

Contending **FOR
THE** Faith™

Volume XXXIV, 2003

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

REEVALUATION/ REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS?*

Dub McClish

INTRODUCTION

The following note was in a printed worship announcement program of a local congregation of the Lord's church earlier this year:

ELDER AFFIRMATION. As part of our service this morning, our five current elders will be re-confirmed [sic] and Brother _____ will be re-appointed [sic] as an elder. This is as a result of the overwhelming response of the congregation to the recently distributed Elder Recommendation Forms.¹

A brother who champions the "reaffirmation" of elders based upon periodic "reevaluation" of them began a manuscript on the subject as follows: "The reaffirmation of elders is new ground for most congregations. It is an uncharted course—a path not traveled. Few congregations have had any experience with reaffirmation."² While (as noted above) this practice is generally of recent vintage among us, it has been observable in the denominational world for many years.³

This writer's first exposure to the practice of appointing elders by a "reaffirmation" process in a church of Christ was in about 1987 when the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Forth Worth, Texas, announced in its bulletin that it follows such a process for both its elders and deacons. Due to its history of leadership in all things liberal for many years, this was not at all surprising. However, the next time I heard of such a practice was both surprising and disappointing. The Brown Trail Congregation, Bedford, Texas, generally known through the years for its scriptural soundness, used the

reevaluation/reaffirmation process in 1990 to restructure its eldership, which included selection of one new elder.⁴ Although there are doubtless many others, in our research for this chapter, we only have documentation of the employment of this practice by the following congregations, including the two mentioned immediately above:

1. The Richland Hills Congregation, North Richland Hills (Forth Worth), Texas
2. The Houston Park Congregation, Selma, Alabama
3. The Pleasant Ridge Congregation, Arlington, Texas
4. The Airport Freeway Congregation, Euless, Texas
5. The 11th and Willis Streets Congregation, Abilene, Texas⁵
6. The Crestview Congregation, Waco, Texas⁶
7. The Brown Trail Congregation, Bedford, Texas (The only congregation in the list without a reputation for liberalism to a greater or lesser degree.)

DEFINITIONS

In order to understand the practice under discussion we need to understand the definition and application of the principal terms used by its advocates:

1. *Reevaluation* is based upon the word *evaluate*. To evaluate is to determine or fix the worth or value of an object or person (in this case, the latter)

(Continued on Page 9)

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

Editorial...

THE "NIGHTMARE" ON BROWN TRAIL

In the October 2002 issue of *Contending for the Faith* I commented on the problems that for some time have troubled the Brown Trail (hereafter BT) Church of Christ and Brown Trail School of Preaching (hereafter BTSOP). The problems were primarily and originally among and between the BT elders, preacher, and BTSOP administration/teachers. I wrote under the caption of "The Brown Trail Church Mess." In that editorial I pointed out the following fact. "Brown Trail has too many works that depend upon the brotherhood for them to function. Therefore, their mess and whoever made it becomes a concern for all faithful Christians."

MAXIE B. BOREN'S NINE PAGE SINGLE SPACED LETTER

BT's preacher, Maxie Boren, wrote a nine page single spaced "open letter" dated November 20, 2002 in an attempt to answer BT's critics in general, an article by brother Marvin Weir printed in the October 2002 issue of the *Gospel Journal*, brother Dub Mowery, and my October 2002 editorial. On page one, the second paragraph of his letter brother Boren wrote:

We believe the Biblical principle of local church autonomy certainly applies in this matter pertaining to Brown Trail... (Boren's ellipsis-DPB) where each congregation is free from a human hierarchical system to handle its own internal affairs in the light of Scripture as is deemed wise.

Brother Boren's words not with standing, it continues to be the case that when a congregation routinely seeks, requests, and accepts money from sister congregations and interested individual Christians for the work they sponsor, they should be open and above board in the use of those funds and the conduct of all involved. Why would a congregation not desire to operate in any other way?

THE AUTONOMY OF THE LORD'S CHURCH—WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT IT DOES NOT MEAN

Anyone who knows the New Testament organization of the Lord's church realizes that the largest and smallest organized entity of the church universal is on the local or congregational level. And, each church is autonomous. Congregational autonomy refers to the self-rule of a congregation under the authority of Christ.

However, all things being scripturally equal the Bible does not teach that congregational autonomy exempts a church (her elders, preachers, and so on) from being examined (criticized) by Christians who hold membership in other congregations. Where is the Christian who will answer the following True/False statements with the word "True"? "T F All other things being scripturally equal, the autonomous nature of the church only authorizes members of a congregation such as BT to examine (involving criticism) its beliefs and practices." Or, stated another way, "T F All other things being scripturally equal, the autonomous nature of the church forbids members of one congregation of God's people from examining the beliefs and practices (involving criticism) of another congregation of God's people." Will brother Boren, the BT elders, or anyone else answer "True" to these propositions? If they do, how will they go about proving either proposition? In other words, where is the *direct statement, implication, or example* in the scriptures that prove either proposition to be "True." Remember, we are to have Bible authority for all we believe and practice (Colossians 3:17). We are obligated to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

It is the case that brother Boren has advocated his view of what church autonomy entails and implies. Therefore, he is obligated to prove his affirmation from which he argues his case. Does brother Boren believe that because I am a member of one autonomous congregation and he a different autonomous congregation, that I do not have the scriptural authority to challenge his doctrine on the meaning and application of church autonomy? In fact, he violated his own false position on church autonomy when he sent his "open letter" to Christians who are not members of the BT congregation. The legs of the lame are not equal. And, brother Boren's legs are about as unequal as they come as far as this matter is concerned.

**THE DEVIL DID IT—
BUT HOW AND THROUGH WHOM?**

On page one in the first sentence of the third paragraph Brother Boren wrote, "In setting forth the facts, may I first of all 'lay the blame' where it belongs...upon Satan!" (The ellipsis and underlined words are brother Boren's). What biblically literate person would seek to contradict his statement? However, Satan operates through agents. Neither false nor true doctrine floats around like some gas corrupting or saving people as the case may be when they

In This Issue..

REEVALUATION/REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS Dub McClish	9
EDITORIAL THE "NIGHTMARE" ON BROWN TRAIL David Brown	2
THE REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS Gary Summers	21
AN OPEN LETTER REGARDING THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST Dan Flournoy	25
RESPONSE TO OPEN LETTER OF MAXIE BOREN Marvin L. Weir	29
MY RESPONSE Dub Mowery	31

inhale one or the other. People teach the truth. People teach false doctrine. People live righteous lives. People live unrighteous lives. People repent. People do not repent. People confess their sins. People do not confess their sins. People will go to heaven. People will go to hell. Standing alone, doctrine does not go to heaven or hell.

Some person(s) who is/was a member of the BT congregation sinned or the problem(s) at BT would not have happened. Satan worked through human beings at BT to cause the trouble that brother Boren in his "open letter" acknowledges. And, Satan works through humans because they allow him to do so (James 1:3-16; I John 2:15-17). Some questions to be asked and answered by brother Boren and the BT elders are: Who were or are Satan's agents among the BT members? What was the sin(s) committed? Has the sinner(s) repented? What sin(s) was confessed?

On pages 29-32 brother Marvin Weir deals with that part of brother Boren's "open letter" concerning him. I am, therefore, not going to rehash what is written in that article. However, one thing stands out clearly, neither the present BT elders, brother Boren, nor Dave Miller (though he is no longer a member of the BT church), former director of BTSOP have repudiated, repented of, or confessed their sin

of believing, teaching, and practicing the false doctrine of reevaluating elders as carried out at BT. If such has been done, where is the proof of it?

BUILDING AND ATTACKING A "STRAW MAN"

On page seven beginning with the first full paragraph of his "open letter" brother Boren turns his attention specifically to my article in the October 2002 *CFTF*. His approach to my editorial is to build a straw man and attack it. Of what I wrote he penned it "**was very unfavorable toward Brown Trail**" (underlined words are brother Boren's). My comments (for that matter brother Weir's article in October along with those in this issue of *CFTF*) are no more "unfavorable" to BT than Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth was "unfavorable" to them. I wrote the truth or I wrote error in that editorial about BT. If I wrote error about BT, please site the error and I will correct it. Brother Boren continues to construct his straw man by making all sorts of comments about what he thinks I have heard—"a bunch of half-truths, distortions, and slanted opinions from those who have become enemies of Brown Trail, because some brethren have spread malicious rumors 'all over everywhere.'" In view of all that brother Boren wrote regarding what he thinks I have heard pertaining to BT, let him or

anyone else from my October 2002 editorial, site a so-called "half truth," "distortion," "slanted opinion" or "malicious rumor." I also challenge anyone to find the same in this article.

I wrote the following in my editorial:

The only doctrinal error that I know of that had somewhat to play in the recent fiasco and the fall out which continues on, is the reevaluation of the elders doctrine. This is not new with those brethren.


Of this matter brother Boren wrote in his "open letter," page 3: "**The FACTS are: On two occasions, under extreme conditions in each case, we have asked brethren to express themselves in order to try to solve untenable circumstances.**" He then went on to site those times and certain ones who were involved. On pages two and four of his "open letter" brother Boren makes it clear that he had suggested the reevaluation process to the BT elders. So, we are in agreement as to BT having practiced reevaluation of elders. Therefore, again I ask him or anyone else, how is it that I wrote from a so-called "half-truth," "distortion of the truth," "slanted opinion," or "rumor" regarding elder reevaluation? I only wrote what brother Boren reported (and he gave more details than I did). This action was what he had recommended to the BT elders, which process they approved and implemented. Thus, I continue to stand by those statements.

WHAT DID YOU SAY IT EXPEDITED?

On page 5 of his "open letter" brother Boren wrote: "**We believe that our action in the matter falls into the realm of 'opinion/judgment/expediency'** (words bolded by brother Boren)." This statement goes far in revealing the fact that these brethren need help in understanding *how* to ascertain Bible authority for what they believe and practice (And they are not the only brethren who need such help). Without biblical authority to act there can be no consideration of options. It is Bible authority alone that places the obligation on one to act. Thus, we must have it for all we believe and practice (Colossians 3:17). This authority is manifest to rational men in the words of the Bible. As noted earlier, these language avenues are *direct statements, examples, and implication*. It is the very nature of the communicative element of language in rational man that it communicates *only* through these three linguistic paths. When the Bible obligates one to act, then, and then only, may one consider the options available whereby the obligation is carried out or discharged. The determining

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factor in deciding on the option used to discharge the biblical obligation is made on the basis of which option is the most advantageous (the option that discharges the obligation in the quickest and best way possible) at that time, under the given circumstances, and technology available.

The question is this, what biblical obligation does the elder reevaluation process as practiced by the BT church (an option according to brother Boren) serve to expedite? He says it is an option to use in breaking up a “logjam within the eldership” (page 5, “open letter”; bold words his)—whatever that means. On the same page of his “open letter” brother Boren says that the reevaluation process is an option that one may choose to use in order to remove an unqualified elder(s) from the eldership. *Thus, he is affirming that elder reevaluation as practiced by the BT church is an option that expedites the church’s obligation to keep only qualified men in the eldership.* Hence, brother Boren et al. should be prepared to affirm on the polemic platform the following proposition. *“The scriptures teach the elder reevaluation process as practiced by the BT church is an option available to the Lord’s church to aid, help, or expedite the church in discharging her obligation to God to keep only qualified men in the eldership.”*

If the previous proposition is true, then “elder reevaluation” bears the same relationship to keeping only qualified men in the eldership (an obligation of the church) as song books, song leaders, and pitch pipes do in helping the church sing in its worship to God. The songbook is a singing aid, help, or expedient because the element of advantage is found in using it. And, it is not an addition to God’s word because it only helps us do what the Bible obligates us to do in worshiping God in music—namely sing. It does not add another *kind* of music (mechanical, humming, whistling, and such like) to the worship. Thus, for said elder reevaluation to be a co-ordinate (an aid) and not an addition to God’s word, it must help (there must be the element of advantage found in it) in keeping qualified men in the eldership while at the same time giving the scriptural respect of the congregation to the authority of the eldership (Hebrew 13:17).

**WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO,
SO WE GOT BUSY AND DID IT**

One serious mistake brother Boren, the BT elders, as well as those who supported, and participated in the elder reevaluation process at BT made is

this—they attempted to find another reason for removing elders other than what is set out in the New Testament, especially the one set out in I Timothy 5:19. Here is what brother Boren wrote:

I have conversed with several highly respected gospel preachers about “how” to handle a situation like we faced at Brown Trail. Two or three said they felt our action was unwise but not unscriptural. Two or three expressed reservations about it since it is not “spelled out” in the Scriptures. Some thought we handled the matter about as well as we could under the circumstances. **But not one of them showed me definite instructions (a “pattern” dealing with such matters, except for the “sin” context of I Tim. 5:19 ff, which we followed pertaining to one brother) from Scripture as to “how” it should be done.** Most replied somewhat like this, “Well, I don’t know exactly, **but I think....**” And from there varied opinions were given. Brethren, that is exactly the way we felt. **We didn’t know exactly what to do either, but we felt we had to something, and we did what we felt was best in order to salvage what we could from the “storm” that had passed through our midst (Bold and underline by brother Boren).**

There is only one exception in the New Testament of which I know that would authorize the church to remove a man from the eldership who is not guilty of unrepentant sin. It is this, if an elder became mentally incompetent by suffering a stroke or for some other reason, and did not realize due to his diminished mental capacity that he was no longer qualified to be an elder, while not guilty of sin, he should be removed from the eldership. If neither one of the previous situations existed in the BT eldership, on what scriptural grounds could elders be removed? The answer is none. However, brother Boren and certain of the BT elders then serving sought other grounds to remove fellow elders. So they came up with the unauthorized elder reevaluation doctrine.

Brother Boren mentions the fact that one elder was dealt with on the basis of I Timothy 5:19. However, there were other elders whom they desired to remove from the BT eldership. Of these elders they could not find any sin in their lives. Neither could they prove any diminished mental capacity that would disqualify the elders they wanted out. Thus, they sought other grounds to remove them. Brother Boren’s comment that, “We didn’t know exactly what to do ... but ... we had to do something...” has been the basis of more than one innovation in the Lord’s church. That statement reminds me of a young woman who said she did not know what to say in replying to another woman so she just “kept on talking.” Yes, when we do not know what to say “just keep on talking” and when you do not know what to do, just do something.

KEEPING ONLY SCRIPTURALLY QUALIFIED MEN IN THE ELDERSHIP

The Bible is not silent regarding *how* to keep the eldership occupied with qualified men. Paul wrote to Timothy saying, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses” (I Timothy 5:19). *Kategoria* is the Greek word rendered “accusation.” Of this word Vine states:

This and the verb *kategoroeo*, to accuse, and the noun *kategoros*, and accuser, all have chiefly to do with judicial procedure, as distinct from *diaballo*, to slander. It is derived from *agora*, a place of public speaking, prefixed by *kata*, against; hence it signifies a speaking against a person before a public tribunal. It is the opposite to *apologia*, a defence (Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 26).

Obviously the “accusation” “against an elder” of I Timothy 5:19 is a formal accusation of some kind pertaining to some wrongdoing (sin)—as the Bible defines the wrong. Or, as noted earlier it could be a situation such as I noted in the illustration of an elder who suffered the stroke.

“Paradechomai” is the Greek word rendered “receive.” It means to take in closely to one’s self (See Vine, p. 256 and Strong’s Concordance, Greek Dictionary p. 54, word numbers 3844 and 3858). Whatever the accusation(s) Timothy was to “receive” such charges *only* when two or more credible witnesses testified to the truth of the charge(s) against an elder(s).

Brother Boren wrote on page four of his “open letter”: “**It is impossible to present a formula guaranteed to work in the solution of this problem**” (underline and bold are brother Boren’s). Yes, it is impossible to expedite that for which you do not have authority to practice in the first place—namely remove men from the eldership on the basis of something other than the reasons set out in the scriptures. If I Timothy 5:19 is not a pattern (“formula”) to follow for removing unqualified elders, what is it? *When a man is qualified to be an elder, is appointed to the office, and is doing the work of an elder, by what scriptural authority does any member of the church (including other elders) have to remove him except for the reasons already cited?* Thus, the elder reevaluation doctrine as practiced by B T is not an expeditious (optional) act to carry out the obligation of the church to keep only scripturally qualified men in the eldership. It is another kind of act that is foreign to I Timothy 5:19 as well as the rest of the teaching of the New Testament on this matter. As taught and prac-

ticed by BT it has no scriptural basis. Please note **Dub McClish** and **Gary Summer’s** articles in this issue regarding the unscripturalness of the reevaluation of elders doctrine.

Where are the formal charges of sin or incompetence to be found in the reevaluation of elders doctrine as taught and practiced by BT? Where are the two or more credible witnesses to testify to the truthfulness of any charges, which charges and witnesses are demanded by I Timothy 5:19?

A CONSTANT ABIDING TRUTH

The truth of the matter is that I Timothy 5:19 is a constant abiding truth to be applied to each elder beginning at the time they are scripturally appointed to the eldership. Each elder is himself subject to its guidelines regarding any of his fellow elders. And, all other things being scripturally equal, any member of the church may act accordingly by the authority set out in I Timothy 5:19. *Please notice that I said such is the case when “all other things are scripturally equal.”* This is God’s rule for keeping faithful men in the eldership. It is not something that is applicable “once in a blue moon.”

Again, brother Boren said BT’s reevaluation of elders was in the realm of options. If that is the case, just what authorized act did it aid or help or expedite? Certainly it did not expedite the actions authorized by I Timothy 5:19, or the removal of a person who has become mentally incapable of performing the work of an elder. Therefore, elder reevaluation as practiced by BT is another *kind* of action from the two actions previously mentioned. It is a *kind* of action not authorized by any *direct statement, example, or implication* found on the pages of the New Testament. Hence, it is as much an unauthorized action as is the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God. And, by those who seek to have Bible authority for what they believe and practice it will be rejected and repudiated.

HAVE YOU VOTED FOR YOUR FAVORITE ELDER TODAY?

The BT elder reevaluation doctrine allowed people to vote on what elders should remain in the eldership. If an elder did not receive a certain percentage of the vote that elder had to resign. Such an idea is not found on the top, side, bottom, or edge of the truth of the New Testament regarding the retention or removal of elders. It circumvents the New Testament truth on the matter and allows any crank and

contentious person to oppose any elder without proper proof. Thus, I Thessalonians 5:21 cannot be properly applied to an elder because the truth of I Timothy 5:19 is ignored. I strongly urge every member of the church to take notice of what God thinks of and how he deals with those who “evaluated” Moses and Aaron in the case of the rebellion of Korah and his henchman (Numbers 16:1ff; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 13:7; 17).

“THE CONGREGATION THAT REMAINS IS HAPPIER THAN IT HAS BEEN FOR MONTHS”

I also wrote, “At present the powers that be at Brown Trail are trying to say everything is A-OK.” Brother Boren did not like that statement and the ones that followed it. However, how does my comment differ from the sentiments expressed by brother Boren in the following quote from page 7, bottom of the page?

The facts are: (1) at present, the four elders and myself have one desire... to put this whole nightmare behind us and press on in the Master’s work. We are NOT trying to whitewash anything, or sweep sin under the rug, as we have been charged. We are just trying to do what Paul wrote in Phi. 3:13-14... forget the past, having sought forgiveness for any mistakes made, and “press on.” And that is exactly what we intend to do... to get busy in “the Father’s business.’ (2) The congregation that remains is happier than it has been in months, and peace has been restored. Brethren have a mind to work, and things are returning to normal. We are awakening from a nightmare (Brother Boren bolded the words).

At least in the matter of elder reevaluation there has not been any effort on the part of brother Boren or the BT elders to acknowledge their error and have repented of acting contrary to the scriptures in the doing of it. If so, where are the acknowledgements of the same? Brother Boren says that the Devil is behind the recent problems at BT, but he does not tell us who the Devil’s agents were/are. He says “mistakes” were made and men have repented. Does brother Boren mean by “mistakes” sinful acts or poor judgment? Furthermore, what men repented of what “mistakes”? If the previous quote from brother Boren does not take the long way around to say everything is “A-OK” at BT, at least at the time he wrote his “open letter,” what was brother Boren attempting to say?

UNLESS YOU WERE THERE YOU CAN’T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?

Previous to the preceding quote from brother Boren he took umbrage at my comment, **“But, I have not seen any sign of repentance from anybody**

for anything.” (Brother Boren underlined my words and bolded them.) He then wrote of my previous remark, **“How could he? He has NOT been here through any of this, and he does NOT know all the facts, and he certainly does NOT know our hearts”** (caps and bold by brother Boren). (1) There is nothing in my October editorial that even hints at pretending to know the hearts of anyone at BT, so why does brother Boren bring up such and direct me to “Matt. 7:1-5”—talk about judging motives. (2) Brother Boren mentioned “mistakes” in his remarks previously quoted from page seven. Very well, again I ask, were these “mistakes” sins, or “mistakes” in judgment, or both? Will someone at BT tell us plainly? If sin was committed, who committed the sin and what was it? Who repented of the sins, or who needs to repent? For those who have not repented, is church discipline being practiced to bring them to repentance? (3) By his remarks brother Boren seems to think one cannot know that sin was in the BT camp unless one was personally involved in BT as well as the trouble therein and thereby has personal knowledge of specific sins and the persons who committed them. Are brother Boren and the present elders at BT attempting to affirm the proposition that, *“All things being scripturally equal, it is impossible for a person to know a sin was committed in a congregation unless one was present in the congregation to observe the sin when it was committed?”* One would think that as long as brother Boren has preached he would know better than to affirm such a ludicrous doctrine—but he has. And, evidently the present elders at BT are supporting him and he them in this absurdity. (4) Does brother Boren and the BT elders mean to declare that in all the turmoil in BT over many months that only one man sinned. All the actions were “mistakes” in judgment? But, brother Boren has the audacity to indicate that I cannot know that sin(s) has been committed at BT to bring about what Maxie B. Boren, declares to have been a “nightmare.” Did sin produce the “nightmare” on BT, or was it produced by “mistakes” in judgment?

WAS BROTHER BOREN “CONDEMNING AND UNKIND” IN HIS “OPEN LETTER?”

If my writing has been “condemning and unkind” it has been no more so than the nine page single spaced letter that brother Boren produced. I seriously doubt that brother Boren would say that his letter was unloving, unkind, harsh, etc. And, if that is the case, then I challenge brother Boren or anyone else to show us

the difference in his writing and ours—excepting this one thing, we have made no charges that cannot be backed up with the facts.

This editorial and the other material in this issue of *CFTF* is no more an attempt to destroy BTSOP or BT than Paul's letter to the church in Corinth was meant to destroy that church. It is hoped, and it is our prayer that this issue of *CFTF* will help bring the appropriate persons to repentance. And, I make no apology for striving to get sinners to repent. Surely because Maxie Boren's "open letter" of November 20, 2002 was an open rebuke to certain persons, he was not attempting by it to destroy them.

"UNITY IN DIVERSITY" ANYONE?

Yes, as brother Boren wrote, "Brethren, we need to be **"pulling together"** as a team instead of tearing each other down!" (Bolded by brother Boren). But as the prophet Amos asked in the long ago, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Are we agreed on what the Bible teaches at least regarding the reevaluation of elders? The Bible also declares:

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 divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the

same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10).

Are we of the same mind and the same judgment and perfectly joined together at least regarding the reevaluation of elders? Now, who has moved? Surely the BT elders and brother Boren do not advocate "unity in diversity" in obligatory matters. And, if the reevaluation of elders does not deal with an obligatory matter, pray tell what does? Furthermore, do the BT Elders, brother Boren, or any other member of the BT congregation intend to declare that over the last many months of turmoil that only one BT member's sin caused or aided in the division that has taken place at BT?

REPENTANCE IS A GOOD FIRST STEP IN DESTROYING "NIGHTMARES"

If some BT church members have sinned and not repented, and the church is not practicing scriptural corrective discipline, will someone attempt to explain, in the light of scripture, *why* the "nightmare" on Brown Trail is not ongoing? Indeed, is it not a sin to refuse to correctively discipline those who need it?

A beginning point in dissolving the "nightmare" on BT would be for the BT elders and brother Boren to repent of practicing elder reevaluation—a doctrine no where taught in the New Testament, and admit that sin(s) of one kind or another (not just mistakes in judgment that I do not doubt were made) is at the root of this whole Brown Trail "nightmare." Again, any church that receives, expects, and seeks the brotherhood's financial support and good will, whose work influences thousands of people, must be prepared to prove its self. Indeed, all Christians are charged to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

The great majority of brethren I have known and know are always glad and ready to forgive brethren when they turn from their sinful ways, confess their sins, and request the prayers of the saints on their behalf to our merciful Father. And, if I know my heart and the hearts of those who have written in this issue of *CFTF*, aside from marking those who are adamant in their refusal to repent of their sins, trying to get those who need to repent to do so is the only reason *CFTF* has in publishing this material regarding the "nightmare" on Brown Trail.

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

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Reevaluation/Reaffirmation

(Continued From Page 1)

based upon examination. To reevaluate is to evaluate again or anew. To reevaluate elders means to reexamine them in order to determine their worthiness or unworthiness to continue to be elders.

2. *Reaffirmation* is based upon the word *affirm*, which means to validate by positive assertion. Thus, to reaffirm means to validate again that which was once validated. In respect to elders, reaffirmation means that men already serving as elders have their continued service validated and positively asserted. Please note that reaffirmation implies prior reevaluation; without it there is no basis for reaffirmation in this procedure.

3. *Reconfirmation* is based upon the word *confirm*. This word means to make firm, strengthen, ratify, or give approval to. Reconfirmation obviously means to repeat the giving of approval or ratification. Since this word is actually a synonym for *reaffirmation*, when applied to elder selection the two words may be and are often used interchangeably.

4. *Deaffirmation* and *deconfirmation* (admittedly coined words, DM) are effective antonyms for *reaffirmation* and *reconfirmation*, respectively. It logically follows that a man who is not reaffirmed/reconfirmed after reevaluation is thereby “deaffirmed”/“deconfirmed”!

APPLICATIONS—SOME CASE STUDIES

In a sermon manuscript on this subject, **John Cannon** asserted the existence of two general parts to the application of the reaffirmation process:

First, each elder as an individual should reaffirm his desire to continue to serve. Self-examination requires an elder to ask, “Do I still have my heart set on serving the Lord’s church as an elder?” (1 Tim. 3:1). If the answer is “no,” he should be willing to resign or retire with dignity. If the answer is “yes,” then he should be concerned about the congregation’s attitude toward him. Second, the congregation’s attitude should be determined. The congregation can reaffirm its desire to have any or all of the present elders to continue to serve. They can reaffirm their commitment to follow the leadership of the elders as individual men and as a group or body of elders—the eldership. In the event an elder is not reaffirmed by the congregation, he is given the opportunity to retire with dignity. If reaffirmation is positive, the elders resume their leadership role in the congregation with a vote of confidence.⁷

Cannon’s purpose is to argue the case for the concept and process. Therefore, he does not set forth the details of how either the reevaluation or reaffirmation is to be executed, although he later advocates “frequent evaluation of leaders,” “periodic evaluation,” and

that elders should undergo “congregational evaluation periodically.”⁸ While we have confirmation that the congregation where Cannon preaches (Pleasant Ridge, Arlington, Texas) uses this approach, we do not have documentation of the specifics of it.

The Richland Hills Congregation combines a specifically-structured tenure plan with its approach to the reevaluation, reaffirmation, and selection process for both elders and deacons, as follows:

1. Each newly-appointed elder is appointed for only a three-year tenure before reevaluation.

2. At the end of the three-year term he can resign if he chooses no longer to serve or he can choose to be a candidate for reaffirmation, subject to reevaluation by the congregation.

3. If his reevaluation “ballots” are sufficiently negative he understands that he will not be reaffirmed. If they are sufficiently positive he is reaffirmed. (We were not able to learn the formula by which one is reaffirmed or deaffirmed.)⁹

4. New elders are selected and appointed, based upon the evaluation process and formula used for the reevaluation of existing elders.

5. Deacons are reaffirmed and new deacons selected by the same process, except the tenure of deacons is one year.

The Crestview Congregation, Waco, Texas, patterned its process after the plan of the 11th and Willis Congregation, Abilene, Texas (as mentioned above) (notwithstanding its claim to be following “a model patterned after that revealed in the book of Acts”). A summary of this plan is as follows:¹⁰

1. The congregation selected fifteen members for a “Drafting Committee” to “draft the procedures for selecting elders and present them to the congregation at an open meeting.”

2. The Drafting Committee prepared a list of “introspective” questions for prospective elders, which, when filled out by the eventually-determined candidates, were made available to the entire congregation.”

3. The chairman of the Drafting Committee conducted an “open” meeting of the congregation in order to select a seven-member “Administrative Committee.” This committee could not include any man who presently served as an elder or who might be an elder candidate.

4. The Drafting Committee tabulated the nomination ballots for members of the Administrative Committee, with the top seven vote-getters being appointed, after which the Drafting Committee dissolved.

5. The Administrative Committee, after selecting its chairman, had the responsibility to review and su-

pervise the elder selection procedure.

6. The congregation was urged to submit written, signed nominations for elders over a given number of days, with existing elders automatically nominated unless they removed themselves from consideration (which four of the five Crestview elders did on February 12, 1987—four days after nominations began). Each candidate had to receive at least twenty nominations to be considered for appointment/reappointment.

7. The Committee then met with each candidate to determine his willingness to be appointed if selected. The list of those who were willing was then placed before the congregation.

8. A period of several days was allowed during which any member could lodge scriptural objections to any of the men. These had to be in writing, signed, and delivered to the Committee by the pre-announced deadline.

9. "Ballots" (their word) were distributed and voting on the candidates took place on a given Sunday morning after worship. "Making the cut" for reaffirmation/affirmation was based on "yes," "no," and "I don't know" "votes" (their term) cast for each man according to the following intricate formula:

The minimum level of confidence is a percentage of all affirmative votes cast for a nominee after his "I Don't Know" votes have been subtracted from the total number of votes cast. The minimum level of confidence for elders shall be set at no lower than 70%. The maximum percentage of "I Don't Know" votes shall be set at no higher than 25% of the total number of votes Cast.¹²

10. The Committee tabulated the elder ballots on the same day the voting was done, thus determining which nominees had been "affirmed." This being done, the ballots were destroyed.

11. The Committee then announced the results of the voting and set a date for installation/reaffirmation of the new eldership.

12. The Committee prepared a written report, in conjunction with suggestions from the congregation, evaluating the selection procedures and projecting the date for the next selection process. The Committee then dissolved and its functions ceased.

1. The specifics of the reevaluation/reaffirmation/selection blueprint implemented at Brown Trail, although not as intricately detailed, have many similarities to the above. The document in which they set forth their plan is reproduced in full below:

1. The elders formed a committee to regulate and monitor the process. Committee members: Gary Fallis, Dave Miller, Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson.¹³

2. Formally apprise the congregation of the commencement of the evaluation/selection process (Dave Miller—April 8). Present sermons on elder qualifications and responsibilities (Johnny Ramsey—April 15 & 22).

3. Distribute evaluation/selection forms to the membership (April 22). Give membership one week to carefully/prayerfully evaluate present eldership as well as potential new elders and submit forms to the committee no later than April 29.¹⁴

4. Tabulation of forms by the committee. Present elders must receive 75% support of those submitting forms.¹⁵ Individual interview appointments will be scheduled. Interviews will facilitate introspection and review biblical qualifications.

5. Names presented to the congregation (May 13). A two-week period will be given for the submission of signed scriptural objections to the committee (Deadline: May 20).

6. If any objections are forthcoming, interview appointments with objectors will be scheduled in order to ascertain the validity of objections. The objector will not be required to meet with the one to whom he objects. The objector's anonymity will be maintained. Scriptural objections will then be discussed with those receiving objections.

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7. Appointment/ordination service (May 27).¹⁶

All of the plans above, while differing in some details have numerous things in common, including the following: 1. A committee (or committees) which stands between existing elders and the congregation. 2. The committee is vested with authority and oversight of the entire reevaluation/selection process. 3. The committee establishes an arbitrary (and sometimes complex) formula by which it determines who is to be reaffirmed/affirmed. 4. The congregation reevaluates existing elders and suggests prospective elders. 5. A period of time is allowed for lodging objections against any of the candidates. 6. Those who satisfy the preestablished formula and who are not disqualified because of sustainable scriptural objections lodged against them are then reaffirmed or affirmed, respectively.

Having seen the nature of the process, we turn now to consider the attempts to justify and defend it on the basis of scriptures.

JUSTIFICATIONS OFFERED BY ADVOCATES

Those congregations that have adopted a reevaluation/reaffirmation approach to elder and/or deacon appointment (such as the ones described) indicate varied attitudes toward justification of same. These range from no justification attempt to the setting forth of an alleged scriptural basis.

John Cannon observes that the New Testament says little about the appointment of elders. Just as it says nothing of elder tenure, resignation, retirement, leave of absence, or sabbatical, "Likewise, the reaffirmation of elders, either individually or congregationally, is not addressed in the text." He concludes that reaffirmation is in the realm of "congregational judgment."¹⁷

The documents from the 11th and Willis Congregation (Abilene, TX) offer no justification for their plan, however, the "Crestview Plan" (Waco, TX) (which is based entirely upon that of the Abilene Church) attempts to do so. This is likely explained by the fact that the Abilene Congregation had been using their plan so long that they assumed that none of its members would question it. On the other hand, this was all new and novel to Crestview, and its implementers seemed to have anticipated objections to it on scriptural grounds. For whatever reason, the Crestview Administrative Committee offered the following in the opening paragraph of its "Procedure" explanation: "We are choosing to follow a model patterned after that revealed in the book of Acts in which the Church [sic] sought to determine its leaders." We suppose that the passage referred to above is the same as that mentioned in a later statement made orally to the congregation by **Norman Murphy**, Chairman of the Administrative Committee:

The purpose of this process is simply for this congregation to recognize the shepherds/elders among us whom God has already chosen. Notice how Matthias

was chosen as the apostle to replace Judas. Acts 1:24 says: "And they prayed and said, 'Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen... [RSV, DM]. Not even the apostles sought to impose their will on the church."¹⁸

The Brown Trail (Bedford, TX) Elder Selection Screening Committee went to much greater pains than those previously cited in its attempt to provide scriptural justification for employing its elder reevaluation process. This would be expected for at least two reasons: (1) The Brown Trail Church has had a long history of seeking to do only what the scriptures authorize (admirably so), and the other congregations involved in this work have not exactly distinguished themselves in this pursuit. (2) Both the Brown Trail elders and the committee of its preachers and instructors surely anticipated that its adoption of this process would identify them with generally-recognized liberal congregations in the minds of many sound brethren and that they would therefore receive criticism because of this fact.¹⁹ Due to the committee's concerns about such matters it issued the following lengthy (by comparison) "Rationale" for the program they adopted:

1. The members select elders to begin with (Acts 6:3). Since the complexion of congregational membership changes over the years, an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals whom the present membership would select.

2. Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. Even if a man is technically qualified to be an elder, if the membership where he attends does not perceive him as a leader whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively.

3. The Bible makes provision for the evaluation of an elder's spiritual standing (1 Tim. 5:19). Should a current elder be found to be disqualified, he no longer meets the qualifications to be an elder. An evaluation process is simply one expedient means of ascertaining the elder's conformity to God's will. "Once an elder, always an elder" is as false as "once saved, always saved."

4. Elders have the authority to ascertain the amount of confidence that members have in their leadership capabilities. Any shepherd who genuinely wishes to serve the flock will naturally desire the continued approval and respect of that flock. Should an elder no longer sustain that respect from a sizable portion of the flock for whatever reason, the only proper attitude would be to remove oneself from a position that depends upon credibility. A Christian does not have to be an elder to go to heaven.²⁰

Let us summarize the assertions offered in justification of the concept of reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders from all of the foregoing sources:

1. The New Testament authorizes the selection

and appointment of elders, but does not instruct us how to do so. Therefore, we must use our judgment concerning the best way to do so.

2. The selection of Matthias as an apostle (Acts 1:24) is a model for selection of elders. God had already made His choice and the other apostles simply employed a means by which He could reveal who it was.

3. Elders are to be selected by the members (Acts 6:3).

4. Elders must have respect of the church members to be able to serve effectively.

5. Elders should be evaluated to see if they continue to be qualified (I Timothy 5:19).

6. Elders have the authority to determine whether or not the congregation still has sufficient confidence in them to respect and follow their leadership.

RESPONSES TO THE JUSTIFICATIONS

The initial response that needs to be made in reference to the proffered justifications is to observe the following: All of the justifications have linked (whether wittingly or unwittingly) selection and appointment of elders with reevaluation and reappointment of elders as if they were inseparable and without distinction. The basic argument of the reevaluation advocates may thus be stated as follows:

1. The scriptures authorize local congregations to select and appoint their own elders, but the details of doing so are in the realm of expediency.

2. Reevaluation and reaffirmation are merely alternate names for and means of the selection and appointment of elders.

3. Therefore, the scriptures authorize reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders as expedients for selection and appointment of elders.

The first premise above is true. Assuredly, the scriptures authorize the selection and appointment of elders/bishops/pastors in every congregation in which two or more men can be found who are scripturally qualified (Acts 14:23; 15:4ff; 16:4; 20:17; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9). Moreover, the specifics of how these are to be done are not provided either by example or precept in the New Testament. Such matters are therefore left to the exercise of human wisdom that works in harmony with the overall context of scriptural principles.

The problem arises with the second premise above: It assumes that which requires proof and evidence, which are not offered. It should be obvious to all that programs of "reevaluation" and "reaffirmation" (or "deaffirmation") (such as those described above) of previously-selected and appointed elders are not the same as mere selection and appointment procedures. The plans referenced above use separate and different forms for evaluating present elders and nominating new

elders—a tacit admission that reevaluation and initial selection are separate processes even in **their** minds. Moreover (as noted above), the Brown Trail plan stipulates: "Present elders must receive 75% support of those submitting forms." No such stipulation was applied to those who had not previously served. Since the second premise is false, the third premise (conclusion) is necessarily false. The reevaluation, reaffirmation, deaffirmation process concerning elders is a separate issue from the mere selection and appointment of elders and thus must be separately tested in light of the scriptures. There is both implicit and explicit authority for the latter. There is neither for the former.

What about the use of Acts 1:24 as justification, per the Crestview documents? This writer must admit that he has never before seen this passage used in any connection with the selection or appointment of elders, and, we think, with good reason! The setting here is the meeting of the 120 disciples, including the eleven apostles, in Jerusalem between the ascension of the Lord and the Day of Pentecost. In the process of selecting a replacement for Judas, the group prayed (apparently led by Peter, v. 15): "**Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away**" (vv. 24-25).

It is argued that the apostles did not "impose their will on the church." This would hardly have been possible since the church had not yet been established! But granting that this was after the church was established, it hardly helps the argument unless those making the argument are willing to cast lots and rely upon same as the means by which God signals his choice of elders. The fact that this was a selection involving the miraculous element invalidates it as a precedent for any generation of the church since the cessation of miracles. True, this incident shows that the apostles did not independently or arbitrarily make the choice of Matthias, but this has little to do with the question before us. The "church" did not make the selection, either. God did! The argument seems to be that because the apostles did not choose Matthias, we therefore have scriptural authority for reevaluating and reaffirming or "deaffirming" elders. This is a very large stretch—even for a Texas church!

