilities. That is not only sad but it hinders the spreading of the gospel which is harmful to the church and to the spiritual well-being of the spiritually blind Christians.

Another area of spiritual blindness is the area of sin in our lives. John by inspiration stated that Christians do not knowingly, willing and regularly engage in sin but that they live righteous lives (I John 3:9, 10). When a Christian strives to justify a sin in his life, be it a sin of commission or omission, by stating that **“I’m only human”** or **“Well you know we all sin”** or any other such excuse, then he is seeing his physical limitations and not his spiritual possibilities. This attitude is not only sad and harmful to the church but will also condemn the Christian who holds to it.

As Paul wrote **“If God be for us, who can be against us?”** (Romans 8:31). Instead of looking at and seeing our physical limitations, we need to look at and see our spiritual possibilities. We need to remember, believe, repeat, and live Paul’s bold proclamation **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Philippians 4:13).

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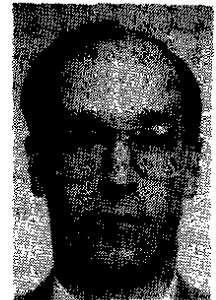
Currents Events that Concern Christians... Spanking, Radical Liberalism, Teen Survey, and The Unborn's Rights

Compiled by Mark McWhorter

Sixty-one percent of parents say spanking is appropriate as a "regular form of punishment," according to the survey, commissioned by *Zero to Three*, *Civitas* and the *Brio Corporation* — three organizations that a press release describes as "dedicated to the welfare of young children." However, **Matthew Melmed**, who heads *Zero to Three*, says those parents are wrong. "What a very, very young child is experiencing (when he or she is spanked) is that they need to be fearful of adults and that, in fact, adults use violence as a way to get what they want," Melmed said. **Jordan Riak**, of *Project No Spank*, went even further. "I don't believe that making anyone suffer teaches them anything useful," Riak said (*Citizenlink* email service, 10/30/00). *[Melmed and Riak need to read the Bible. Fear (particularly reverential fear) is a very good first deterrent. We have today's criminal problem in America partly due to the lack of fear of the wrongdoer. I will choose God's way over man's way.—mtm]*

.....
"Radical liberalism" in the church is "an enemy to us all," the archbishop of Canterbury says. Honest questions are ap-

propriate, but theological radicalism inside the church "denies the teaching of the church down the centuries and denies the authority of the scriptures, for 2,000 years the base of historic Christianity," **George Carey** told delegates July 31 at Amsterdam 2000, an international conference of evangelicals. That kind of teaching is "truly worrying," he said. "...Christianity is not passé, but "the Christian faith is as relevant today as it has ever been, and the need for a savior is as urgent as ever," said Carey, who was introduced as a fellow evangelical. He leads the world's 77 million Anglicans and Episcopalians (*Religion Today* email service, 8/2/00). *[Carey is right that recognition of the authority of scriptures is crucial to properly understand the scriptures. Having questions is healthy because it leads to study. But when the questions are rooted in the desire to change the direction the church is to take, then it is unhealthy.—mtm]*



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1:00 PM "Tobacco Use" Michael Wyatt
2:00 PM The Open Forum/Questions & Answers
3:00 PM "Social Drinking" David Brown
4:00 PM Singing with Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
5:00 PM Dinner Provided
7:00 PM "Is All of Life Worship?" Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

8:00 AM Breakfast Provided
9:00 AM "Drug Abuse" H.D. Simmons
10:00 AM "Homosexuality" Tommy Hicks
11:00 AM "Gambling" Floyd Johnson
12:00 PM Lunch Provided
1:00 PM "The Women's Role In The Church" David Brown
2:00 PM The Open Forum/Questions and Answers
3:00 PM "The Boston Movement" Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
4:00 PM Singing With Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
5:00 PM Dinner Provided
7:00 PM "Marriage—Divorce—Remarriage" (I Cor. 7) Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

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.....