We turn our attention now to the "Biblical Rationale" statement (hereafter referred to as the "Rationale") issued by Brown Trail (see above). Since it is by far the longest attempt at a Biblical justification, it will require a longer response than the other attempts. While realizing that the Bible need teach a thing only once for it to be the will of God, it is still noteworthy that the four paragraphs of the "Rationale" are not all that "Biblical." That is, only two passages are cited (not even

Spring Bible Institute Lectures

"ISLAM—FROM GOD OR MAN?"

February 23-26, 2003

David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

9:30 A.M. *The Islamic View of the Bible*
10:30 A.M. *Abraham Sows & the Middle East Reaps*
4:00 P.M. *Biography of Muhammad*
5:00 P.M. *An Overview of the Koran*
6:00 P.M. *Islamic Objections to the Trinity & Deity of Christ Answered*

Gary Grizzell
Tom Wacaster
Paul Vaughn
Gary Summers
Tom S. Bright

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24

9:00 A.M. *Who Owns Palestine?*
10:00 A.M. *The Status of Women In Islam*
**10: A.M. *From The Women's Quarters*
11:00 A.M. *Is Islam a Religion of Peace?*
1:30 P.M. *The Religious Hierarchy in Islam*
2:30 P.M. *The Causes of Division In Islam*
3:30 P.M. *The 5 Pillars (Duties) of Islam*
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**
7:00 P.M. *Jihad*
8:00 P.M. *The Jesus of Islam (Born of a Virgin, a True Prophet—But Not Deity)*

Roddy Covington
Jim Nash
Fran McClure
Charles Collett
Darrell Broking
Michael Hatcher
David Baker

Jerry Murrell
Barry Grider

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

9:00 A.M. *Religious Tolerance of Muslims In Islamic States*
10:00 A.M. *Islamic Holy Places*
**10: A.M. *Through the Lattice*
11:00 A.M. *Islamic Worship: Then and Now*
1:30 P.M. *Sources of Authority In Islam*
2:30 P.M. *Muhammad Is Not The fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy*
3:30 P.M. *Islam's Eschatology*
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**
7:00 P.M. *The Nation of Islam (Black Muslims)*
8:00 P.M. *The Church Confronts Islam In America*

Rick Popejoy
Clifford Newell
Fran McClure
Randy Mabe
Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
Richard Massey
Jerry Brewer

Michael Shepherd
Curtis Cates

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

9:00 A.M. *Islam—From God or Men?*
10:00 A.M. *Shariah Law (Punishment by Severing Fingers, Hands, etc.)*
11:00 A.M. *How Islam Grew—the Culture in which Muhammad Lived*
1:30 P.M. *Islamic Distinctives in Diet, Clothing, Etc.*
2:30 P.M. *The Impact of Islam on World Affairs*
3:30 P.M. *The Islamic view of the Prophets*
DINNER BREAK
6:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**
7:00 P.M. *A Christian's View of Islam (Salvation is Only In Christ's Church)*
8:00 P.M. *Allah: Islam's God is Not The God of the Bible*
**Ladies Only

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Preston Silcox
Michael Light
Lester Kamp
Bobby Liddell
John West

Lynn Parker
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quoted) and little application of them is made. Had there been more Scripture in their favor they surely would have used it. We intend to demonstrate that neither of these passages justifies what these brethren purport to see in them.

The first passage cited is Acts 6:3. What, if anything, does it have to say about the issue before us? The only point the "Rationale" drew from it was that "The members select elders to begin with (Acts 6:3)." The context of this passage is the response of the apostles to the complaint from the Grecian Jews that "their widows were being neglected in the daily ministration" (v. 1). The apostles called the church together and told them, "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (v. 3). While admitting in his sermon cited earlier that the seven men selected were not elders (in his opinion they were deacons),²¹ Dave Miller concludes: "Let's simply note that here is an inspired selection process given by the inspired apostles." We have no problem with this conclusion. In fact, we believe it is a correct use of the passage and have so used it for many years. However, we ask how this justifies the reevaluation, reaffirmation, deaffirmation program? All this passage does is furnish the principle that the whole congregation is to be involved in the selection of elders (and deacons), not in some intricate reevaluation process of men who were already selected, appointed, and serving.

Next, the "Rationale" states: "Since the complexion of congregational membership changes over the years, an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals whom the present membership would select." Our initial reaction to this statement was registered immediately after the Brown Trail program was implemented and it remains the same:

Just because the "complexion" of a congregation changes over the years (as all do) says nothing to justify the practice (i.e., of reevaluation/reaffirmation). When saints come to place membership with a congregation they are under the same directive to submit themselves to the elders of that congregation, just as every other member is (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). If said members cannot follow the leadership and work under the oversight of those elders, why should they want to place membership?...

I see certain harmful consequences that may accrue from this practice: (1) The congregation is "up for grabs" with the change of congregational "complexion." Any group of errorists of any sort (antis, premillennialists, Crossroaders, Kingites, whatever) could move into a congregation over a period of months and so change the "complexion" of a church as to demand their own chosen elders. Of course, this has been done as a power move in more than one place, but the "reevaluation" program invites and encourages it. (2)

This "reevaluation/reconfirmation/deconfirmation" concept removes the oversight of the congregation from the elders (Acts 20:28) and gives it to 25% of the congregation. Majority rule in the absence of elders has its drawbacks at times, but allowing a mere 25% to determine who will or will not serve as elders, and that, perhaps on the basis of personal likes and/or dislikes rather than on scriptural qualifications, is absurd. Moreover, the 25% apparently relates to the number of forms received by the...screening committee, rather than 25% of the actual membership (75% support of those submitting forms," "Procedure..." statement [emp. DM]). Depending on how many forms were submitted, the 25% could represent a much smaller percentage of the entire membership. Talk about "minority rule!"²²

Garland Elkins registered a similar response to the "change of complexion" idea:

Those who contend for "reconfirmation" argue that many of the present members were not there when the present elders were appointed, and if they were given the opportunity at present they would not be in favor of appointing the present elders. That may be true, but remember that they agreed to work under the oversight of the present elders when they placed their membership with a given congregation.²³

W. Terry Varner reacted to the "change of complexion" statement as follows:

[The] argument for "Reconfirmation" based on "the complexion of a congregation in terms of its membership can change over a period of time...no longer consist of the same individuals..." proves nothing. Hopefully, the case would be that...the congregation would grow by winning souls and transfer of memberships, so that membership would indeed change. If the eldership continues to meet the divine qualifications, whether the complexion of the congregation changes or not, he remains God's servant as an elder... For a congregation's complexion to change wherein the members would not submit themselves places the members in violation of Hebrews 13:17, "obey them that have rule over you [sic]."²⁴

There is not even any reasonable, much less scriptural, connection between the "change of complexion" of a congregation and the justification for some sort of reevaluation/reaffirmation process for elders.

The next item in the "Rationale" asserts: "Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow." It goes on to argue that while a man may be "technically qualified" to be an elder, if the congregation does not respect and trust him as a leader, he cannot "shepherd effectively." Does not this open the floodgates to abuse of and rebellion against the eldership or at least of certain men who are elders? Does not this place all of the responsibility upon the elders to be men (even though scripturally qualified) who the members want to follow (based on carnal standards), rather than placing it on

the members to obey the elders because they are qualified and because God commands them to (Hebrews 13:17, et al.)?

Mac Deaver wrote the following perceptive observations in response to the attempted justification of the “reevaluation” of elders on the basis that the members will not follow him even though he is scripturally qualified:

Brother Miller did not exactly prove what he set out to prove regarding the alleged scripturalness of evaluating elders who are already elders in order to determine whether or not the sheep are going to follow them.

I think the matter of stressing that elders can't lead if the sheep won't follow needs to be thought about more thoroughly. The evaluation process, as far as I can see, ... is to determine whether or not the congregation is willing to submit to certain men. It is not simply an effort to find out who is or is not scripturally qualified to remain an elder.

*I think the position that brother Miller takes implies that at any time there is an effort on the part of the elders to lead in a direction in which the sheep don't want to go, then all they have to do at that time is to reevaluate the eldership and remove all those to whom they do not want to submit. **This would imply that the elders are not ruling the congregation but that really the congregation is ruling the eldership [emp. DM]....***

25

The argument that a man could meet the qualifications, yet not be perceived by the members as a shepherd or one to whom they would submit themselves “is filled with questions and problems,” according to W. Terry Varner:

1. If an elder met the divine qualifications, he would, by virtue of his qualification, “know” the flock he helps to oversee (I Thessalonians 5:12-13) and be a watchman of (Acts 20:28-31; Hebrews 13:17).

2. The subsequent result would be that the eldership would be known (come to be known by all newcomers in the membership). There is no justification for “Reconfirmation of the Eldership.”²⁶

This pretense of an argument in fact adds a qualification to those in the scriptures, namely, that “The bishop therefore must measure up to certain ‘leadership qualities’ as determined by at least 75% of the membership.”

The second passage of scripture cited in the “Rationale” (I Timothy 5:19) is supposed to demonstrate that “the Bible makes provision for the evaluation of an elder’s spiritual standing.” In this passage Paul teaches: **“Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses.” He then adds: “Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear” (v. 20).** The “Rationale” goes on to state the redundancy that “should

a current elder be found to be disqualified, he no longer meets the qualifications to be an elder.” It is then alleged that “an evaluation process is simply one expedient means of ascertaining the elder’s conformity to God’s will.” The paragraph closes by stating: “Once an elder, always an elder” is as false as once saved, always saved.”

Our immediate response to this use of I Timothy 5:19 when we first read the “Rationale” was that it was a misuse of it, and our convictions have not changed. We wrote the following concerning this part of the “Rationale”:

I find no scriptural precedent for it [i.e., the “reevaluation/reconfirmation” practice] in I Timothy 5:19–20. To find this practice in this text requires some imaginative eisegesis, rather than sound exegesis. Of course, “once an elder, always an elder” is faulty. However, the task and necessity of removing an elder because two or three witnesses sustain a charge of sin against him is one thing, and “reevaluating” and either “reconfirming” or “deconfirming” an entire eldership as a matter of policy or routine is something altogether different. Further, I know of no basis for removing a man as an elder unless he is proved to be unqualified on the basis of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. To say that a man should be removed because “25% of the congregation doesn’t want to follow him” or “doesn’t like him” [is not in this passage or any other].

Brown Trail has not announced that it will do this annually or at any other stated interval, but the precedent has now been set for doing it. “If it was a good thing to do once, why not a good thing to do regularly?” it might be argued.²⁷

The late **Bill Jackson** wrote some incisive comments relating to the “reevaluation” practice and removing a man from the eldership as set forth in this part of the “Rationale”:

The work of the eldership is permanent—the congregation will always need elders. The men appointed were appointed because they met the qualifications set forth in the Bible. I think all of us would agree that an elder can resign, and certainly, if unqualified, should be removed if he does not resign. But that is the point: An elder is “examined, evaluated” day-by-day in his life and in his functioning. Fellow elders and the congregation should be able to see the man, know the man, day-by-day in the work of the kingdom. It becomes nothing but a political arrangement, giving every man a vote, however wrongly motivated he may be, and through this process, good and qualified men can be rejected on this second evaluation, and thus unscriptural and liberal forces can move their own men into Office!²⁸

Once more, from the pen of W. Terry Varner came the following words:

Elders must meet the divine qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:3–9, I Peter 5:1–3, and other

related Scriptures. This is not to affirm “once and elder, always an elder,” as brother Miller seems to accuse those of us of who would oppose the “Reconfirmation of Elders.”

Since an elder must meet the divine qualifications in order to be appointed an elder, it follows by implication, that an elder becomes disqualified when he fails to meet and/or violates the divine qualifications. To imply any other manner of removing an elder or eldership is to assume more than the Bible teaches. There is no hint of “Reconfirmation of Elders” in the divine qualifications.²⁹

The “reevaluation” process is merely an expedient means of determining whether or not an elder is conforming to God’s will, the “Rationale” asserts. John Cannon made the same basic assertion in his attempt to justify the reevaluation procedure to the Pleasant Ridge Congregation (Arlington, TX):

The reaffirmation of elders, either individually or collectively is not addressed in the text.... If congregational judgment or opinion is valid for current practices of dealing with ‘elder questions,’ then reaffirmation would be in the same realm of congregational judgment.³⁰

The attempt to place the reevaluation/reaffirmation phenomenon in the realm of expediency overlooks an elementary principle of Biblical hermeneutics: **Authorization must precede expediency.** In other words, no matter can be expedient unless it is first authorized, and the authorization for this practice has not been produced.

The final paragraph of the “Rationale” asserts that elders have the authority to determine what level of confidence the members have in their “leadership capabilities.” Granting that they have this authority, where is there any emphasis in the New Testament relating to a craving for such information? This sort of uneasiness smacks more of the cold, sterile, secular concerns of executives in the business world than it does of God’s elders. It is evident throughout the “Rationale” that there is a severe preoccupation with whether or not an elder is perceived as having “leadership” qualities that will inspire members to follow him. There seems to be a corresponding under emphasis on the actual scriptural qualifications themselves in the whole reevaluation/reaffirming process. Elders have authority in the local congregation in matters of expediency and judgment, but they do not have authority to empower a committee, whatever its purpose, that supersedes the authority God gave them alone.

A LIST OF CONCERNS

We will now list a number of matters that need to be seriously considered by any congregation that is contemplating adoption of a reevaluation/reaffirmation

plan. This plan concerns us because:

1. It professes to “reappoint” (the practical meaning of reaffirming or reconfirming) men who are already appointed and who have not resigned (both contradictory and nonsensical).

2. It renders duly-selected and appointed elders only “de facto” or “quasi” elders during the reevaluation process.

3. It places an administrative or screening committee in authority, to which the existing elders must give account and submit.

4. It prevents elders (who are to oversee all of the members and all of the work of all of the congregation) from having any voice in or oversight of who will serve as elders.

5. It sets a precedent that will be very difficult to abandon. It will thenceforth appear unfair to those to whom it was originally applied if all succeeding elders are not likewise subjected to it.

6. It adds the qualification of “leadership characteristics” to the qualifications found in the New Testament.

7. It may result in removing certain unqualified men from the eldership, but it also provides an opportunity for forces of error to quickly and easily gain control of the eldership of a congregation with a minimum number of people by removal of qualified men. (What if the elders in a congregation are qualified men who are determined to keep the church pure, but in the reevaluation process a twenty-six percent element of liberals in the church turn in negative ballots? Just this easily [and unscripturally] can a dedicated, qualified eldership be restructured.)

8. It creates a great potential for dissension and division in a congregation should the elders dare contradict the committee, the existence of which they have authorized and whose policies and procedures have been sanctioned by the congregation.

9. It gives an opportunity for fraud, deceit, and favoritism in the process of tabulation of the ballots by the committee members.

10. It could encourage an elder who is being reevaluated to engage in politicking and “promise-making” in order to be able to attain the necessary percentage of votes for reaffirmation.

11. It establishes arbitrary percentages for “reaffirmation” or “deaffirmation.”

12. It necessarily tabulates the percentages only of those who actually participate in the balloting, which may represent much smaller percentages of the actual membership.

13. It allows a small percentage of the members of a congregation to determine who will be its elders and how long they will serve.

14. It smacks more of the standards of failure

and success employed by business rather than the standards set forth in the New Testament.

15. It replaces the criptural mandate, "**them that sin rebuke before all**" (I Timothy 5:20) with "in the event an elder is not reaffirmed by the congregation, he should be given opportunity to retire with dignity."³¹

16. It supplants the scriptural instruction for dealing with sin and/or failure in qualifications of elders (I Timothy 5:19) with a humanly-contrived scheme of detailed and intricate "reevaluation" relating more to "leadership characteristics" than to scriptural qualifications.

CONCLUSION

The one major concern that overrides all others for lovers of truth is that the formal, arbitrary, highly-structured reevaluation, reaffirmation, or deaffirmation procedure that is almost a fad running through liberal congregations (and that has ensnared even some unwary conservative ones) is without scriptural authority. Most of those who defend it hardly make an appeal to the scriptures. Those who attempt such an appeal fail.

Philip Gould, a deacon at the Brown Trail Congregation at the time the "reevaluation" and "reconfirming" plans were being implemented, expressed his grave concern about this and several other matters in a letter to the elders. The words below are germane to the point at hand:

Regarding the office of an elder, brother Peterman [an elder at Brown Trail in 1990, DM] mentioned something called "reconfirming" the existing elders through a majority or some percentage of votes of the congregation. I assume that this is similar to the bishops' way of electing a new pope, **because there is no basis for it in God's Bible** [emp. DM]. The eldership is not a popularity contest. You are either qualified or you are not—you know the Truth. It was interesting to see where the Airport Freeway Congregation [Euless, TX], now home to many past Brown Trail members, "reconfirmed" their elders a few weeks ago as they installed others. Is the Brown Trail Church going to import doctrinal error from those who previously left when God's will and not theirs prevailed?³²

Many other astute Bible students have recognized this dearth of authorization and have boldly stated so:

Robert R Taylor, Jr.:

Like you, I do not believe there is Biblical authorization for what they [the Brown Trail Elder Selection Screening Committee] proposed. I constantly stand amazed at our brethren seeking to tamper with God's crystal clear pattern. The eldership is clear in Holy Writ. They are seeking to muddy the clear water of such. I view such with great alarm.³³

Bill Jackson:

There is absolutely no Bible, or justification, for that matter, of "reconfirming, reexamination, or reevaluation" as to either elders or deacons. It smacks of politi-

cal maneuvering done in foreign countries whereby a new government is formed, based on "reevaluation" and a "vote of confidence." It reflects adversely on a congregation, and those behind this process, to move in this direction.³⁴

W. Terry Varner:

The process of "Reconfirmation of Elders" is without Scriptural basis and results in a way to remove Scriptural men as elders and to place men into the office of the eldership that harmonize more nearly with the thoughts and desires of the membership rather than the divine qualifications.³⁵

Garland Elkins:

I do not know of any Bible authority for "electing" elders as if it were a political process. Neither do I know of any Bible authority for "reconfirming" existing elders. If elders lose their qualifications, they should resign. If qualified elders resign, the congregation has the same right to appoint them again in the future (if they are qualified) as they did the first time they were appointed.... I do not know why brethren cannot be content to simply "appoint" (ASV), "ordain" (KJV) (Acts 14:23) rather than to come up with an imaginary "reconfirmation" of present elders.³⁶

Mac Deaver:

I find no authority for such a procedure in the New Testament.³⁷

We concluded our own written reaction to this practice at the time it was being carried out with the following assessment:

The best argument against it is the same as that against the instrument and a thousand other innovations that men have dreamed up: "There ain't no Bible fer it," as the hillbilly saint declared!³⁸

ENDNOTES

*Used with Permission of Editor. Dub McClish, "Reevaluation/Reaffirmation of Elders?" *Leadership*, ed. Michael Hatcher (Pensacola, FL:1997), 89-103.

1. The Sunday Morning Review, Houston Park Church of Christ, Selma, Alabama (Jan. 19, 1997). Our thanks to Michael Hatcher for this document.

2. John H. Cannon, Jr., "A New Direction for Church Leadership: The Reaffirmation and Selection of Elders Among Churches of Christ," MS of sermon delivered at Pleasant Ridge Church of Christ, Arlington, TX (n.d., but 1991 or later), p. 1. Cannon excerpted and edited this MS from his unpublished Doctor of Ministry dissertation by the same title, for the College of Biblical Studies, Abilene Christian University. (The quotation endnoted is one of the very few things in the entire manuscript with which I can agree, incidentally!). Our thanks to Jesse Whitlock for this document.

3. Garland Elkins tells of first seeing such procedures in the Christian Church perhaps thirty years ago (from a personal letter to Goebel Music, May 14, 1990 [used by permission and with appreciation]). As with most of the other innovations, the change agents are continually introducing into the worship, organization, and work of the New Testament church, this one apparently originated in sectarian/denominational circles where the issue of Scriptural authority is rarely considered. We thank Goebel Music for several letters and documents relating to this subject.

4. This writer has known and loved many of the brethren at Brown Trail, including her preachers and some of her elders, for many years. He has also worked closely with this congregation in many ways for a number of years. Therefore, while it particularly grieves him to report this information concerning her, fairness and consistency demand it. He is not opposed to Brown Trail as such, but only to the error in which he believes she was involved in this matter.

5. Three of its six elders (in 1989, the date of documents in our possession) were firmly ensconced at Abilene Christian University (Ian Fair, Dean of the College of Biblical Studies; Neil Lightfoot, Professor of Bible; Dub Orr, board member). Our thanks to Darrell and Ruth Hanson for extensive documents pertaining to the 11th & Willis plan.

6. This concept was adopted in 1986–1987 after instruction sessions at Crestview by Ian Fair and Dub Orr. The Crestview documents and forms are almost “carbon copies” of the ones produced by 11th and Willis. (We infer from a cover letter accompanying the documents from 11th and Willis that brethren Fair and Orr have introduced their procedure in other congregations where they have lectured on the eldership.) Our thanks to Darrell and Ruth Hansen for numerous documents relating to the Crestview procedures.

7. Cannon, p. 2.

8. Cannon, pp. 6–7.

9. Interestingly, the Richland Hills “Affirmation-Reaffirmation” ballots for 1992 contained only a “yes” or “no” box to check for each candidate. The 1996 ballots contained a third box to check: “Don’t know this elder.” Since the “I don’t know” response is a prominent part of the formula coming out of 11th and Willis (Abilene, TX) and adopted by Crestview (Waco, TX), this addition by Richland Hills may reflect influence from one or both of these congregations.

10. Quoted from “Suggested Procedures for Participative Appointment of Elders” (Crestview Church of Christ, Waco, TX, 1987), p. 1. The plans of these two churches are so similar that there is no need to summarize both of them.

11. “Introspective Questionnaire for Elder Candidates” (Crestview Church of Christ, 1986, Revised 12/17/86). In explaining the rationale for the questions, we find it significant that the Committee stated the following: “These carefully chosen and sometimes delicate questions are intended to let the congregation know the heart and mind of prospective elders. Per the guidance of brethren Fair and Orr, there are no questions about specific doctrinal matters such as the Holy Spirit, divorce and remarriage, etc.” How is that for a telling bit of liberal advice from the ACU bigwigs and an equally telling mark of liberalism in the Crestview folk, that they readily swallowed it?

12. “Suggested Procedures,” p. 3.

13. In his sermon at Brown Trail (4/8/90), Dave Miller also added the following information concerning the committee membership and function: “Maxie Boren had an opportunity to have input on this committee, but is out of touch and out of town so much that his participation will probably be rather minimal” (from transcription of taped sermon).

14. Originally, members were not required to sign these forms, per Miller’s sermon: “You won’t be asked to sign that form. In fact, our five current elders have made that point, that this is strictly your opportunity without any pressure from anywhere or anyone to state your feelings about the current eldership in light of what the Bible teaches.” By the time the forms were distributed on April 22, this part of the procedure had been changed per a document titled, “Announcement from the Elder Selection Screening Committee”: “Only one change has been made in the procedures which were presented two weeks ago to the congregation. The committee is asking that you sign the forms. No forms will be considered which do not include a signature.... The only purpose for requiring signatures is to insure that all participants are members of this congregation and to ‘provide things honest in the sight of all men.’”

15. In his sermon, Miller referred to the need for one in a leadership position to voluntarily resign if he “no longer sustains the respect from a sizable portion of the flock” and further stated: “Present elders would need to receive a sizable percentage of support from this congregation.” He immediately used objections by 25% of the congregation as a percentage that should cause one to

voluntarily resign.

16. “Procedure for Implementing Elder Evaluation/Selection Process, Brown Trail Church of Christ.” From the following statements at the beginning of brother Miller’s sermon, this “procedure” was apparently suggested by him: “Plans were made several weeks ago more concretely and they [the elders] asked me to present them with some information that would assist them in carrying out this objective.” The “Procedure” statement seems to have been worded by the “elder selection screening committee” as a whole: “And so, in formulating this committee, as well as a number of guidelines that were discussed by the committee, we submitted to the eldership for their approval [sic]. A system has been set in place by which current elders might be evaluated and additional elders might be added to the body of elders.”

17. Cannon, “A New Direction....”

18. Norman Murphy, “Text of Statement to Congregation from the Administrative Committee” (Feb. 1, 1987).

19. Dave Miller was defensive about this very charge in his sermon of April 8, 1990: “But what about this idea of reevaluating current elders or reconfirming? There are some brethren that are really up in arms it seems to me and say, ‘That is what the liberals are doing.’ ... We may use the term ‘evaluation’ of elders, we may use the term ‘reconfirmation.’ If those terms concern you, then call it something else.”

20. “Biblical Rationale for Evaluation of Elders” (n.d.). Ironically, according to a former Brown Trail elder, a “reevaluation/reaffirmation” proposal was suggested by one of the other elders in about 1985, but it was rejected on grounds that there was no Scriptural authority for such a procedure!

21. We differ with the assertion that the seven men of Acts 6 were deacons: (1) These men (by Miller’s admission) were appointed before the church had any elders. It is not reasonable (not to say not Scriptural) to envision a congregation (then or now) with deacons before it has elders or without elders. (2) If these seven men were deacons in the sense of Philippians 1:1 we have two sets of qualifications for their selection, one in Acts 6:3 and another in 1 Timothy 3:8–10, 12–13. Why so and which should we now use? (3) The use of a form of the Greek word *diakonos* in reference to the “Jerusalem seven” no more implies an “official” position than when used in reference to civil rulers (Rom. 13:4, 6) or to Phoebe (Rom. 16:1). However, as Miller notes, whether or not they were deacons does not negate the fact of the selection process set forth in Acts 6:3.

22. Dub McClish, personal letter addressed to Goebel Music (May 23, 1990). We would add to this that if one is a member of a congregation in which elders begin to deviate from the Truth (whether into some form of liberalism or anti-ism), if those elders cannot be persuaded either to return to the Truth or to resign, then one should leave that congregation and seek one that is committed to the Truth.

23. Garland Elkins, personal letter addressed to Goebel Music (May 14, 1990), used by permission.

24. W. Terry Varner, personal letter addressed to Goebel Music (n.d., but received May 29, 1990), used by permission.

25. Mac Deaver, personal letter addressed to Goebel Music (May 10, 1990), used by permission.

26. Vamer, letter.

27. McClish, letter.

28. Bill Jackson, personal letter addressed to Goebel Music (May 4, 1990), used by permission.

29. Vamer, letter.

30. Cannon, p. 3.

31. Cannon, p. 2.

32. Philip C. Gould, 8-page letter to the Brown Trail elders (March 24, 1990), p. 5. Note: Brother Gould and his family are no longer members at Brown Trail.

33. Robert R. Taylor, Jr., personal letter addressed to Goebel Music (June 20, 1990), p. 2, used by permission.

34. Jackson, letter.

35. Vamer, letter.

36. Elkins, letter.

37. Deaver, letter.

38. McClish, letter.

—312 Pearl St.
Denton, TX 76201

Directory of Churches...

-Alabama-

Holly Pond-Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026. Sun. 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, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, Evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris PKWY NW Cartersville, GA 30120-4222. Tel. (770) 382-6775. E-mail: bdgayton@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Tel. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sun. 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, 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.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 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, 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. (361) 643-6571, Sun: 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Michael Wyatt, Evangelist. Email: portlandcofe@juno.com.

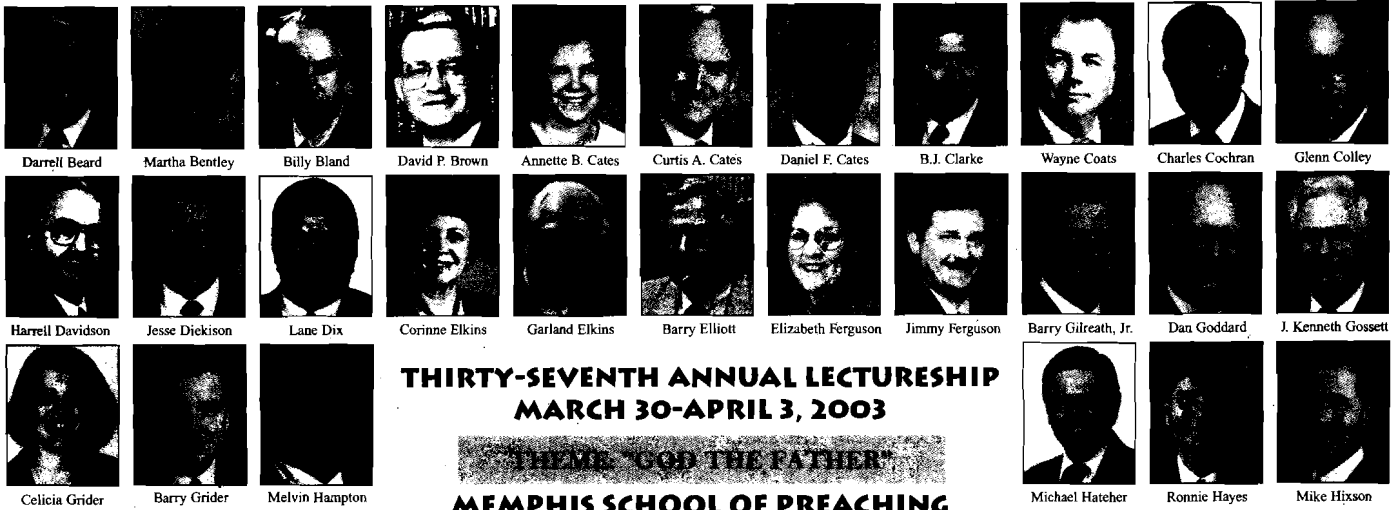
Richwood-1600 Brazosport, (979) 265-4256. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m.

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

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



Darrell Beard Martha Bentley Billy Bland David P. Brown Annette B. Cates Curtis A. Cates Daniel F. Cates B.J. Clarke Wayne Coats Charles Cochran Glenn Colley
 Harrell Davidson Jesse Dickson Lane Dix Corinne Elkins Garland Elkins Barry Elliott Elizabeth Ferguson Jimmy Ferguson Barry Gilreath, Jr. Dan Goddard J. Kenneth Gossett
 Celia Grider Barry Grider Melvin Hampton Michael Hatcher Ronnie Hayes Mike Hixson

**THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP
MARCH 30-APRIL 3, 2003**

THEME: "GOD THE FATHER"

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

3950 FOREST HILL IRENE ROAD, MEMPHIS, TN 38125-2585

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2003

9:30-10:20 A.M. Listening In The Presence Of God
 10:30-11:30 A.M. The Greatest Sermon On God-Acts 17
 6:00-7:00 P.M. The Eternal Purpose Of God
 7:00-7:45 P.M. The Heavens Declare The Glory Of God

Jerry Martin
 Barry Grider
 Paul Sain
 Curtis A. Cates

MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2003

8:30-8:50 A.M. CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium) The Peace Of God
 9:00-9:50 A.M. God The Father
 10:00-10:50 A.M. The Foreknowledge Of God
 10:00-10:50 A.M. A Practical Approach To Worshiping God (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. God Is Not Mocked
 Class 1: One Nation Under God
 Class 2: The Nature Of God
 Class 3: Can Man Know And Be Known Of God?
 Class 4: God Keeps His Promises
11:50-1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10-2:00 P.M. God's Compassion For The Afflicted And Oppressed
 Class 1: That Which God Hates
 Class 2: The "God" Of Existentialism
 Class 3: Our God Is A Sun And Shield (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M. God Is The God Of The Living
 3:10-4:00 P.M. Open Forum
4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
7:00-7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30-8:30 P.M. God So Loved The World

Matt Jaggers
 Will T. Winchester
 Dub McClish
 Corinne Elkins
 B. J. Clarke
 Sam Willcut
 Tim Rice
 Jimmy Ferguson
 Eric Owens

Harrell Davidson
 David B. Jones
 Charles Cochran
 Annette B. Cates
 Gary McDade
 Garland Elkins

Wendell Winkler

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2003

8:30-8:50 A.M. CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium) The Holiness Of God
 9:00-9:50 A.M. God Has Spoken
 10:00-10:50 A.M. Where Is Their God?
 10:00-10:50 A.M. Draw Near To God (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. God And Christian Ethics
 Class 1: God And Temptation
 Class 2: What God Has Joined Together
 Class 3: Is God Just In Punishing The Wicked?
 Class 4: The Providence Of God
11:50-1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10-2:00 P.M. God Seeks True Worshipers
 Class 1: Glorifying God
 Class 2: God, Evil And Suffering
 Class 3: God Made Them Male And Female (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M. **PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS/SUPPORTERS SEMINAR**
 2:10-3:00 P.M. The Origin Of The Idea Of God
 3:10-4:00 P.M. Open Forum
4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
7:00-7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30-8:30 P.M. God Gives Sanctity To Life

Eugene Edwards
 Keith Mosher
 Jack Openshaw
 Betty Tucker
 David Brown
 Lane Dix
 Michael Shepherd
 Mike Hixson
 Michael Hatcher

John Shannon
 Don Treadway
 Glenn Colley
 Irene Taylor
 Andy Cates
 Lennie Reagan
 Garland Elkins

James Segars

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2003

8:30-8:50 A.M. CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium) The Justice Of God
 9:00-9:50 A.M. The Angels Of God
 10:00-10:50 A.M. God Is Not Dead
 10:00-10:50 A.M. God Chose A Woman (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. Should We Seek Unto God Or Familiar Spirits?
 Class 1: The Problem Of Sin And The Process Of God's Forgiveness
 Class 2: Friendship Of The World Is Enmity With God
 Class 3: The Indwelling Of Man By God
 Class 4: Answering Charges Against God
11:50-1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10-2:00 P.M. The Oneness Holiness View Of God
 Class 1: The Names Of God
 Class 2: God In The Home
 Class 3: Learning To Trust In God (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M. God Resists The Proud And Gives Grace To The Humble
 3:10-4:00 P.M. Open Forum
4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
7:00-7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30-8:30 P.M. The Importance Of One Person To God

Bill Doyle
 Kenneth Gossett
 Wayne Coats
 Marsha Bentley
 Wayne Price
 Brad Poe
 Daniel F. Cates
 David Smith
 Brent Smith

Billy Bland
 Barry Elliott
 Dan Goddard
 Vada Rice
 Tony Lawrence
 Garland Elkins

Ronnie Hayes

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2003

8:30-8:50 A.M. CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium) The People Of God
 9:00-9:50 A.M. Is All We Do Worship To God?
 10:00-10:50 A.M. The Relationship Of The Father To The Son And Spirit
 10:00-10:50 A.M. Living Godly Lives In An Ungodly World (Women's Class)
 11:00-11:50 A.M. God, Time And Eternity
 Class 1: Walking With God
 Class 2: The Living God And The Idols Of Men
 Class 3: The Wrath Of God
 Class 4: The Secret Things Belong To God
11:50-1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10-2:00 P.M. The Grace Of God
 Class 1: Respect For God And His Name
 Class 2: God, Man And Money
 Class 3: Is There Anything God Cannot Do? (Women's Class)
 2:10-3:00 P.M. There Is One God
 3:10-4:00 P.M. Open Forum
4:00-7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
7:00-7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30-8:30 P.M. The Conclusion Of The Whole Matter

Mike Hall
 Darrell Beard
 Barry Gilreath, Jr.
 Celia Grider
 James Hudley
 Jesse Dickson
 Gary Summers
 Floyd Johnson
 Preston Silcox

Melvin Hampton
 Freddie Shows
 Robert Williams
 Elizabeth Ferguson
 Bobby Liddell
 Garland Elkins

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.



James Hudley Floyd Johnson David B. Jones Tony Lawrence Bobby Liddell Jerry Martin Dub McClish Gary McDade Keith Mosher Jack Openshaw Eric Owens
 Brad Poe Wayne Price Lennie Reagan Tim Rice Vada Rice Paul Sain James Segars John Shannon Michael Shepherd Freddie Shows Preston Silcox
 Brent Smith David Smith Gary Summers Irene Taylor Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Don Treadway Betty Tucker Sam Willcut Robert Williams Will T. Winchester Wendell Winkler

THE REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS

Gary W. Summers

In the past few months the topic of “reaffirming elders” has come to the forefront, primarily because of the problems that the Brown Trail Church has experienced. This article does not seek to attack anyone there personally. **Maxie Boren**, who preaches and works with the Brown Trail Congregation (he also writes excellent articles in *Waymarks*, their church bulletin), has been both kind and friendly to me over the years I have lived in this area. Twice I have spoken on their lectures and occasionally taught a three-hour class to the preaching students. I also spoke at the last chapel service of this year’s spring session. At that time tensions had been running high, but it was prior to the resignation of two of the elders. This article, however, is not about their internal problems per se (except as they reflect on the topic); commenting on those events would serve no useful purpose. Having been through a similar (though lesser) turmoil once, I know how emotional and intense these matters can be; it is always unfortunate when brethren begin treating each other as enemies and start doing battle against one another.

Certainly, no one should want to harm the influence of either the *Truth in Love* television show or the Brown Trail School of Preaching. But these programs do depend upon support from others, and those who contribute have a right to expect that they will continue to stand on a solid basis. The Brown Trail Congregation has now twice used what may be called a “reaffirmation” process. Maxie says they used it twelve years ago and have not repeated its use until this summer. While this information is, of course, true, there is an additional factor that those not from this area should know.

Many brethren criticized the practice the first time it was used. Brother **Dub McClish** documents some of these objections in his chapter, “Reevaluation/Reaffirmation of Elders?” in the 1997 Bellview lectureship book, *Leadership* (89-103). And for a number of years, many of us have been told, “They will never do it again.” Some members of the Brown Trail Congregation were under this impression and have given others this assurance. Many people in this area agreed with this assessment. As recently as a year before the reaffirmation was repeated, one individual was allegedly told by one of the elders (who remains) that the practice would not be repeated. So, imagine everyone’s surprise to hear that it had, in fact, occurred once more!

Now the practice is being defended, and many wonder what kind of detrimental effect this idea may have upon brethren. Before me are two documents:

The first is my transcript of an Open Forum that occurred in Longview, Texas in August of this year. The second one is a nine-page “open letter,” sent out by Maxie Boren, with the approval of the current eldership at Brown Trail. It is not our desire to accuse anyone of improper motives. The men taking this position publicly proclaim the Truth boldly in all other major areas. Our goal is to get them to reconsider this issue, or (failing that), at least try to persuade others concerning this doctrine.

THE LONGVIEW FORUM

Following is the question posed to the panelists: “Is it scriptural to have a reaffirmation of the serving elders? If it is scriptural, shouldn’t the reaffirmation use the same authority—outlined in Timothy and Titus—as when they were installed as elders, instead of popular vote? So, what about the reaffirmation of elders?”

Before we look at the answers to the question, we might point out that we do not know what the purpose of the questioner was. He (or she) may have had in mind what Brown Trail had recently done, or the inquirer may have been thinking about what some liberal congregations practice on a periodic basis (see pages 83-88 in *Leadership*). None of the answers drew any distinctions between these two possibilities.

Denny Petrillo: I’m going to answer yes to that question. I do believe that it is a process that the church can enact. It’s not that there’s a book, chapter, and verse that we can turn to because there’s not—just like there’s not as far as the installation of elders to begin with.

What is the basis for this rationale (in the second sentence)? Do we all agree that something should be done in a congregation in which an elder becomes disqualified? Yes. But how did the need to do *something* evolve into a *reaffirmation process*? What is being presented to brethren is the false dichotomy that *either* the church must have a reaffirmation process *or* we must allow disqualified men to remain in the eldership.