An unborn baby involved in an auto accident can sue, a judge says. **Christopher Collier**, a county judge in Medina, Ohio, ruled last week that **Sarah Leinweber**, now 2 ½, of Elyria was a "viable child" when the 1997 accident occurred two months before she was born, and has the right to sue for damages, according to APBnews...Collier researched case law and concluded that Leinweber was "capable of existing independently" at the time of the accident and had legal rights. The family is suing **Christopher Murray**, 21, whose car collided with the vehicle driven by **Julie Leinweber** in a parking lot, for \$50,000. ...The ruling is unprecedented in Ohio and could have far-reaching implications regarding the rights of the unborn, **Robert Gray**, the Leinwebers' attorney, told APBnews. Sarah was born healthy 10 weeks after the accident, but suffered stress in the womb, Gray said. "Her mother had heart palpitations, had to undergo stress tests, and was forced to an early delivery for which she had to take medications." Julie Leinweber suffered head, neck, and chest injuries, couldn't hold the baby with her left arm, and had trouble carrying and bathing her, Gray said (*Religion Today* email news service, 8/2/00). [*This is indeed another good ruling towards giving rights back to the unborn infant.—mtm*].

.....

An educational neglect case in Albany, N.Y., involving a 7-year-old boy whose parents were hauled into court after taking him off Ritalin, has sparked a national debate over privacy rights, judicial authority, and parental sovereignty. The case is apparently the first in the nation in which parents were pressured — if not outright ordered — by a judge to give their child the controversial stimulant (Law News Network email service, 8/18/00). [*The school system is mandating that the child take a psychotropic drug. The parents say that the drug was causing bad side effects. The judge says the child must take the drug. Who has parental right in this case—the parents, the school, or the judge? Does the State have the right to force parents to give children psychotropic drugs? Before stating yes, think of the logical consequences. The State in communist countries have claimed this right for many years.—mtm*]

.....

"I think if we call it 'marriage' we're never going to get anywhere. I think that you're playing with something that is a tradition and an institution to a certain majority of people. Why go there? Create a new language, create a new tradition, then approach the government about tax rights and rights in hospitals. Instead of fitting into something that's not ours, we have to build our own culture. We're historically an alterna-

tive and cryptic culture, and to me, that's one of the beautiful parts of being gay. Even though you may not want to live in the closet, it's about being discreet and being private and being a little more romantic."—**Singer k.d. Lang** to the *Advocate*, June 20 (quoted in Planet Out news email service, 7/20/00). [*Create your own language. Call things by different names so that the unknowing are dooped into supporting your cause. Sounds a bit like the way many dictators and totalitarian governments have taken power through the election process. By renaming what others find wrong and evil you make it "romantic." How interesting. This also sounds a great deal like what the change agents are doing in the brotherhood. Don't call it a gymnasium. Call it a family life center. Don't call them a quartet performance. Call them worship team leaders. Don't call it holy rolling. Call it a praise worship. By doing this, you make it that much more "romantic" for those wanting to change the traditions of God's word.—mtm*]

.....

In a Barna survey of just over 600 teens, 86% of them said they were Christians. However, 60% endorsed the false teaching that salvation can be earned through good deeds. In another disturbing finding, 53% said they felt Jesus was a sinner. And regarding the Bible, 60% thought it was totally accurate, yet 66% turned around and said Satan was not a real living being but a mere symbol of evil. Not surprising then was the fact that after a series of questions probing their salvation, researcher **George Barna** concluded only one-third of them were born again. He says the teen survey points to an ongoing problem he has also seen among adults who call themselves Christians. On the one hand, they say they believe the Bible, but then make statements about their beliefs which run contrary to scriptural teaching (*Agape Press* email service, 10/26/00). [*He is probably wrong in that one-third are born again. It is doubtful that one-third are members of the Lord's church. These are disturbing statistics. There was a time when even the denominations taught that Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life and that Satan truly existed. The ignorance of the last two generations must partly fall on the shoulders of the generation before. And now we must not fall short in proclaiming the full gospel to the present generations. Many professed Christians cry out wanting to know where our nation's morality has gone. Yet the majority deny the full authority of the scriptures thus undermining the truthfulness of the scriptures to the children. And yes, the problem even exists within the Lord's church.—mtm*]

.....

Mormonism is the fastest growing faith group in American history according to U.S. News & World Report, which reports that if present trends continue there could be 265 million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) worldwide by 2080 (*Maranatha* email news service, 11/9/00). [*So sad. Yet we should learn something from them. They are evangelistic. They believe they have the truth, and they devote themselves to teaching it to others. Each one of us should examine ourselves. Are we doing what we can to bring others to Christ? Are we saddened by the fact that the Mormons are doing a better job of teaching others than we are?—mtm*]

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DOES MORALITY STILL EXIST?