Those are not the only two choices; ironically, Petrillo mentions the scriptural approach when he refers briefly to I Timothy 5. This passage sets forth God’s plan for dealing with problems concerning an elder. The first two verses below supply the context, but the next two are the ones applicable to this issue.

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine. For the scripture says, “**You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,**” and, “**The laborer is worthy of his wages**” (I Timothy 5:17-18).

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except

from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest may also fear (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

What wisdom shines forth in these two verses for dealing with a charge against an elder! The first step is to ascertain that there is a genuine problem—not just the gripes of a disgruntled, unspiritual member. If the elder is guilty, he should be publicly rebuked. Then what? Presumably, he repents. But what if he refuses to humble himself? Did not the Lord already deal with that possibility? He was not specifically talking about elders, but they would certainly be included.

But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (Matthew 18:16-17).

Where, in these scriptural solutions, do we find a hint of the “reaffirmation process”? Petrillo argues:

Does the church have any kind of means at all in which to, as the body of Christ, address the problem of a man serving who is not qualified? And the reaffirmation process is one of those. It is still heavily Bible-based.... As a matter of fact, the congregation where I come from in Bear Valley recently did this: We did have a reaffirmation form based upon the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

How is “reaffirmation” Bible-based at all? And what is the authority for it—especially in light of God’s inspired word, which provides a different (and better) solution? The Bible provides no authority for “reaffirmation” every two years—or every twelve years! In fact, there is no authority to do so even once. Some brethren are beginning to equate the removal of an unqualified elder with reaffirmation, as though this unauthorized process were a viable option—as though 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:16-17 were not part of “the faith,” for which we are to contend.

Tom Gaumer agreed with these sentiments:

I thought a reaffirmation might come in handy where there’s some elders who should have never been put in in the first place. I had that experience several years ago. I was preaching on weekends for a congregation in Ohio, while I taught at Ohio Valley College (that was my regular job). And they had two elders, and the two elders were obviously not qualified for several reasons....

Maybe if we had had some kind of reaffirmation, to get the congregation to do it, that they might have become aware of the fact that these two men were not qualified. I did try to talk to both of ‘em and get them to step down, and they wouldn’t do it....

Question: if these two men were *obviously not qualified for several reasons*, why had the congregation not done something already? If the congrega-

tion was not concerned enough to take action on their own, how would a reaffirmation process have made any difference? As a preacher of the gospel, why did Tom not present a study on the qualifications of elders, after which he could have publicly rebuked the men, as Timothy was instructed to do? It appears that there were two problems here: 1) unqualified elders, and 2) members who did not care. If they would not do the right thing, as per a Biblical commandment regarding those men, why substitute that which is not authorized in its place and expect better results?

Maxie Boren was also on this panel at Longview: There are some things that are not addressed in the Bible in specific ways, and there are some things therefore left up to the realm of judgment as to how you handle a particular situation.

Brethren certainly agree; not everything is specified in the scriptures. There is a certain amount of leeway in appointing or removing an elder. But God also gave us some specifics, such as the two passages already mentioned. Some of us cannot wedge the “reaffirmation process” into those two verses or figure out in what way they would even imply one. Brother Boren provides an example of an elder disqualifying himself.

The bishop must be blameless; he must not be self-willed; he must not be soon angry, and etc. Well, what if a man, when he was selected as an elder, gave every appearance of not being a man of anger, not being a man that was contentious, and not being a man that was self-willed, but then after he was placed in the position of being an elder, he begins to manifest those characteristics. It seems to me that the passages that qualify a man to become an elder would also disqualify a man who does not live his life in keeping with those things.

We agree totally that something should be done, but such examples do not prove that the reaffirmation process is valid. First of all, his fellow elders ought to be concerned, along with the preacher and the members. Those who are in authority should publicly rebuke the man, if he refuses private exhortations. Such an action harmonizes with the scriptures. Inventing a reaffirmation process (or borrowing it from liberals) does not fit the divine plan at all. Ironically, Maxie provides an example in which precisely the right action was taken in a certain congregation (albeit several years too late):

Well, finally, finally, the brethren had enough of it. And they wrote down definite things that he had done that disqualified him, dating back twenty years. And they signed their names to it. “I saw him,” for an example (I remember one of the charges), “hand out bottles of liquor to people in the minority community to get them to vote the way he wanted them to vote.” And people signed their names to that. People heard him use God’s name in vain in conversation numbers of times, and people signed their names to these charges. Well, you don’t find anything in the New Testament about that. I don’t find anywhere, anywhere in the New Testament

where people dealt with a situation like that, but it was a bad situation. It needed to be corrected.

Yes, it did! And the course of action followed was in harmony with I Timothy 5:19-20. The evidence, which showed that he was not qualified to be an elder, was gathered against this man. This procedure lays the groundwork for rebuking him, which could not have been done without proper evidence. When the mouths of two or three witnesses have spoken, the man can then be rebuked and (if he refuses to repent) be removed from the office (work) which he has disgraced.

Gathering evidence in this manner, however, is an expedient; it is a legitimate means by which to fulfill God's command, which makes it authorized. In what possible way can a reaffirmation of all elders be considered an expedient in rebuking one who is guilty of sin? Maxie continues his defense of reaffirmation:

But when you analyze it, why would it be unscriptural to allow people to express their sentiments in regard to whether a man is qualified or not. After all, when elders were selected, people in the congregation expressed their sentiments.... And then the eldership usually has a screening committee to take the ones that are most often mentioned and have the greatest support within the congregation, and those are the names that are generally put forward.

But where do you read anything in the Bible about all of that procedure? You don't, but good judgment tells you that's probably the best way to do it....

We all know that God gave the qualifications for elders but left the procedure for selecting them up to the judgment of men. Some congregations have exercised poor judgment in the means of obtaining elders, which is not God's fault. Every man seeking the work should be evaluated by the qualifications in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. All who are qualified should be appointed elders; those who are not should not be. Most congregations ask the members: "If you know of a scriptural reason why any of these men should not be allowed to serve, please state your objection to the current elders" (or to some temporary committee if elders do not currently exist). Thus, there is a 100% approval if no damaging evidence against any of them is brought forth. All of these things fall under generic authority in the task of procuring elders. Exercising good judgment in this procedure in no way justifies the reaffirmation of elders. Brother Boren continues:

Now if the congregation was allowed to express themselves in that regard, let's just move on down the stream of time for ten years, and some of these men that were put in have proven themselves totally disqualified and are causing dissension within the body of Christ and about to divide the church, are we just going to sit by and do nothing? Or should we say to the congregation, "Examine your scriptures, and see whether these men have remained qualified." If they've disqualified themselves, please express yourselves.

If there are men in the eldership who have *proven themselves totally disqualified and are causing dissension within the body of Christ*, then why not rebuke them before all? Gather the evidence, let the congregation know, and implore them to repent. If they do not, the church should withdraw fellowship from them. How does this problem remotely relate to the idea of reevaluating all the elders in the congregation and requiring a certain percentage of the popular vote in order to remain an elder?

THE NINE-PAGE "OPEN LETTER"

Recently Pearl Street and many other congregations received a nine-page letter responding to some of the criticism Brown Trail has received in handling their recent turmoil. Maxie Boren sent out a very well written letter, dated November 20th, explaining their rationale. Once again we want to deal with the issue, and in no way do we intend our comments to be a personal attack. Neither are we taking sides in their internal controversy; we shall only (for the most part) consider the material set forth in the letter. Maxie lays the blame for these problems on Satan, and we could not agree with him more. We have all seen good works torn asunder; it is tragic to observe and painful to endure. Our prayer is that brethren can learn to disagree without forgetting that we have a divine command to love one another, as Christ has loved us (John 13:34-35). If we allow adversarial relationships to develop in a congregation (or outside, for that matter), we are only issuing an invitation for Satan to triumph. The devil, however, never makes progress without men being willing accomplices. We have no accusations to make here; each person involved will have to determine how much, if any, he did the bidding of Satan.

After describing the heart-wrenching problem that had arisen and the failure of certain attempts to resolve the situation, brother Boren writes:

Finally, with no desire at all to "take sides," but only with a strong sense of urgency to solve the problem before absolute disaster came upon us, **as a last ditch effort to salvage what had become an "impossible situation,"** I proposed to a hopelessly divided (4/3) eldership that a carefully written letter be sent to the congregation giving members an opportunity to express themselves as to which of the elders had disqualified themselves in view of I Timothy 3:1ff and Titus 1:6ff. **The reasoning was this: if in fact the members of a local congregation are asked to express themselves sin the selection process of elders, why not allow them to express themselves in an "impasse" situation like we had, on whether or not these men so appointed had disqualified themselves or not?**

This is precisely the place where the scriptures were abandoned, and we want to raise clear and loud objections to this procedure. *First* of all, this unfortunate situation was not "hopelessly divided." A 3/3 split would have been hopeless. Four elders constituted a

majority, as evidenced by the fact that the reevaluation letter was sent out on the basis of the decision of these four men. Maxie explains that none of the three (who have since left Brown Trail) signed it (although the wife of one did—with a reservation included). Why did not the four gather sufficient evidence against the three and rebuke them before the congregation, as I Timothy 5:19-20 teaches? They were in the majority.

Second, what could a “reaffirmation” form hope to accomplish? If members were not aware of the division within the eldership, how could they determine who was not qualified? If they had no evidence of disqualification, how could they remove anyone? Should they receive their information through gossip passing among the members or from a public rebuke?

If, on the other hand, members were involved in the turmoil and had taken sides, how could ANY of the men expect to be reaffirmed? The two sides would cancel each other out. But if the members already knew who was the source of the problems, then once again, why not rebuke them publicly, as the Scriptures teach?

Third, what percentage of approval did an elder need to be retained, and what percentage was grounds for disqualification? Was it not 75% and 25% (the open letter does not say)? Who selected these numbers? Do not such arbitrary figures stretch the idea of expediency? If only a few members were aware of the problems, what would happen if all three now-scripturally unqualified men (as this letter indicates—we are not taking sides) only received a 23% negative vote? Then, on the basis of a 77% majority, unqualified men, who should have been rebuked publicly, remain elders, and the turmoil continues.

Conversely, what if two of the four solid elders only received a 74% favorable vote? The possibility is that if two good elders were not reaffirmed and only one disqualified one was eliminated, there would be a two-two tie and a genuine hopeless deadlock. What if the three disqualified elders did some major politicking and all got reaffirmed while two of the others fell by the wayside? (After all, if they are *that* unscrupulous, what would prevent them from lying?) Then these men who should have been rebuked now control the eldership and the congregation by a three to two margin. The possibility for such disasters could be avoided by following the Biblical pattern.

Fourth, are the members expressing their sentiments **informed** fully before making their evaluations? Or are they operating on the basis of hearsay and rumor? If they comprehend that three men have disqualified themselves, then there is no need of reaffirmation; the four qualified elders should publicly rebuke them and call on them to repent. If the congregation is being asked to evaluate on the basis of hearsay, how **informed** would such a decision be?

Fifth, if only 1% of the congregation knows a scriptural reason why a man should not be an elder,

then he should be rebuked and removed.

Sixth, when elders are appointed, does anyone use a 75% approval rating? How can a church follow someone when 25% of the members do not think he is qualified? For that reason most congregations ask for a scriptural objection to be made known, and if none are forthcoming, the man is appointed (since there is 100% tacit approval). If the rationale for reaffirmation rests upon allowing the congregation to express their sentiments as they did when men were appointed, how can anything less than 100% approval be required this time around?

These six observations deserve a thoughtful reply and should not be dismissed with a mere wave of the hand. Only a few comments need be made on the remaining seven pages of the “open letter.” Maxie writes:

An elder can disqualify himself, just like a preacher can default and disqualify himself. When that occurs, such a “situation” must be handled. But how? The Bible does not specifically tell us how. We exercised our best collective judgment in dealing with our specific problem. The ones “from afar” who have taken pens in hand to criticize and condemn us COULD NOT POSSIBLY KNOW the “ins and outs” of our internal problem like we did. And yet they from afar have sat in judgment as if they were eye witnesses to every action, conversation, and meeting that was held to try to resolve our problems. There is a lot more in the Bible about NOT bearing false witness, NOT judging falsely, NOT having a condemning spirit, etc., than there is about HOW to solve a problem like we faced. It might be well for our self-appointed critics to consider that fact.

We have no way of knowing the amount of or kinds of criticism Brown Trail has received, and certainly our intention here is not to “pile on.” Maxie is right that few know the “ins and outs” of the situation. Hence, we have no desire to be critical or judgmental. Furthermore, we do not question anyone’s motives in saying that they thought this was the best way to resolve their problems. As we stated previously, both Maxie and Brown Trail (to our knowledge) have usually taught and stood for the truth. And we surely pray that we will not be lumped in with self-appointed critics when we object to a practice that lacks Biblical authority and which invites a multitude of problems.

In fact, brother Boren writes that Brown Trail did follow I Timothy 5:19-20 with respect to one elder:

...he had disqualified himself in the light of two scriptures...I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7...being contentious, self-willed, and soon angry, and had sinned by doing at least three of the seven things God hates, as listed in Prov. 6:16-19. Yet, he refused to resign although confronted with these facts. Thus, in keeping with I Timothy 5:19-21, he was reprovved, and removed as an elder.

We find no fault at all with this procedure, since it

follows precisely what the Bible teaches (even though no specific formula is provided). In fact, we applaud its being handled this way. But why not do it in every case? Why rebuke one man publicly but then call for a re-evaluation of all the elders in other circumstances? Would not consistency have served them better?

SUGGESTIONS

First, my fervent prayer for Maxie and the remaining elders at Brown Trail is that they reconsider the reaffirmation process. Is it an expedient that falls under I Timothy 5:19-20, or is it a different approach altogether? Is it so hard to see that gathering evidence and rebuking a disqualified elder is not at all identical to a reevaluation of the elders? Furthermore, there is no need to have a periodic reaffirmation of the elders because ANY time members of the church have a viable charge against a bishop is *exactly* the right time to take care of the situation.

Reconsider the problems that are set in motion by using percentages and being satisfied with anything less than 100% (tacit) scriptural approval. If, after a re-evaluation of the process you were willing to use, you conclude that the procedure is not in harmony with the scriptures, will you please write a statement to that effect so that brethren may know it? As mentioned previously, many of us thought you had already repudiated the practice. We would like to be sure this time whether you will continue to defend it or admit that it lacks Biblical authority. Many brethren think that a rejection of the reaffirmation process and an assurance that it will not be repeated would do much to restore your credibility and silence your critics.

Second, we call upon all brethren to think through this matter, disassociating it from the turmoil Brown Trail has experienced. The practice is not wrong because they chose to do it; neither is it correct. The reaffirmation process needs to be decided, as every practice does, on the sole basis of what the scriptures teach. Other men are defending it (as demonstrated by the Longview Forum). Is it right and defensible or wrong and therefore dispensable? For many, this is a new topic, by virtue of its not having been an issue before. Now it is, and we need to determine its soundness before it spreads to other congregations.

Denny Petrillo said that reaffirmation was recently practiced where he lives, and now we have an open letter to brethren from Brown Trail defending the concept. Now is the time to examine carefully whether or not this idea is scriptural and has merit or lacks Biblical authority and should be forsaken. **“Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil”** (I Thessalonians 5:21-22).

—312 Pearl St.
Denton, TX 76201

Preaching Christ

The
Gospel Preceptor

“Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way” (Psalms 119:104)

An Evangelistic Voice to Reach The Lost
Jerry C. Brewer, Editor & Publisher

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AN OPEN LETTER REGARDING THE TAKE OVER OF THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST

Dan Flourney

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ELDERS AT BROWN TRAIL GUY ELLIOTT, EDDIE PARKER, PHIL POPE, BOBBY WATTS

I was Minister of Education/Evangelism at Brown Trail from May 15, 2001 to Oct. 4, 2002 and Assistant Director of the Preacher Training School from June through September, 2002. I am writing this open letter because duty demands it (Romans 16:17-18). I am writing this letter because brethren who continue to support Brown Trail and her works deserve to *know the truth*. I am writing this letter to help vindicate other preachers and teachers at Brown Trail who were falsely accused. I have been falsely accused by the four remaining elders at Brown Trail. Therefore, I am writing this letter. In a letter dated December 4, 2002 they made several false charges against me. Some of these have already come back to me from brethren in churches where I might find employment. **Please see the web site www.Brown-Trail-Truth.com for a fuller treatment of the Brown Trail fiasco.**

You have wrongfully accused me of several things that I am sure you are spreading to others. Your method of operation has been to denigrate anyone who would not go along with your cover-up of **Dave Miller** and **Everett Chambers** in their treatment of students in the Preacher Training School. Therefore, I am answering your false accusations by means of this open letter.

You have accused me of opposing you behind your back. This is absolutely false. My opposition to your actions regarding the reaffirmation of the eldership, my opposition to your meeting in secret with Dave Miller and others to plan the ouster of your fellow elders was never hidden. I did nothing behind your back. I confronted you with these matters and dealt with you directly regarding them as soon as I was made aware of them. You admitted to me that you attended this meeting but continue to defend it saying, "we didn't act on anything."

You have charged that I was in alliance with those who were fomenting discord in the congregation. Your definition of sowing discord evidently is that if anyone differs with your handling of the situation he is sowing discord. When you set about to take over the eldership through secret meetings and deception, you were in alliance with those who were in fact systematically going to members of the congregation to poison their minds

against three elders with whom you disagreed. On the other hand, I was not going to the congregation at all. The brethren who left Brown Trail did so after seeing your conduct. A few (less than a dozen) came to me for information regarding the process of reaffirmation and to ask about what was going on in the PTS. I told them the truth. Yet, you labeled me a "trouble maker."

Your preacher, **Maxie Boren** pleads your case in his nine-page letter of November 20, 2002 saying, "What else could we do?" and "We did the best that we could." He makes no mention of Dave's secret meeting and your conspiracy to get rid of three elders who were trying to get Dave to repent. What else could we do? Why not call the entire congregation together and let each side state their case? Why call for a reaffirmation of the elders and then tamper with the "jury" secretly? Maxie would have the brotherhood believe that this was just an internal matter regarding a divided eldership and therefore nobody's business. Well, brethren who contribute thousands of dollars to Brown Trail projects deserve to know that the leaders have underhandedly usurped the authority of the eldership. The elders who were forced out in such an ungodly fashion were men who were trying to correct sin in the camp.

You have said that you kept me on full salary because you did not want to hurt me and have indicated that my receiving a salary while in opposition to you is dishonest. Well, this is plainly not true. The Sunday the four of you went forward to "confess," you called me in to ask if I was "on board" and "are you happy?" I told you at that time that I heard nothing about your being sorry for allowing Dave Miller to bring division into the congregation by way of a secret meeting with over thirty men of the congregation. You did not admit to the congregation nor apologize for attending this meeting. Again, I told you that as an eldership, you needed to rebuke Dave for calling a meeting to orchestrate the overthrow of three elders. Dave had already resigned and had no further business with the Brown Trail congregation. Yet, you sanctioned this meeting by your attendance. When will you go before the congregation and tell them the truth?

You accuse me of being dishonest for taking my salary while disagreeing with you. You say that I was "biting the hand that was feeding me." Was Dave Miller dishonest for taking a salary while in open rebellion to directives given him by his elders? I did not speak out publicly against the elders but Dave did in chapel and in class. Was he biting the hand that was feeding him? Dave whined in his letter of resignation that he was mistreated by the elders and then continued to draw a salary through May, June and July. Was he dishonest? It seems to me you have a double standard.

You complain that my article on the website is designed to do harm to Brown Trail. However, the harm has been done by you four elders along with Maxie Boren, Dave Miller and Everett Chambers. My reporting the facts of your conduct is no more the problem than Elijah rebuking Ahab for his conduct. Ahab said to Elijah, "Is that you, Oh troubler of Israel?" (I Kings 18:17). So you spread the word that I am a troublemaker. But who really caused the trouble at Brown Trail? You, who met in secret to plot an overthrow of three elders are the trouble-makers!

My article only gave the facts of what you did by meeting in secret. The Psalmist has well spoken of your evil plotting:

Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked...they talk of laying snares secretly...they devise iniquities: 'we have perfected a shrewd scheme.' But God shall shoot at them with an arrow. Suddenly they shall be wounded. So he will make them stumble over their own tongue... (Psalm 64).

Did Paul hurt or help the church at Corinth or the churches of Galatia (4:16) by relating to them their sins? Harm to the church comes from false brethren, not from those who expose their error! Paul's rebuke of sin was not to harm but to help. On the other hand, Maxie continues to send your propaganda everywhere in an attempt to continue the cover-up of Dave and Everett as well as **your conspiracy** to usurp the eldership at Brown Trail. My article is on the Internet for those who want to know the truth.

You four men with Maxie's help have taken over the leadership at Brown Trail. Many members left because of what you did. (According to Maxie's "Open Letter" of November 20, 2002, relatively few left, so what are you complaining about?) Those who left did not leave because of anything I said or what appeared on the website long after the events took place. I did nothing dishonest. I was open with you regarding my opposition. I did not go among the congregation to promote my views as you did. I met with no one in secret to plot your overthrow. In fact, I did additional work for the PTS for which I was not paid.

You have said that I need to come before the congregation and repent because I opposed you. Again, you

continue to have a double standard. Dave Miller, on more than one occasion, spoke against the "evil elders" to the PTS students. Was he undermining the elders? Was he sowing discord? Does he need to come before the Brown Trail congregation to confess what he did and repent? For years, Maxie has taken individuals aside to warn them about Bobby Watts being a dictator among the elders and running the show at Brown Trail. Was he undermining the elders or sowing discord? Does he need to come before the congregation and repent? Brethren, a double standard is nothing more than hypocrisy!

Bobby Watts assured me, before I came to work at Brown Trail, that the reaffirmation of elders would never again be practiced at Brown Trail. Did he lie to me in breaking this pledge? I left a productive and peaceful work to come to Brown Trail based on such affirmations—another double standard.

Brethren, **YOU** four elders with the help of your preacher, Maxie Boren created the division at Brown Trail. **YOU** have usurped the leadership of the church and **YOU** continue to blame others for the resulting division. **YOU** want to uphold Dave and Everett in their treatment of the students in the PTS. You say that anyone who disagrees with you is sowing discord. You threw brother **James L. French** out of the eldership falsely accusing him of sowing discord but it is **YOU** who were sowing the discord! **YOU** have sinned and **YOU** are the ones who need to repent before the Brown Trail congregation. My prayer is that you will do so before it is eternally too late.

In Christ,
Dan Flournoy
1/10/03

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RESPONSE TO OPEN LETTER OF MAXIE BOREN

Marvin L. Weir

On November 20, 2002 the preacher of the Brown Trail church of Christ, **Maxie Boren**, sent an open letter to numerous congregations in response to alleged "rumors" being circulated about the congregation. Several pages of the letter are devoted to rebuking me and criticizing my article in the October, 2002 *Gospel Journal* (hereafter, *TGJ*) entitled "Change Agents And Leadership." Maxie states that brethren "took pens in hand, stood in judgment from afar, and commenced to condemn us based on 'what they had heard.'" The *American Heritage Dictionary* (hereafter, dictionary) defines a rumor as "unverified information of uncertain origin usually spread by word of mouth; hearsay. The only thing that *TGJ* article under attack contains about Brown Trail is their utilization of an unscriptural elder "reaffirmation/reevaluation" process. Brethren, how can what I charged Brown Trail with be rumor when Maxie in his letter admits that the process was used "in 1990" and in "June/July 2002" (pp. 3, 4).

A ROSE BY ANOTHER NAME

Maxie may counter, as others have done, that they have not practiced elder "reaffirmation/reevaluation" because they do not call it that. In a letter dated August 14, 2002 I asked the *BT* elders if it was true that they had just recently utilized the "reaffirmation/reevaluation" process. **Eddy Parker** replied for the elders in a letter dated September 20, 2002 and stated, "But first of all, let us clarify one thing: at no time did WE ever refer to what we did as a 'reaffirmation' or 'reevaluation of elders,' or a vote." On April 8, 1990 **Dave Miller** in advocating the "reaffirmation" process in his sermon, said, "We may use the term evaluation of elders, we may use the term reconfirmation, if those terms concern you, then call it something else..." (4-8-90 sermon at Brown Trail). Brethren, the old adage aptly depicts the attempted "cover-up" at Brown Trail - "A rose by any other name is still a rose."

LABELING FACTS AS "INSINUATIONS"

The first thing that the letter accuses me of being wrong about is "[insinuating] that Brown Trail has adopted the 'reaffirming' of elders process of the 'change agents'" (p. 3, #1). One who reads the article in question will quickly note that I did not "insinuate" any such thing; I forthrightly stated the fact that Brown

Trail has "repeatedly used the elder 'reaffirmation/reevaluation' practice" of the change agents. Remember, Maxie has admitted that the "process" was used twice at Brown Trail. Upon what basis, then, can Maxie say that my statement "suggests to the brotherhood that we are imbibing the 'change agent' movement, **which is absurd!**" No, Maxie, what is absurd is that you expect faithful brethren to play "make believe" that Brown Trail did not practice this "change agent" practice on two occasions. Again, by your own admission, the brethren were asked "to express themselves" (the "reaffirmation" process as I'll prove later) "in 1990" and "June/July of 2002."

ESTABLISHING WHERE THE "DARK CLOUD" ORIGINATED

Maxie's public letter next accuses me of making an ill-informed, absolutely false assertion: 'Supporters have a right to know that they have repeatedly used the elder reaffirmation/reevaluation practice'. Dear brother Weir, that is just plain NOT true! You make it sound like every year or two we 'reaffirm/reevaluate' elders. That is not the case at all. Wherefore, I ask, what motivated you to make such a false charge? Why do you seek to cast a dark cloud over a faithful sister congregation (p. 3, #2)?

First, I submit that I did not make a false accusation against Brown Trail as Maxie has alleged. My accuser even admits in the next sentence of his letter that they have used this process "on two occasions, under extreme conditions in each case..." Maxie takes exception to the word "repeatedly" which the dictionary defines as meaning "more than once; again and again." The "reaffirmation/reevaluation" process was used at Brown Trail "more than once," and *TGJ* article in question will prove that I was not "implying" that they use this process "every year or two" as Maxie alleges. In the same paragraph of *TGJ* article where the word "repeatedly" was used, I noted that on April 8, 1990 Dave Miller advocated this process. Three sentences later I said, "However, it was recently repeated at Brown Trail, even though some of the Brown Trail elders objected to it." Maxie, the truth is that nowhere in my article did I say or imply that Brown Trail was using the "reaffirmation/reevaluation" practice every year or two.

Neither did *TGJ* article state or imply that Brown

Trail was a "change-agent" church. The article forthrightly stated, "The practice of "reaffirming" elders was begun several years ago by change agents. Unfortunately, this unscriptural process has been **adopted by some whom we would not number with them**" (emph. MLW).

Thus, I deny that I have done as Maxie accuses—something "unfair, uncalled for, and very wrong!" Neither is it I who have "cast a dark cloud over a faithful sister congregation." Maxie, the "dark cloud" hovering over Brown Trail comes from within and not from without! It is a "cloud" that will continue to be observed by faithful brethren as long as "change agent tactics" such as the "reaffirmation" process are used by Brown Trail to remove existing elders who do not obtain a 75% approval rating from the congregation.

THE "WOW" STATEMENT EXAMINED

The first full paragraph on page 4 of Maxie's letter indicts me of maintaining a double standard. He says:

It is interesting to note this statement by brother Weir in the article he wrote under examination, on page 26 of *The Gospel Journal*, Oct., '02: "The same people that select one to serve as an elder because he is Scripturally qualified (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11) can also reject that one because he no longer meets the scriptural qualifications. Existing elders can and should reject a fellow elder who is no longer qualified to serve." WOW! And AMEN! Why then, Marvin, do you condemn us for doing what you indicate we had the right to do? We did exactly what you approved in that statement. The majority of our elders approved and facilitated the action I had suggested, allowing the congregation to express itself.

What Maxie fostered off on the congregation (he admits facilitating "the action") is not even a 32nd cousin to my statement! I said that "the same people that select one to serve as an elder because he is scripturally qualified (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11) can also reject that one **because he no longer meets the scriptural qualifications**" (emph. MLW). What is really **interesting** is that Maxie conveniently left out the two sentences that follow the above quote. I concluded that paragraph, saying, "The 'reaffirmation' process, however, is **not** based upon **scriptural** objections. The 'I feel that one is doing a bad or good job' is totally subjective." Maxie says that they "did exactly what [I] approved in that statement." Thus let us continue our study to see if what I said and what they did are one and the same.

A VALID OBJECTION VERSUS AN EXPRESSED SENTIMENT

The following are excerpts from the letter and forms sent by the elders to members at Brown Trail. All of the elders were not in agreement with this process and some did not sign the letter. All bold emphasis

in the following quotes are mine:

We WANT and NEED to know your feelings in regard to each one of us so each elder may consider your **sentiments** and determine whether he should continue to serve as one of your elders or not (emph. MLW in these quotes).

Please pray about this matter, and fill out the attached evaluation sheet with your honest and **objective sentiments** as soon as possible, and sign it.

Each one of us has agreed to abide by the **sentiments** of the congregation as to whether he will continue to serve as an elder, or resign (some did not agree because they did not sign the letter, MLW).

IMPORTANT—The elders will NOT see the returned "sentiment" sheets, so your **sentiments** and any comments you make will **NOT be seen by them**. Only the tallied results will be given to them.

MY SINCERE AND HUMBLE SENTIMENTS CONCERNING THE SEVEN ELDERS OF THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The following is a sample of the form to be checked for each elder:

[Please check the blank space that expresses your sentiments]

_____ : (1) In my considered judgment, I **think** _____ has done a good job, serving as an elder and would like for him to continue to serve _____. (2) In my considered judgment, I **feel** it would be in the best interest of the congregation for _____ to resign as an elder _____. In brief fashion, the following is why I **feel** the way I do:

The dictionary defines "sentiment" as "a cast of mind; general mental disposition or an opinion about a specific matter, a view. A thought, a view, or an attitude based on feeling or emotion instead of reason." The word "opinion" is given as a synonym and it means "a belief or conclusion held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof." Brethren, not one single time in the letter or the forms were the members at Brown Trail admonished to make sure they submitted **only** scriptural objections to the men serving as elders! There is absolutely no Bible authority for a "sentiment sheet" being used for the purpose removing certain elders that **some** members **feel** should not be serving. I still stand by the statement I made in *TGJ* article.

One valid objection disqualifies a man from serving as an elder. However, where is the scripture or wisdom that necessitates that an elder who has been selected by the congregation and who meets the Holy Spirit's qualifications can/must be periodically 'reaffirmed'?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

If scriptural objections are being voiced against

certain elders, why would it require 26% of those objecting to disqualify the man from serving? Is not one scriptural objection sufficient to disqualify one serving as an elder? Let me pose another question for consideration. Can one who is scripturally unqualified to serve as an elder continue to serve if he receives 75% of the member's support? Brethren, the arbitrary percentages listed above do not come from the Bible, but from Maxie who takes the credit for suggesting this course of action to the elders so that the congregation could "express itself" (p. 4).

A SCRIPTURAL REMEDY IS POSSIBLE

Maxie seeks to convince the brethren that there are no "explicit instructions given as to how to remedy a 'problem of magnitude' like Satan had managed to create at Brown Trail." He says that they "do not subscribe to the concept of 'once an elder always an elder,'" and neither do I. An elder can disqualify himself. One who no longer meets the qualifications of an elder should not continue to serve in that capacity. What if one is guilty of sin and refuses to repent? The apostle Paul says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (I Timothy 5:19-20). If one who is guilty of sin refuses to repent, he must be marked and withdrawn from (Romans 16:17-18; II Thessalonians 3:6).

If scriptural objections are set forth against an elder, is the elder not entitled to see them? Is an elder entitled to face the one who has accused him of sin? Such was surely not the case as the "sentiment sheets" were distributed, tallied, destroyed, and the elders informed whether or not they had garnered enough votes to remain in office!

If elders cannot work together they may all choose to resign. The congregation can then seek out men to serve as qualified elders. It is a fact that just last summer at Brown Trail all but two of the elders resigned. I know that on July 14, 2002 (audio tape) that Maxie pleads with the congregation to "receive what he [Bobby Watts] has to say in a very positive manner, and I hope and pray you will respond positively to the requests that he makes." Bobby then reminds the congregation that he and Phil Pope had recently resigned as elders. Then Bobby says, "We later were told that the remaining eldership [Guy Elliott and Eddie Parker] did not accept this, along with Maxie, and ask us to remain as elders here." Brethren, by what Biblical principal were their resignations "refused" and then "rescinded"?

In seeking to be accurate about what occurred, let me add that Bobby Watts did ask those in the congregation who agreed to their "reinstatement" as el-

ders to stand. I am told by those who were in attendance that a good number of brethren did indeed stand. The previous Wednesday, however, after certain information was made available to the congregation, those present were asked to stand if they thought all the elders should resign. It is then that Phil Pope says, "That's a pretty good number." Why mention these things? I believe they show that the "jury" was indeed tampered with throughout the entire process (as stated in Dan Flournoy's article entitled "*The Necessity of Exposing Error*"). Those in attendance on Sunday, July 14 were not privileged to hear the information heard by those who were present on Wednesday, July 10. Unless there is a "secret agenda," why not abide by the decision of those who stood on July 10? Keep in mind that four elders did resign at Brown Trail. Why not make a plea to the congregation in behalf of all the elders who resigned? Maxie and the existing elders accept two resignations, and then Maxie and the existing elders reject two resignations. Does this not suggest that certain men were wanted "out" of the eldership and certain men were wanted "in" the eldership?

As the saying goes, "the proof is in the pudding." The entire eldership of seven elders was still intact when about thirty people including only four of the seven elders were invited to a secret meeting that was called by Dave Miller. When questioned about the meeting the four elders replied that they did not "act on anything discussed at the meeting." But one who was in attendance at this meeting has now come forward and stated that the meeting was for the purpose of discussing how to remove the three elders who were not invited to the meeting. At least some if not all the elders who attended this meeting have now confirmed that this was the purpose of the meeting. Thus, the more one digs the clearer it becomes that the elder "reaffirmation/reevaluation" process and all that accompanied it was for the purpose of removing three of the elders from the eldership at Brown Trail. Since when is "politicizing" a scriptural approach to appointing an elder or removing an elder?

MY "FRUIT"

Maxie states that "a sister congregation" dropped their support to "The Truth In Love" TV program because they read my article in *TJG*. He then says, "That is unfair, uncalled for, and very wrong! Do you think the Lord is pleased with your 'fruit' (John 15:8) in this, Marvin" (p. 3)? Maxie, I simply exposed and stated my opposition to the "fruit" (elder reaffirmation process) coming forth from Brown Trail. The elder "reaffirmation/reevaluation" practice that is lacking in Bible authority was implemented and used at Brown Trail. Is it wrong to be opposed to that for which there is no Bible authority? Evidently, the sister congregation believes the process that was employed in this matter to be

wrong or they would not have ceased their support.

There is no joy in writing this article or *TGJ* article of last October. I have no animosity toward Maxie Boren, Dave Miller, the elders, or Brown Trail congregation. Neither have I quickly reacted to what some will continue to call “hearsay” and “rumor.” There is ample “proof” i.e., written, audio, and oral [witnesses] for what I have stated. One’s first allegiance is to the Lord and his cause (Matthew 6:33). Thus, I continue to stand opposed to the unscriptural change agent tactic of “elder reaffirmation/reevaluation” (or whatever name they choose to call it) that was recently used a second time at Brown Trail. My prayer is those guilty of wrong-doing will repent and make proper restitution so that the cause of Christ will not continue to be thwarted.

Again, I say that the influence of the Brown Trail

congregation is far reaching through the school of preaching and *The Truth In Love* television program. Brethren who support the school have a right to know what is taught and practiced in the congregation, the TV program, and in the school of preaching. They also have the right and responsibility to reject any teaching or practice that is unscriptural.

This article would have never been written were it not for the “open letter” that Maxie sent to numerous congregations charging me with “false assertion[s],” “false charge[s],” and implying that I have “a condemning spirit” (p. 3). I will let the facts determine what the truth is in these matters.

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MY RESPONSE

Dub Mowery

In April 2002, a fellow gospel preacher posted some inquiries on an online Internet discussion list made-up primarily of members of the body of Christ. One of the inquiries was concerning the soundness of brother **Dave Miller**. This brother spoke of Dave as being formerly of the Brown Trail School of Preaching. He wanted information as to whether or not brother Miller had taken the position that mechanical instruments of music were acceptable in the worship service. A few weeks prior to that post on the Internet, brother Miller had spoken at Oklahoma City and Glenpool, Oklahoma against such innovations. Being present on those two occasions and having brother Miller’s book *Piloting the Strait*, I found it hard to believe such a rumor to be true. In contacting Brown Trail last April, I was assured by a secretary that brother Miller remained the director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching. In fact, brother Miller assured me, at that time, that he continued to be a member of the Brown Trail congregation and the director of their school of preaching. He indicated puzzlement that anyone would accuse him of upholding the use of mechanical instruments of music in a worship service.

In the weeks to follow several rumors about brother Miller and Brown Trail continued to surface. In corresponding with Dave by e-mail, he denied the various accusations against him. With his permission, I posted to the Internet his own explanation of the events

at Brown Trail and his denial of the various rumors against him and Brown Trail. In hoping to obtain the truth concerning these rumors, I arranged to meet with brother Miller at his office on the Wednesday morning of July 17, 2002. I arrived early for the meeting at the Brown Trail church building. Brother **Maxie Boren** invited me into his office. Brother Boren then went into detail about the circumstances involving the Brown Trail congregation. After about thirty minutes, brother Miller joined us in Maxie’s office. Our discussion was for approximately two hours. In it Maxie continued relating the problems effecting Brown Trail. Dave would make brief comments during this time. Toward the close of the meeting, I asked the two of them questions about the various things that had been discussed. I was especially concerned about the congregation using the process of reaffirmation/reevaluation of their elders. Maxie and Dave upheld the use of reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders. In fact, Maxie acknowledged that he had initiated its use by that congregation.

In brother Boren’s November 20, 2002 “open letter” He denied that he and Dave upheld the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders. He said:

That is just plain NOT true! What we did defend was the right of a congregation to try to solve an extremely complex and difficult internal problem, in the light of Scripture as best it can. There is a very BIG difference between Dub Mowery’s charge and the facts!

(Bolded and underlined by brother Boren).

He further quotes me as follows: **“I pleaded with those two brethren to use their influence to stop that process at Brown Trial”** (Bolded by brother Boren). He responded in his “open letter” with, “That statement is ludicrous. How can you stop a process that had already been implemented, and that **brother Mowery knew had been implemented?**” (Bolded by brother Boren).

There are two observations I will make about brother Boren’s statements. *First*, he admits the congregation was using the process that he denied they were using and that he and Dave defended in our July 2002 meeting. *Second*, by “implemented” does he mean the process was already completed or that it was in the process of being carried out? At the time I met with brethren Boren and Miller, it was my impression that the reaffirmation/reevaluation procedure was still in progress.

Concerning the various rumors and accusations made against Dave Miller and the Brown Trial congregation, I was not able to determine what was true, what

was exaggerated, and what was false. With Dave’s permission, I posted his own explanation of these matters on the previously mentioned Internet list. This included his defense of the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders.

Brother Boren stated in reference to Brown Trail’s use of that process, **“We believe that our action in the matter falls into the realm of “opinion/judgment/expense”** (Bolded by brother Boren). It seems to me that Maxie is defending the use of the reaffirmation/reevaluation process. No, Maxie, I am not the authority in these matters. We obtain our authority from the inspired word of God. I challenge you to find the authority in the scriptures for the process of reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders.

I have attended several of the Fort Worth Lectureships hosted by Brown Trail. Several of its lectureship books are in my library. That congregation has been known in the past as a very sound congregation. It is my prayer that those brethren will refrain from using the unscriptural process of reaffirmation/reevaluation of their eldership.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

SHOWTIME IN WESTERN OKLAHOMA!

Jerry C. Brewer

The Clinton, Oklahoma Church of Christ stepped right into postmodern sectarianism with its religious burlesque production on November 17, 2002 at the Tornado Dome, Clinton High School's basketball gymnasium. The show was explained in the following announcement mailed to area churches:

Clinton Church of Christ - Presents Acappella Ministries Inc. "Vocal Union" In Concert Sunday, Nov. 17, 2002. Accappella (sic) Ministries Inc. of Paris, TN along with the Clinton church of Christ is happy to present the seven man, all-vocal, contemporary Southern Gospel ensemble, The Vocal Union in Concert (sic). Along with Acappella, Keith Lancaster, and The Fireman, The Vocal Union rounds out Acappella Ministries roster of professional artists. Calling on years of singing, song writing, and recording experience, as well as rich gospel heritage, VU's members bring acapella (sic) expertise, moving enthusiasm, and good old fashioned carisma (sic) to every performance. The Vocal Union represents a kind of music that reaches people of all ages. Together with Vocal Union we want the lost to hear the Good News about Jesus Christ and the faithful to be uplifted in their walk with him. Go into all the world... Clinton church of Christ Youth (Brent Evans-Associate Minister, Clinton church of Christ, 2601 Custer Ave. Clinton, Oklahoma).

If "years of singing, song writing, recording experience," an "undefined rich gospel heritage," "acappella expertise," "moving enthusiasm," and "good old fashioned charisma" will save souls, then one wonders where the gospel of Christ fits in. Paul said God

chose the foolishness of preaching to save men (I Corinthians 1:21) not the glitter and glitz of charismatic showbiz. God's power to save is in the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17), not in the Nashville "recording experience."

At the bottom of the flyer advertising the show was listed 15 local businesses, above which is a line that says, "Sponsored by the following business owners and many other generous contributors from the Clinton church of Christ." This shameless recruiting of sponsorship from local businesses makes a beggar of the church and casts the bride of Christ into the same muck and mire as the Knights of Columbus' Casino Nights, Methodist Bazaars and Baptist car washes and carnivals.

The very idea that modern "Southern Gospel" music can save souls is Biblical ignorance at best and blasphemous at worst. The Lord's injunction to "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15) is rejected by these religious vaudevillians who have changed it to read, "Go ye into all the world and sing and act and call it 'the Good News about Jesus Christ.'" There is not a breath of a hint of authority in all of the New Testament for the church to provide entertainment of this kind. If this concert is "worship," it is unauthorized worship and if it is entertainment, it is a transgression of God's law because the church was never authorized to "entertain."

Elders, preachers and "youth ministers" seem to think they have discovered something new in drama

(Continued on Page 6)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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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.

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

AN EXPLANATION

As many of you know many names on the address labels of the January issue of *Contending for the Faith* were altered. No, we really were not trying to rename any of you. And, I do not think terrorists sabotaged our address database. It seems that the fault was in the software we use for our address labels. There was a glitch of some kind in the emailing of the addresses from the computer containing the CFTF address database to the mailer who takes care of all our needs in that area. In some way the software pulled names from some addresses and put them with the last name and addresses of others. How it happened I surely do not know. This is the first time this has happened. I only hope it does not happen again, but with computers who knows one way or the other. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused you. We deeply appreciate our readers and your support for our efforts in *Contending for the Faith*.

—Editor

Editorial...

JESUS DEALS WITH REBELLIOUS FALSE TEACHERS

I wish that people could understand the simple fact that false doctrine does not travel on the wind; it does not come through the heating or air conditioning ducts; it is not contagious as is measles, and mosquitoes do not carry it. Just as surely as the gospel (the truth, the word of God, the Faith), when believed and practiced by people changes their lives for the better, then people are changed for the worse when they believe and practice false doctrine (Romans 1:16, John 8:31, 32; Ephesians 6:17, Jude 3; II Corinthians 11:14-15).

SOME BODY'S LOVED ONE OR FRIEND IS A FALSE TEACHER

Does the Bible teach itself and does false doctrine propagate itself? Indeed not. Human beings teach truth or they spread error. Someone's son, daughter, wife, husband, mother, father, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandma, grandpa, cousin and/or friend teaches truth or they teach error. Friendly, likeable, and kind people teach truth or error. Grouchy, cantankerous, and grumbling people teach truth or error. The educated, uneducated, rich, poor, and middle classes teach the truth or they teach error. Different races teach either the truth or error. If you believe and practice the truth or you believe and practice error, some person(s)

taught you what you believe and to do one or the other. And, if you have believed false teaching pertaining to salvation and die in that condition you will lose your soul in a devil's hell (Galatians 1:6-10). Therefore, because persons of every description teach error, our Lord delivered broadside after broadside of withering fire against rebellious false teachers. He did this because he loves the souls of men and does not desire their eternal destruction (John 3:16). Jesus wants all persons to come to the truth, believe it, obey it, and always abide in it (II Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:10-12; Matthew 18:11; II John 4, 8-11). Indeed, as our Lord said, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4; Also see II Peter 2:1-3).

JESUS'S WITHERING REBUKE AND DENUNCIATION OF FALSE TEACHERS

Matthew chapter 23 is a good passage to study in order to see how Jesus dealt with, what he said to, and the labels he placed on rebellious false teachers. We do not see Jesus as the Lamb of God in Matthew chapter 24:13ff. On the contrary, we see the Lion of the tribe of Judah confronting, dealing with, and condemning rebellious false teachers.

Please notice that I am not necessarily discussing those persons in error, who are honest and teachable, and thus, when taught the truth will change their ways to comply with the Lord's demands. (Although some times they were sharply rebuked—Matthew 16:21-23; Acts 8:18-24; Galatians 2:11; Titus 2:13.) In this article I am dealing with those who are best described by Paul in I Timothy 4:1-3. Let us notice how Christ dealt with them.

In Matthew 23 our Lord was bold, candid, frank, sharp, and easily understood by those whom he addressed (I Corinthians 2:1; II Corinthians 3:12; Titus 2:8). Christ pronounced a "woe" upon these wicked men. To pronounce a "woe" on someone is to denounce that person. Who were these to whom he spoke? They were the scribes and Pharisees.

1. In truth Jesus labeled them hypocrites, for they pretended to be righteous when they knew they were not anything of the kind (verse 13). By their doctrine they prohibited others from serving God. Moreover, they were proud and arrogant (verse 14). By their tireless efforts they made children of hell, not children of God (verse 15).

2. He told them they were "blind guides" and "fools" (verses 16-22). They took oaths that allowed them to rationalize their violation of what they considered to be lesser oaths. They made distinctions in their teaching regarding oaths that God did not make. They

In This Issue..

It's Showtime In Western Oklahoma! Jerry Brewer	1
<i>Editorial...</i> Jesus Deals With Rebellious False Teachers	2
<i>Assistant Editorial...</i> ACU Allows Denominational Preachers to "Recruit" Students Into His Ministry	4
Messenger Shooting, Summer Soldiers, and Sunshine Patriots Brandon Renfroe	7
<i>Current Events that Concern Christians...</i> Cloning Jerry Murrell	8
<i>Sermon Outlines...</i> Namaan the Leper (II Kings 5:1-14) Tom Moore	10
<i>Restoration Reflections...</i> Bellview Church of Christ, Christianity in Action Paul Vaughn	12
<i>One Woman's Perspective...</i> Untempered Clay Annette Cates	14
Feel Led of God? Wayne Price	15
<i>The Last Word...</i> An Open Door Kent Bailey	16
Index 2002	17

had no genuine respect for God or his word. Thereby they violated God's word. Hence, by their bad examples they led the people into the same pit of hell away from which they claimed to be leading them. They were the what they were because they wanted to be that way.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words has this to say about the Greek word "moros" translated fool in verse 17. Vine stated it: primarily denotes dull, sluggish (from a root *muh*, to be silly); hence, stupid, foolish; it is used (*a*) of persons, Matthew 5:22, "Thou fool;" here the word means morally worthless, a scoundrel, a more serious reproach than "Raca;" the latter scorns a man's mind and calls him stupid; *moros* scorns his heart and character; hence the Lord's more severe condemnation; (p. 114).

3. They were "hobby Riders" that neglected the "weightier" matters of the Law (verse 23). As they tithed their "mint and anise and cumin," that the Lord

says was right for them to do, they neglected “law, judgment, mercy, and faith.” They majored in minors. The source of all their knowledge of their service to God was Moses’ Law. But they ignored it. Thus, they did not have the proper standard on and by which to make proper judgments. Therefore, their faith could not be correct (Romans 10:17; II Corinthians 5:7). And, since they were hypocrites to begin with, exhibiting mercy was very far down on their list (if on it at all) of things to be and do.

4. The scribes and Pharisees were so corrupt in their minds and governed by their traditions that they choked on the smallest matters, but swallowed with ease the things of which they should have found to be more difficult to administer and practice. These comments are in the same context of verse 23.

5. Jesus told these people that they were corrupt on the inside though they appeared to men pure on the outside (verses 24-28). They did not have a good and honest heart (Luke 8:15).

6. They were called a generation of vipers—a nest of snakes (verse 33). The serpent has always stood for evil and the father of it (Revelation 12:9; 20:2). These men were religious leaders, but wicked to the core of their being. Jesus had said to them:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the begin-

ning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

7. Jesus graphically pointed out to the scribes and Pharisees that they had continued to walk in the wicked paths of their sinful forefathers. As their fathers had killed the faithful prophets of God of long days gone by, so they, though they declared to the contrary, were “**partakers with them in the blood of the prophets**” (verse 30). These were destined for the “**damnation of hell**” (verse 33). Thus, our Lord declares the eternal and final end of all rebellious false teachers. As John declared, all liars (and that is what a false prophet is) “**shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death**” (Revelation 21:8).

CONCLUSION

Let us take to heart what our Lord said to these rebellious false teachers—religious leaders of their day. Let us determine to follow the truth in all things that we may be well pleasing to our Lord and not suffer the eternal death reserved for all those who love and make a lie (John 8:31, 32; I John 1:7, 8; 17:17; I Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10; Revelation 22:15)

—David P. Brown, *Editor*

Assistant Editorial...

ACU Allows Denominational Preacher to “Recruit” Students Into His Ministry

Michael Light

“**Esterine Bernard** was so inspired by **Tony Campolo**’s speech that she rushed to the front of Moody Coliseum to volunteer to join his team Monday morning.” These were the words of the first paragraph in a recent article in the *Abilene Reporter News* (Abilene Texas). The idea of a speaker inspiring students at our Christian colleges to seek opportunities to serve in the work of the church is not shocking, in fact such should be expected. What is shocking about the event herein under discussion is that the speaker himself was not a Christian.

WHO WAS THE SPEAKER?

Tony Campolo is a denominationalist. He is reported as being the founder of Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education. Dr. Campolo is a professor emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University in St. David’s Pennsylvania. He is an ordained minister having served American Baptist churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He is currently an associate pastor at Mt. Carmel Baptist church in West Philadelphia.

Eastern University is a Baptist school. The school

actually has some fairly conservative positions that are set forth in their doctrinal statement section. But, notice the second section of their “doctrinal statement” area on their website.

SECTION II

Every member of the Board of Trustees, every administrative officer of the institution, professor, teacher, and instructor shall annually subscribe over his or her signature to the foregoing Doctrinal Basis, excepting only that a non-Baptist individual occupying any of the foregoing positions shall not be required to subscribe to that part of the Doctrinal Statement regarding the mode of water baptism and to the definition of the New Testament church, as stated in subparagraph J of Section 1.

How is that for a “doctrinal statement?” It is required that all of the staff agree with the statement, unless they do not. More could be made of this, but the point is that a denominational preacher was brought in and allowed to recruit ACU students into his “denominational ministry.”

Campolo also works with a “ministry” known as Compassion. To read more information about him and these two ministries simply go to the internet and search—Tony Campolo.

ACU DID WHAT?

According to the newspaper report, Dr. Campolo spoke at the Abilene Christian University’s chapel service. I guess we should not be surprised, but as a member of the church in West Texas I am always concerned when ACU endorses denominationalism in some public arena (like the newspaper). In fact, the headline was, “Evangelist finds recruits during speech at ACU.”

The conclusion of the speech included an appeal or invitation from this Baptist missionary to the students to join his ministry for a year. I am sure the parents of the students who have been sent to Abilene for a Christian education, will be pleased to learn that the high tuition rates they pay are being rewarded by turning the sheep (their children) over to the wolves (non-Christian—denominational—preachers).

Unfortunately, Abilene Christian continues to race headlong into the abyss of ecumenical denominationalism. Why some members of the Lord’s church continue to defend this university is beyond me. If their goal is to lead the church into denominationalism

what could they do that they have not already done? Since when, is a Christian college encouraging its students to join a denominational “ministry,” acceptable? The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul stated, “**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them**” (Ephesians 5:11).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I know that controlling what ACU does is beyond my control. I am also all too sure that they will continue to ignore biblical principles and go on fellowshiping non-Christians. But, I most certainly can speak my piece on matters such as these. Every time the *Abilene Reporter News* writes this type of article (and several times a year it does), the church suffers. We expend immense amounts of energy, time and funds every year to uphold the distinctive nature of the church of our Lord. And I, for one, will not sit quietly while our spineless brethren on the “holy hill,” parade one false teacher after another to the podium to spread their heresies.

Either, there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God, or else there is not. The New Testament certainly affirms each of these points (Ephesians 4:4-6). We must stand for the truth, all the truth, whether it is popular or not (Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2-4). I thank God for the fact that we have to look no further than the Book of books for our instructions concerning what we will believe, practice and teach (John 8:32; John 17:17; Luke 6:46; II Timothy 2:15; II Timothy 3:16-17).

We need to view this unfortunate occurrence as a reminder of the persistence of the devil. That old roaring lion is still stalking the earth seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). Currently he holds much influence over the university we have examined in this editorial. Let us strive to insure that we are not ensnared by his devices as well.

—Michael Light, *Assistant Editor*

"SHOWTIME..."

(Continued From Page 1)

and musical concerts. Calling them "outreaches," they tell us they are just other ways to communicate the gospel. But with theatre so widespread in the Roman Empire, one would think the apostles would have known of its value in communicating the "Good News of Jesus Christ... in song and praise."

Neither the Clinton church, its elders **Gary Driskill, Eddie King, Gene Miller, Kenneth Thomas**, its preacher **Pat Peters**, nor "Associate Minister" **Brent Evans** can produce a single passage from the New Testament to justify this shameless corruption of the Lord's message, the worship of the Living God, and blood-bought church. If, as **Ethel Merman**, area brethren think "There's No Business Like Show Business," they "ain't heard nothin' yet" if this "holy burlesque" is a portent of things to come. With this event scheduled for the "Sunday Night Live Youth Series" rotated among western Oklahoma churches, it is only a matter of time until area youth demand concerts at home so they can sit "down to eat and to drink," then rise up to play more often.

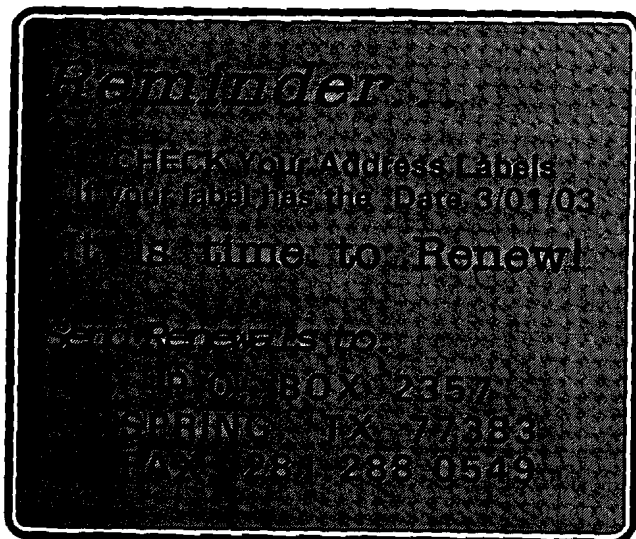
Brethren, the world is lost in sin and is steeped in the love of pleasure. The world cannot be saved by entertainment, by 'playing' them in. The world must be taught the gospel (Romans 1:16). God has chosen the "foolishness of preaching" as the means by which the world can be saved (I Corinthians 1:21); he has not chosen 'plays' and other forms of entertainment to convert the world. Entertainment is not going to keep the church saved either. What is needed in the church is "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)... We need to

stop 'playing' and return to 'preaching.' (Lester Kamp, "And They Rose Up to Play," *Matters of The Faith*, Vol. 4:3, October-December, 1998, p. 3).

Drama and concerts are added elements to worship as surely as the mechanical musical instrument. They serve the self-interest of audience and participants, have no saving power, exalt the messenger instead of the message, take Christ from the cross and like the soldiers in Pilate's common hall (Matthew 27:27-30), treat him as a buffoon instead of the Lamb of God.

When the 12-year-old Jesus remained behind in the temple and was confronted by Joseph and Mary three days later, he asked them, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). The father's business to which he referred was not "show business," and he certainly was not doing a song and dance routine for the doctors of the Law. This denominational show business foolishness is a radical, unwarranted, and sinful departure from the New Testament pattern. Clinton's elders need to repent and lead a return to the principles of the New Testament that made them Christ's church in the first place, or they need to take down their sign which reads "Church of Christ."

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MESSENGER SHOOTING, SUMMER SOLDIERS, AND SUNSHINE PATRIOTS

Brandon Renfro

Putting to death the bearer of bad tidings is an activity usually associated with the more uninhibited Roman emperors or Eastern despots. Yet messenger-shooting can be just as common in scientific and academic circles when the bad news concerns one of science's sacred cows.

Thus wrote **Richard Milton**, author of *Shattering the Myths of Darwinism*. Milton is a science journalist, and very respected in his field. Very respected, that is, until he wrote a book exposing many flaws in the theory of synthetic evolution that is taught in many public schools, colleges, and universities in our day and time. Upon publication of his book, Milton learned how very quickly supposed friends can turn to foes and was vilified by some of his scientific brethren who before had counted him an esteemed colleague.

Why did scientists take aim at Milton? Because he had the courage to report the truth of his findings, regardless of how unpopular those findings might be. What Milton found especially disappointing, though, was the manner in which his colleagues went about criticizing him. Rather than dispute the veracity of his scientific reporting, rather than claiming that his data were wrong or that he had made a mistake in calculations, Milton's opponents resorted to petty personal attacks. One eminent scientist responded to Milton's work by calling it "loony," "stupid," and "drivel," while calling its author a "harmless fruitcake" who "needs psychiatric help."

Says Milton, "I didn't expect science to welcome an inquisitive reporter, but I did expect the controversy to be conducted on a rational level, that people would rightly demand to inspect my evidence more closely and question me on the correctness of this or that fact." No doubt Milton now draws the wrath of those who once praised his work.

Is messenger-shooting unique to the scientific community? Hardly. Many in our own brotherhood today treat good, sound brethren in the same manner that Milton was treated by those he counted as close associates. Why do they do this? Jealousy? Perhaps. Smallness? Maybe. No doubt it is the case with many of our brethren, as it was with the colleagues of Milton, that those who lash out are the "hit dogs" that have started "howling."

Perhaps we could have steeled Milton to the at-

tack he was going to receive by pointing him to the words of the late **Guy N. Woods**, whose words seem more applicable today than ever:

Sadly, there are, in every conflict, the 'summer soldiers,' and the 'sunshine patriots,' who do not hesitate to abandon the fight when the guns of battle begin to roar; who insist that they do not believe in digression, but who often bitterly criticize the efforts of those who do oppose it. What shooting they do is usually limited to sniping at their own front line soldiers!

We need to uphold the hands of our brethren who stand for the truth, brethren who have stood for the truth for *years*. Petty attacks and baseless charges? My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

—5030 Crowne Chase Parkway
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Current Events That Concern Christians...

CLONING

Jerry Murrell

As I write this article the latest news on every cable network concerns cloning. On December 27, 2002 a group calling itself Clonaid announced at a news conference it has cloned a healthy thirty-one year old American woman and the baby has been born. The director of Clonaid is **Brigitte Boisselier**, who identified herself as a research chemist from France. She claimed that the seven-pound baby, "Eve," had been born on December 26 at 11:55 a.m.

This news alone would be what some used to call a "stop the presses" event, but it gets even more interesting when one delves into the background of the group making the claim. Clonaid was founded by a self-described prophet named **Rael**. Rael (formerly known as **Claude Vorihon**) is also the founder of the religious sect calling itself the *Raelians*. This sect claims to have 55,000 adherents. In an interview on *The Cavuto Report* (December 27) Rael tried to separate the two projects, Clonaid and the Raelians, seemingly to give more credibility to the cloning project.

However, they cannot be separated since it was Rael's religious beliefs that caused him to begin his cloning project. He explained why he was interested in cloning human beings to **Brenda Buckner** on the *The Cavuto Report*. Rael teaches that human life was created by extraterrestrial (he is offended if you call them aliens) scientists. These scientists used genetic engineering, and Rael is paying them a compliment by trying to clone a human because he is "grateful to them for my life." He said these extraterrestrials were named *Elohim* and that the Bible names them as the creators of man. He met these creators in 1973 when they revealed all of this to him.

This brings us to the two important questions that need to be addressed. Did Clonaid actually clone a human baby? Is cloning ethical? These will be the questions discussed in this article.

DID CLONAIID CLONE ACTUALLY CLONE A HUMAN?

I write this with some trepidation, since by the time this issue reaches your mailboxes, it is likely that you will already know the answer. This question actually divides into two questions. Can anyone successfully clone a human and bring the clone to full term? Did Clonaid actually do this? First, the answer to the

second question seems to be no. Even if it could be done, it will not be done by Raelians who believe that we were placed on earth by extraterrestrials. It is interesting that Rael did not claim to have received the knowledge to clone humans from the "aliens" who actually had done it. At the news conference, Boisselier did not even attempt to present any evidence, much less independent proof, for her claim. She said they had implanted ten clones; five of whom were spontaneously aborted while five continued. Also, the lengths to which Rael went to distance his religious organization from this "experiment" seems to indicate that they had not actually cloned a baby. If they had done so, it would be similar to the biblical model where the miracle verifies the claim of the prophet (Mark 16:18-20; Hebrews 2:1-4).

Regarding the first question, the pure science behind it would say that it is possible. Scientists have already cloned animals, the most famous case having been **Dolly** the sheep, which was cloned in Scotland. The more recent case was in the United States. A house cat was cloned at Texas A&M. The clone was named **cc**, for carbon copy. The scientist who cloned Dolly in 1997, **Ian Wilmut**, has said, "screening is ineffective, it is not possible. Hence, what we would expect would be late abortions and perhaps worst of all, surviving but abnormal children." Wilmut admits that he failed 277 times to clone sheep before he was "successful" with Dolly.

The most likely candidates to carry out this project "successfully" are **Severino Antinori**, an embryologist from Rome, who is cooperating with **Panos Zavos**, the head of the Andrology Institute in Lexington, Kentucky. They claim their project will have a cloned baby born in January. The method seems simple, the woman's egg is stripped of its genetic material, which is then replaced by the DNA containing nucleus from another human's somatic (body) cell. Then the (egg) cell is forced to divide by means of electric shock. However, in practice it has been far from simple. The group that is currently doing the best job of keeping the world informed of its progress in the area, through the journal *Nature*, is Advanced Cell Technology. They have not even been able to successfully bring one its clone to the age of fourteen days, which is its goal. In brief my

answer to the first question is a qualified “maybe,” if the world stands long enough.

IS CLONING ETHICAL?

For the readers of *Contending for the Faith*, I will not take the time to prove that God’s word is the ethical standard to which we must all conform. To argue this case with an atheist, this would be the first step. So the question really is, does the Bible authorize human beings to clone themselves?

First, it must be recognized that those who advocate cloning talk about two types of cloning: (1) reproductive cloning; (2) therapeutic cloning. Reproductive cloning is cloning for the purpose of having a baby brought to term with the same genetic code as its parent. At the present time, in the United States there is an overwhelming consensus that reproductive cloning should not take place. Last year the House passed legislation to ban both types of cloning. This legislation died in the Senate as some Senators put bills forward to ban only reproductive cloning. Even the *American Society of Reproductive Medicine*, which is a group of in vitro fertilization doctors, is opposed to cloning for reproductive purposes. Therapeutic cloning is more popular because it “promises” to be useful in helping to combat terrible diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, and Alzheimer’s disease.

While I am willing to recognize that proponents of cloning talk about two different types of cloning, I am not willing to admit that such a distinction exists in reality. Both clones are produced by the same process and after the process is complete, one cannot tell one egg from another egg. The only difference is the way the clones are used. All cloning is reproductive cloning. If one takes the position that life begins at conception, then therapeutic cloning will actually result in the taking of a human life. Therapeutic cloning is certainly not therapeutic for the newly formed embryo/baby. Life should not be created simply to be destroyed.

Even if it were to be granted that it is ethical to kill one human life to increase the quality of life of another human, there are still problems that exist. In an early stem cell trial in rats, which had been given Parkinson disease, scientists have found that while some rats got better, five of the nineteen rats developed tumors and died. If this were the result of human trials by some “evil” pharmaceutical company, the company would be excoriated in the media rather than praised. Even if stem cells were proven to be successful in such trials, it is highly likely that adult stem cells are better suited to curing disease since they will not require anti-rejection drugs when they are given to the patient.

We are the creatures of God and are subject to his laws. We must maintain the distinction, in our minds, between creator and creature. It seems to me that there should be a distinction made between the cloning of animals and the cloning of humans. It was man, not animals, who was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Man was given “dominion” over the animals (Genesis 2:6-8) but not over other human beings or even ourselves.

It seems that at least four questions need to be answered when a ethical dilemma concerning the production of babies by, shall we say, extra-natural means (such as cloning, in vitro etc.). (1) Does this method respect the sanctity of human life (cf. Genesis 9:6)? (2) Does this method keep the marriage bed pure (cf. Hebrews 13:4)? (3) Will a mother and father raise this child as God has intended from the beginning (Genesis 4:1)? (4) Are there legal, social, and psychological issues that need to be considered?

The world these scientists want to take us into was written about by **Aldous Huxley** in 1932, called *Brave New World*, in which cloning was called Bokanovskification. In Huxley’s world, religion was a thing of the past and mankind lived according to a new ethic. Mankind had accepted the idea that whatever man can do, he should do. When we see that we are headed in the direction of Huxley’s dehumanization brought on by “better living through science,” by some we are told that we simply fear the unknown. Actually, my fear is not the unknown, but the known that is headed toward the path Huxley predicted.

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NAAMAN THE LEPER

II Kings 5:1-14

Tom Moore



INTRODUCTION

- A. Proper attitudes are very important when it comes to dealing with God's word
 - 1. Many are rejecting and misunderstanding God's word because their attitude is not right
 - 2. Too many have an attitude of wanting to please self instead of pleasing God.
 - 3. The account of Naaman the leper will give us insight into the importance of attitude.
- B. "Naaman" was the commander-in-chief of the Syrian king, who held a high place in the service of the king, and was afflicted with leprosy.
 - 1. In Naaman's house there was an Israelite maiden who served Naaman's wife.
 - 2. The Israelite maiden told her mistress that there is a prophet in Samaria that could heal Naaman of leprosy.
 - 3. Naaman related this to the king of Syria, and the king sends Naaman to the king of Israel with a letter.
 - 4. When the king of Israel received the letter, and read that he was to cure Naaman—he tore his clothes in alarm, and exclaimed, "Am I God, to be able to kill and make alive?"
- C. Elisha now comes into the picture ...
 - 1. II Kings 5:8-10
 - 2. Naaman was not pleased...
 - a. II Kings 5:11...he was expecting more, perhaps some special ceremony
 - b. Notice Naaman's complaint...II Kings 5:12
 - 3. Notice the response of Naaman's servant
 - a. II Kings 5:13
 - b. He says, If the prophet had given you some difficult thing to do, wouldn't you have done it? Then why refuse to do something easy?
 - 4. Naaman then...II Kings 5:14
- D. I want us now to consider some of the different attitudes we find in this historical account of Naaman the leper.

DISCUSSION

- A. THE "I THOUGHT" ATTITUDE (II Kings 5:11)
 - 1. Naaman expected something different than what the prophet had given him.
 - a. He thought something else would happen; therefore, he went away angry.
 - b. He should have just been satisfied with

being clean.

- 2. Is this not the exact sentiment of many in the world today when they are confronted with God's word?
 - a. Many become angry...
 - b. They have the I Think Attitude: "I thought another answer would be given" — "I thought it would have been done another way"
- 3. We need to be more concerned with what God thinks than what we think. The reason? (Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36)
 - c. Our thoughts are of no consequence when compared to the thoughts of God.
- B. THE "EXPECTING MORE THAN WAS GIVEN" ATTITUDE (II Kings 5:11)
 - 1. Naaman was expecting some type of special ceremony — expecting something different, and became angry as a result.
 - 2. Many in the church today get mad and leave because they are not getting what they expected.
 - a. Perhaps, they were expecting something more.
 - b. Or, it could be that they were not getting what they wanted.
 - 3. Naaman thought that something greater would happen.
 - a. But, what greater event could have occurred than his healing?
 - b. That which was great was always there — but, he overlooked it.
 - 4. Many today are expecting something greater out of religion; yet, all the while failing to see the greatness ever present.
 - 5. If we are not getting enough out of our religion — it is clear that we are not putting enough into it.
- C. THE "COMPLAIN ABOUT WHAT IS COMMANDED AND WOULD RATHER DO SOMETHING ELSE" ATTITUDE (II Kings 5:12)
 - 1. Naaman complained about having to dip in that old dirty Jordan River.
 - a. He was told exactly what he needed to do to be healed of his horrible disease — and he complained about it!
 - b. Can you imagine having leprosy and

- complaining about the cure?
- c. Most would have been willing to do anything to be cured!
 2. Today, many are complaining about the Lord's cure for sin.
 - a. Can you imagine someone complaining about avoiding eternal death?!
 - b. Many complain about the requirement of baptism and would rather do something else – like “faith only.”
 3. Philippians 2:14...are we going to complain about God's commands?
- D. THE “CARING FRIEND” ATTITUDE (II Kings 5:13)
1. Naaman's servant points out to him how ridiculous his attitude was.
 - a. Naaman's servant asks, “If the prophet would have told you some great thing to do, wouldn't you have done it?”
 - b. The servant says, “Why reject something so easy?”
 2. Naaman was lucky to have such a good friend!
 3. The world needs more good friends who will try to show others their error.

- a. Many times we get caught up in a situation and can't see clearly.
 - b. A good friend will help us to see as it really is.
 4. James 5:19-20
 - a. Naaman's servant saved him from certain death.
 - b. A good friend will help us see more clearly
 5. Psalm 142:4...may this never be said of us
- E. THE “OBEDIENT” ATTITUDE (II Kings 5:14)
1. When Naaman finally realized how foolish he was, he obeyed Elisha's commands.
 2. We need to put away our pride and big heads and obey God.
 - a. I Samuel 15:22-23...many are going through the motions, but are not really obeying God (Luke 6:46; James 2:17).

CONCLUSION

- A. A proper attitude is a MUST if we are going to be pleasing to God.

—2406 Main
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

Ninth Annual N. E. Oklahoma Gospel Journal Lectures

“Biblical Love”

Friday, April 18 - Sunday, April 20, 2003

Friday:

7:00 PM	Biblical Words of Love	Wayne Price
8:00 PM	Love for the Truth	Preston Silcox

SATURDAY:

9:00 AM	The Love of Christ	Eddie Whitten
10:00 AM	Love for the Lost & Erring	Ben Williams
11:00 AM	What Love Is Not	Dub McClish

NOON MEAL FURNISHED

2:30 PM	Love in the Home	Preston Silcox
3:30 PM	The Relationship of Love & Forgiveness	Wayne Price

SUNDAY:

9:30 AM	Man's Love for God & Neighbor	Eddie Whitten
10:30 AM	God's Love for the World	David Watson

NOON MEAL FURNISHED

1:00 PM	Question/Answer Session	Dub McClish
2:00 PM	Love the Brotherhood	Ben Williams
3:00 PM	The Relationship of Love & Fellowship	Dub McClish

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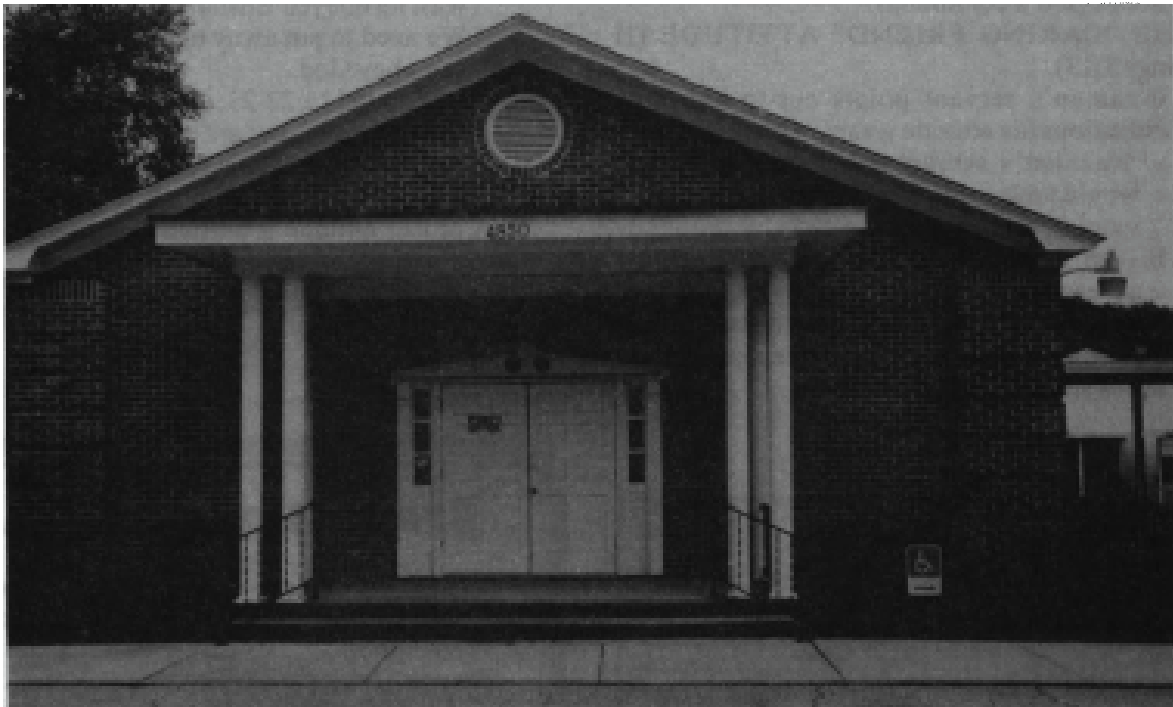
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Restoration Reflections...

BELVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST, CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Paul Vaughn



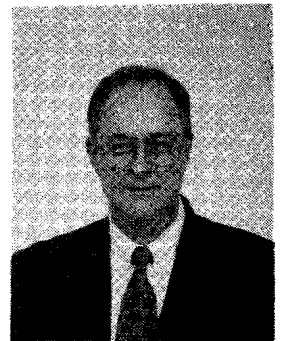
There are many churches who flounder in inaction and are struggling to just keep themselves alive. This comes about because of numerous and different forces within a congregation. It could be lukewarmness, the cancer that was eating away at the church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22). Another cause of the decline in a congregation is the decline of love for God, the church, and the lost. But, perhaps the greatest cause of failure in any congregation is the absence or inadequacy of spiritual leadership. It is the responsibility of the eldership to see that the church is fed, given the nourishment it needs to be able to stand against the forces of evil in the world. Paul instructed this very thing to the Ephesian elders. He said:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

I have been extremely blessed to know of many congregations whose leadership is working responsibly to help the church grow in spirit and knowledge of God's

word. In this article there is one congregation on which I wish to focus, the Bellview Church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida.

Every congregation seeking to walk the ancient path given in the New Testament traces the beginning of the church of Christ to Acts chapter two. Each congregation from that time has the date in which it was established. The Bellview Church of Christ held its first service on the first Lord's Day in 1952, in the old Bellview School building on the corner of Bellview Road and Millview Road. The individuals and families who made up the congregation came from different congregations in the area. They were: **the Hairston Brantley family, the Elaine Goelz, the Robert Goelz family, the W.C. Goelz family, the W.C. Hammac family, the W.P. Kittell family, the Tom McNeece family, the Elmer Muldoon family, Evelyn Muldoon, Zera Rutherford, the H.T. Simmons family, Lucille and**



Sharon Staples, Thelma Staples, Albert C. Turner and his wife Marseillette, and the W. George Williams family.

The congregation was self supporting from the very beginning. During the first few weeks they came together for Bible study and worship on Sunday morning, then on Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings they would attend their home congregations. The young congregation met in the Bellview School building for the first year. It was during this time that they were able to purchase land. A. C. and Marseillette Turner mortgaged their house enabling the congregation to build a building. The first service in the new building was on the first Lord's Day in 1953.

The first full time preacher for the congregation was **Thornton Crews**; he served from June 1953 through July 1957. Other ministers for the church were **Warren Rainwater, Jack Zorn, Stanley Crews, William Cline, Ray Hawk, John Priola, Max Miller, Bobby Liddell and Michael Hatcher** who presently serves the congregation.

In seeking to follow the pattern for the church in the New Testament, the Bellview congregation appointed their first elders on December 19, 1965. They were **Hairston Brantley and Bill Gallaher**. The first deacons were **Elward Brantley, Randall Johnson and Calvin McDaniel**. The elders serving the congregation today are **Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff, and Paul Brantley**.

The Bellview Church of Christ is extremely busy in doing the Lord's work from their establishment. In 1973 they established the Bellview Preacher Training School. This school helped many faithful men prepare to preach the gospel. The school was discontinued in 1988. The church has supported many mission points around the world. They helped to establish a congregation in Donalsonville, Georgia. They have supported many foreign mission points: Kakinada, India, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Murmansk, Russia.

Preaching the gospel can be accomplished in many ways: radio, television, newspaper, campaigns, gospel meetings, and lectureships. The Bellview Church of Christ has used all of these avenues in reaching the lost and building up the church. They started publishing the *Defender* in 1972, and mail out hundreds of their bulletin, *The Beacon*. Another publication they mail to homes in their community is the *House to House/Heart to Heart*.

One of the best efforts the church does is the annual Bellview lectureship. It is held

beginning on the second Saturday of June each year. Some of the subjects they have studied during their lectures are: What Does The Bible Authorize In Worship, Changes In The Church of Christ, Preaching God Demands, God's Pattern for Christian Living, Christian Fellowship, and the Beatitudes. The lectureship in 2003 will be on June 7-11 and the theme is *Great Old Testament Questions*.

During the past twenty years this writer has been blessed to visit many faithful congregations of the Lord's Church. The Bellview Church of Christ is one that I have had the opportunity to worship with, one or two times a year. They are one of the most loving group of Christians that I have seen. They love each other, they love all the visitors who come their way, but most of all they have a great love for God and proclaiming the gospel. It is my prayer that they continue to grow and abound in good works, demonstrating Christianity in action.