Noah A. Hackworth


One of the things that effected the fall of the Roman Empire was the collapse of morality. If ancient Rome declined and fell due in part to the death of morality, that same thing could effect the death of any nation, including America. The Bible says, **“Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people”** (Proverbs 14:34). One of the things any immoral nation or people must do is repent. God’s instructions to ancient Israel are still apropos: **“If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land”** (II Chronicles 7:14).

In a recent bulletin that came to my attention (Ridgedale Reminder) there is mention made of a book titled “The Day America Told the Truth.” The book represents what Americans had to say about themselves. The article was originally written by a brother in Ponca City, Oklahoma. The following statistics are some of the results of the survey.

1. 74% of the respondents said that they would steal from those who wouldn’t miss it.
2. 64% said they would lie when it suited them, as long as it didn’t cause any real damage.
3. 56% said they would drink and drive if they felt they could handle it. They all felt they knew their own limits.
4. 50% said they procrastinate at work and do absolutely nothing for the equivalent of about one day in every five.
5. 30% said they would cheat on their taxes ...to a point.
6. 31% said they would put their lover at risk of disease by sleeping around a bit.
7. 93% said they, and nobody else, determined what is and isn’t moral in their lives.
8. 84% confessed that they would violate the established rules of their religion.
9. 81 % said they would violate a civil law if they thought it was wrong in their own lives.
10. When asked if there was anything that they would die for, 48% said “No!”
11. 52% said that the Bible has some right to tell them right from wrong. The Bible followed behind spouse (77%), parents (71%), grandparents and best friends (52%).

If the above statistics are accurate, they are a sad commentary on the “morality” of a great many people. To whatever level it may degenerate, we must keep in mind that morality, because it is not an invention of society, does exist. The Bible says, **“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals”** (I Corinthians 15:33). If there was no standard of morality, good morals could not exist. But there is a standard and good morals do exist. They are possessed by people who have retained God in their knowledge (cf. Romans 1:28). There has never been any moral standard higher than the Bible; it is the ultimate basis for all thought and being. God has **“given us all things that pertain to life and godliness”** (II Peter 1:3). We are complete in him (Colossians 2:9). The scriptures furnish us unto every good work (II Timothy 3:17).

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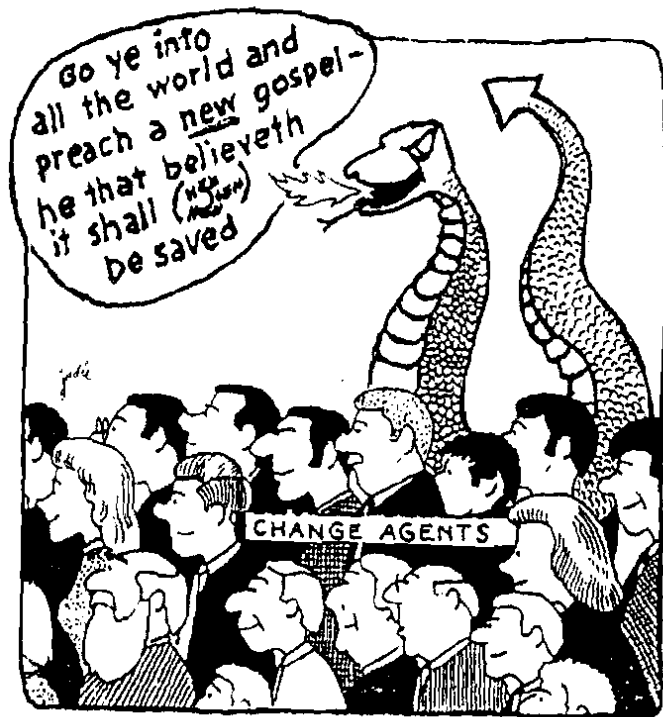
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Seeing It Helps Saying It...

The "Father of Lies" Sends Forth His Angels

Jodie Boren



Since the garden of Eden that old serpent, which is called the Devil and Satan (Revelation 12:9), has been the adversary of mankind. This avowed enemy of all that is holy and righteous stalks his prey as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).

That he is referred to as the great deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9) should cause us to sit up and take notice. The most effective weapon that Satan uses in his deceptions is, of course, the lie. In John 8:44, our Lord said that he is the father of liars.

Satan is most proficient in beguiling us. One of his strategies is to transform himself into an angel of light (messenger of truth) and to send forth his ministers as ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:14, 15).

Satan recruits his messengers from the world to preach his "new" and false gospel as we see in so many of the radio and television evangelists that are nothing more than money hungry charlatans misleading millions of unsuspecting souls. However, the most insidious false teachers under the power of the prince of darkness are those that are recruited from within the body of Christ! Paul warns of this in Acts 20:30 where he says, "...of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Notice: this statement was made to elders of the church of our Lord! Again, as he writes to Christians, Paul warns of those that shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of dev-

ils (I Timothy 4:1). These preachers of false doctrine—these wolves in sheep's clothing—these "change agents"—find so many of the brethren easy and willing targets as they parade as messengers of light. But the Holy Spirit directed Paul to make the faithful aware that such would take place. In II Timothy 4:3, 4 Paul wrote, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

The false teachers of today are disobedient to the true gospel of Christ and this is one reason why Satan is able to work in and through them (Ephesians 2:2) to gain an advantage on so many. They mix enough truth into their lies to make their perversions sound most plausible. Thus, those who are not well grounded in the faith swallow their false doctrine hook, line, and sinker!

We need to heed God's warnings about those who pervert the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). We need to put on the whole armour of God that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-16).

Respect for the authority of God has diminished to an alarming state—even in the church of our Lord. Choirs, women preachers, instrumental music in worship, the new hermeneutics, hand-clapping, the observing of special days such as Easter and Christmas, and the like are found in the brotherhood today and are additions to the word of God. Because these things are not authorized by God, they are sinful! These teachings come from a generation of vipers (Matthew 3:7) who are full of subtlety—who are children of the devil (Acts 13:10). Satan is sending forth his angels—his change agents and God says—**SOLDIERS OF CHRIST ARISE!**

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Fourth Annual Lecture Series—October 14-18, 2001

Congregational Development...

"Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged"

Lynn Parker

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord gave this command: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). While a great many people would never claim to have a deep knowledge of the Bible, most every person knows the words of Matthew 7:1 by heart. You see, this verse is frequently wrenched from its contextual setting, wrested, and misapplied, until the common idea is that Christ was forbidding any person from judging the actions of another to be wrong.

THE PASSAGE STUDIED

Carefully now consider this passage in its context, and let us then look at the totality of Bible teaching on the subject of judging. Jesus said,

Judge not, that ye be not judged. {2} For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. {3} And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? {4} Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? {5} Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye (Matthew 7:1-5).

Here is one that has a nasty penchant for fault-finding. As a matter of fact, he is so bent on seeing what wrongs he can find in the lives of others that he completely ignores his own transgressions. Looking into his brother's eye, this hyper-critical person seeks to remove the smallest speck of chaff (from the Greek, *karphos*, meaning a twig, a piece of chaff or straw) while neglecting to remove a beam (a large squared timber such as that upon which a house rests) from his own! The very description brings to mind a preposterous scene and gives us an understanding of what the Lord has condemned. He has condemned the harsh, censorious, hyper-critical judgment of one who is out to get others with no thought given by the "judge" here to (1) loving correction of a brother, and (2) self-examination. Too, the thought of judging another by a stricter standard than that by which you would want to be judged is addressed here. Such is the case with Matthew 7:1-5.

But what if I interpret Matthew 7:1-5 in such a way as to prevent all judging, by any man at any time? Then I pit

scripture against scripture and am forced to say the Bible contradicts itself when, in reality, it does not. In John 7:24, our Lord's words are, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Now in Matthew 7:1 you read, "Judge not..." and in John 7 you find, "...judge righteous judgment." The former prohibits judgment, the latter commands it. No contradiction will be found here for the Lord has commanded one to avoid the harsh, censorious judgment of others while at the same time commanding us to judge according to a proper standard—"righteous judgment." The Bible teaches that there is a judgment to be avoided and a judgment we are to exercise. Note the simple chart below:



Judgment Forbidden!
"Judge not" - Matthew 7:1
Harsh standard
Hypocritical
No self-examination

Judgment Commanded!
"Judge righteous judgment" - John 7:24
Proper standard
Not according to appearance
Unbiased

"DON'T JUDGE ME!"

Denominations often justify their existence on the grounds that "we can't see the Bible alike" or "the Bible can be interpreted many ways." The philosophy behind such error requires its adherents to admit that two views concerning the Bible—diametrically opposed to each other—are both right. Denominations say, "Don't judge me!"