—1415 Lincoln Rd.
Lewisport, Kentucky 42391



UNTEMPERED CLAY

Annette B. Gates

One of the pluses found in living within the metropolitan area of a city such as Memphis is the wide variety of activities available to the populace at little or no cost. Every autumn we have a festival called "Arts in the Park." It features exhibits and vending of different types of art. One aspect involves hands-on crafts for children. Among other things, a child can create cardboard sculptures, experiment with chalk drawings, and dip sheets of paper into trays of water to which paint has been added. The child gets to keep whatever he/she has made.

This year, we took our six year-old granddaughter to Arts in the Park. Maggie had a great time with all of the fun things to make, and I think she tried them all. Two activities involved working with different types of clay. One used an art clay that was very brightly colored and easily molded into shape. At this particular booth, the object was to make a necklace. Lengths of small ribbon were provided, along with the clay which was to be used to make beads to go on the ribbon. Another booth had a grainy type of clay out of which the child could make a bowl. Small decorative objects such as seashells were available to use in making the bowls have a pattern, and not be just a plain bowl. One type of clay formed a beautiful object. The other clay was more utilitarian. There was only one problem with the clay activities. Neither was durable. It would take high heat and time to temper the clay in order for it to have the strength to last. For the purpose served by Arts in the Park, neither was feasible.

FORMING CHARACTER

These two types of clay remind me of human nature. One was quite beautiful, while the other would appear to be very useful. Sadly, neither lasted more than a few hours. From this I learn that true quality has little to do with how something appears, or how it might be used. It is true that what counts is on the inside, not on the outside, and that comes from basing one's life on the will of God (I Samuel 16:7; Acts 1:24). Just as those clay objects needed to be fired in a kiln, we must also be tempered by some trials, maturity, and experience in order to come forth as the type of person God would have us be. Two verses in the Old Testament refer to this fact. Job stated, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). David wrote, "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us,

as silver is tried" (Psalm 66:10).

Speaking of the gullibility of the people to the errors and false prophets of their day, Ezekiel used the example of building a wall of untempered mortar. As surely as the next rainfall, the wall would collapse because there was no strength to hold it together (Ezekiel



13:10-12). Is this not just like so many of us today? In the nation, as well as in the church, we listen to the message of peace when there is no peace (v. 12). We grasp at any new fad that comes along. We want to do what everyone else is doing the way they are doing it. God's word and his way have been tried in the fire for thousands of years, yet we seek untempered mortar (Jeremiah 6:16; Galatians 1:6-9; I Peter 4:11). There is nothing wrong with "new" unless it is contrary to God's commands. When "new" is error, it will collapse as surely as a building where the bricks are held together with sand.

PUT TO THE TEST

On a personal level, one who does not cultivate spiritual strength will crumble with trial or temptation. Life is not always lived on Easy Street. Aristotle said, "Virtue, like art, constantly deals with what is hard to do, and the harder the task the better the success." While we cannot know which stumbling blocks will appear along the way, preparation is the only way to be ready. We build a foundation of strength by developing a ready knowledge of God's word. While we must study the word of God in order to be able to answer when others ask us about our faith (I Peter 3:15), we must also be able to answer our own questions regarding right and wrong, doubt and fear. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Corinthians 13:5). We further strengthen our inner being by taking note of our spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). "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" (James 1:17). As Christians, we have forgiveness of our sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

(I John 1:9). We can communicate with our Maker, hearing him through the Bible, and talking to him through the avenue of prayer. Our faith allows us to know that God exists, that he created all things, and that he is the ruler of all the earth. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this the hard way, but eventually he acknowledged that God **“ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will...”** (Daniel 4:17, 25, 32). This same God also cares for us (Matthew 6:26-30; I Peter 5:7). Our greatest blessing is the hope of eternal life. **“...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”** (Revelation 2:10).

The clay objects that Maggie made at Arts in the Park did not last long. Her joy in her creations turned to sadness as she saw the ribbon cut through the art clay and as her decorated bowl disintegrated. How much more must God hurt when those whom he created do not have the attitude and strength, the tempering, to remain his people, thus crumble and fall away? **“But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand”** (Isaiah 64:8).

—9194 Lakeside Dr.
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38654

Feel Led of God?

Wayne Price

A Baptist Church in the DFW Metroplex was having problems a number of years ago. The issue? Whether or not the church ought to move to a new location! A letter was sent to members who voted against the move, in an effort to get them to change their vote. Excerpts from that letter are as follows:

“It was decided that no less than 70% of the congregation must support such a move for it to be successful.”

We were asked to pray diligently for God’s direction in this decision. Our pastor spent a significant portion of a four week period, plus a weekend, praying about this recommendation. He *felt led of God* to support the committee’s recommendation (to move, wp). He knew that joining with their recommendation would cause controversy, but *because of God’s leading* he had no other alternative,” the letter stated.

The vote was 69.9% in favor of moving and 30.1% against moving! Now, since it was previously decided that 70% of the vote was necessary in order to relocate, they were 1/10 short of that goal. What to do?

The above letter (in part) was sent out to 30.1% who voted against relocating, saying that “we should not accept this position. Our spiritual leader, 90% of the deacon body and 69.9% of our voting congregation felt that God wanted our church relocated. 30.1% *felt led* to vote against the vote. God does not say ‘yes’ to some and ‘no’ to others. He is consistent. Some folks either did not listen to God’s direction, or they did not seek his direction.”

What a problem! Two sides felt led of God to vote the way they did, fully believing that God was leading them in the process! This is a classic example of how emotionalism in religion rules the day. Of course, neither side would admit that it was emotion, since both claimed to be led of God in making their decisions. But

the question arises: How are others to know who was really led of God? Was one side correct in its assumption of God’s leading, and the other side wrong? How did they come to believe that God was leading them anyway?

How would God make his will known? This reminds me of various sports figures who, after a great victory in their chosen sport, thank God or Christ for helping them to win a certain contest. If I were a boxer and I knew beforehand that God was going to be on the side of my opponent, why would I even bother to enter the ring?

In religion, the fact is that God has made his will known to man (Ephesians 3:3-4; I Corinthians 2:13; I Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 1:6-9), and if and when we read it, we too can understand what his will is (Ephesians, loc cit). Forget about “heavenly hunches,” “testimonies,” and a “feeling as if you are being led” by God. Feelings come and feelings go, but the word of God is sure and steadfast, and it will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

It is told that once a man approached a lady at a party, and said: “God told me that we were going to get married,” to which she responded by saying, “God told me to tell you to ‘get lost.’”

Obviously in all the cases listed above, your writer is convinced that none of them were told anything by God. The truth is, in each case, they all decided what *they* wanted to do, then claimed that they were being *led by God*. Such are like the false prophets of old who **“speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord”** (Jeremiah 23:16; see also Ezekiel 13:2-3, 13:17). What lies back of all of this is the very deadly doctrine that the Bible is NOT a “once-for-all-time” revelation from heaven.

In Maxwell Anderson’s *Anne of a 1,000 Days*, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn have the following con-

versation:

Henry: What I do is God's will. **Anne:** Now if a man or monarch could be sure of that—**Henry:** I've worked it out in my mind. I pray to God... I pray Him to direct me, that whatever comes to my mind... shall be God's will... whatever I do — whether to reach for food... or interpret the holy word, or judge men innocent —or guilty —every morning I pray Him on my knees nothing shall rise in my brain or heart but He has wished it first...He must answer this. He does answer... **Anne:** This is noble of you, of course, but your Majesty realizes that it might be possibly be used as an excuse for— **Henry:**

For what? **Anne:** For doing as you please!

Now, apply Anne's assessment of the situation to all such cases today, and you will have the answer as to why there are so many different religious groups, all claiming that they are right. My friend, the question is not WHO is right, but rather WHAT is right? The answer: The BIBLE IS RIGHT!

—P.O. Box 760
McCloud, Oklahoma 74851

The Last Word...

AN OPEN DOOR

Kent Bailey

In I Corinthians 16:9 the apostle Paul wrote, “**For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.**” The opportunities which presented themselves at Ephesus must have truly been outstanding. According to Acts 20:31, Paul remained in Ephesus for a time frame of three years. During this period he taught and defended God's truth not only in that particular locale, but also in areas throughout the province of Asia (Acts 19:10, 26). Luke depicts the success of this gospel work in stating, “**And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.**” As further evidence of this “great door and effectual” which presented itself to Paul, we note the words of Demetrius as recorded in Acts 19:26-27:

Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul both persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

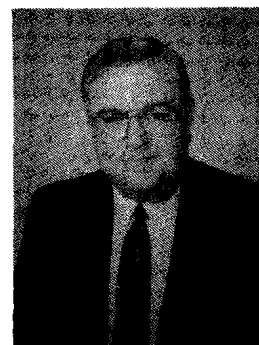
Making use of such an open door did not and does not always guarantee that of “smooth sailing.” The gospel of Christ is by its very essence controversial and elicits opposition in its strongest form. From the book of Acts we note some of the adversaries that Paul faced while preaching in Ephesus. Demetrius, the silver-smith, stirred up such a riot that the town clerk of the city government had to quiet things down. Paul had earlier noted in I Corinthians 15:32 that he had

fought wild beasts. Whether this statement is to be understood literally, or figuratively, such presupposes that he indeed faced militant adversaries in the proclamation and defense of the everlasting gospel of Christ.

It is noteworthy to observe that in view of that particular situation, Paul did not desire to leave the area, but rather stood his ground and braced himself for a valiant fight. To the Corinthian brethren Paul wrote, “**Watch ye, stand you like men, be strong**” (I Corinthians 16:13). When God in his good providence opens a great door for the preaching of the gospel, Satan will provide great adversaries. The true servant of Christ will stand up and fight rather than flee for his life!

With this particular edition of *Contending For The Faith*, I begin work as a regular contributor writing under the caption: *The Last Word...* I am truly honored the editor of this journal, **David Brown**, has confidence in my work as a gospel preacher to invite me to contribute articles to this great publication. It does not take a great deal of time to recognize the apostasy with which God's faithful must contend.

Of great necessity we are faced with a tremendous task in presenting to the world a clear and precise concept of the one true New Testament church. Such a challenge presents “a great door and effectual” being opened unto us. With the modern means of communication we now have, perhaps, the greatest opportunity to present the truth of God to the masses than



Directory of Churches

-Alabama-

Holly Pond-Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026. Sun. 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, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, Evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris PKWY NW Cartersville, GA 30120-4222. Tel. (770) 382-6775. E-mail: bdgayton@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Tel. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sun. 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, 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.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 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, 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.

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

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

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

ever before. However, the plain proclamation of the New Testament pattern will bring about strong opposition from both within and without of the church. While indeed we love the souls of humanity, our love for God and His truth is even greater. Because of an uncompromising stand upon New Testament principles, we realize that such will demand an unrelenting warfare on our part against all sin and error. Specific problems will be addressed, and when necessary particular individuals will be identified by name. At the moment we

stand at a great crossroads. May we as faithful members of the church of Christ take note of this "great door and effectual" being opened unto us. May we unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, and through faithful proclamation and defense of God's eternal truth do battle until Jesus comes!

—124 Executive Meadows Dr.
Lenoir City, Tennessee 37771

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH INDEX

VOLUME XXXIII/2002

David P. Brown, *Editor*

(INDEX prepared by Leon D. Schrei)

AUTHOR AND TOPICAL INDEX

ADULTERY

Young, Tyler – Living In Sin, (July): 10.

ALCOHOL

Yeatts, Steven E. – “Sin Taxes”, (November): 9.

ANTI-ISM / COOPERATION / ORPHAN HOMES

Alexander, Glenn – Disaster Relief Questions And Answers, (March): 8.

Brown, David P. – “Anti-ism,” (February): 2.

Brown, David P. – Church Cooperation, Orphan Homes And Other Related Matters, (March): 2.

Brown, David P. – A Critique of “Disaster Relief Questions And Answers,” (March): 10.

Brown, David P. – Do The Scriptures Authorize The Church To Contribute to Anything It Cannot “Oversee”?, (April): 2.

Brown, David P. – The “Saints Only” Doctrine, (May): 2.

Brown, David P. – Is It A Sin To Eat In The Church Building?, (June): 2.

Dishongh, V.B. – Personal Letter To David P. Brown, (July): 17.

Jackson, Bill – Expediences – And Hobbyism Problem!, (June): 24.

BAPTISM

Curd, Bruce C. – Avoiding And Evading The Most Obvious Truth, (June): 12.

Denham, Daniel – Does Baptism Require A Verbal Formula, (February): 19.

BAPTIST, JOHN THE

Mowery, Dub – Attempting To Protect Their Name, (July): 8.

BERARD, BOB

Cohn, Kenneth D. and Buddy R. Roth – Open Letter re: Bob Berard, (August): 20.

BIBLE, THE

Moore, Tom – The Descriptive Word Of God, (March): 22.

BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

Hackworth, Noah – Did Peter and Paul Preach Different Gospels?, (February): 9.

Hackworth, Noah – What Is The Value Of Prayer?, (March): 21.

Hackworth, Noah – With Liberty And Justice For All?, (April): 9.

Hackworth, Noah – What Is The Valley Of Dry Bones?, (May): 12.

Hackworth, Noah A. – What If There is No Church of Christ Where You Live?, (June): 21.

Box, Danny Lester

Brown, David P. – Danny Lester Box – A Good Man Gone Home, (June): 1.

CHANGE AGENTS

Choate, J.E. – Explaining “Change Agents” And “Change Agency”, (May): 8.

Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.

McDade, Gary – Teach No Other Doctrine, (June): 10.

Weir, Marvin – Religions Are Retooling To Keep Pace With Fast-Changing World!, (June): 8.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Moore, Tom – 99.9%, (April): 5.

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT...

Parker, Lynn – We Will Listen To These Advisors, (February): 21.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH MAGAZINE

Light, Michael – “We Can Make a Difference” Today, (September): 6.

COUNSELING

Parker, Lynn – We Will Listen To These Advisors, (February): 21.

CURRENT EVENTS...

McWhorter, Mark – Intolerance, Therapeutic Classrooms, Women’s Rights in Public Ministry, and More, (February): 17.

McWhorter, Mark – Rubel Shelly and Mission Work, Boy Scouts Policies, Homosexual Pastors, and Prayer Concerts, (April): 18.

McWhorter, Mark – Rosie O’Donnell, Government Research, and Tim Woodroofs’ Advice, (May): 19.

McWhorter, Mark – Ecumenical News, the Intent of Rock Music, and lesbian Scout Leaders, (June): 20.

McWhorter, Mark – Intolerance of Religious Diversity, Avoiding Biblical Language, and Disney World’s Gay Day, (July): 18.

McWhorter, Mark – President Bush and Homosexual Benefits, When Does Life Begin and More, (September): 17.

McWhorter, Mark – The Church Of England, Christians Without Religion, Heaven And Hell, (October): 21.

McWhorter, Mark – Cultural Marxists, Christian-Jewish Relations, (December): 17.

DECEIT

Silcox, Preston – The Declaration Of Deceit, (February): 1.

DENOMINATIONALISM / SECTARIANISM

McDade, Gary – “The Larger Community of Believers,” (March): 1.
Weir, Marvin – Religions Are Retooling To Keep Pace With Fast-Changing World!, (June): 8.

DIVISION

Moore, Tom – Division In The Church, (September): 18.

DOCTRINE

McDade, Gary – Teach No Other Doctrine, (June): 10.

DORAN, ADRON

Vaughn, Paul – Adron Doran: Educator, Legislator, Preacher, Historian, Faithful Husband, (February): 16.

DUTY / SERVICE

Moore, Tom – Saved To Serve, (February): 15.

EDITORIALS

Brown, David P. – “Never Give In, Never, Never, Never,” (January): 2.
Brown, David P. – “Anti-ism,” (February): 2.
Brown, David P. – Church Cooperation, Orphan Homes And Other Related Matters, (March): 2.
Brown, David P. – Do The Scriptures Authorize The Church To Contribute to Anything It Cannot “Oversee”?, (April): 2.
Brown, David P. – Is It A Sin To Eat In The Church Building?, (June): 2.
Brown, David P. – Michael Light To Serve As Assistant Editor Of CFTF, (July): 2.
Brown, David P. – Did You Know That In Order To Become A Christian You Must Be Baptized In The Holy Spirit?, (August): 2.
Brown, David P. – Attempts To Alter God’s Laws On MDR, (September): 2.
Brown, David P. – A Medley Of Matters, (October): 2.
Brown, David P. – “We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men” (Acts 5:29), (November): 2.
Brown, David P. – “Time is Filled With Swift Transition”, (December): 2.

EDUCATION

Cates, Curtis – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Great Friend And Supporter Of The Memphis School Of Preaching, (January): 11.

ELDERS

Boren, Jodie – “...Busy Here And There...,” (March): 18.

EVANGELISM

Stancliff, Fred – Evangelism And Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 8.
Cates, Annette B. – “Don’t Mess With My Heart”, (April): 20.

FALSE TEACHERS

Eskew, Victor M. – Bidding God Speed To Error, (February): 6.
McDade, Gary – Teach No Other Doctrine, (June): 10.

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

Renfroe, Brandon – He Shrugged His Shoulders, (April): 1.

FREE WILL

Denham, Daniel – Excursus On Free Will, (May): 16.

FRONT PAGE, THE

Brown, David P. – Danny Lester Box – A Good Man Gone Home, (June): 1.
Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.
Coats, Wayne – What Happened At The Madison Church Of Christ, (May): 1.
Denham, Daniel – Does Acts 2:41 Prove That The Holy

Spirit Personally And Directly Indwells The Christian?, (July): 1.

Denham, Daniel – Does One Receive Holy Spirit Baptism at the Same Time He is Baptized in Water for the Remission of Sins?, (August): 1.

McDade, Gary – “The Larger Community of Believers,” (March): 1.

Parker, Lynn – “I Don’t Read Brotherhood Rags”, (October): 1.

Renfroe, Brandon – He Shrugged His Shoulders, (April): 1.

Renfroe, Brandon – The Romans 7 Clause, (September): 1.

Rice, Ira Y., Jr. – Rice Quotation and Photographs, (January): 1.

Silcox, Preston – The Declaration Of Deceit, (February): 1.

Summers, Gary W. – Being Fair, (December): 1.

GANO, JOHN ALLEN

Vaughn, Paul – John Allen Gano Chose God Over Family, (May): 14.

GIVING

Boren, Jodie – “In Every Thing Give Thanks”, (December): 18.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Vaughn, Paul – The Importance Of The Gospel Meeting Restoration History, (April): 13.

GRACE

Beard, Kevin D. – Grace And Works, (June): 6.

HARDING UNIVERSITY

McDade, Gary – “The Larger Community of Believers,” (March): 1.

HERMENEUTICS

Hartwigsen, Brock – Hermeneutics Controversy – The Spirit Verses the Letter of the Law, (February): 7.

HIGHER CRITICISM

Hackworth, Noah – Did Peter and Paul Preach Different Gospels?, (February): 9.

HOLY SPIRIT, BAPTISM OF THE

Berard, Bob – Baptism With Holy Spirit And Baptism Into Christ Are They The Same Or Different?, (August): 14.

Brown, David P. – Did You Know That In Order To Become A Christian You Must Be Baptized In The Holy Spirit?, (August): 2.

Brown, David P. – Thomas B. Warren And Holy Spirit Baptism, (August): 17.

Cohn, Kenneth D. and Buddy R. Roth – Open Letter re: Bob Berard, (August): 20.

Denham, Daniel – Does One Receive Holy Spirit Baptism at the Same Time He is Baptized in Water for the Remission of Sins?, (August): 1.

Kilpatrick, Marlin – Why Tarry in Jerusalem?, (February): 10.
McGarvey, J.W. – Immersion In The Holy Spirit, (October): 8.

HOLY SPIRIT, DIRECT OPERATION OF THE

Brown, David P. – Reply to New Hope Road Church of Christ, (December): 5.

New Hope Road Church of Christ, Letter to CFTF, (December): 4.

Summers, Gary W. – Being Fair, (December): 1.

HOLY SPIRIT, INDWELLING OF THE

Denham, Daniel – Does Acts 2:41 Prove That The Holy Spirit Personally And Directly Indwells The Christian?, (July): 1.

HOPE

Boren, Jodie – How Would You Answer, (February): 11.

HUFFARD, EVERTT W.

McDade, Gary – “The Larger Community of Believers,” (March): 1.

McDade, Gary – Teach No Other Doctrine, (June): 10.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

Summers, Gary W. – Recommended Reading: “Jehovah’s Witnesses”, (June): 18.

JOSHUA

Denham, Daniel – The Commission Of Joshua, (April): 16.

JOURNALISM

Choate, J.C. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. “Quintessential” Christian Journalist, (January): 6.

JUDGING

Heartwigsen, Brock – I’m Not His Judge, (June): 9.

JUDGMENT, DAY OF

Boren Jodie – Record Book, (November): 18.

JUSTICE

Hackworth, Noah – With Liberty And Justice For All?, (April): 9.

KINGDOM, THE

Moore, Tom – The Unshakeable Kingdom, (December): 20.

LAST WORD, THE...

Whitten, Eddie – The Blessing Of Repentance, (February): 22.

Whitten, Eddie – My Responsibility, (April): 21.

Whitten, Eddie – The Cycle Of History, (May): 21.

Whitten, Eddie – Little Child Shall Lead Them, (October): 22.

Whitten, Eddie – Some Things I Have Learned, (November): 21.

Whitten, Eddie – Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve, (December): 22.

LEADERSHIP

Denham, Daniel – The Commission Of Joshua, (April): 16.

LIBERALISM

Brewer, Jerry C. – Skirting The Issue: (Or, “Tiptoeing Through The Tulip Patch Of Politically Correct, Obfuscated Generalities”), (February): 8.

Choate, J.E. – Explaining “Change Agents” And “Change Agency”, (May): 8.

Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.

Eskew, Victor M. – Bidding God Speed To Error, (February): 6.

Light, Michael – Practical Liberals, (November): 5.

McDade, Gary – “The Larger Community of Believers,” (March): 1.

LIGHT, MICHAEL

Brown, David P. – Michael Light To Serve As Assistant Editor Of CFTF, (July): 2.

MADISON CHURCH OF CHRIST

Coats, Wayne – What Happened At The Madison Church Of Christ, (May): 1.

MAN, NATURE OF

Newell, Clifford, Jr. – What Is Man?, (November): 16.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE

Brown, David P. – Attempts To Alter God’s Laws On MDR, (September): 2.

Brown, David P. – “We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men” (Acts 5:29), (November): 2.

Hightower, Terry M. – A Brief Response To Mettenbrink, (September): 14.

Mettenbrink, James C. – Whoever Remarries First And Whoever Remarries Second, (September): 13.

Parker, Lynn – American-izing Matthew, (September): 9.

Renfroe, Brandon – The Romans 7 Clause, (September): 1.

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Cates, Curtis – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Great Friend And Supporter Of The Memphis School Of Preaching, (January): 11.

Missionary / Missions

Daniel, Alex – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A Missionary Who Loved Souls, (January): 29.

MODERNISM

Cline, Steven D. – “They Believed Others More Than Those Things Which Were Spoken by Paul”, (June): 15.

Coats, Wayne – Modernism Marches Onward, (February): 12.

Coats, Wayne – Soup, Soap And Social Problems, (April): 10.

Coats, Wayne – Bultmann And Demythology, (June): 17.

Coats, Wayne – Encounter Theology, (July): 12.

Coats, Wayne – A Bit More About Bultmann, (November): 11.

MODESTY

Kline, Russell M. – Modesty In Worship, (July): 22.

OBEDIENCE

Moore, Tom – Obedience To The Truth, (April): 6.

Brown, David P. – “We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men” (Acts 5:29), (November): 2.

ONE WOMAN’S PERSPECTIVE...

Cates, Annette B. – Dangerous Waters, (February): 14.

Cates, Annette B. – Out-Laws, In-Laws, In-Loves, (March): 20.

Cates, Annette B. – “Don’t Mess With My Heart”, (April): 20.

Cates, Annette B. – Lovin’s, (May): 20.

Cates, Annette B. – Our Topsy-Turvy World, (July): 20.

Cates, Annette B. – That Ringing Cell Phone!, (September): 22.

Cates, Annette B. – Swimming Along, (October): 20.

Cates, Annette B. – Man, This Is The Life!, (November): 19.

Cates, Annette B. – You Can’t Buy A Home, (December): 19.

ORIGINAL SIN

Cauley, Kevin – The Argument Against The Doctrine of Original Sin, (April): 8.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Murrell, Jerry – “I Didn’t Do It,” (February): 4.

POST-MODERNISM

Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.

Murrell, Jerry – A Post-modern Problem-The Relationship Of Bias To Truth, (April): 7.

PRAYER

Denham, Daniel – “The God Who Heareth Prayers,” (March): 16.

Hackworth, Noah – What Is The Value Of Prayer?, (March): 21.

PREACHING

Boren, Jodie – "...Busy Here And There..." (March): 18.
Brewer, Jerry C. – Skirting The Issue: (Or, "Tiptoeing Through The Tulip Patch Of Politically Correct, Obfuscated Generalities"), (February): 8.
Grider, Barry M. – In Defending The Faith, (November): 14.
Silcox, Preston – The Declaration Of Deceit, (February): 1.
Light, Michael – What Are You Looking For? – In A Preacher That Is, (October): 6.
Massey, Richard – Being Negative Can Be A Positive, (November): 15.
Pride
Whitten, Eddie – Pride: A Lurking Danger, (July): 23.

REPENTANCE

Whitten, Eddie – The Blessing Of Repentance, (February): 22.

RESPONSIBILITY

Whitten, Eddie – My Responsibility, (April): 21.

RESTORATION REFLECTIONS...

Vaughn, Paul – Adron Doran: Educator, Legislator, Preacher, Historian, Faithful Husband, (February): 16.
Vaughn, Paul – The Church At Poole, (March): 14.
Vaughn, Paul – The Importance Of The Gospel Meeting Restoration History, (April): 13.
Vaughn, Paul – John Allen Gano Chose God Over Family, (May): 14.
Vauhg, Paul – They Are Too Nondenominational, (July): 16.
Vaughn, Paul – Eddie Whitten: Faithful Soldier Of The Cross, (September): 19.
Vaughn, Paul – "Uncle Jake" Starling, (October): 17.
Vaughn, Paul – The Establishment Of The Hawesville Church Of Christ, (December): 10.

RICE, IRA Y., JR.

Bland, Billy – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Dedicated, Optimistic Evangelist, (January): 17.
Brown, David P. – "Never Give In, Never, Never, Never," (January): 2.
Cates, Curtis – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Great Friend And Supporter Of The Memphis School Of Preaching, (January): 11.
Choate, J.C. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. "Quintessential" Christian Journalist, (January): 6.
Choom, Kwan Tai – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A True Soldier Of Christ In The 20th Century, (January): 31.
Conley, Darrell – I Remember Ira Rice, (January): 20.
Curd, Bruce R. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Brother And Friend, (January): 18.
Daniel, Alex – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A Missionary Who Loved Souls, (January): 29.
Davidson, Harrell – Black Strap Molasses And They Said What?, (January): 9.
Davis, Lee – Personal Remembrances of Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 24.
Ee, Eddie – More Than A Brother, (January): 27.
Elkins, Garland – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A Legend In His Own Time, (January): 12.
Graham, Colin – A Tribute To A Fine Christian Man... Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 30.
Grider, Barry M. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. 1917-2001, (January): 13.
Liddell, Bobby – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Great Steward Of Time, (January): 16.
Mosher, Keith A., Sr. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Some Things I Believe About Him, (January): 15.
Nichols Tim – The Passing Of Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 26.
Rice, Ira Y., Jr. – Rice Quotation and Photographs, (January): 1.
Silcox, Preston – Ira Y. Rice, Jr.'s Life Cut Short at 84, (Janu-

ary): 23.

Stancliff, Fred – Evangelism And Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 8.
Traw, Dorsey – My Tribute To Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 31.
Whitten, Eddie – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Reflections, (January): 22.

SALVATION

Boren, Jodie – The Water's Free-but You Gotta Prime The Pump, (April): 15.
Mowery, Dub – Attempting To Protect Their Name, (July): 8.

SALVATION ARMY

Travis, Joe F. – Are You A Bell Ringer?, (December): 14.

SATAN

Boren, Jodie – Satan Uses Them On Mankind, (May): 15.

SEEING IT HELPS SAYING IT...

Boren, Jodie – How Would You Answer, (February): 11.
Boren, Jodie – "...Busy Here And There..." (March): 18.
Boren, Jodie – The Water's Free-but You Gotta Prime The Pump, (April): 15.
Boren, Jodie – Satan Uses Them On Mankind, (May): 15.
Boren, Jodie – Record Book, (November): 18.
Boren, Jodie – "In Every Thing Give Thanks", (December): 18.

SERMON OUTLINES

Moore, Tom – Saved To Serve, (February): 15.
Moore, Tom – The Descriptive Word Of God, (March): 22.
Moore, Tom – Obedience To The Truth, (April): 6.
Moore, Tom – Repentance, (May): 13.
Moore, Tom – The Valley Of The Dry Bones, (June): 22.
Moore, Tom – Division In The Church, (September): 18.
Moore, Tom – The Pivotal Command, (October): 18.
Moore, Tom – The Unshakeable Kingdom, (December): 20.

SIN

Yeatts, Steven E. – "Sin Taxes", (November): 9.

SOUL WINNING

Light, Michael – Do You Know How To Farm?, (December): 7.

SPEECH

Sweeten, Jeff – You "Ben – Had?", (June): 11.

SPRING BIBLE INSTITUTE LECTURES

Summers, Gary W. – Recommended Reading: "Jehovah's Witnesses", (June): 18.

STUDIES FROM THE BIBLICAL TEXT...

Denham, Daniel – Does Baptism Require A Verbal Formula, (February): 19.
Denham, Daniel – "The God Who Heareth Prayers," (March): 16.
Denham, Daniel – The Commission Of Joshua, (April): 16.
Denham, Daniel – Excursus On Free Will, (May): 16.
Denham, Daniel – Does Acts 2:41 Prove That The Holy Spirit Personally And Directly Indwells The Christian?, (July): 1.

STUDIES IN GREEK

Price, Wayne – "Thelo", (November): 17.
Price, Wayne – The First Day Of Every Week?, (December): 16.

TATTOOS

Box, Danny L. – Body Piercing And Tattoos, (July): 14.

THEOLOGY

Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.

Coats, Wayne – Bultmann And Demythology, (June): 17.
Coats, Wayne – A Bit More About Bultmann, (November): 11.
Coats, Wayne – Encounter Theology, (July): 12.

TOBACCO

Yeatts, Steven E. – “Sin Taxes”, (November): 9.

WHITTEN, EDDIE

Vaughn, Paul – Eddie Whitten: Faithful Soldier Of The Cross, (September): 19.

WITNESSING

Box, Danny L. – “Witnessing And Testifying”, (April): 11.

WORKS

Beard, Kevin D. – Grace And Works, (June): 6).

WORSHIP

Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.
Kline, Russell M. – Modesty In Worship, (July): 22.

AUTHORS

Alexander, Glenn – Disaster Relief Questions And Answers, (March): 8.
Beard, Kevin D. – Grace And Works, (June): 6).
Berard, Bob – Baptism With Holy Spirit And Baptism Into Christ Are They The Same Or Different?, (August): 14.
Bland, Billy – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Dedicated, Optimistic Evangelist, (January): 17.
Boren, Jodie – How Would You Answer, (February): 11.
Boren, Jodie – “...Busy Here And There...” (March): 18.
Boren, Jodie – The Water’s Free-but You Gotta Prime The Pump, (April): 15.
Boren, Jodie – Satan Uses Them On Mankind, (May): 15.
Boren, Jodie – Record Book, (November): 18.
Boren, Jodie – “In Every Thing Give Thanks”, (December): 18.
Box, Danny L. – Body Piercing And Tattoos, (July): 14.
Box, Danny L. – “Witnessing And Testifying”, (April): 11.
Boren, Jodie – Satan Uses Them On Mankind, (May): 15.
Brewer, Jerry C. – Skirting The Issue: (Or, “Tiptoeing Through The Tulip Patch Of Politically Correct, Obfuscated Generalities”), (February): 8.
Brown, David P. – “Never Give In, Never, Never, Never,” (January): 2.
Brown, David P. – “Anti-ism,” (February): 2.
Brown, David P. – Church Cooperation, Orphan Homes And Other Related Matters, (March): 2.
Brown, David P. – A Critique Of “Disaster Relief Questions And Answers,” (March): 10.
Brown, David P. – Do The Scriptures Authorize The Church To Contribute To Anything It Cannot “Oversee”?, (April): 2.
Brown, David P. – The “Saints Only” Doctrine, (May): 2.
Brown, David P. – Danny Lester Box – A Good Man Gone Home, (June): 1.
Brown, David P. – Is It A Sin To Eat In The Church Building?, (June): 2.
Brown, David P. – Michael Light To Serve As Assistant Editor Of CFTF, (July): 2.
Brown, David P. – Did You Know That In Order To Become A Christian You Must Be Baptized In The Holy Spirit?, (August): 2.
Brown, David P. – Thomas B. Warren And Holy Spirit Baptism, (August): 17.
Brown, David P. – Attempts To Alter God’s Laws On MDR, (September): 2.
Brown, David P. – A Medley Of Matters, (October): 2.
Brown, David P. – “We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men” (Acts 5:29), (November): 2.

Brown, David P. – “Time is Filled With Swift Transition”, (December): 2.
Brown, David P. – Reply to New Hope Road Church of Christ, (December): 5.
Cates, Annette B. – Dangerous Waters, (February): 14.
Cates, Annette B. – Out-Laws, In-Laws, In-Loves, (March): 20.
Cates, Annette B. – “Don’t Mess With My Heart”, (April): 20.
Cates, Annette B. – Lovin’s, (May): 20.
Cates, Annette B. – Our Topsy-Turvy World, (July): 20.
Cates, Annette B. – That Ringing Cell Phone!, (September): 22.
Cates, Annette B. – Swimming Along, (October): 20.
Cates, Annette B. – Man, This Is The Life!, (November): 19.
Cates, Annette B. – You Can’t Buy A Home, (December): 19.
Cates, Curtis – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Great Friend And Supporter Of The Memphis School Of Preaching, (January): 11.
Cauley, Kevin – The Argument Against The Doctrine Of Original Sin, (April): 8.
Choate, J.E. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. “Quintessential” Christian Journalist, (January): 6.
Choate, J.E. – Explaining “Change Agents” And “Change Agency”, (May): 8.
Choate, J.E. – Scriptural Patterns Of Polity, Worship And Practices For Churches Of Christ, (November): 1.
Choom, Kwan Tai – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A True Soldier Of Christ In The 20th Century, (January): 31.
Cline, Steven D. – “They Believed Others More Than Thoses Things Which Were Spoken by Paul”, (June): 15.
Coats, Wayne – Modernism Marches Onward, (February): 12.
Coats, Wayne – The Stream Continues With Pollution, (March): 19.
Coats, Wayne – Soup, Soap And Social Problems, (April): 10.
Coats, Wayne – What Happened At The Madison Church Of Christ, (May): 1.
Coats, Wayne – Bultmann And Demythology, (June): 17.
Coats, Wayne – Encounter Theology, (July): 12.
Coats, Wayne – A Bit More About Bultmann, (November): 11.
Cohn, Kenneth D. and Buddy R. Roth – Open Letter re: Bob Berard, (August): 20.
Conley, Darrell – I Remember Ira Rice, (January): 20.
Curd, Bruce C. – Avoiding And Evading The Most Obvious Truth, (June): 12.
Curd, Bruce R. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Brother And Friend, (January): 18.
Daniel, Alex – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A Missionary Who Loved Souls, (January): 29.
Davidson, Harrell – Black Strap Molasses And They Said What?, (January): 9.
Davis, Lee – Personal Remembrances of Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 24.
Denham, Daniel – Does Baptism Require A Verbal Formula, (February): 19.
Denham, Daniel – “The God Who Heareth Prayers,” (March): 16.
Denham, Daniel – The Commission Of Joshua, (April): 16.
Denham, Daniel – Excursus On Free Will, (May): 16.
Denham, Daniel – Does Acts 2:41 Prove That The Holy Spirit Personally And Directly Indwells The Christian?, (July): 1.
Denham, Daniel – Does One Receive Holy Spirit Baptism at the Same Time He is Baptized in Water for the Remission of Sins?, (August): 1.
Dishongh, V.B. – Personal Letter To David P. Brown, (July): 17.
Ee, Eddie – More Than A Brother, (January): 27.
Elkins, Garland – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – A Legend In His Own Time, (January): 12.