Those that would like to bring in new, novel, and false doctrines are well-rehearsed in the idea of judging as wrong the ones who judge their erroneous practices to be wrong. It's "OK" for the false teacher to judge but the faithful child of God who rejects error may not, or so goes the misguided thinking of inconsistent brethren. The liberal mindset might be typified in a statement that says, "I can't see anything wrong with social drinking, and who are you to judge me?" The erring brother who forsakes the assemblies or lives in an adulterous union while purporting to be married feels no tolerance at all for those who would

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bring the light of Bible examination on his sinful ways. Once again, to these folks, nothing they want to do is subject to critical inspection and rejection by others. They, too, holler, "Don't judge me!"

JUDGING DEFINED AND ILLUSTRATED

The Greek word used in John 7:24 and other places is *krino* (or a derivative). Vine writes that it is "a separating, then a decision." It also carries with it the meaning, "to distinguish" or, "to decide." The idea then is that a person engages in judging every time he makes a decision between options, types of behavior, and whether or not Hitler was wrong to murder Jews. Those are all judgments, and you and I pass them every day.

Jesus warned of false prophets who appeared harmless enough but "inwardly are ravaging wolves" and cautioned, "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-16). The son of God then warned of the existence of false prophets and gave the means by which one could pronounce a judgment on who these wolves were. Read Acts 13:8 and see that Elymas was judged to be full of guile, "all villainy" and "a son of the devil." Did Paul judge Elymas to be wrong? The answer is an obvious, "yes!" Paul wrote to the Corinthians to, "but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a

fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat...Put away that wicked man from among yourselves" (I Corinthians 5:11,13). It is plain to see that what Paul obligated the Corinthians to do required that they pass judgment—they were to "judge righteous judgment."

When we then call something wrong or sinful, we are to apply the proper standard—God's word—as the authority. I may not agree with another in a matter of opinion, but I dare not pass unrighteous judgment—saying he is in sin—because our opinions differ. Righteous judgment labels an act "sinful" when the Bible authorizes such labeling. John wrote, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4). A person may claim faithfulness to God but be living contrary to his word. A Christian teacher then judges his claim to be erroneous and points out that he is not yet saved. In so doing, the teacher has engaged in judging but only that which is authorized by God. The child of God is commanded to help restore a brother in sin (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). To do this, he must first judge certain action to be contrary to the Bible and thus sinful. This is judging "righteous judgment."

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Spring Bible Institute Lectures

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Sunday, February 25

- 9:30 A.M. "Mormon Doctrine of Apostles".....Daniel Denham
10:30 A.M. "God's Infallible and Only Source Book for Man's Salvation is the Bible".....Keith Mosher
4:00 P.M. "Direct Revelation of God is Unnecessary Today"..... Jason Rollo
5:00 P.M. "We Love the Mormons, but Oppose Their Fundamental Doctrines"..... Michael Hatcher
6:00 P.M. "The 'Two Sticks' of Ezekiel Thirty-Seven"..... Clifford Newell

Monday, February 26

- 9:00 A.M. "The Account of the Origin of Mormonism Proves it False".....Jim Nash
10:00 A.M. "Sidney Rigdon and Mormonism"..... Paul Vaughn
**10:00 A.M. "Keep Yourselves in the Love of God" (Jude 21).....Anita Hochdorf
11:00 A.M. "A Review of the Gatewood-Farnsworth Debate".....Lester Kamp
1:30 P.M. "A Study of Joseph Smith".....Jesse Whitlock
2:30 P.M. "Literary and Historical Characteristics of the Book of Mormon"..... Gary Summers
3:30 P.M. "A Study of Doctrines & Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S"....Tom Wacaster
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 P.M. "Mormon Doctrine of Miracles Versus the Bible".....Michael Wyatt
8:00 P.M. "Mormons and Plural Marriages (Polygamy)".....Don Walker

Tuesday, February 27

- 9:00 A.M. "Mormons and Zion".....Wayne Blake
10:00 A.M. "Mormon Doctrine of the Priesthood Versus the Bible".....David Baker
**10:00 A.M. "Snatching Them Out of the Fire" (Jude 23).....Anita Hochdorf
11:00 A.M. "The Mormon View of Eternal Life Versus the Bible".....Michael Light
1:30 P.M. "Miscellaneous Mistakes of the Mormons".....Darrell Conley
2:30 P.M. "The Absurdities of Joseph Smith's 'Prophecies'".....Gary Grizzell
3:30 P.M. "A Study of Brigham Young".....Noah Hackworth
DINNER BREAK - 5:00 P.M. SBI BANQUET
6:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 P.M. "The False Claims of Mormon Inspiration".....Paul Sain
8:00 P.M. "The God of Mormonism".....B. J. Clarke

Wednesday, February 28

- 9:00 A.M. "The Bible Warns Against False Teachers".....Monte Evans
10:00 A.M. "Mormons and Baptism for the Dead".....Marvin Weir
11:00 A.M. "A Review of Mormonism Exposed by G. B. Hancock".....Don Tarbet
1:30 P.M. "A Study of the Pearl of Great Price".....Kenneth Ratcliff
2:30 P.M. "Mormons and the New Covenant".....Eddie Whitten
3:30 P.M. "The Virgin Birth and Mormonism".....Danny Box
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 P.M. "The Mormon Doctrine of Man, Sin and Salvation Versus the Bible"..... Jason Roberts
8:00 P.M. "God's Temple versus the Mormon's Temple".....Bobby Liddell

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WATCHING AND DELIVERANCE AND PRAYER

Tom Moore



INTRODUCTION

- A. Prayer is a very significant part of the Christian life.
1. A Christian without a good prayer life is like a carpenter without his tools or a musician without his instrument.
 2. Faithful men and women of the Bible were always great men and women of prayer, for example:
 - a. Abraham pleaded with God in behalf of Sodom (Genesis 18:22-32).
 - b. Moses, among many other things, prayed for guidance (Exodus 33:13).
 - c. Samuel on one occasion prayed all night in behalf of Saul (I Samuel 15:11).
 - d. David is said to have sat before the Lord in prayer (II Samuel 7:18-20).
 3. Jesus, our perfect example (I Peter 2:21), prayed often—If Jesus, the sinless Son of God, recognized the need and value of prayer, how much more should we?
 4. The apostles and early church prayed often.
 - a. The early church, “continued steadfastly ... in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
 - b. The apostles told of their need to give themselves continually to prayer (Acts 6:1-4).
- B. Not only is prayer an important part of a Christian’s life, but we are commanded to pray.
1. I Samuel 12:23
 2. “Men ought always to pray” (Luke 18:1).
 3. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always” (Luke 21:36).
 4. We are to do everything “by prayer” (Philippians 4:6).
 5. “Continue in prayer” (Colossians 4:2).
 6. Give ourselves to prayer (I Corinthians 1:5).

- 2) False doctrine (II Timothy 4:1-4).
 - 3) Temptation (Luke 22:31; James 1:13-15).
 - c. Opportunity (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5).
5. Who is to be on watch?
- a. Elders (Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:2).
 - b. Preachers and teachers (James 3:1; I Timothy 4:16).
 - c. Parents (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6).
 - d. All Christians.
6. The result of not watching (Matthew 25:7-8).
7. The blessed result of watching (Luke 12:37).
- B. PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE
1. The Bible gives us examples of prayers given for deliverance.
 - a. David prayed for deliverance from his enemies (Psalm 59:2).
 - b. Moses prayed for the deliverance of Israel from death of the fiery serpents (Numbers 21).
 - c. Hezekiah prayed for deliverance from death (II Kings 20:1-11).
 - d. Nehemiah prayed for deliverance from the criticism of Sanballat (Nehemiah 4:1-6).
 - e. Jesus prayed that his disciples be delivered from the evil one (John 17).
 - f. Paul prayed for deliverance from a thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7-10).
 2. We have a Divine Deliverer.
 - a. II Samuel 22:2.
 - b. Isaiah 46:3-4.
 - c. Jeremiah 1:8.
 - d. Daniel 6:25-27.
 - e. II Corinthians 1:10.
 3. Deliverance is promised.
 - a. I Corinthians 10:13.
 - b. II Timothy 4:18.
 - c. II Peter 2:9.
 4. We should pray for deliverance from:
 - a. health
 - b. persecution
 - c. suffering
 - d. temptation
 - e. death

DISCUSSION

A. WATCH AND PRAY

1. The need to watch and pray is taught very clearly in the scriptures.
 - a. Matthew 26:41
 - b. Mark 13:33
 - c. Mark 14:38
 - d. Luke 21:36
 - e. Ephesians 6:18
 - f. Colossians 4:2
2. What are the Bible writers speaking of when we are told to “watch”?
 - a. Metaphorically “watch” means to give strict attention to, be cautious, to be active in giving attention.
 - b. To watch is like being a military guard.
3. Our watching must be:
 - a. Constant (Matthew 24:42-44; I Corinthians 15:58).
 - b. With prayer (Matthew 26:41).
 - c. Unhindered (Luke 21:34-36; Hebrews 12:1-2).
4. For what are we to watch or be on guard?
 - a. The coming of Christ (Matthew 25:13; Revelation 16:15).
 - b. The snares of Satan.
 - 1) I Peter 5:8-9.