- Eskew, Victor M. – Bidding God Speed To Error, (February): 6.
- Graham, Colin – A Tribute To A Fine Christian Man... Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 30.
- Grider, Barry M. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. 1917-2001, (January): 13.
- Grider, Barry M. – In Defending The Faith, (November): 14.
- Hartwigsen, Brock – Hermeneutics Controversy – The Spirit Verses the Letter of the Law, (February): 7.
- Hackworth, Noah – Did Peter and Paul Preach Different Gospels?, (February): 9.
- Hackworth, Noah – What Is The Value Of Prayer?, (March): 21.
- Hackworth, Noah – With Liberty And Justice For All?, (April): 9.
- Hackworth, Noah – What Is The Valley Of Dry Bones?, (May): 12.
- Hackworth, Noah A. – What If There is No Church of Christ Where You Live?, (June): 21.
- Heartwigsen, Brock – I'm Not His Judge, (June): 9.
- Hightower, Terry M. – A Brief Response To Mettenbrink, (September): 14.
- Jackson, Bill – Expediences – And Hobbyism Proben!, (June): 24.
- Kline, Russell M. – Modesty In Worship, (July): 22.
- Liddell, Bobby – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Great Steward Of Time, (January): 16.
- Light, Michael – "We Can Make a Difference" Today, (September): 6.
- Light, Michael – What Are You Looking For? – In A Preacher That Is, (October): 6.
- Light, Michael – Practical Liberals, (November): 5.
- Light, Michael – Do You Know How To Farm?, (December): 7.
- Massey, Richard – Being Negative Can Be A Positive, (November): 15.
- McDade, Gary – "The Larger Community of Believers," (March): 1.
- McDade, Gary – Teach No Other Doctrine, (June): 10.
- McGarvey, J.W. – Immersion In The Holy Spirit, (October): 8.
- McWhorter, Mark – Rubel Shelly and Mission Work, Boy Scouts Policies, Homosexual Pastors, and Prayer Concerts, (April): 18.
- McWhorter, Mark – Rosie O'Donnell, Government Research, and Tim Woodroofs' Advice, (May): 19.
- McWhorter, Mark – Ecumenical News, the Intent of Rock Music, and lesbian Scout Leaders, (June): 20.
- McWhorter, Mark – Intolerance of Religious Diversity, Avoiding Biblical Language, and Disney World's Gay Day, (July): 18.
- McWhorter, Mark – President Bush and Homosexual Benefits, When Does Life Begin and More, (September): 17.
- McWhorter, Mark – The Church Of England, Christians Without Religion, Heaven And Hell, (October): 21.
- McWhorter, Mark – Cultural Marxists, Christian-Jewish Relations, (December): 17.
- Mettenbrink, James C. – Whoever Remarries First And Whoever Remarries Second, (September): 13.
- Newell, Clifford, Jr. – What Is Man?, (November): 16.
- Moore, Tom – Saved To Serve, (February): 15.
- Moore, Tom – Obedience To The Truth, (April): 6.
- Moore, Tom – The Descriptive Word Of God, (March): 22.
- Moore, Tom – 99.9%, (April): 5.
- Moore, Tom – Repentance, (May): 13.
- Moore, Tom – The Valley Of The Dry Bones, (June): 22.
- Moore, Tom – Division In The Church, (September): 18.
- Moore, Tom – The Pivotal Command, (October): 18.
- Moore, Tom – The Unshakeable Kingdom, (December): 20.
- Mosher, Keith A., Sr. – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Some Things I Believe About Him, (January): 15.
- Mowery, Dub – Attempting To Protect Their Name, (July): 8.
- Murrell, Jerry – "I Didn't Do It," (February): 4.
- Murrell, Jerry – A Post-modern Problem-The Relationship of Bias to Truth, (April): 7.
- New Hope Road Church of Christ, Letter to CFTF, (December): 4.
- Nichols Tim – The Passing Of Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 26.
- Parker, Lynn – We Will Listen To These Advisors, (February): 21.
- Parker, Lynn – American-izing Matthew, (September): 9.
- Parker, Lynn – "I Don't Read Brotherhood Rags", (October): 1.
- Price, Wayne – "Thelo", (November): 17.
- Price, Wayne – The First Day Of Every Week?, (December): 16.
- Renfro, Brandon – He Shrugged His Shoulders, (April): 1.
- Renfro, Brandon – The Romans 7 Clause, (September): 1.
- Silcox, Preston – Ira Y. Rice, Jr.'s Life Cut Short at 84, (January): 23.
- Silcox, Preston – The Declaration Of Deceit, (February): 1.
- Stancliff, Fred – Evangelism And Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 8.
- Summers, Gary W. – Recommended Reading: "Jehovah's Witnesses", (June): 18.
- Summers, Gary W. – Being Fair, (December): 1.
- Sweeten, Jeff – You "Ben – Had?", (June): 11.
- Travis, Joe F. – Are You A Bell Ringer?, (December): 14.
- Traw, Dorsey – My Tribute To Ira Y. Rice, Jr., (January): 31.
- Vaughn, Paul – Adron Doran: Educator, Legislator, Preacher, Historian, Faithful Husband, (February): 16.
- Vaughn, Paul – The Church At Poole, (March): 14.
- Vaughn, Paul – The Importance Of The Gospel Meeting Restoration History, (April): 13.
- Vaughn, Paul – John Allen Gano Chose God Over Family, (May): 14.
- Vaughn, Paul – They Are Too Nondenominational, (July): 16.
- Vaughn, Paul – Eddie Whitten: Faithful Soldier Of The Cross, (September): 19.
- Vaughn, Paul – "Uncle Jake" Starling, (October): 17.
- Vaughn, Paul – The Establishment Of The Hawesville Church Of Christ, (December): 10.
- Weir, Marvin – Religions Are Retooling To Keep Pace With Fast-Changing World!, (June): 8.
- Whitten, Eddie – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. – Reflections, (January): 22.
- Whitten, Eddie – The Blessing Of Repentance, (February): 22.
- Whitten, Eddie – My Responsibility, (April): 21.
- Whitten, Eddie – The Cycle Of History, (May): 21.
- Whitten, Eddie – Pride: A Lurking Danger, (July): 23.
- Whitten, Eddie – Little Child Shall Lead Them, (October): 22.
- Whitten, Eddie – Some Things I Have Learned, (November): 21.
- Whitten, Eddie – Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve, (December): 22.
- Yeatts, Steven E. – "Sin Taxes", (November): 9.
- Young, Tyler – Living In Sin, (July): 10.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

STEVE FLATT, THE CHIEF PRIESTS, AND PONTIUS PILATE

Jerry C. Brewer

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them, the potter's field to bury strangers in (Matthew 27:1-6).

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it (Matthew 27:24).

The chief priests who paid Judas to betray Christ, Pontius Pilate who absolved himself of any responsibility in Christ's death, and David Lipscomb University's President **Steve Flatt** have a few things in common. That is apparent from the following letter:

November 18, 2002

Dear Brethren, A recent Associated Press article distributed statewide detailed my appointment to a task force charged with determining how funds generated by a potential state lottery will be used to assist stu-

dents as they pursue a college or university education. There are several points I wish to make clear.

I have always been opposed to a lottery. I believe that a lottery is the most regressive and unfair system of taxation our state government could employ. I will continue to oppose a lottery as public debate continues on this issue. I was systematically appointed to the task force because of my roles as board chair of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, and board member for the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation.

Despite my preference, the state's voters have indicated that they favor a lottery. If the lottery is approved, hundreds of thousands of dollars in public funds will Tennessee students who wish to earn a college or university education.

My role on this task force will be to insure that the administration of these funds is balanced and considers the needs of students who wish to attend one of 35 private institutions in Tennessee, including Lipscomb University and Freed-Hardeman University. I object to a lottery, the source of these funds. While I may find the source of these funds distasteful, as are many other sources of public funds, the good that can be accomplished by helping young people attend independent colleges and universities in the state is paramount.

I remain consistent in my opposition to a lottery as a source of public revenue. I also have concerns about

(Continued on Page 6)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

"Just the Facts Please, Just the Facts"

It is not unusual for me to get phone calls, emails, and letters when on the pages of *CFTF* we get specific—calling names and examining errors in which certain brethren are engaged. Those who are upset tend to respond via their emotions rather than from a rational mind-set based on a "thus saith the Lord" proposition.

It was, therefore, not unexpected when I received five phone calls and two emails from members of the Brown Trail Church of Christ. Their comments pertained to the January issue of *CFTF* wherein we dealt with the Brown Trail Church of Christ's practice of the false doctrine of reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders. If my memory serves me correctly, among other things, all of those who phoned me were incensed that some non-members of the church of Christ were among those who received the January 2003 issue of *CFTF*. As I have been informed the non-members were listed with the supporters' addresses because they had made contributions to Brown Trail's TV program. We did not knowingly send the paper to non-members. However, in view of what has transpired over many months in certain mixed assemblies containing Christians and non-Christians at Brown Trail, I am trying to determine why these fellows who phoned me really cared one way or the other about non-Christians being exposed to the "Brown Trail's dirty laundry." Maybe the brethren who phoned me will answer the following questions.

1. On Wednesday, June 19, 2002 did **Bobby Watts** (one of the Brown Trail elders) present material concerning the reaffirmation of the elders before an assembly comprised of Christians and non-Christians (hereafter designated as "mixed assembly")?

2. Before a mixed assembly at the Brown Trail Church building on Sunday morning June 23, 2002 after leading the closing prayer did **Jimmy McKenzie** (one of the Brown Trail elders at that time) make statements in opposition to the reaffirmation process? *Regardless of precautions taken or not taken in later Brown Trail assemblies to insure that non-Christians were absent, did all involved in the previously*

noted assembly know assuredly that non-Christians were absent?

3. Also, was a prepared statement, the design of which was to attempt to clear **David Miller** (former director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching) of all financial wrong doing read by **Dean Mannen** (a deacon)? Did brother Mannen read the aforementioned statement before a mixed assembly following the closing prayer at the Brown Trail Church building on Sunday morning June 23, 2002? Was brother Mannen's statement read at the direction of one of the elders, namely Bobby Watts?

4. At the 6:00 p.m. worship service on June 23, 2002 following about a ten minute sermon and after the invitation was offered, did **Maxie Boren** (Brown Trail's preacher) by the direction of four elders (Bobby Watts, **Phil Pope**, **Eddy Parker**, and **Guy Elliott**), mount the pulpit to respond to Jimmy McKenzie's statements in opposition to the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders given that morning? In said reply of about twenty minutes did brother Boren oppose and attempt to expose brother McKenzie's said morning statement? Was brother Boren's said response to brother McKenzie's aforementioned statement made before a mixed assembly? Did the elders who authorized brother Boren's aforesaid response to brother McKenzie's said statement take any precautions on June 23, 2002 to make sure that an "airing of Brown Trail's dirty laundry" not be done before non-Christians?

5. Following brother Boren's said response to brother McKenzie's aforementioned statement, did brother McKenzie come to the pulpit and resign from the eldership? Did brother McKenzie resign before a mixed assembly?

6. Following brother McKenzie's aforesaid resignation did brother **Daryl Barker** (an elder at the time) mount the pulpit and point out what he considered to be brother Boren's lies, omissions, and misleading statements? Following his comments did brother Barker resign the eldership? After Barker's resignation was the Lord's Supper then observed? Did the events noted in my previous questions two through six transpire before a mixed assembly?

7. Were there any criticisms of Bobby Watts, Dean Mannen or Maxie Boren for their comments and activities before a mixed assembly?

8. Was brother McKenzie criticized for delivering his statements opposing elder reevaluation and

In this Issue..

Steve Flatt, The Chief Priests, and Pontius Pilate Jerry C. Brewer	1
<i>Editorial...</i> Just the Facts Please David Brown	2
<i>Associate Editorial...</i> Some Topics Denominational Preachers Cannot Preach Michael Light	5
Was America Founded a Godless Nation? Darrell Conley	8
From a Brown Trail Member A Letter and My Response David Brown	10
A Study of II John 9-11 David Watson	14
Another New Testament Pattern Roelf L. Ruffner	15
<i>Sermon Outlines...</i> Am I a God at Hand and Not Afar Off (Jeremiah 23:23) Tom Moore	16
<i>Current Events that Concern Christians...</i> Roman Catholics Having a Hard Time Keeping Doctrinally Pure During College Years Jerry Murrell	19
<i>Restoration Reflections...</i> The Oracles of God Paul Vaughn	20
<i>One Woman's Perspective...</i> What Do You Say? Annette Cates	22
<i>The Last Word...</i> The One True Church Kent Bailey	23

reaffirmation before a mixed assembly at Brown Trail?

9. If it is such a bad thing for non-Christians to be exposed to trouble among and between Christians, did the men who phoned me protest to the Brown Trail elders and brother Boren about the actions as set out in the preceding eight questions before a mixed assembly at Brown Trail?

10. It is an established fact that the Brown Trail elders and Maxie Boren believe the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders as they have practiced it is scriptural. That being the case, if they were studying the Bible with a Lutheran with the full intent to convert that person to Christ, what would they teach the Lutheran about their scriptural authority to practice the reevaluation and affirmation of elders? Would it not be incumbent on any member of the Brown Trail congregation to give a reason from the scriptures to a Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, or any one else regarding why they practice the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders? If a Lutheran asks me why we do not believe and practice infant baptism, I am more than pleased to tell them. If a Lutheran asks me why we partake of the Lord's Supper only on the first day of the week, I am pleased to tell them. That being the case, why would members of the Brown Trail congregation be so upset because a Lutheran or any other denominationalist found out they were under fire because they are practicing what the present Brown Trail elders and Maxie Boren believe to be authorized by the scriptures? Moreover, if the hierarchy at Brown Trail had never deviated from the New Testament pattern there never would have been a problem regarding the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders. Why is it not the case that those who brought in the unauthorized innovation are the ones who are at fault? Are we to believe that anyone converted by the Brown Trail brethren will not be taught that the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders is scriptural? Are the Brown Trail elders, deacons, preacher, and members willing to say that they will teach those they convert that the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders is sin?

11. What will the students in the preacher's school be taught regarding the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders? By the conduct of the Brown Trail elders, her preachers, and the members who support them, may we not correctly conclude that the Brown Trail elders and Maxie Boren will teach them the same thing they have practiced and defended? That being the case, why should we not expect the graduates of the Brown

Trail School of Preaching to graduate from the school believing that the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders is part of the whole council of God that must be preached in the churches they serve as evangelists?

12. Would the present eldership at Brown Trail employ a director and teachers in the preacher's school who do not believe the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders as taught and practiced by the Brown Trail congregation, and who would teach against it?

13. Please tell us how faithful brethren may scripturally support the Brown Trail T V program, *Truth in Love*, when those who make and carry out policy at Brown Trail believe in the reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders as believed, taught, practiced, and defended by the present eldership, preacher, and members of the Brown Trail congregation?

In view of the thinking of some fine brethren may I remind them that the letters that comprise the New Testament were circulated throughout the churches of the first century? And, they were read in the assemblies of the saints. Are we to assume that before the Corinthian epistle could be read in the assembly of the church at Corinth they had to clear the house of all the non-Christians? Does anyone desire to affirm that the scriptures teach that the Corinthian epistle could only be read before Christians without non-Christians present in the assemblies of the church at Corinth? Please do not run over the babies as you race forward to affirm the previous proposition—especially Maxie Boren, the Brown Trail elders, and their defenders.

Is it not amazing to what ends certain brethren will go in their attempts to blame others for their mistakes? To these "weak sisters" whose emotions operate better than their intellects and rational powers, they would do well to realize they best compare to the British Prime Minister **Neville Chamberlain** when he came home from consulting with Hitler in Munich in 1938 and declaring he had obtained "Peace in our time." Indeed, how peaceful the next few years were. And, when some brethren who have some what of a reputation for standing for the truth and opposing error criticize us for our efforts to expose error, I borrow this comment from a friend as an appropriate answer to these do nothings: "*I like the way we did it rather than the way you did not do it.*"

—David P. Brown, Editor

SOME TOPICS DENOMINATIONAL PREACHERS CANNOT PREACH

As one considers the religious world around us there is little doubt that denominationalism is the prominent concept of Christianity in the mind of most. Regardless of its popularity, denominationalism is anti-scriptural. Christ clearly came to this earth to establish his (one) church (Matthew 16:13-19). When one is baptized God adds him to THE CHURCH (Acts 2:47).

Another problem with denominationalism is the fact that those who possess a creed are automatically in violation of the holy scriptures. The Bible is replete with passages which clearly magnify the scriptures as being all sufficient (II Timothy 2:15; II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:3; Jude 3; John 8:32; et al.). The existence of a creed or manual of faith implies that the Bible is not sufficient. This implication is blatantly false.

A creed by its very nature is a violation of scripture. A creed is either more than the Bible, in which case it is condemned (Deuteronomy 4:2; II John 9; Revelation 22:18) or it is less than, a subtraction from, the Bible in which case it is condemned (Deuteronomy 4:2; Matthew 15:9; Revelation 22:19). Creeds are a violation of God's divine will and therefore all who ascribe to a creed do so to their own peril.

There are other limitations inherent in denominationalism. For instance, denominational preachers are limited on what they can preach. Unlike faithful gospel preachers who can declare the whole council of God (Acts 20:27). There are several topics on which denominational preachers cannot touch.

BELIEVE ONLY WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE

As mentioned earlier there is not a single denominational preacher who can preach this from their pulpit. Where would he get the name of his denomination? Where would he find justification for ignoring what the Bible says about church government? Where would he find the distinct doctrines of his "church" that are different from other denominations? If he used only the Bible all such differences would dissipate. Giving lip service to the Bible while in effect ignoring its basic teaching is hypocrisy of the rankest sort.

OBEY ONLY WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE

Many denominational preachers deny the necessity of actual obedience. In spite of passages like I John 5:3, which states, "**This is the love of God, that WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS [emph. LML] and his commandments are not grievous.**"

And they even turn a deaf ear to Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21, "**Not every one that says unto me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven but HE THAT DOETH the will of my father which is in heaven.**" There are a host of other passages that stress the necessity of obedience (Acts 10:34-35; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; John 14:15; I Peter 1:22-23; Hebrew 5:8, 9; I John 2:4; Romans 6:16; James 2:24).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN AND NOTHING ELSE

As alluded to earlier the Bible knows nothing of hyphenated Christians. But in the denominational world we find "Baptist-Christians," "Methodist-Christians," "Episcopalian-Christians," and so on. When a member of a denomination asks "What are you?" and you answer, "I'm just a Christian" they usually get mad or frustrated. But the truth is they are not just a Christian, they are "hyphenated" Christians which you do not find in the Bible. Hence, they are not Christians at all. One of the glorious truths of Christ and his church is its unity. This unity is to be found in belief, judgment, and practice. Notice the word of the Spirit through the apostle Paul:

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 divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10).

Divisive denominational names and practices are ungodly and carnal, springing from Satan not God.

BE BAPTIZED AND WASH AWAY YOUR SINS

Though a few denominations do teach baptism for the remissions of sins the vast majority do not.

Though the Bible clearly teaches that baptism is the point at which sins are washed away (Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3-6) they still deny it. Most teach that one is saved prior to baptism and in doing so inadvertently teach that one is saved prior to having his/her sins washed away. We cannot be saved outside of Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) and we cannot get into Christ without baptism (Galatians 3:26, 27), therefore, we cannot be saved without being baptized into Jesus.

As a gospel preacher I can preach on the previous doctrines and all other doctrines and topics contained within the word of God; but the denominational

preachers cannot do so. They cannot because they are bound to their denominational creeds and traditions. Jesus warned against this in Matthew 15:9, "**But in VAIN do they worship me, TEACHING FOR DOCTRINE THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN [emp.LML].**" If you are currently living according to some denominational teaching, for the sake of your soul, please give serious consideration to these matters.

—Michael Light, *Assistant Editor*

STEVE FLATT, THE CHIEF PRIESTS....

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

the social and moral implications of taxes derived from other sources such as tobacco and alcohol. In the case of the lottery, the citizens of Tennessee have made the decision to overrule objections by me and many others. Since they have made that decision I want to do all I can within my responsibility to make certain that the students and families who need financial help in order to receive an education at Universities like Lipscomb are treated with equity in the administration of these funds.

I solicit your prayers — on behalf of our state, and on my behalf as I represent the Christian young people of our state who would benefit from increased funding of higher education scholarships.

Sincerely, Stephen F. Flatt
President ("Lipscomb's President,"
www.freewebs.com/mountaincitycoc)

For its shameless lack of moral principles and its prototypical, postmodern, political correctness, few things can compare with this letter. Flatt is apparently devoid of moral scruples as manifested by his compromise with legalized sin in Tennessee.

I have always been opposed to a lottery. I believe that a lottery is the most regressive and unfair system of taxation our state government could employ. I will continue to oppose a lottery as public debate continues on this issue.

His "opposition" to a lottery is not based on the fact that gambling is sin, but on its "regressive and unfair system of taxation." That's the same argument we heard out here in Oklahoma when Democratic Govern-

nor, **Brad Henry**, wanted a lottery to fund education (In Oklahoma the lottery was defeated—Editor). How grateful we all ought to be that Flatt will "continue to oppose a lottery," even though he has no moral conscience about its sinfulness. His drooling over the possibility of funds for his own school betrays his duplicity, he's "agin' it" but does not mind using its funds. At least that kind of hypocrisy did not typify the chief priests!

He's like the driver who picked up a hitch hiker and after they had gone a mile or so, the driver pulled a bottle of moonshine from under the seat, pulled out a gun and held it on his passenger and demanded he take a drink. Scared out of his wits, the passenger took a big swig, nearly choking on the fiery liquid that seared its way into his stomach.

"Now, will you do me a favor?" the driver asked.
"What's that?" the passenger responded.
"Will you hold the gun on me while I take a drink?"

Despite my preference, the state's voters have indicated that they favor a lottery. If the lottery is approved, hundreds of thousands of dollars in public funds will be made available to Tennessee students who wish to earn a college or university education.

He does not call the lottery sinful. It's just a matter of his own preference and since the voters of Tennessee approved it, he may as well get his share. Gambling is legal in Nevada. Would Flatt advocate that brethren out there install slot machines in their class rooms to get some of that money that may come in "despite their preference?" His reasoning is pure postmodern

theology. A lottery is not his "preference," but since the voters have okayed it, he may as well get his share. God's truth does not matter. After all, truth, in this postmodern world, is whatever one thinks it is.

My role on this task force will be to insure that the administration of these funds is balanced and considers the needs of students who wish to attend one of 35 private institutions in Tennessee, including Lipscomb University and Freed-Hardeman University. I object to a lottery, the source of these funds. While I may find the source of these funds distasteful, as are many other sources of public funds, the good that can be accomplished by helping young people attend independent colleges and universities in the state is paramount.

One wonders why those priests did not just appoint some kind of task force to insure that the administration of those 30 pieces of silver was fair and that deserving young people were helped. At least they had *some* scruples. **David Lipscomb, N. B. Hardeman, and A. G. Freed** would have fought gambling with every fiber of their souls, and we can be certain that none of them would have accepted money from legalized sin.

Flatt finds the "source of these funds distasteful" but he is willing to use those 30 pieces of lottery silver to fund his school. In his own words, this is "paramount" which means obtaining ill-gotten gain takes precedence over the truth of God because of "the good that can be accomplished by helping young people and independent universities." Flatt needs to answer Paul's question which **Darrell Broking** posed at the above website: "**Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**" (Romans 6:1). The DLU president apparently believes

it is fine to do evil, so long as good may come (Romans 3:8).

I remain consistent in my opposition to a lottery as a source of public revenue. I also have concerns about the social and moral implications of taxes derived from other sources such as tobacco and alcohol. In the case of the lottery, the citizens of Tennessee have made the decision to overrule objections by me and many others. Since they have made that decision I want to do all I can within my responsibility to make certain that the students and families who need financial help in order to receive an education at Universities like Lipscomb are treated with equity in the administration of these funds.

Perhaps Flatt has forgotten another group of citizens who long ago "made the decision to overrule" Pilate's objections. Or perhaps he believes he can cleanse his own hands of culpability by making "certain that the students and families who need financial help in order to receive an education at universities like Lipscomb are treated with equity in the administration of these funds."

Brethren who continue to support Flatt's school do no honor to the name of David Lipscomb. Lipscomb's devotion to the word of God no longer typifies the administration of the school that continues to bear his name. One wonders how long it will be before beer can be purchased on the DLU campus as it now can at Bethany College. After all, brethren may object to it, but think of the good than can come from its proceeds!

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Was America Founded As a Godless Nation?

Darrell Conley

Before the Washington march last fall the following was written.

Atheists, secularists and humanists from across the United States are planning a 'Godless Americans March on Washington' this fall to protest what they see as the growth of religion in U. S. culture and government, especially since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. 'We are participating in this march to reclaim the American nation as a secular nation because we feel it's being moved more and more to a religious nation,' said Katherine Bourdonnay, a spokeswoman for Council for Secular Humanism. 'While America has many religious roots, it was founded as a secular nation, with a distinct separation of church and state,' she said (Rick Docksai, CNSNews.com).

The first amendment to the Constitution says "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.... " It says nothing about separation of church and state. Besides, as the founders wrote it (not as the atheists have read it), the Constitution limited only the federal government, it did not limit the states. A number of early state constitutions required those who held office to make a confession of faith in God.

Listen to the intertwining of the United States and religion, and see if you believe there is "a distinct separation of church and state":

1620*

"Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, Voyage to plant the first colony in the northern Parts of Virginia, Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civil Body Politick..." (The Mayflower Compact).

1789

"It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the

people of the United States" (George Washington, in his first inaugural address).

1813

"The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were. . . the general principles of Christianity" (John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson).

1833

"The American population is entirely Christian, and with us Christianity and Religion are identified. It would be strange indeed, if with such a people, our institutions did not presuppose Christianity, and did not often refer to it, and exhibit relations with it" John Marshall, Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court 1801-1835, in a letter to Jasper Adams).

1835

"There is no country in the whole world, in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America: and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth" (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1, p. 294).

1905

"It is not exaggeration to say that Christianity in some of its creeds was the principle cause of the settlement of many of the colonies..." (David J. Brewer, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court 1889-1910, *The United States, a Christian Nation*, 1905, p. 19).

"In the common schools the Bible has been as much a textbook as the New England primer. It is only within very late years that any objection has been raised to its daily use" (*Ibid.* p. 61).

1947

"[T]his is a Christian Nation. More than a half century ago that declaration was written into the decrees of the highest court in this land. It is not without significance that the valiant pioneers who left Europe to establish settlements here, at the very beginning of their colonial enterprises, declared their faith in the Christian religion and made ample provision for its practice and for its support. The story of the Christian mission-

aries who in earliest days endured perils, hardship—even death itself in carrying the message of Jesus Christ to untutored savages is one that still moves the heart of men” (Harry S Truman, in a letter to Pope Pius XII).

1951

“The First Amendment... does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of Church and State. Rather, it studiously defines the manner, the specific ways, in which there shall be no concert opinion or dependency one on the other. That is the common sense of the matter” (William O. Douglas, Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, in *Zorach v. Clausen*, 343 U. S. 306).

[We] are a religious people and our institutions presuppose a Supreme Being” (William O. Douglas).

The Ten Commandments hang in the U. S. Supreme Court courtroom. Both the houses of Congress

begin every session with a prayer. And **Thomas Jefferson’s** words are still inscribed in the Jefferson Memorial:

“God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep”

It is clear to anyone who understands the New Testament, that America has never truly been a Christian nation. And now, more than ever, it is an immoral and godless society. But this is no excuse to allow atheists and humanists to slander our history. This country did have religious roots and, as some of us can remember, was much more religious thirty and more years ago than recently. Let us rejoice in any change of direction toward God that we perceive in our country and take the opportunity to teach the truth to the lost.

*Quotations taken from material by **Dr. Robert Waggoner**.

—97 Florence St.
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- 7:00 PM “Does True Science Contradict the Bible”
Jerry Murrell
- 8:00 PM “Scientific Evidence of Existence of God”
Keith Mosher

Saturday, April 26:

- 9:00 AM “Scientific Evidence of the Creation of the Universe”
Larry Albritton
- 10:00 AM “Scientific Evidence of the Origin of Life”
Jerry Murrell
- 11:00 AM “Scientific Evidence of the Great Flood”
Curtis Cates

NOON LUNCHBREAK

- 1:30 PM OPEN FORUM (panel of speaker)
- 2:30 PM “Attempts to Harmonize Scientific Theory with the Bible”
Don Treadway
- 3:30 PM “Scientific Attempts to Discredit the Bible”
Richard Guill

Sunday, April 27:

- 9:30 AM “Confirmation of Scientific References in the Bible”
Keith Mosher
- 10:30 AM “Confirmation of Historical References in the Bible”
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FROM A BROWN TRAIL MEMBER A LETTER AND MY RESPONSE

[I received the following email on February 6, 2003. It is from a sister in Christ. She is a member of the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Hurst, Texas. I have removed her name and address from her email. I did not include them because they are not necessary to accomplish my intended purpose..

I decided to print this sister's email and my reply to it because of the nature of her response to our January 2003 issue of CFTF. Among other things, it evidences the lack of thinking done by certain people. The sister has not the slightest realization that her email is nothing more than an emotional response devoid of evidence and reason. Moreover, it evidences the inconsistent attitude and conduct of some in the church as they employ and practice on others the error they think they see in them. They are oblivious to the fact that they are condemning condemnation. Thus, they are not really opposed to condemning something or someone. It is really a matter of opposing and condemning whomsoever or whatsoever they desire to oppose and condemn.

*This sister thinks she sees in the articles of the January 2003 issue of CFTF articles from people who are "interested only in spreading hurt" in their "vicious articles." She has no compunction of conscious in possessing an attitude and conducting herself in a way that she is sure she sees and condemns in others. However, she is blind to the same thing in her own life. Without flinching she judges motives and thinks herself godly in the doing of it. She does not think that anyone else has problems as large and painful as her's are. Thus, she justifies herself in her vindictiveness. She might as well have said, "My pain is so terrible and my problems are so insurmountable, you must smile and utter not a sound of protest while I gnaw the flesh from your bones." No wonder Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray that he **"be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith"** (II Thessalonians 3:2). As long as this kind of hypocritical attitude and false concept of love exists in the church, especially among preachers and elders, there will always be a seat reserved for Satan in a congregation (Revelation 2:13). -Editor]*

We received your publication today. Kindly remove us from your mailing list.

The name is incorrect—you must have gotten it from someone who was interested only in spreading hurt in your vicious articles. So we are happy that you didn't take the time to at least get our name right.

Please allow us to continue to worship God without being constantly barraged by bitter former members of our congregation, who obviously aren't interested in furthering the cause of Christ, but only in hurting those who chose to stay at Brown Trail. Websites devoted solely to hurting our congregation, your devotion to an entire issue of Contending for the Faith regarding Brown Trail—appalling lack of christian love and an abundance of mean spiritedness.

I am told that you will not even discuss the ar-

ticles except in writing. How cowardly and unfair—you've made up your minds, sent this junk to everyone you can think of and have no plans to listen to anyone else's view.

Maxie Boren and all of our elders are the most loving group of men we have ever known and your treatment of them is unconscionable.

We are currently battling my husband's cancer and we don't need your completely disgusting publication to add to his stress.

We have always looked to Contending for the Faith as a wonderful source—no longer. We had the wonderful pleasure of traveling to Nashville years ago and hearing Ira Rice—I'm sure he would be crushed to know how you've chosen to use his work.

Please remove us from your list immediately.

February 11, 2003

Dear Sis. _____,

I am certainly sorry to know of the battle your husband is fighting with cancer. I know that such puts a terrible strain on you and certainly on him. Less than two years ago my father died of cancer. Due to mother's condition we had to bring her to the Houston area for care. She is in private care now because of her dementia brought on by "mini-strokes," seizures, and Alzheimer's. Recently she fell and broke her hip. Presently she is recuperating from hip replacement surgery in a rehabilitation hospital. As I begin to write this response to your email I have just returned from the hospital where I fed my mother lunch. And, it does not make me feel very good to see both of her hands tied to the railings of the bed so she, in her deranged state, will not pull out the various tubes to which she is connected. There is nothing pleasant about seeing her in her own world and out of touch with reality or at times hallucinating. Recently she has had a good day or two. She was not fighting and was able to smile and communicate to a certain extent when my wife and I visited her. We also had one of our grandchildren with us and she seemed to pleasantly respond to him. Indeed, we all have burdens to bear. It is a part of living in the flesh in this world. Nevertheless we are expected to remain sober minded, fair, objective, and rational and always conduct ourselves according to God's word (Col. 3:17). You and yours will be in our prayers.

It is obvious that your husband's illness is not such that it kept you from writing your e-mail to me. And, certainly my mother's terrible condition does not hinder me from doing a work that must go on regardless of other tremendous concerns and pressures brought on us by the vice like grip into which life sometimes gets us. Moreover, though under the duress of your present family conditions I am sure that you will read my response closely even as I have read your email to me.

As you requested your name and address will certainly be removed from the Contending for the Faith mailing list.

I will now address your objections to the January 2003 issue of Contending for the Faith that you recently received.

1. When I heard that so many names in the addresses of Brown Trail Members had been changed I too was puzzled and wondered what had happened. Indeed, we had never had this kind of problem. Then, I learned that the name change in the addresses was a problem throughout all of our CFTF mailing list. It seems that the fault was in the software we used for handling our mailing list. In the mailing program some way a "glitch" or whatever you call it, in the software

pulled names from one name and put them with the last names and addresses of others. How it happened I do not know. I only hope it does not happen again, but with computers who knows one way or another. Thus, your assumption (that for which you had no proof) that the person who supplied us with the Brown Trail addresses is to blame for the address error is incorrect. Sometimes this kind of sad conduct takes place when people are so strongly prejudiced against something or someone that they draw conclusions that suit them, but the evidence does not warrant their conclusion. Furthermore, when I learn of such action coming from people who think of themselves as loving, merciful, kind, not harsh or mean spirited, I would find their inconsistency humorous if such action was not hypocritical, sad, and sinful.

One person, a long time member of Brown Trail, phoned to have his name removed from our mailing list. Which request, as with you, we are more than happy to fulfill. He too assumed that the one who provided the Brown Trail mailing list to us was the culprit behind the name "glitch" in the soft ware that produced the error on our address labels of the 2003 January issue. He also told me that every article but one in the January 2003 issue was harsh and mean spirited. He said we were on "the attack." Indeed, we were and are on the attack (Jude 3), but so was he and so are you. Since he was not hesitating to be frank, candid, specific, and pointed in his critical and condemning words to me, I asked him how his oral statements to me differed from what he thought he saw in our printed words in the articles he considered to be harsh. He readily admitted his statements to me were harsh and that he was using them on me because we employed them in the January 2003 issue. I was tempted to say with that kind of reasoning, are you planning to run for public office, but I restrained myself and decided to inform our readers about it in hopes that someone could possibly explain to my feeble mind the scriptural "rhyme and reason" to such a thought process. Well, I then mustered up my courage and lack luster logic and dared asked him how it was that he could employ on me that which he considered erroneous in my conduct. He answered that he had sinned in his approach toward me in using on me what he thought he saw in the articles he had in mind. I am glad that he saw the error of his way on that matter. And, maybe, just maybe, he and others (you too) will also realize the error in the doctrine of re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders as taught and practiced by the Brown Trail preacher and elders. By the way, this caller placed the reevaluation reaffirmation of elders' doctrine in the area of expediency, saying such action was inexpedient. He also placed the

difference brethren have over the reevaluation reaffirmation of elders and the differences among faithful brethren over the manner or mode of the indwelling of Holy Spirit in the same category. I do not know how any hermeneutical or logical principles allow for such a parallel, but nothing my brethren do or do not do surprises me any more. It is a tragic thing when I think of how much the Lord's church needs to learn regarding respect for, the importance of, how to ascertain, and how to apply Bible authority in all we believe and practice (Colossians 3:17). And, others who phoned me had little or no idea about the meaning and application of I Timothy 5:19 as it relates to removing men from the eldership who have no right to be there. This lack of understanding is abundantly evident in brother Boren and Brown Trail's eldership.

2. Sister _____, have you read the articles in the January issue of CFTF? If you did, did you understand them? If you have read and understood them, and in view of your remarks in your February 6, 2003 email to me, I may only conclude that you believe and support the false doctrine and practice of elder reevaluation and reaffirmation that the Brown Trail elders have carried out and continue to uphold.

3. You write we (the writers in the January 2003 CFTF) desire to "hurt" the Brown Trail church by what we published in our January 2003 issue of CFTF. Sister _____, were you trying to "hurt" the writers in CFTF when you said we were "cowardly" and "unfair;" when you said that CFTF was "appalling;" when you called our articles "vicious" and "junk;" when you wrote that we (writers) "have no plans to listen to anyone else's view"? Sister _____, were you kind, tender, loving, not harsh, and certainly not bitter when you wrote the previous words about the writers of the January issue of CFTF? Also, were you loving, tender, kind, not harsh, and not bitter when you wrote of those who left Brown Trail because of the elder reevaluation reaffirmation issue as "bitter former members of our congregation, who obviously aren't interested in furthering the cause of Christ, but only in hurting those who chose to stay at Brown Trail"? Did Paul seek to "hurt" Peter when he withstood Peter to the face because of his (Peter's) sin in the church at Antioch of Syria (Gal. 2:11)? Did Paul seek to destroy the reputation of Peter when he wrote about Peter's sin at Antioch and reported it in a letter to all the churches of Galatia? Did Paul seek the hurt of the church in Corinth when he said what he did to them in the First Corinthian epistle? You know, Sister _____, when these letters were originally written they were to be circulated and read to all the churches of Christ. I wonder how Peter felt when he knew that his sin was in a letter written to all the churches of

Galatia and would forever make up part of the New Testament of Christ. On and on we could go in listing frank, candid, bold, pointed material from the New Testament, which material gives us proper guidance in showing our love to those in sin and who teach false doctrine. As the Lord asked many of his day, have you never read in the scriptures regarding these things previously mentioned?

In your February 6, 2003 email to me you did not mention the doctrinal issue with which the January 2003 issue of CFTF was concerned. You did not attempt to show where we have misused the scriptures or reasoned incorrectly in exposing the elder reevaluation reaffirmation doctrine. All you really did was call us names and practice on us what you think you saw in us.

4. Sister _____, you continued this kind of response in your email to me when you wrote that we have an "appalling lack of Christian love and an abundance of mean spiritedness." In view of your criticism and condemnation of our writing why did you write to me in your email as you did? You may or may not have read brother Boren's nine page single spaced letter dated November 20, 2002, but I would like to know how his letter differs in content and wording from the writing in CFTF. Does he or you consider his pointed, frank, candid, critical words, and name calling hurtful, vicious, bitter, appalling, without Christian love, mean spirited, cowardly, unfair, junk, and disgusting? Of course you will recognize those words of the last sentence to be your words. Jesus said, "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). And, I know you do not consider, nor would you describe brother Boren's November 20, 2002 letter with the words with which you "lovingly" labeled us. I know this because you wrote, "Maxie Boren and all of our elders are the most loving group of men we have ever known and your treatment of them is unconscionable." I am glad to know that your choice of words to describe us is "conscionable." And, pressures or no pressures, do your words in your email to me not tell me something about your attitude toward us and your objectivity or the lack of it in dealing with us? If you or others think that it does not, what would you have to write to us for us to determine your "sweet" or "sour" disposition toward us? In view of your accusations, would you or someone else who agrees with you take the time to site the specific differences in brother Boren's material and ours? Since, no doubt, you wrote your email to me with love and kindness surely it is not asking too much of you or anyone else who thinks and writes from their own hearts as you have done.

5. In closing your letter you decided to engage in

another speculation not supported by the evidence. This seems to be something that some brethren just cannot be kept from doing. Concerning the late brother **Ira Rice** you wrote, "I'm sure he would be crushed to know how you've chosen to use his work." Knowing brother Rice as I did, when I first read your previously quoted comment I could almost hear brother Ira's basso chuckle and see the smile cross his face as he would think about how I am worse in your eyes than what various and sundry brethren over the years had labeled him to be. What you seemingly do not know is that the front-page article by brother **Dub McClish** in the January 2003 issue of CFTF was a chapter that originally was written for and appears in 1997 Bellview Church of Christ lecturership book. (Please note the first endnote appearing in brother McClish's article.)

Sister _____, Bellview was Ira Rice's sponsor church until his death. He spoke on the same lecturership in which brother Dub presented this material orally. Moreover, brother Rice had a chapter in the same book in which brother McClish's chapter appears. He supported brother McClish in his and our opposition to the false reevaluation reaffirmation doctrine as taught and practiced by the Brown Trail preacher and elders. Remember brother McClish's material was dealing with the first time (over ten years ago) that Brown Trail practiced this unauthorized act. If brother Boren and the present elders and many in the present membership had read brother McClish's material in 1997 maybe, just maybe, they would not have plunged the Brown Trail Church into the mess through which it has gone.

I do think that brother Rice would be "crushed to know" that those who have thought so much of him and his work over the years, decide to oppose it when they find themselves holding a doctrine that is contrary to New Testament teaching and CFTF, without respect of person, opposes it. But as brother Rice has said so many, many, times: "You just can't warn some people." And, I intend to do and declare the same thing as he did, the Brown Trail church as proof that such is the case not with standing.

5. Yes, it is very true that I do not intend to get into much of an oral discussion on such matters (though to some extent I have). However, I will do so if all other things being scripturally equal in writing regarding such things as the false reevaluation reaffirmation doctrine. That should be obvious by the January 2003 issue of CFTF. After almost 38 years of preaching and all that such work entails, I know how balled up and mixed up people get for whatever reason and for no reason when they attempt to report what took place in a conversation, especially in a give and take discussion of such a subject as this one. Dealing with this matter

only in writing does not in any way mean that we will not deal properly with the matter. However, it does mean that those who want to have a serious discussion are going to have to write down what they have to say and sign it. And, I thank you for doing just that. Moreover, I am glad that the news is spreading among the present Brown Trail members that such is the way I will respond in most instances to this matter.