CONCLUSION

- A. Prayer as we watch and pray for deliverance is essential in the Christian’s life.
- B. May we always be men and women of great prayer! “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.”

—P.O. Box 235
Port Lavaca, TX 77977-0235

"THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS"

Jason R. Roberts

In H. I. Hester's book, *The Heart of The New Testament*, he describes Herod's brutal killing of the little baby boys in Bethlehem and the borders thereof as the "Slaughter of the Innocents." Two-thousand years later, we are haunted by the grim reminder that the slaughter of the innocents has not ceased.

From the dark halls of the abortion clinics across America, the silent scream of the innocent continues to go unheard—while the very soul of our nation is dying at a startling rate. What has been so called the "American Dream," may very well be on the verge of becoming a *National Nightmare*.

A SHADOW OF BLOOD

The consuming interest of many to sacrifice little children on the altars of convenience has sent over 40 million babies to their graves since that infamous, dark day in our nation's history—January 22, 1973. The dark shadow of over 40 million slaughtered children hovers over America like a malignant angel of death—permeating and poisoning every part of our society. When we contemplate the staggering death total of these children since January 22, 1973, it makes Pharaoh's extermination of the Hebrew boys nothing more than a ripple on the ocean of time.

If we could take the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall—which spans approximately one city block—and

etch into that black, granite wall all the names of the 40 million children murdered since January 22, 1973 to this day, that wall would not stretch for one city block—it would stretch in excess of 60 miles!

These defenseless children were not permitted to have a fair trial. The objections they voiced were never heard in a court of law, but could only be heard within the darkness of their mother's wombs—while the gruesome abortion procedures were taking place, depriving them of their lives—even as they were beginning.



WHERE IS THE NATION'S CONSCIENCE?

These innocent babies were executed by techniques more cruel and inhumane than the most horrifying, gut-wrenching, motion picture could ever portray. If America could just witness a day's quota of an abortion clinic's barbaric executions, then the conscience of this nation would be awakened and we would rise to our feet in righteous indignation, putting a stop to this horrendous evil taking place in a land that proudly declares, "In God We Trust!"

The abortion industry is an out-of-sight-out-of-mind practice. Marching under the banner of "freedom to choose," and hiding behind closed doors, these *Abortuaries* are generating a multi-billion dollar profit from the dead, the defenseless, the helpless and the voiceless children—whose silent screams can still be heard echoing throughout our land—crying for justice.

The perpetrators of these evil crimes are willing mothers, failing fathers, malicious doctors, greedy, government social planners and silent, side-lined Christians!

No longer are the streets in America the most dangerous place in the world for a child. The most dangerous place in the world for a child today is in his or her mother's womb. Because, if the child could somehow escape from his mother's womb within that nine month period, he is protected by law—but while there, no such protection is offered.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Abortion is the great, moral issue of our day. And on this issue, hinges the future of our country. Our next President could appoint three new Supreme Court Justices—who will preside in that capacity for life. The decisions they make regarding abortion will be felt personally by each one of us. And if the Lord delays his coming long enough, those same decisions will be undoubtedly felt by untold generations to come.

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When the historians reflect upon our nation, and highlight what pivotal event changed the course of America, they will not point to one of our great victories in a World War, they will not remember the day of the Stock Market crash that triggered the Depression, or the moment that man first walked on the moon, or the collapse of Communism and the fall of the Soviet Union. Rather, they will write about that one, dark, winter day on January 22, 1973, when nine black-robed Justices of the United States Supreme Court announced their infamous *Rowe v. Wade* decision that opened the floodgates of death in our land and changed forever the character of America.

LOST—HER "GENIUS" AND "POWER"

Early in the 1830's, a French Nobleman named *Alexis de Tocqueville* came from Europe to America—intrigued by this dynamic vital society—seeking to understand what gave us our power and our energy and our optimism. In 1835, he published his observations in a book, which has since become a classic, entitled, "*Democracy in America*." The book concludes with this triumphant tribute to America:

I sought for the key to the genius and the greatness of America in her harbors; in her fertile fields, and in her boundless forests, in her rich mines, and in her vast world commerce, in her public school systems, and in her institutions of higher learning. I sought for it in her democratic congress, and in her matchless constitution. But not until I went into the churches of America, and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness, did I understand the secret of her genius and her power. . . . America is great because America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

Notice again Tocqueville's words, "*not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and her power.*" The flames of righteousness that once burned so brightly in the pulpits of America have flickered and gone out. The moral collapse of our nation has been met by a deafening silence from those pulpits and the people-pleasing preachers who presume to stand in them. Unless those flames of righteousness are rekindled in the pulpits of our country, the flame of liberty in the Lady's torch, in New York Harbor, will also flicker and go out.

Tocqueville was exactly right when he said there is an indissoluble connection between *goodness* and *greatness*. A country where the people would *rule*, must be a country where morality *prevails*.

The soul of America is dying. And part of the reason this is occurring is because the Christians of America have failed to become the *stinging salt* and the *shining light* so that our country can again be the *gleaming city*—set high upon a hill (cf. Matthew 5:13-16). This silence, in the face of the ongoing slaughter, is a denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ! (I Peter 3:15).

America has only one savior. He is not running for office. His name does not appear on any election ballot. He is not the mascot of the Republican party. He is not a Democrat. He is not even an American. But if there is one thing of which we can be absolutely certain, it is this—the Lord, God Almighty hates the murder of innocent, unborn children (Proverbs 6:16-17).

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The Last Word...

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Eddie Whitten

One of the dictionary definitions of "ethics," or "ethical," is "conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group." The basic thought involving ethics centers on that which is right and honorable. No profession considers any conduct ethical that involves deceit, cheating, lying, stealing or subversive actions. It is true that there may be different standards of ethics depending upon the profession involved.

Business ethics would consider what is best for the company even if the consequences resulted in loss for a competitor. Even then, whatever action taken by the company to achieve success must be honorable. Social ethics would differ from business ethics in that personal merit and integrity are the top priorities for social recognition. Again, honorable conduct on a personal level must be maintained in all relationships and activities. Ethics involving sports, at one time, encouraged the adage, "It is not who wins or

loses, but how you play the game." Play hard, but fair, was the basic ethical thought. It still should be that way, therefore cheating, trying to injure the opponent, violating rules, and the like is not only detestable but it is unethical.

In every phase of life, there is an element of conduct that should be our guide. It always involves interaction with others. That element of conduct is ethics. How one's relationship with others, his influence upon others, his value to the community, his contribution to society, is evaluated is by his sense of ethical principles. Respectability is based upon ethics regardless of what pursuit of life is addressed.

Men of great notability and respect (many have achieved notability but without respect) are men who have



conducted themselves ethically in all undertakings. We applaud those who have so conducted themselves that their achievements and character live on.

THE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

The question is asked, "Is Christian ethics any different from social or business ethics?" The answer to that question centers on the standard by which ethics are determined. The standard of Christian ethics is God's word, the Bible. Now, if there is no difference from the world in the basic principles that Christ taught relative to human relationship, then we could say there is no difference in the ethics of the world and the ethics of a Christian. Honorable and decent conduct is demanded in everything that is ethical, but what about the ethics of Christian conduct? Is there a difference between Christianity and the world?

John 15:19, Jesus speaking: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." 1 John 2:15-17:

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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Jesus taught some very different and treasured lessons in the wonderful Sermon on the Mount. Among those lessons were these ethical gems: "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matthew 5:40-41). The idea here is to do good even to your enemies. These are precisely the words of Jesus as he proceeds.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ...For if ye love them which love you, what reward have

ye? do not even the publicans the same? (Matthew 5:44, 46).

There is a vast difference between the ethics of the world and Christian ethics. For those who may think contrariwise, consider the standards. Greedy and perverse men govern the world. The Bible sets the Christian's ethics. The ethics of the Christian are not for his personal advancement or acclaim. It is not for self. Christian ethics seek the best for others even at the risk of personal loss. Greedy and unethical conduct is seen in the conduct even of so-called Christians.

The influence of the world is great. Eyes that see that which is pleasing; ears that hear that which is flattering, and minds that think higher of themselves than they ought to think (1 John 2:16; Romans 12:3) are susceptible to worldly ethics. Oil and water do not mix. Neither can the ethics of the world control the Christian. If the Bible is your guide, Christian ethics will characterize your life.

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