If brother Boren would like to have a oral discussion on the polemic platform let him affirm a proposition that states precisely what he believes and let the present Brown Trail elders back him on it. We can then have the proper kind of oral discussion and whomever of the members of the Brown Trail congregation that desires to orally visit with me about this matter can be available to give him all the help he desires in saying whatever he wants to say in affirmation of his reevaluation reaffirmation of elders doctrine in a forum that is conducted decently and in order. However, I will not hold my breath till that happens. Because I learned along time ago "muley cows don't hook."

Sister _____, I close this response to your email by once again declaring that we seek the repentance of all at Brown Trail or anywhere else if they espouse and support the reevaluation and affirmation of elders' doctrine as taught and practiced by the present leadership at Brown Trail. However, if there is no repentance then we will continue to mark the congregation just as the New Testament directs all Christian to do (Romans 16:17). We will continue to **"use great plainness of speech"** for the same reason Paul did whether anyone likes it or not (II Corinthians 3:12). We will continue to practice a love that **"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"** (I Corinthians 13:6). We will do our best not to practice some sort of sick, sweet, syrupy, subjective, mushy, sentimentalism that bears no relationship in any form or fashion to the "agape" love of the New Testament (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-5; 5:2, 3; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Many people need to be hearing from preachers **"you have made my father's house a den of thieves"** However, they are hearing for the most part **"consider the lilies of the field."** Mankind has a history of saying the wrong thing to the wrong people and some of them are the "good words and fair speech" preachers and spineless elders in the Lord's church. And, the people in general who are ignorant of God's word love to have it so (Hosea 4:6-17).

In Christian Love,
David P. Brown

—P.O. Box 2357
Spring, Texas 77383-2357

A STUDY OF II JOHN 9-11

David Watson

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

False teachers have for years been trying to sustain the idea that the phrase “the doctrine of Christ” in the above passage only applies to the doctrine or teaching about Christ (his Deity and his coming in the flesh) and that it does not apply to the doctrine or teaching from Christ (that which Christ taught personally and through others). It is important, therefore, to know whether the “doctrine” or “teaching” of Christ in II John 9-11 refers only to the teaching about Christ or to the teaching from Christ.

A. T. Robertson, noted Greek scholar, unequivocally states: “Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is that standard of Christian teaching as the walk of Christ is the standard for the Christian’s walk (I John 2:6).” (Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. VI).

Joseph Henry Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon says it is “the doctrine which has God, Christ, the Lord for its author and supporter,” listing II John 9 as an example of this usage.

In Matthew 16:12 we have “the teaching of the Pharisees.” We read: “**Then understood they how**

that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees.” The word here is the same which is translated “doctrine” or “teaching” in II John 9. If the doctrine or teaching of Christ in II John 9 means only the doctrine or teaching about Christ, then does the doctrine or teaching of the Pharisees in Matthew 16:12 mean only the doctrine or teaching about the Pharisees? If you can see through a ladder, then you can see plainly that the doctrine or teaching of the Pharisees means that which the Pharisees taught. Likewise, the doctrine or teaching of Christ in II John 9-11 means more than the doctrine teaching about Christ. It refers the doctrine or teaching which Christ did and which he commissioned in others.

The doctrine or teaching of Christ in II John 9-11 has the same meaning in the latter part of the passage as it does in the first part of the passage. When John writes, “**He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son,**” does he mean that to abide in the teaching is to continue only in the belief that Jesus came in the flesh? Or does it mean that we are to continue to walk in the truth (II John 4; III John 4), and to abide in the teaching of which Christ is the author and giver? To abide in the doctrine of Christ is the same in context as to “**walk in truth.**” To abide in the doctrine of Christ is to “**walk in the light, as he is in the light**” (I John 1:7).

There is an emphasis in the New Testament upon our continuing faithfulness—our abiding in the doctrine. The early disciples continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine or teaching (Acts 2:42). If we walk in the light (keep on walking in the light) then we have fellowship one with another (I John 1:7) and we have fellowship with the father and the son (II John 9-11) so that the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us (keep on cleansing us) from all sin.

There is a definite correlation in the scriptures between doctrine and fellowship. We cannot simply ignore doctrinal differences and have the kind of fellowship taught in the word of God. Let us diligently strive to learn the lessons taught in II John 9-11.

—101 S. Walnut
Sapulpa, Oklahoma 74066

I hope to be able to send Contending for the Faith to more people this year. There are so few who will read the good solid publications. God bless all those who help make this such a good bulletin.

*In Christ,
Ernest E. Armstrong
P.O. Drawer 2188
Pecos, TX 79772*

ANOTHER NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN

Roelf L. Ruffner

In this present age of “tolerance” and “harmony” it has become fashionable among brethren to have the same attitude regarding religious error. It is seen as “unloving” to confront liberalism and digression; which at this very moment are ripping apart the church of our Lord. It is considered “not Christ-like” to rebuke and reprove. We must have harmony and peace at any price. How alien this position would have been to the church of Christ of the 1st Century A.D.! **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”** (Romans 16:17).

A case in point may be found in the book of Acts, Chapter 15. Here Luke and the Holy Spirit record how the church at Antioch of Syria faced error. False teachers from Jerusalem had come down to Antioch and were confusing the Gentile brethren, saying they must be circumcised (become Jews) in order to be saved (Verse 1). Paul and Barnabas lit into these Judaizers like the proverbial “hen on a June bug.” They **“had no small dissension and disputation with them”**(verse 2). I can just imagine how some modern brethren would have confronted Paul: “Brother Paul, these are our brethren! They may see the Bible differently than we do, but we all love the Lord. Can’t we just all agree to disagree?” But I am thankful for the divine example of how we should defend the gospel. There was no compromise with error!

But the brethren at Antioch wanted to snuff this heresy out at the source—Jerusalem. So they sent Paul, Barnabas, and Titus to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the brethren there (Galatians 2:1). Again, I can imagine how some brethren today would react: “We have no right to go to these men’s home congregation. We must remember the principle of congregational autonomy!” Yet I notice that the brethren chose to follow the principle of brotherly love laid out by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17.

With an unflinching love for the truth in their bosoms the delegation headed to Jerusalem. This took courage. The congregation in Jerusalem was the home of these false teachers. It was led by the elders and apostles. Men who had been with the Lord. James, the half-brother of Jesus was one of them. The human impulse would have been for these men to protect their own; those “zealous of the law”(Acts 21:20).

But what followed is one of the great examples of Christian unity found in the pages of the Bible. After hearing from both sides, Peter arose and with righteous indignation condemned the Judaizers. **“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of**

the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” (verse 10). How refreshing it must have been for Paul to see an elder and fellow apostle denounce these false teachers. This attribute is one of the qualifications of an elder, **“that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers”**(Titus 1:9 ASV).

Still further assurance was offered by James. Quoting and interpreting scripture, he added that Gentiles could enter the kingdom as they were, not as proselytized Jews. He proposed a letter to the Gentile congregation affirming their freedom from the law of Moses. The brethren in Jerusalem did not coddle or protect these workers of error. They were condemned and marked for all to see!

How purifying and enlightening New Testament Christianity is! Elders, preachers, and members of the body of Christ should take note of this pattern. If it were followed today there would be far less “subverting of souls” and far fewer false teachers flourishing in the house of God (Acts 15:24). Remember the pattern!

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AM I A GOD AT HAND AND NOT AFAR OFF?

(Jeremiah 23:23)

Tom Moore

I. Introduction

- A. In the thirteenth year of Josiah, Jeremiah was called to his prophetic office in about 627 B.C.
1. His preaching was done during early Babylonian period, through the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.), and into the captivity.
 2. The work of this great prophet was God's last effort to bring Judah to repentance, and thus avert the coming calamities of destruction and captivity.
- B. In Jeremiah 22, Jeremiah had been denouncing the sins of the sons and grandsons of Josiah.
1. Josiah had been a righteous king on the throne of Judah, whose death was mourned by Jeremiah (II Chronicles 35:25), but his sons were wicked men who ruled by force and corruption.
 2. In chapter 23 we find Jeremiah setting forth a series of prophecies and condemnations against the civil and religious leaders of God's people.
 3. In this chapter God places the blame on the:
 - a. Pastors (Jeremiah 23:1-2)
 - b. Prophets and priests (Jeremiah 23:9-16)
 - c. Concerning these false prophets, the Lord said ... Jeremiah 23:21.
- C. It was in this time of great apostasy that the Lord said ... Jeremiah 23:23-24.
1. Did the false prophets think that God would not be aware of their evil doings?
 2. Notice God said:
 - a. "I found" ... v. 11
 - b. "I have seen" ... vs. 13-14
 - c. "I have heard" ... v. 25
 3. God is announcing that there is nothing that happens in this world that escapes his attention.
- D. From this proclamation of God we learn many valuable truths—two of these are:
1. God is omnipresent
 2. God has interest and knowledge of all that occur on the earth and in our lives, whether it be good or bad.
- E. Let us now look more closely at what the Almighty means when he says, "Am I a God

at hand and not afar off?"

II. Discussion

- A. What is the meaning of omnipresence?

1. **Augustus Hopkins Strong** in his book *Systematic Theology* states

"...that God, in the totality of his essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication of division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts."

2. **Walter Thomas Conner** in his book *Revelation and God* writes, "The omnipresence of God has reference to God's immanence in the spatial and temporal order, and means that he is immanent in that order at all points of time and space. The omnipresence of God means that he is everywhere present in space and time. There is no point of space, no moment of time, where God is not present."
3. Simply put, omnipresent means "that God is everywhere at the same time—there is no place he is not—and as a result there is not one thing that goes on that God is not aware of."

B. THE FACT OF GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

1. Psalm 139:1-10
2. Proverbs 15:3
3. Acts 17:22-28

C. THE EFFECT OF THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD

1. Since we know that God is everywhere and that he is interested in the happens of this world, what effect should this have on our lives?
2. It should be a deterrent to sin.
 - a. Knowing that God sees all, knows all, and



is in every place—should this not cause us to want to speak better, act better, and think better?

- b. Job said concerning God ... Job 23:15.
- c. Again, remember ... Proverbs 15:3.
- 3. It should give us great encouragement.
 - a. Genesis 28:15
 - b. Psalm 34:15-22
 - c. Psalm 115:9-12
 - d. Psalm 120:1
 - 1) There's the divine presence of the Lord in our lives, thus,
 - 2) Psalm 121:1-4
 - e. Because of the omnipresence of God we know that the word of Isaiah 25:4 are true.
 - f. Matthew 6:25-32
 - g. Matthew 28:20
- 4. The omnipresence should encourage us to believe in the providence of God.
 - a. I do not know all I would like to know about providence of God—but I know it exists.
 - 1) Joseph
 - 2) Esther
 - b. I know God can work things out providentially because he is omnipresent.
- 5. The fact of the omnipresence of God should put fear into the hearts of the wicked.
 - a. They cannot flee his presence.
 - 1) Adam and Eve tried (Genesis 3).
 - 2) Jonah tried (Jonah 1:3).
 - b. There will be no secret place to form ungodly plans—no hidden place to practice wickedness that God will not see.
 - c. This should put fear into the hearts of the wicked!

III. Conclusion

- A. To the ungodly the omnipresence and watchful eye of the Almighty bring about horror.
- B. To the faithful child of God the omnipresence and watchful eye of God brings us encouragement and motivation.

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Roman Catholics Having a Hard Time Keeping Doctrinally Pure During College Years

Jerry Murrell

There is a vast difference between Roman Catholicism and New Testament Christianity. If anyone doubts this assertion he should read the Spring Bible Institute's Lectureship book from 2000, *Roman Catholicism*. However, it seems that those who profess Catholicism are finding that they are recognizing the fact that their children who are sent to Catholic colleges and universities are losing their "doctrinal purity" during their time in school. The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) recently surveyed students at 38 of the 223 Catholic colleges in the United States concerning their stand on many issues. While we might rejoice to find that these students came to have a greater respect for the Bible than for the Pope after their years in school, this was not addressed by the survey.

REMARKABLE FINDINGS

The results of this survey were published in *Catholic World Review* (a self-described conservative Catholic publication) at <http://www.cwnews.com/cwreport/viewrec.cfm?RefNum=833&M=00>. The survey concerned 1997 incoming freshmen and 2001 graduation seniors. The survey found that:

In 1997, 45 percent of incoming freshmen at Catholic colleges said they support keeping abortion legal, with 55 percent opposed. Four years later, the same students were 57 percent pro-abortion, 43 percent pro-life. Similarly, students' support for legalizing homosexual marriages increased from 55 percent to 71 percent. Approval of casual sex increased from 30 percent to 49 percent.

As you can see the issues that concerned *Catholic World Review* are those where the Catholic position and that of the Bible are almost identical. The author of the article, **Patrick Reilly**, went on to observe "Catholic colleges ought to be alarmed when most students thumb their noses at Church teaching."

"CHANGE AGENT" UNIVERSITIES

I wonder what such a survey would find if it were to be conducted on "Our" college campuses such as Lipscomb, Abilene, Pepperdine, and the rest? If the results were similar would we be surprised to find that professors at "our" universities were not alarmed when most students thumb their noses at the teaching of the Bible on these issues? Reilly seemed to be puzzled

when he commented that, "By and large, students graduating from Catholic colleges ought to have views more in line with Catholic teaching, assuming that the Church's teaching is accurately presented and lived out by college faculty and staff." I know very little about Catholic universities, but have matriculated at three Universities' that claim to see themselves affiliated with of churches of Christ. I can tell the readers of *Contending for the Faith*, that one cannot assume that the teaching of the Bible will be presented in these Universities.



Reilly observed: "The pro-abortion politician who is given an opportunity to gain some favorable publicity on a Catholic campus by speaking on world peace, the environment, or women's rights seems almost obligatory for many colleges." On "our" college campuses, you can see many interesting speakers who are given credibility before the student body by being allowed to speak on campus. For example, the Bible is clear in teaching that women are not to teach over men (I Timothy 2:11ff). However, at the 2003 ACU Lectureship, **Beth Phillips**, one of the key speakers, spoke to audiences composed of men and women. The local newspaper in Abilene might lead one to think that she was the main speaker at the lectureship http://www.reporter-news.com/abil/nw/local/article/0,1874,ABIL_7959_1774612,00.html. The *Abilene Reporter-News* calls lectureship speaker Beth Phillips "an ACU graduate who is working on a doctorate in Christian ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif." Her sermons were on the ethic of Christ as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Since, very few congregations associated with churches of Christ would allow women to preach from their pulpits, why does ACU do this? From their "ivory towers" are they trying to change the church? To ask the question is to answer it.

Concerning the changes students at Catholic colleges undergo Reilly said, "All this is natural at Catholic colleges that showcase dissenters as campus lecturers." However the college leaders would not present

what they are doing in this way. They say that “colleges should allow free and open discussion of all issues, and saying that this process inevitably allow Catholic students to encounter and possibly embrace views contrary to Catholic teaching.”

The difference between “our” schools and those of the Catholic persuasion is their discussion is about having an “open debate” on the issues and “our” schools are not at all interested in providing any such discussion. Just as the evolutionists of years gone by in the public schools, the liberals wanted a fair hearing of the issues only until they gained control of the schools. Now they are no longer willing to allow all sides to be heard in fair and open discussion.

Reilly went on to quote **David House**, President of St. Joseph’s College of Maine, who asserts that Catholic parents who send their children to Catholic schools do so with the understanding that the students will receive basic teaching in Catholic doctrine. However, “That this often doesn’t occur would be occasion for consumer-fraud lawsuits in just about any other industry.”

What would the parents of members of churches of Christ think if they were able to see the effect that “our” schools were having on the doctrinal positions taken by their children during their time in college? Would they be happy to learn that most come to college being opposed to churches putting women into the pulpit and come home with the opposite view. I do not know that

such results, as the Catholic study, are the case since no similar study has been done among “us.” But, I do know that most churches do not presently allow this innovation (women preaching to adult men and women) while it is becoming more and more common among ACU and Pepperdine. How far behind ACU, Pepperdine and the rest are the other schools? If they refuse to go that route, let them “tell us plainly” how they think about the directions of ACU and the rest who are seeking to change the church of Christ into just another denomination among denominations. I submit that their silence is deafening.

FOR MANY YEARS THE ALARM HAS BEEN SOUNDING

In the 1960’s and 1970’s the Baptists began to wake-up and take notice at what was taught at their schools. The Southern Baptists had the means to cut off the funds to their colleges, seminaries, and universities through their Southern Baptist Convention. We have no such means.

Catholics are beginning to awaken to what for years has been going on in Catholic colleges. Is it not past time for Christians wake-up and find out where the so-called “Christian colleges” stand on the issues before the church? *A soul is a terrible thing to waste.*

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Restoration Reflections...

THE ORACLES OF GOD

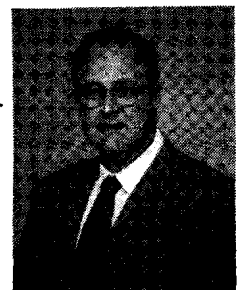
Paul Vaughn

The history of the Israelite people is filled with peaks and valleys. They had blessings beyond measure from God and at times served him faithfully, yet they often failed by revolting from God by worshipping idols. It was during a time of great wickedness that Jeremiah was called to deliver God’s message to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. It was Jeremiah who foretold of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews to Babylon (Jeremiah 16:10-13).

The message Jeremiah spoke to the Israelites was not his own but the oracles of God. In chapter one of the book of Jeremiah we have the picture of the prophet Jeremiah receiving God’s word. “**Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth**” (Jeremiah 1:9). If the people

rejected the message of Jeremiah, they were rejecting God’s word. This is exactly what they did, so God deported them to Babylon for seventy years of captivity (Jeremiah 25:11).

Speaking the utterances, oracles of God, did not put Jeremiah in favor with the Jewish people. There was a conspiracy against his life; some even wanted Jeremiah’s name forgotten.



But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land

of the living, that his name may be no more remembered (Jeremiah 11:19).

The men of Judah desired to kill Jeremiah so his name would be forgotten, but it was their names that have vanished in history.

Jeremiah was obligated, legally bound, to speak the words that God gave him. There is no less an obligation to men today in speaking the "oracles of God." Peter said:

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 (1 Peter 4:11).

In matters of religion, one must speak the words that God has given in the scriptures. When men faithfully speak the oracles that God has given in the Book of Books, the Bible, God is glorified, honored, exalted, hallowed, and revered.

As in Jeremiah's time, when God's word is proclaimed today, people often fail to respond. Resentment and hostility for the message can cause hatred for the messenger. Bitterness toward the message does not lessen the obligation of the messenger to faithfully proclaim the "oracles of God." This was the attitude of Jeremiah and must be the conviction of all Christians today. Even in the face of death, one is committed to trust in God and "teach no other doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:3).

During the time of Isaiah, like in the time of Jeremiah, the attitude was one of rebellion. The people did not desire truth, "oracles of God," so they sought out men who would speak lies and deceit. God said:

That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits (Isaiah 30:9-10).

Sadly, this is the attitude of many people today concerning God's word. They seek men who are willing to speak pleasing things to the ear and entertain them with false religion, making believe that all is good. These are teachers with charisma who use the Bible as an ornament to beguile and destroy the souls of men, all because there is no love for the "oracles of God."

THE EARLY RESTORERS SOUGHT TO SPEAK THE ORACLES OF GOD

The success of the early restorers of New Testament Christianity can be traced to their desire to honor the scriptures above the opinions and creeds of man. In seeking the primitive gospel Barton W. Stone saw

the need to refute the doctrines of Calvinism. He pointed out its tenets were not from the "Oracles of God." He said:

Calvinism is among the heaviest clogs on Christianity in the world. It is a dark mountain between heaven and earth, and is amongst the most discouraging hindrances to sinners from seeking the kingdom of God, and engenders bondage and gloominess to the saints.¹

The Apology of the Springfield Presbytery rejected the authority of creeds and confessions of faith. Stone wrote, "We expressed our total abandonment of all authoritative creeds, but the Bible alone, as the only rule of our faith and practice."²

Thomas Campbell abandoned the traditions of men for the "Oracles of God." "He insisted that the people read the Bible and follow its teaching, and abandon everything not authorized by the Scriptures."³

Another soldier of the Restoration was David Purviance. In 1797 he was elected to the State Legislature of Kentucky. He gave up his seat in the legislature to preach the "Oracles of God."

These and thousands of others were willing to lose their material property and have their friends and family turn their backs on them so they could proclaim the "Oracles of God." Their efforts assisted people see the "Old Paths" laid down in the scriptures. The early Restorers were willing to give up all to preach and teach the word of God in its purity because of their zeal a great restoration of New Testament Christianity flourished.

Everyone should prepare his heart to seek out, to receive, and to follow the "oracles," that God has given to all in his Book, the Bible. The customs of mankind has never saved a soul, nor will they ever keep one from the fires of hell. It is only in obedience of the "Oracles of God" that mankind can be saved.

The history of the Israelite people, the message of the prophets, and the teaching of the New Testament all point to the "Oracles of God" as the only accepted message to obey. This is the path the early restorers sought to walk.

ENDNOTES

1. Hoke Dickinson, editor, *The Cane Ridge Reader*, J.A. & U.P. James publishers, Cincinnati, 1847, p. 33,34.
2. Ibid. p 49.
3. J.M Powell, *The Cause We Plead*, 20th Century Christian, Nashville, 1987, p. 70.

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WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Annette B. Cates

Parents use the expression, "What do you say?" as a reminder to their children to say "thank you" for gifts and favors from others. Of course, this hint is sabotaged when the child looks up and in all innocence asks, "Can I have another piece of candy?" Prompting children in this way is a good start, but all too often, expressing gratitude is neglected or done so callously as to be meaningless. Are people living at such a fast pace that we cannot slow down enough to thank someone who has done something thoughtful for us? Are we too distracted by the events around us to smile and say, "Thank you"? Or, worse, do a lot of people just not care?

A lack of gratitude for blessings is nothing new. Jesus told of ten lepers, nine of whom needed to learn the importance of those two simple words (Luke 17:11-19). Only one returned to Jesus to give glory to God with words of thanksgiving for the blessing of having been healed of leprosy. If these men were familiar with the Psalms (and they should have been), they would have known to express their thanks. These beautiful verses are full of examples of gratitude, showing the value of cultivating a grateful spirit.

Thanksgiving does more than exhibit good manners; it is one of the qualities that identifies a civilized society. More important, it is a trait that is valued by God. When one is the recipient of good from another, saying "thank you" accomplishes two things. First, it builds up and encourages the donor. Second, it reinforces in the recipient the healthy sense of humility with which one should be clothed (I Peter 5:5). How much more then should we express our gratitude to God for his good gifts and blessings for us?

Not expressing thanksgiving toward God or man is a sin. Not only does the Bible list ingratitude with other sins (Romans 1:21; II Timothy 5:2-4), it gives us both commands and examples to do so. "**Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Ephesians 5:20). "**In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you**" (I Thessalonians 5:18). Jesus expressed his gratitude to the father (Matthew 11:25; 26:26, 27; Mark 8:6; John 11:41). The person who does not acknowledge with gratitude the source of all blessings has forgotten

God. Psalm 78:52-57 describes God's care for his people, their lack of appreciation, and his anger toward them. Ingratitude is the result of a heart that is wrapped up in self. Too many people today think that they are entitled to whatever they can get. Like the nine lepers of Luke 17, they receive and then go their way. They forget that **"the Lord he is God: it is He that made us and not we ourselves"** (Psalm 100:3).

One way in which we can keep God in the forefront of our lives is to focus on the blessings with which he showers us daily. Psalm 30:4 reminds us to **"give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."** We know that **"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord...thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night"** (Psalm 92:1, 2). Even when life seems the darkest, we should give thanks, for our lives are not without blessings. The Psalmist arose at midnight to give thanks because of God's righteous judgements (Psalm 119:62). Not only should we give thanks for our blessings, but also simply because he is God.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and is truth endureth to all generations (Psalm 100:4, 5).

The simple act of being grateful to God will help us draw ever closer to him.

When we awaken in the morning, and when we close the day at night, what do we say? Do we remember to thank God for our blessings? Do we thank him for the good of the day? Do we thank him, even when the blessings may not be obvious? Are our prayers full of "gimme" and devoid of "thank you"? All of us have blessings beyond enumeration, both spiritual and physical. May we recognize the source, and give him all praise.



—9194 Lakeside Dr.
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The One True New Testament Church

Kent Bailey

The false view that one religious entity is as good as another is a position that will cause the vast majority of morally good and sincere people to be lost in hell. When one understands God's revealed truth regarding the very nature of the New Testament church one will certainly have taken note of the fact that Christ died for it and purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). One will also understand that Christ redeemed it; washed and cleansed it (Ephesians 5:25-27). Christ, therefore is savior of such (Ephesians 5:23).

When false teachers advocate that "it makes no difference to which church one belongs," or, that "one church is as good as another;" such demonstrates either a total lack of understanding of Bible teaching, or else deliberate dishonesty. On numerous occasions, the late brother **Foy E. Wallace, Jr.** referred to such religious teaching as "pious profanity." While such may not be the intent of such teachers, nonetheless such is indeed the case in that such teaching is opposed to God's eternal plan.

THE CHURCH DEFINED

An essential component of presenting and defending the gospel is to properly define the terms we are using. Those outside the Lord's church usually view the term "church" either as an invisible trans-denominational body composed of various individuals advocating various doctrines, or a particular denomination. Such reasoning is false. The word "church" as found in the New Testament regarding the people of God is used in two ways:

The New Testament church in its universal or comprehensive sense comprises the totality of all who have obeyed the gospel of Christ; the universal body of those saved from past sins (Acts 2:38-47; I Corinthians 12:13). The church in its universal extension is a relationship in Christ (Galatians 3:26-29). It has no time of assembly, no meeting place, no brotherhood eldership, and no collective function. It is simply the sphere of salvation and the realm and room of those redeemed (Hebrews 12:22-23).

The New Testament also refers to the church in the limited or local sense. The local extension of the church is an autonomous independent collective functioning unit. It has a meeting place, times of assembly, and collective function. When brought to spiritual maturity faithful local churches following the New Testament pattern develop qualified men to oversee their work of evangelism, edification, and benevolence.

We read of such local churches in Acts 13:1; 20:17; I Corinthians 1:2; 16:9; and I Thessalonians 1:1 as well as in other passages.

Due to the fact that the authority of elders is limited to the local church (I Peter 5:1-4), the organization of the New Testament church is limited in its scope to nothing larger than the local congregation. Whereas one is added by the Lord to the universal extension of the church when one is baptized into Christ (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27), one personally identifies with the local extension of such in a given community (Acts 9:26). Both Roman Catholicism and Protestant Denominationalism do not constitute the universal body of the those saved. Both Roman Catholicism and Protestant Denominationalism do not fit the category of being local churches following the New Testament pattern, therefore neither of the two constitutes the Lord's church in either the universal or local sense.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS ESSENTIAL

Spiritually speaking, the church of Christ is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; Colossians 1:18). However, one cannot be saved outside of this body. The church is also comprised of those purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). However, one cannot be saved without being purchased by the blood of Christ.

The church of Christ is also composed of all those having been reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:16). However one cannot be saved without such reconciliation. The church of Christ is composed of those "**in Christ**" (I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 2:1). However, one cannot be saved outside of Christ!

Because of the very nature of the New Testament church we conclude that the same relationship that exists between the father and Christ (Colossians 1:9) also exists between Christ and the church (Ephesians 1:22). Christ is the fullness of God and the church is the fullness of Christ. Therefore, no individual can come to Christ and at the same time reject his church.



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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

RECOMMENDED READING: *ISLAM—FROM GOD OR MAN?*

Gary W. Summers

This study of the Islamic religion was the subject of the 2003 Spring Bible Institute lectures. It is close to superfluous to point out that this is one of the timeliest topics that could have been selected, as well as being one of the most vital of this age. The vast majority of the population in this nation needs to read this material—and the sooner the better. A great deal of *disinformation* is being presented through the news media, most of which is favorable to Islam. The truth of the matter is set forth in this book—not that it cannot be found in various other venues, but all this information is collected together here—and documented.

In this review we will not look at each chapter but emphasize instead some of the key elements of the Muslim religion as those subjects arise in the various sections of the book. The first consideration must be, “What constitutes authority in the Muslim religion?” Obviously, the Qur’an is considered to be from God, but so are the hadith (traditional sayings and doings of Muhammad, 227). Before someone wonders if these traditions are considered authoritative, brother Jim Nash provided a quotation from a book by Ergun Mehmet and Emir Fethi Caner, titled *Unveiling Islam: An Insider’s Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs*, published by Kregel just last year. On page 96 they quote the South African Council of Muslim Theologians as saying:

The Holy Qur’an, in several verses, ordered Muslims to follow the prophet in all his deeds and sayings. There-

fore, if one believes in the Holy Qur’an, there is no other alternative but to uphold the Hadith of the prophet.

This establishes, then, for many Muslims (do any disagree?) authority for the hadith, which appears to be equal to that of the Qur’an. This quote is not in the Spring lectureship book, but it was presented orally. An entire chapter is devoted to sources of authority in the Muslim religion (222-38).

WOMEN

One of the subjects that should be of great concern is “The Status of Women in Islam” (33-44; 185-92; 580-85). Many are familiar with statements, such as “Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them” (Sura 4:38). Just a few verses earlier Muhammad said: “Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other.... As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them” (Sura 4:38).

Sura 2:223 reduces women to sex objects: “Your wives are as a tilth [field to be plowed] unto you, so approach your tilth when and how you will.” The hadith adds: “Wives are playthings, so take your pick” (39). Women are considered mentally deficient, as in the hadith 2:541, in which Muhammad is speaking to a group

(Continued on Page 7)

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

Editorial...

OF LIES, LIARS, HYPOCRITES, TESTING, MARKING, AND AVOIDING

The first definition of the word "lie" on page 689 of *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* is "an assertion of something known or believed by the speaker to be untrue with intent to deceive." The second definition given by this dictionary of the word "lie" is "an untrue statement with intent to deceive" and the third definition is "to create a false or misleading impression." Pages 333-335 of W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* gives us the inspired Greek words from the New Testament that are rendered into English by the words "lie," "falsehood" and their derivatives.

When we put together the component parts of the definitions of a lie (which parts are found in the definition of the words themselves) we conclude that for one to be correctly labeled a liar (one who tells a lie) that person must know the following:

1. That he or she is stating a falsehood and not the truth.
2. That the false statement is being presented as the truth.
3. That the false statement is being stated as the truth with the intent to deceive the hearer and/or reader (persuade the hearer and/or reader to accept the falsehood as the truth).

It is obvious that one may teach error (that which is false) while believing it to be the truth and without the intent to represent a falsehood as the truth. In other words, the person intends to and thinks he or she is speaking the truth when in reality he or she is teaching error. The impact on the persons persuaded by such a one as described in the preceding sentence is the same as if they knew they were teaching error—they are deceived. And, of course such teachers and their students will be lost unless they learn better. However, the motive of the teacher is not that of the liar. Wrong in doctrine? Yes. However, the liar knows he or she is teaching a falsehood and fully intends to get his hearers or readers to think that he or she is teaching the truth. Therefore, such a person is also a hypocrite.

Notice what Paul said to Timothy about the wicked character traits of those who caused the apostasy about which he wrote to the young evangelist. He said they would come "speaking lies in hypocrisy;

having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:2). These liars had once been faithful, but they were seduced by false teaching. Thus, they had departed from the system of faith for which they should have been contending (I Timothy 4:1; Jude 3). They had determined to believe their error fully knowing it was not the truth. Furthermore, they had lived so long rejecting the pangs of their own consciences that they had destroyed the function of the conscience. Therefore, their consciences no longer pricked them when they taught what they knew was false.

In his second letter to the Thessalonians Paul gives us some insight into why the people described by him in I Timothy 4:1, 2 listened **"to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"** and were persuaded thereby to **"depart from the faith."** In the second chapter of Second Thessalonians Paul is discussing the apostasy of the church (II Thessalonians 2:3). In this context he speaks of those that would **"perish"** (verse 10). Of them he writes, they **"received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"** (verse 10). Thus, we learn, though one becomes a Christian, which action necessitates loving the truth, one must continue to cultivate the love for the truth or lose it. Notice that Paul says when a person stops loving the truth, **"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"** (verse 11). Does verse 11 mean that God directly and immediately impacted them in such a way as to delude them and make it impossible for them to repent, though they might desire to repent? To the contrary, when these people who had fallen out of love with the truth turned from and rejected the body of truth that is the New Testament or any part of it, there was nothing left to which they could turn but falsehoods of one kind or another. That which deluded them had always been available to them. However, as long as they loved the truth of the gospel and lived according to its mandates and precepts they were not under the influence of the falsehoods ever present in this world. But, having given up their love of the truth, they were **"fair game"** to be deluded by the error that abounds all around us in this life. Having turned from the truth there was and is only error to which they may turn. These persons of whom Paul wrote, stopped themselves from believing the truth because they **"had pleasure in unrighteousness."** Thus, they guaranteed their eternal damnation (verse 12). These people enjoyed breaking God's commandments (See Psalms 119:172 for the definition of righteousness). Thus, we understand why such people listened to and were and are persuaded by **"seducing**

In This Issue..

Recommended Reading Islam —From God or Man? Gary Summers	1
EDITORIAL... Of Lies, Liars, Hypocrites, Testing, Marking, and Avoiding David P. Brown	2
ASSISTANT EDITORIAL... "Created Male and Female" Michael Light	5
2003 Spring Bible Institute Lectures David P. Brown	9
They Won't Play on Sunday! Steve Yeatts	10
Arguments That I Used For the Use of Instrumental Music—When I Preached for the Christian Church Dan Goddard	12
March Madness! Jason Rollo	14
Continued Heresy at ACU Elders of the Rising Star Church of Christ	15
RESTORATION REFLECTIONS... A Review of "Bound to Slavery, James Shannon and the Restoration Movement" Written by Barry Poyner Paul Vaughn	16
CURRENT EVENTS THAT CONCERN CHRISTIANS... Max Lucado on Larry King Live Jerry Murrell	17
The Gospel is Still God's Power to Save Noah Hackworth	19
ONE WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE... The Church Library Annette Cates	20
THE LAST WORD... The Importance of Consistency as it Relates to Fellowship Kent Bailey	21

spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1).

1. They ceased to love the truth.
2. They took pleasure in breaking God’s commandments.
3. Thus, they were seduced by the false doctrines, sinned, and felt comfortable and acceptable to God in their sin.
4. They had no compunction of conscience as they went about practicing and teaching others that which they knew violated the teaching of the New Testament.

The apostle John informs us: **“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). Again, and in view of what we have previously studied about what constitutes a liar, it is obvious that such a character as John described in the previous verse, knew and knows full well that he or she is not obeying God’s word. But, being the hypocrite that he or she was and is, deceives others into thinking that he or she loves God and is, thus, a faithful servant of God.

In the book of Revelation in our Lord’s letter to the church in Ephesus, Jesus congratulated the church because **“thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars”** (Revelation 2:2). These false apostles knew they were not what they represented themselves to be. These characters had lied to the brethren at Ephesus—they said they were apostles.

Unlike many brethren, at least some members of the church at Ephesus remembered that a very important part of being faithful to God is that we must **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (I Thessalonians 5:21). No doubt they also remembered our Lord’s words, **“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing (pretending to be what they know they are not—DPB), but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits”** (Matthew 7:15, 16; Also see 17-19). On the basis of such scriptures as previously quoted, the church at Ephesus did not take these false apostles at their word only. These brethren required proof that these men were apostles.

One of the simplest tests to give them was and is the “sign” test. In defense of his own apostleship Paul had no problem reminding the Corinthian brethren they did not have to take his word only that he was an apostle. He had proven he was an apostle. Paul wrote them saying:

...for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles,

though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds (II Corinthians 12:11, 12).

There were certain miracles worked by the apostles that no other person in the infant church could do. One of those miracles serving as a sign of an apostle was an apostle’s ability to bestow miraculous gifts on others through the laying on his hands (Acts 8:14-19). Simon saw what transpired between the apostles and the converts when the apostles Peter and John came down to Samaria from Jerusalem (verse 19). We ought to be able to see what Simon saw in Peter and John.

Paul had done the same thing Peter and John did in Samaria when he started the church in Ephesus. Specifically, he laid hands on the disciples in Ephesus to convey to them a miraculous gift (Acts 19:5-7). It is interesting to note that years after the events recorded in Acts 19 the church at Ephesus is the church commended by our Lord for putting to the test those who claimed they were apostles. When they failed the test, they were proven to be liars. As Jesus had said, **“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”** (Matthew 7:20).

How are faithful brethren to deal with such people? Paul gives us the answer:

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).

Having put people to the test and found them liars we are then to **“mark”** and **“avoid”** false teachers. I know of no better way to mark the **“good words and fair speeches”** fellows than to call them by their names. Having identified them I avoid them.

Paul also authorized us to withhold our fellowship from such people, and **“reprove”** their **“unfruitful works of darkness”** (Ephesians 5:11). A good example of reprovng those who deserve it is Paul’s debate with the false teachers who came to Antioch of Syria to trouble the church with their manmade doctrine (Acts 15:1, 2; Galatians 2:4, 5). If some who wear the name Christian have a problem with identifying by name false teachers, their false doctrine, reprovng them, and exposing their error, let them take it up with the apostle Paul. I am only following his inspired example and instructions when I mark, reprove, and avoid false teachers. As long as false teachers remain in their error—teaching, defending, and liv-

ing it out in their lives—I do not intend for them to feel welcome, comfortable, or at home around me. Indeed, they are liars and know they are. One difference in them and some of those they have beguiled is the fact they have seared their conscience and, thus, will not repent. To mark and expose hardened spiritual criminals for the liars and hypocrites they are may be the only way to get some of their blinded followers to see the truth about the people that have beguiled them and the subject they have perverted.

If the Lord commended the church at Ephesus for putting to the test those who claimed to be apostles and thereby found them liars, can we be faithful to our Lord and not operate in the same manner as our Ephesian brethren of 2000 years ago did? Would he not commend us for doing that for which he commended

the Ephesian brethren? It may be highly offensive to some brethren to be caused to prove that they are what they claim to be. However, if I Thessalonians 5:21 does not authorize, among other things, the church to check out the beliefs and practices of her members, please tell us why it does not.

—David P. Brown, Editor

“One ought never to turn one’s back on a threatened danger and try to run away from it. If you do that, you will double the danger. But if you meet it promptly and without flinching, you will reduce the danger by half.”—Winston Churchill

Assistant Editorial...

“Created Male and Female”

Michael Light

I was recently given a copy of a booklet which is being taught at the Golf Course Road Church of Christ in Midland Texas. The material is a study of, “The Roles and Issues of Men and Women in Christ.” I certainly am all for a study of the roles God has established for both men and women in the home and in the church. The pamphlet deals with various issues and certainly does teach the truth on several aspects of these subjects. However, in the closing chapter, entitled, “Women in the church,” we see some problems with the material.

The writer (whose name does not appear on the material) states that the role of women in the church has long been controversial and will not be solved in this one study. He states, “**For the Churches of Christ the role of women in the church has always been limited** [emp. mine ML]. Several verses have traditionally defined our view of women in the church.”

As soon as I read this quote I knew there was going to be a problem in the subsequent material. I get tired of liberals attempting to practice revisionist history concerning the church. These “wiser-than-you” types tend to paint with a broad brush and affirm state-

ments that they could not possibly back up if their lives depended on it.

First, the denominational use of the name of the church is unacceptable. We should avoid the temptation to refer to the church in a fashion that would tend to leave the impression that the church is just one of many denominations.

Second, what is meant by “the role of women” in the past being limited. My library is full of books, magazines, journals and articles where our brethren for generations have dealt with this subject in much detail and I would say in anything but a limited fashion. I fear (and am correct) the author of this material does not like being “limited” by what the Bible says on this subject.

The writer next quotes: I Timothy 2:11-13; I Corinthians 14:33-35; Titus 2:3-5 and I Peter 3:2-5. Please read these verses before proceeding to get the full effect. Next the material asks, “How have these scriptures been interpreted and applied in the church concerning the roles that women should fill in the churches you attend? What have women been allowed to do and what have they not been allowed

to do in ministry roles and participation in the assembly?" The aforementioned verses certainly do address women and place some limits on them.

But next, the piece mentions some other verses and offers them as verses which seem to allow a more public ministry on the part of women. Read the following verses: Acts 21:7-9 (Phillip's daughters), I Corinthians 11:5 (mentions women praying and prophesying), Galatians 3:28 (Neither male nor female in Christ), Romans 16:1 (Phoebe, a **deaconess** [emp. his/hers]), I Corinthians 12:7 (followed by the question, "do you see any gender specific gifts?"), Romans 16:7 (followed by—"Junias is considered by most commentators to be a woman's name"), Acts 18:18-19; 2 Timothy 4:19 (followed by—"the dominant personality is named first"). Based on later material provided in the piece, the point of these passages is to leave the impression that women were allowed to do much more than they are today. Brethren, much more could be said (and has been said and written in years gone by) about these verses. But for brevity's sake let me affirm, "None of the foregoing passages establish authority for women to take leadership roles in the public worship of the church." The fact that Phillip's daughters prophesied does not prove that they preached (or prophesied) to men. Phoebe being a servant of the church does not authorize women leading prayers, and singing, or preaching before mixed assemblies. Priscilla being mentioned before her husband, does not make her head of her house or a preacher of the gospel in a public pulpit. The writer is making a long jump based on speculation. The conclusions are unwarranted and fly in the face of plain passages which do limit the roles women can occupy. Certainly men and women are the same in worth to God (Galatians 3:28), but this fact does not delete the passages which teach differences in roles, both in the home and in the church, between men and women.

The writer then goes further by listing: Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; I Peter 3:1; I Timothy 2:11-13; I Corinthians 14:33; and I Peter 3:5-6. The assertion is then put forth that the primary problem being addressed in these passages was unruly wives. A corrupted rendering of I Timothy 2:11-13 and I Corinthians 14:33-35 is then put forth where they are re-worded to simply say that married women cannot publicly chide or correct their husbands in worship.

Finally, the assertion is made that our first century sisters had been given unprecedented roles at a

time and place where such was not accepted. So Paul had to correct some abuses by these women. The writer affirms that the "other passages that refer to women praying and prophesying in the assemblies—where no distinction between male and female was recognized—where there were deaconesses and prominent women in the life of the church—where the same spiritual gifts were given to women as were given to men—seem more consistent?" In other words, "if we can take away the passages that limit the roles of women, then no limits exist." That is rich. The problem is that the passages which limit the roles of women are not exclusively dealing with married women, but rather with male-female relations. This person assumes the very point they set out to prove and then claim to have proved it. Assumptions and assertions aside, arguing from silence and conjecture does not establish biblical authority.

The piece concludes, "How would you feel about women having a wider role in the church and exercising their gifts in broader contexts than they have in the past? What expanded roles would you like to see?" Well, surprise, surprise. This person began by saying we have been too limiting in our interpretation about the roles of women, and in two pages decides, broader roles are okay. It seems our friend has found what he/she was looking to find. Too bad, it is a figment of their imagination.

Three asterisks are followed by this gem, "There is no indication that women ever served as elders. The qualifications of elders **seem to assume** [emp. mine ML] that elders will be men. Therefore, women who served in any role in the church ultimately would be in submission to their spiritual leaders as well as husbands if they were married." How's that grab you? The qualifications "seem to assume..." that men will be elders. In time, mark my words, some will move for women to serve as elders as well. When you view the Bible in this way and base your religious convictions and actions on assumptions, there really is no limit to what can result.

This matter is just another example of the Golf Course Road congregation's apostasy. But this type of "study" concerning the roles of women is hardly limited to this group. Let us all give diligence to stand for the Old Paths on all matters.

—Michael Light, Assistant Editor

Recommended Reading...

(Continued From Page 1)

of women and says: "I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you" (35). Other similar quotations are provided in the book on this subject; women should know what is in store for them before becoming or marrying a Muslim.

"IS ISLAM A RELIGION OF PEACE?"

The news media and our government officials have fallen all over themselves trying to dress Islam in robes of peace, but its true nature cannot be disguised. This chapter (45-64) provides a synopsis of the history of the Muslim religion, which is bloody indeed (and deserves consideration). Also of value is the chart of Muslim nations, ranging from 81% to 99.8% Muslim. How much freedom of religion exists in those countries? The final chapter in the book (586-93) describes what it is like to live in one of those nations and the difficulty of practicing Christianity under such conditions.

The worship services I have mentioned above were all conducted in secret. Had we been discovered, our husbands would have lost their jobs in that country, and we would have been deported within 48 hours (589).

Apparently, there is no SACLU (Saudi Arabian Civil Liberties Union) over there. Another chapter includes a quotation from a book by **Robert Payne**, titled *The History of Islam*, published in 1959 by Barnes and Noble (if this book is still available). It contains a thorough history of the origin and spread of the Muslim religion. Its author observes on pages 136-37: "Muhammad envisaged a time when the whole world would be conquered by the sword for Islam..." (199).

Still another chapter on this subject is: "Religious Toleration of Muslims in Islamic States" (425-50). The writer explains the context of the oft-quoted statement of Muhammad's: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Sura 2:256). The public needs to know when and why that statement was made; more important, they need to see the application of it as it relates to *jihad* and *dhimmitude* . The atrocities of the Muslim terrorists did not begin in New York City in this century by a bunch of fanatics; they began in the seventh century with Muhammad himself (430-35).

THE MUSLIM RELIGION

There is a biography of Muhammad (66-81) and "An Overview of the Qur'an" (158-210). The former of these deals with his birth, his marriage to Khadija, a rich widow (subsequent marriages occurred after her death), his "calling" as a prophet, and his rise to power.

The latter of these describes how the Qur'an came to be, since Muhammad never wrote anything down himself. It also explains the reason why the Qur'an seems so lackluster in the English but why it is so popular in Arabic. Several major doctrines of the Qur'an are examined, including what it says of itself, what it teaches about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Heaven, and Hell. It also provides an appendix on "The Satanic Verses," which gained notoriety a few years ago when **Salman Rushdie** authored a book by that same designation (203-205).

Equally helpful is the chapter: "How Islam Grew—The Culture in Which Muhammad Lived" (346-64). One section asks the question, "Was Muhammad Allah's Last Prophet?" (see also 301-304), to which the Mormons would have to reply in the negative, since their **Joseph Smith** was also reportedly "touched by an angel." We answer, "No," also—to both of them—on the basis of the all-sufficiency of the scriptures. Included is a map showing "The Expansion of Islam" (356).

Other portions of the book deal with "The Religious Hierarchy in Islam," "Islamic Worship: Then and Now," "The Islamic View of the Prophets," "Islamic Holy Places," "The Five Pillars of Islam," and "Islamic Distinctives in Diet, Clothing, Etc." Each will enrich immensely the reader's understanding about this religion.

RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES OF ISLAM

The doctrinal stances of the Muslims also need to be examined because they conflict with the scriptures. "Muhammad Is Not the Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy" rejects the notion that Muhammad is that "prophet" about whom Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (139-57). The Islamic view of Jesus contradicts the teachings of the Bible. They do not view Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God (322-27). Although they agree that he was born of a virgin, they do not consider him as begotten of God. Neither do they teach that the Lord was crucified for the sins of the world. Thus they deny the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity (208-21, 173-80, 298-301).

"The Islamic View of the Bible" shows some of the errors of the Muslims regarding the holy scriptures, as well as a defense of them (365-85, 312-18). An entire chapter is devoted to "Islamic Objections to the Trinity and Deity of Christ..." (468-91). The Muslim view of God does not coincide at all with the Bible; thus a discussion is provided: "Allah: Islam's God Is

Not the God of the Bible” (514-37, 319-22). The nature of God is different, the careful student discovers. Allah and Jehovah, although similar in some aspects, are not the same Deity. Some attention is paid to the doctrine of Predestination (525-28; see also the comments on Fatalism, 200-202). One of the most striking contrasts relates to sin, forgiveness, and salvation (528-32, 216-219).

“Islam’s Eschatology” (556-79) makes for interesting reading—even though their perception is false. Included are a hadith about the torments of al-barzakh (565-67) and what happens to souls awaiting judgment. A gate to Hell occasionally opens so that he will feel a preview of the torments to come. A gate to Paradise also opens periodically to show the dead soul what he would have been granted if he had only trusted in Allah (570).

The reader who is unfamiliar with the *shari-ah* will also profit from the knowledge he can glean from the portion of the book that deals with “the sacred law of Islam that regulates every aspect of the Muslim’s life—from his duties to God to his dealings with other

humans” (124). Primarily, the sources of authority for these laws are the Qur’an and the hadiths. Some of these penalties are quite severe; Sura 5:42 teaches: “As to the thief, whether man or woman, cut ye off their hands in recompense for their doings. This is a penalty by way of warning from God himself. And God is mighty, wise.” While penalties such as these may deter crime, they are entirely devoid of mercy, and they create people that are more dependent on others than they otherwise would have been.

POLITICS

Several chapters touch upon the political aspects of Islam. “The Impact of Islam on World Affairs,” besides the material one expects, contains a chart which provides the percentage of the Muslim population in more than 50 nations of the world (98-100). “Abraham Sows and the Middle East Reaps” draws upon some material by **Guy N. Woods** that has been out of print for some time (242-43, 46). “The Palestine Question: Who Owns Palestine?” traces the history of the land, from prior to the time of Abraham to the current day. Also discussed is the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, a date which proves significant in light of certain claims made today (414-18). Related closely to this history is “Why Have Some Declared Jihad Against America?” This chapter contains six pages of endnotes (508-13). For someone wanting to study the Muslim religion intensely, this book refers to several Web sites with valuable information, as well as to books.

One chapter that did not make it into the book (due to technical difficulties) is the one on “The Nation of Islam” or “The Black Muslims.” It was printed separately in booklet form, accompanies the book, and is included in the price, which is \$17. About half of the material deals with Muhammad’s Islam; the other half, however, shows that the Nation of Islam (NOI) was founded in 1930 “by a yard-goods peddler named **Wallace Fard**” (10-11). He traces the movement from Fard (who mysteriously disappeared in 1934) to **Elijah Poole** to **Malcom X** to **Louis Farrakhan**. Historically, the Nation of Islam has not been closely related to the Muslim religion; it is a separate entity altogether. Included is a list of their core beliefs (13-15).

This review has only touched briefly the wealth of material presented. The first printing has been sold out; a second printing will be available shortly. For the time being, they may still be backordered from *Contending for the Faith*, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77373-2357.

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2003 SPRING BIBLE INSTITUTE LECTURES

David P. Brown

We knew when we chose our 2003 SBI lecture theme, “*Islam—From God or Man*” (held February 23-26 at the Spring Church of Christ building) that we had chosen a relevant and timely topic. (Please see **Gary Summers** review of the lectureship in this issue of CFTF.) However, we did not know if the threat of terrorism would cause people to stay away or not. Furthermore, we never know whether we will have good or bad weather. The weather was okay for Sunday and part of the day Monday, but for the remainder of the lectures it could only be labeled as bad, especially at night. While the Spring members, under the able direction of her elders **Kenneth D. Cohn** and **Buddy Roth** with the help of Spring member **Larry Shiver**, organized a number of men to prepare for the possibility of trouble, we thank our Heavenly Father that such did not happen.

WE APPRECIATE YOU

More than anything or anyone else we thank Jehovah God, our Heavenly Father, for His providential care over us in these uncertain times. He has answered our prayers for protection and we want Him to receive all the praise, honor, and glory for the lectureship’s success. May all such efforts ever be to the glory of God and His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am personally very grateful for the wonderful work and cooperation of all the members of the Spring congregation for making this lectureship a success. There are so many specific things that must be done and the Spring brethren were there to fill the gap. Without the Spring members wonderful work, this lectureship as well as all the others could not take place. Thanks again for a job well done.

All of us at Spring are very grateful for the many brethren who attend each year from various parts of the country. And, certainly this year we rejoiced for the attendance of not only our brethren, but several denominational people who attended most of the lectures. Of course we greatly rejoiced that at least six Muslims attended several of the lectures. We had some discussion with these individuals and we will let you know what may develop from these contacts.

THIS YEAR’S ATTENDANCE

Our combined attendance for the five sessions on Sunday, February 23 was 832. We averaged 166 per session with a high of 191 for morning worship and a low of 127 at the 4:00 p.m. session. Of the 11 lectureships we have conducted this was the best attendance for all the lectures during the day on Sunday and during the weekdays.

On Monday our combined attendance was 875. The lowest attendance was 83 at 9:00 a.m. and the highest was 156 at 8:00 p.m. The average for the day was 109 per session. On Tuesday the total attendance for the day was 743. The lowest attendance was 60 at the 3:30 p. m. session. The highest attendance was 153 at the 7:00 p.m. assembly. The average for each period was 93.

On Wednesday the combined attendance was 664. The lowest number in attendance was 56 at the 3:30 p. m. assembly. The highest attended lecture for the day was 139 at the 8:00 p. m. lecture. The average attendance for the day was 83 per session.

The combined attendance for the week was 3114 for all sessions. We averaged 779 in attendance per day for the entire lectureship.

INTERNET VIEWS

We had 18 to 39 viewing the lectures live via the Internet over the *Online Academy of Bible Studies (OABS)*. The lectures are archived on the *OABS* site (oabs.org). It may also be accessed at churchesofchrist.com. We appreciate very much **Gil Yoder** and **Tom Bright** and all the rest at *OABS* for helping us get the lectureship on the Internet. For the last several years through the help of Gil Yoder in particular we have been able to transmit the lectures over the Internet.

FIRST PRINTING OF THE BOOK SELLS OUT

The hardback book is comprised of 593 pages. We also printed a 20-page tract (the pages are the same size as the pages in the book) entitled “The Nation of Islam” (The “Black Muslims”) written by **Eric L. Owens**, who also spoke in the lectures on this subject. This tract accompanied the book at no extra charge. In the reprint we plan to include the tract in the lecture

book.

Eight days after the lectures ended we sold our last book of the lectures. *As noted, we intend to print the book again.* For all those who desired a book and did not get one we urge you to go ahead and order it. When the book is reprinted we will send your copy to you. The book costs \$17.00 plus \$2.00 S&H. For Texas residents *only* you must add 7.25% sales tax.

RECORDINGS OF THE LECTURES

Brother **Jim Green** of Columbia, Tennessee recorded the lectureship. The lectures are available on audiotapes, videotapes, and CD's. Audiotapes are \$2.00 a tape. The complete lectureship on audiotapes is available for \$34.00. Four VHS videotape set is \$40.00. Four DVD disks are available for \$45.00. Please allow for postage and handling charges. The DVD's work only on later models — DVD-R. Make your checks

payable to **James E. Green**. His address is 2711 **Spring Meade Blvd., Columbia, Tennessee 38401**. His phone number is (931) 486-1364 and his email is jgreen@charter.net.

NEXT YEAR'S LECTURE THEME

As announced before the lectures, the Lord willing, next year's lecture theme is "*Judaism, From God or Man.*" We hope you will make your plans to attend the lectures and urge others to attend. The lectureship begins on the last Sunday of February and continues through the following Wednesday evening. We continue to covet the prayers of faithful brethren for our work at Spring and around the world. May God bless us all in our work for Him.

—P.O. Box 2357
Spring, Texas 77383

THEY WON'T PLAY ON SUNDAY!

Steve Yeatts

One of my favorite times of the year as an avid basketball fan is the NCAA basketball tournament (a.k.a. "March Madness"). I enjoy choosing what teams I think will win and watching at least bits and pieces of the games as the tournament unfolds towards the National Championship game. Part of the spectacle of the NCAA basketball tournament occurs when the selection committee chooses the 65 teams that will participate. Last Sunday (March 16th) the teams were selected and the tournament was set. Oops, not quite! It seems the NCAA tournament selection committee made a mistake in regard to Brigham Young University. The BYU Cougars were placed in a bracket that, should they win their first two games, would cause them to go to the next level of the tournament that would require them to play on Sunday if they continued to win.

Brigham Young University is a Mormon-founded university and their policy is that they do not allow their athletic teams to compete on Sundays—no exceptions! Imagine that! Here in the era where collegiate sports are a multi-billion dollar yearly business and where corporate powerhouses, along with television contracts dictate who plays, when they play and where they play—a school maintains their policy not to play on Sunday.

Now this article is certainly no endorsement of BYU, and certainly not of the Mormon religion, that is

a pernicious cult that has deceived millions worldwide. The point of this article is the principle of an issue lost on many who claim New Testament Christianity. No doubt that the Mormons are zealous, dedicated, and adamant about their religious positions. They are willing to stand for certain principles even if it meant not being able to win the NCAA basketball tournament. Now realistically, BYU would be a considerable longshot, especially to win the whole tournament, but even if they advanced past the first round or two it would be a surprise. However, there seems to be a lesson for us in the New Testament church that is lost on many (especially parents of sports-playing children). As for BYU—THEY WON'T PLAY ON SUNDAY!

How many Christians who have children on athletic teams are willing to make the stand that the practices and games of their children's sports teams will not interfere with their family assembling of the saints whether it is on Sunday or Wednesday? How many Christian parents who agree to coach a team, referee games, or be involved on any level are willing to seek the things of Jesus Christ first and foremost and not allow their extracurricular activities to supersede their calling as a Christian? It is not that our children could not practice or play on Sundays or Wednesdays (as long as it does not prevent the family from assembling

with the saints)—it is just that the parents are to show enough spiritual maturity to let the children know that any activity (sports or otherwise) is something that we do, but being a Christian is who we are, and that takes priority over anything and everything else every day of our lives.

We live in a recreation-obsessed society. Many view Sunday as just another day of the weekend that is ideal for indulging their recreational pursuits. And Wednesday evening is no deterrent for most folks who plan practices or games. If the saved of God would refuse to accept sports assignments, practices, or games that they knew in advance would interfere with Bible study, or worship, then even if the team continued without their child, the lesson they would have taught their child would be invaluable on the scale of eternity.

Parents in the New Testament church need to make a stand that distinguishes them from the world (II Corinthians 6:14-18; Titus 2:14). Sports and other extracurricular interests (provided they are wholesome) are certainly no transgression in and of themselves. Sports can be a wonderful and rewarding outlet for our children. I have participated in sports since I was a young child and continue to be active in playing sports. The issue is not letting sports become our “god” that

removes our Savior as the number one priority in our lives. If you think this cannot happen in the Lord’s church, then pay attention to what is going on around you, and you may be woefully surprised at how many will forsake the assembling of the saints (including gospel meetings and lectureships), or chronically neglect fellowship opportunities because their son or daughter (or perhaps even the parent) has a practice or a game. Satan is well-pleased with those who claim Christ who are so glaringly inconsistent and unconvicted about their Christianity that they have not had their “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” regarding this matter (Hebrews 5:14).

The Apostle Paul acknowledged that bodily exercise is profitable “for a little,” but he made the profound point that **“godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come”** (I Timothy 4:8, ASV 1901). May Christians take their calling seriously enough to not let the “recreation god” take precedence over the true and living God.

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ARGUMENTS THAT I USED FOR THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC—WHEN I PREACHED FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Dan Goddard

Men have long been prone to go beyond the limitations of God's word in their zeal to serve Jehovah. Zeal for God is commendable when it is coupled with a knowledge of God's will; but when one allows his zeal to drive him beyond the confines of Bible teaching, it is catastrophic. As he delivered his law to the Israelites God said, "**Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you**" (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32). For the Israelites to keep the commandments of Jehovah was for them to observe his word without addition or subtraction. Any other course was to invite the Father's displeasure. That the same principle holds true today is shown in the following instances:

1. Paul's instruction to "**Learn not to go beyond the things written**" (I Corinthians 4:6).

2. Peter's admonition to speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11).

3. John's warning that those who go onward and abide not in the teachings of Christ "**hath not God**" (II John 9).

4. The closing words of the Revelation letter is cited against those who would "add to" or "take away from" the words contained in "**the book of this prophecy**" (Revelation 22:18).

In view of such perspicuous statements it would seem that men could see the folly of going beyond God's written word. That they do not is evident in prevalent religious practices. A case in point is the use of instruments of music in worship. Here is a common practice, yet one for which there is not a vestige of scriptural basis. Its existence depends upon going beyond God's commands.

Many advocates of instrumental music, both seeing and readily admitting there is no Bible authority for their practice, seek to justify instrumental music from other viewpoints.

Let us notice some of the arguments I used to justify this unscriptural practice.

Argument: It is true that musical instruments in Christian worship are not mentioned in the Bible, but neither

are church buildings, pews, lights, and many other things—things which we all readily accept.

Answer: I failed to distinguish between worship and the place of worship. God has specified acts of worship, but not the place; yet a place of worship is essential in keeping God's command to assemble. Whether it is under an oak tree or in a building equipped with pews, lights, baptistry, etc., the place of worship is authorized in the command to assemble (Matthew 18:20; Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25). Authority for a church house can also be found in other scriptures, but there is no such scriptures covering instrumental music in worship.

Argument: But you have Sunday School. The Bible does not mention this. How can you accept this, but condemn instrumental music?

Answer: Christ said teach, but he did not specify how (Matthew 28:19; John 6:45). Methods of teaching are left to human judgment. Sunday School, or Bible Class (as we prefer to call it) is only a means of teaching. But instrumental music is not a method of doing anything God has commanded. Surely no one will say it is a means of singing.

Argument: You do not object to the piano in the home. How can you use it at home, but not in the church?

Answer: If one is worshiping, it is just as wrong for him to use the instrument at home in private as it is in the assembly. Anything that is morally right is permissible for the home, but only that which is commanded by God can be used in worship.

Argument: But all Christian life is worship. When you use the instrument at home, you are actually worshiping. When you refuse to use it in the assembly, you are being inconsistent.

Answer: All Christian life is service, but not all Christian life is worship. Everything that one does is to be in harmony with God's will, but not every act is an act of worship. God's word is comprehensive, governing both our everyday activities and our activities in worship.

The use of “worship” in the Bible indicates that it has reference to special acts of homage. Apostle John fell down before the angel of God in a definite act “to worship.” The angel reproved him and instructed him to “worship God” (Revelation 22:8-9). This act should have been directed to God, not the angel. One is hard pressed indeed when he bases his case on such an obvious assumption.

Argument: We use the instrument as an aid to singing.

Answer: Instrumental music is more than an aid. It is an addition to God’s plan. Illustration: God specified gopher wood as the material out of which the ark was to be made. Suppose Noah had used cedar, or pine. Such would have been a violation of God’s plan. Now if God had commanded the ark to be made of wood, there would have been no violation. But he specified

gopher wood. This excluded all other kinds. God has specified the kind of music to be used in worship. Instrumental music is another kind. To use it is to despise the plan of God.

Argument: I see no harm in it and I am going to use instruments of music regardless of what the Bible says or does not say.

Answer: Perhaps not. This does not mean that God does not see harm in it. Remember, our worship is to please God, not ourselves (Colossians 3:17). Let us sing, making melody with our hearts to the Lord, as God commands (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Let us refuse to go beyond that which is written.

—1657 Middlebelt Road
Garden City, Michigan 48135

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT POMEROY AND THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE OF A SUPPORTED WORK BY DENNIS J. SARGENT

This month marks the three year anniversary of the church of Christ at Pomeroy (Pomeroy, Ohio). My family of four were the initial Christians. I have since had numerous studies resulting in four others (3 adults, one 12 year old) being added to the church (totaling 8 members). There have been three others who were baptized but who have not remained faithful. During the course of this three years we have had a good number of non-Christians attend our services, some with which we are still in contact and continue to encourage in the way of Christ. We are even more convinced now than when we first began of the enormous potential for good and for growth here at Pomeroy.

We meet in a former denominational building (with 5.2 acres) in a perfect location, that we were able to procure, and the Northside church (Calhoun, GA) has agreed to assume our mortgage payments. We are surrounded by five congregations of the Christian Church (all of which bear the name “Church of Christ”, and one small “anti” congregation. In fact, we use “the church of Christ at Pomeroy” because the “Pomeroy Church of Christ” is really the Christian Church. We are the only sound congregation in Meigs county, and one of only a few sound congregations in the entire state of Ohio.

Faithful brethren are no doubt receiving many requests, like ours, for financial assistance. We believe funds are available, and it is just a matter of: 1) informing our brethren of our need, 2) brethren recognizing their ability to help, and 3) brethren being willing to help. These are just a few things involved in the financial challenge of a supported work. The Northside church (700 Jolly Road, N.W., Calhoun, GA, 30701-8655; phone 706-625-8722) serves to receive and administer the incoming financial support for Pomeroy. I can be contacted at (P.O. Box 325, Pomeroy, Ohio 45769); 740-985-4385 (cocpom@frognet.net). Your consideration of these matters, and of our need, is appreciated!

MARCH MADNESS!

Jason Rollo

Any true college basketball fan loves the month of March. "March Madness" as it is commonly known, is the description given to the period of time when division championships are decided and more importantly when the NCAA tournament is conducted. This "madness" allows the avid basketball fan to watch scores of games and witness unbelievable last-second finishes. It truly is an exciting time for the basketball lover.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MARCH MADNESS

No, this article is not about basketball. Rather, it addresses another kind of "March Madness." What is this "madness," you ask? It is the madness seen every March, when otherwise sensible people begin to take off layers of clothing and proceed to flaunt themselves about as if nothing were wrong with such action. To be more blunt, the "March Madness" herein discussed is summed up in the word, "IMMODESTY!" Yes, that is right, "IMMODESTY!" It seems that every March as the weather begins to warm in Texas, this "madness" heightens and the clothes shorten. Short shorts, mini-skirts, tank-tops, tight shirts, and of course bathing suits are definitely on display during the warm months. Such worldliness should not be the case in the life of the Christian! God's word does speak about this subject and it forever condemns those who flippantly disregard God's mandates regarding this vital subject.

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DEFINING & DEFEATING THE MADNESS

The madness of immodesty needs to be better understood. To do this, one needs to realize what is and is not immodest. Per the dictionaries the term "modest" means orderly. It carries with it the idea of something being decent and well-arranged. One article worded it this way when it stated, "Immodest dress is the wearing (or not wearing) of clothing in public that reveals or emphasizes parts of the human body in a manner which draws attention to those parts and incites evil thoughts and desires." Through inspiration, Paul declared:

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works (I Timothy 2:9-10).

This verse commands women (and it obviously applies in principle to men as well) to "adorn themselves in modest apparel." This is not an option, this is an apostolic decree! To argue that one "cannot know" what modesty or immodesty is, is to accuse the apostle Paul (and in reality, the Holy Spirit) of commanding an impossibility. The problem is not in understanding this verse. The problem is not in understanding modesty and the principles addressing such. The problem is worldliness! Better yet, the problem is people who want to live like the world—who want to involve themselves in worldliness (I John 2:15-17). Even apart from I Timothy 2:9-10, the principles of the Bible should forever dissuade the godly from wearing immodest clothing. Apparel that is: 1) tight, 2) short, 3) low cut, 4) wet and therefore clingy, and so on, should not be worn. To be more specific, bathing suits (and this goes for one piece or two!), cheerleading uniforms, twirling outfits, skimpy track gear, short shorts (i.e., shorts that are above the knee—compare the Hebrew term used to describe the garments God made for Adam and Eve), and the like, should not be worn. Unless one thinks such language is too restrictive, please consider the following points which forever show the sinfulness of wearing immodest apparel.

1. *The Bible commands modesty. There is no authority for being immodest* (I Timothy 2:9-10). To do something without God's authority is sinful (Colossians 3:17, I Peter 4:11).

2. *Immodesty promotes lust* and lust is clearly condemned in scripture (Proverbs 6:25, Malachi 5:28, James 1:15, Colossians 3:5, I Peter 2:9).

3. *Immodesty leads others into sin* and such action is forbidden in God's word (Malachi 18:7, Luke 17:1ff).

4. *Immodesty is the door opener for other sins* (II Samuel 11:2-4, Malachi 5:28).

5. *Immodesty is contrary to the clear principles of godly living* laid out in Holy Writ (Malachi 5:14-16, Romans 12:1-2, I Thessalonians 5:22, I Peter 1:15, I John 2:15).

The next time you put on something "question-

able," ask yourself these questions: Would I want to face God in judgment wearing this garment? Will the clothing I am wearing promote lust? Would I want my _____ (i.e., spouse, daughter, son, etc.) to wear this clothing when they are alone and around another of the opposite sex? Would one of the faithful of the Old or New Testament wear such clothing? Does my clothing portray me as godly or worldly?

This world is temporary, please do not go to Hell for the sin of immodesty! Sadly, many (even in the church) are currently making the wrong choice!

—P.O. Box 85
Hurst, Texas 76053

Continued Heresy at ACU

[Editor's note: The following is from the March 5, 2003 issue of the Rising Star church of Christ bulletin, Rising Star, Texas, and deals with the continuing apostasy of Abilene Christian University. These are godly, brave elders concerned for the souls of others. I also believe their capable preacher, Richard Massey, played a part in this letter.]

FROM THE ELDERS

Every mature child of God ought to have an awareness that false teachers pose a real threat to the church of our Lord. The following passages should be familiar to all the members of this congregation (Matthew 7:15-23; Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 16:17-18; Philippians 3:18-19; Colossians 2:8, 18-23; II Timothy 3:1-7; II Peter 2:1-22; I John 4:1; II John 9-11). All of these passages warn of the real danger of false teachers and the devastation they bring. Sometimes these forces come from within the church and other times they come from without the church (Acts 20:28-31). The Lord did not leave the church defenseless, but he implemented safeguards. He appointed an eldership for each local congregation (Acts 14:22-23; Titus 1:5). These men are given the responsibility to watch for the souls that are under their care (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:1-6).

When elders fail to do their jobs tragedy will result as it did in Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29). The wolf was effectively destroying the band of Christians in that ancient city because the elders did not do their duty. The elders of Rising Star do not want any such spiritual destruction to come upon this congregation. If we do

not watch and verbally warn, then we are not doing our jobs. We must give an account to the Lord for the way we have done our duty (Hebrews 13:17). We believe that you understand why it is necessary to state the following warning concerning the false doctrines emanating from Abilene Christian University.

In their latest lectureship series the following errors were taught: That there is not one path to God, "...but that Muhammad or Buddha would be acceptable as well. Jesus is a good choice, but not the only choice..." A new style of worship was taught called "Taize." **Jack Reese**, dean of ACU's College of Biblical Studies taught that "Taize is a popular style of worship that focuses on wholeness and healing through contemplative songs, silence and prayer. It originated in a community of Roman Catholic brothers." **Oprah Winfrey** was called "one of the most influential spiritual leaders in America." Also in January a denominational preacher named **Tony Compolo** spoke at the university's chapel service and openly recruited students to work in his denomination's ministry.

The elders cannot remain silent in the face of these startling developments. We do not condone these doctrines or practices. This is not the first time we have sounded out such a warning. This once beloved university is no longer following the truth. Our God-given responsibility as shepherds of this flock compels us to bring these matters to your attention. We love the souls of men and at the same time love and respect the Lord (John 14:15; I John 2:3-5; 5:2-3).

Signed by:
Dean Bailey, Joe Swinney, Larry Wilson.

A REVIEW OF "BOUND TO SLAVERY, JAMES SHANNON AND THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT" WRITTEN BY BARRY POYNER

Paul Vaughn

Bound to Slavery, by Barry Poyner is an excellent study of the life of James Shannon. It was well-researched, giving an accurate and complex history of Shannon's life and teaching on the very volatile subject of slavery. The introduction was written by J.E. Choate. The book has 144 pages and a chronology of the life of Shannon on the last two pages.

James Shannon led a life of very complex views at a time when his philosophies caused much stress in the brotherhood. As an educator, he was president of four institutions of higher learning, College of Louisiana (now Centenary), Bacon College, University of Missouri at Columbia, and Christian University (now Culver-Stockton College). Yet, his commitment for the institution of slavery overshadowed all the accomplishment he made during his life and restricted him to an obscure role in Restoration history. Brother Choate summed up the life of Shannon with his closing remarks in the introduction. "This writer is both attracted to and repelled by the life and influence of Shannon. My personal problem is that I cannot conceive of a brilliant educator who entertained such views on the institution of slavery over a lifetime."¹

There are many who advocate that slavery was the cause of division in the church of Christ, advancing the teaching that missionary societies and mechanical instrumental music were secondary reasons for division in the church. Brother Poyner refutes this teaching in a very forceful and candid statement. He said:

Sectionalism, disparate views on slavery prompted by geography and intensified by harsh living conditions during the Civil War and Reconstruction, has been a contemporary theory popularly advanced as the principal cause. This explanation, in my opinion, overestimates sectionalism, underestimates doctrinal matters including the influence of higher criticism, and dismisses the sphere of influence individual church leaders had through personal associations and readerships. Other than momentarily stirring controversy at the immediate, Shannon's views on slavery, shared by many of his auditors in Kentucky and Missouri and sympathetic extended audiences, cannot be said to have divided churches.²

James Shannon was born on April 22, 1799 in Monaghan County, Northern Ireland. In 1815 he entered Belfast Academical Institution. While in school he excelled in Latin and Greek. He also took classes in church history, Hebrew, mathematics, and physiology. In 1821 an opportunity was given to Shannon to come to America and teach in Georgia. It is interesting that later in life he would say, "That common goal of educating the citizenry was seen as imperative if the United States should survive. The real enemies were misguided abolitionists and uneducated immigrants."³ Poyner said, "Given his own status the remarks about immigrants are curious."⁴



The inconsistencies in Shannon were extreme, but he did tremendous good as an educator and gospel preacher during his life. Yet, his pro slavery views influenced him to aggressively attack abolitionists by calling them "foul demons, negro thieves, robbers, villains, foul fiends, and as a motley crew."⁵ James Shannon led a life of seeking truth from God's word. He could not find truth in Protestant denominations, the Presbyterians or the Baptists. His journey for truth led him to follow only the New Testament. Yet, in teaching the scriptures he never could overcome his views on slavery. Thus, he is left in the shadows of history as an enigma among giants. Shannon completed his pilgrimage on earth on February 25, 1859. He was survived by his wife and nine children.

I do have a point of disagreement with brother Poyner. He views the Restoration Movement as dead. He said, "From a rhetorical point of view, the movement had entered the termination stage."⁶ And in the footnotes on the same page he said, "I contend that the Restoration Movement in America has long been dead, and that much of the 20th century has been engaged in eulogizing its demise."⁷ Granted there are some churches and preachers who view the restoration of the time-honored paradigm given in the New Testa-

ment as dead and in their hearts it is dead, but that does not make it true. As long as there are faithful Christians seeking to go to the scriptures and follow only what is authorized in the New Testament the Restoration Movement is alive. When churches are established looking to the authority of Christ for what they do in religion, the Restoration Movement is alive. When preachers offer the plan of salvation given by the Lord, the Restoration Movement is alive. When elders oversee a congregation following the design given to the early church, the Restoration Movement is alive. When faithful Christians teach there is only one church, the Restoration Movement is alive. Some may teach that the return to the "Ancient Order" is out of date or dead, having entered the "termination stage." The eulogy should not be for the church, but for the loss of zeal and love for the primitive pattern given in the New Testament.

Brother Poyner has written a very interesting book because the man himself, James Shannon, was very

interesting. Though I strongly disagree with Dr. Poyner's views on the demise of Restoration Movement, a student of Restoration history needs this book in his library. The information in the footnotes is worth the price of the book.

ENDNOTES

1. Barry Poyner, *Bound to Slavery James Shannon and the Restoration Movement*, Star Bible Pub. Forth Worth, 1999, p. 12.
2. Ibid. p.18.
3. Ibid. p.109.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. p.116.
6. Ibid. p.18.
7. Ibid.

—1415 Lincoln Rd.
Lewisport, Kentucky 42351

Current Events that Concern Christians...

MAX LUCADO ON LARRY KING LIVE

Jerry Murrell

I like to watch cable news networks. Now that I have a choice, I confess that I watch the "fair and balanced" reporting on Fox News, rather than the CNN. However, I have been a cable news watcher from near the beginning, when CNN was the only choice. As I began to watch Crossfire, in the old days of **Michael Kinsley** and **Pat Buchanan**, I often noticed **Jesse Jackson** and **Jerry Falwell** coming on to represent what they both would characterize as the Christian viewpoint on the "big" issue of the day. In the past, I often wished that instead of the usual suspects, CNN would invite a New Testament Christian on to give a true Christian viewpoint.

I have a copy of the tape of the Donahue show where **Garland Elkins** did such a fine job, defending the truth on church discipline. I know that it made liberals like **James Woodruff** sick to see that defense, but that is only a side benefit. The important thing was that, in spite of Donahue's attempt to silence Brother Elkins, America had an opportunity to hear the truth on at least one Biblical topic, of which they had very little

understanding. I longed for the day when the church of Christ would be represented on a show with less bias, so that a brother in Christ could tell even more of the truth to the world.

America desperately needs to hear the truth. She is in a day of pluralism. The Postmodern philosophy is that there are many truths, which may seem to contradict each other, but they are all still true. Truth is person centered, and what is true for you is not necessarily true for me. Surely any Christian could defeat this philosophy by showing that this logical contradiction does not hold true in any area we can use to test it empirically. We may have different perceptions about an event, but contradictory perceptions cannot all be true. If one person says an object is made of steel, a second person says it is made of iron, and a third person says it is made of wood, they cannot all be right. It may be that



they are all wrong, or one of them may be right, but it is impossible that they are all correct. It may be that the person who says the object is steel and the person who says the object is iron are both sincere, but they cannot both be right.

Max Lucado went on **Larry King Live** where he was introduced as “minister of the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio.” Also on the program were four other “Christian leaders” (at least in Larry King’s mind) who were all going to discuss the then soon coming war on Iraq. As concerned the war issue, **Bob Jones** had some good things to say, but they were all based on his misunderstanding that man was born in sin. **John MacArthur** did a good job of dealing with the question at hand. Lucado seemed to be trying to position himself in the middle between these two men, who thought war with Iraq was allowed by God as well as necessary given the present circumstances, and the two pacifist panelists, the “priest” **Michael Manning** and the Methodist “bishop” **Melvin Talbert**. In my estimation, if this was his goal, he succeeded. Lucado came across as a reluctant proponent of this war. He seemed to go out of his way to agree with statements from those who opposed the war more than with those who thought it was a time for war. This is not the way I would have appeared on this program, but it was understandable given Lucado’s beliefs and the circumstances.

Lucado’s problem in this discussion was evident from the beginning. After the Catholic spoke, as an advocate of the pacifist position, Lucado’s first words were “I think the father’s making a good point there.” This was no mistake because he did it again saying “the risk of what the father is describing is evil going unpunished.” No other guest on the show, except Larry King, who is Catholic, ever referred to the “priest” as father. This is not the first time that Lucado has seen fit to refer to a Catholic leader as “Father.” This has been well documented in **Gobel Music’s** book, *Behold the Pattern*, so I refer you to that book for proof of my assertion. Jesus said, “**call no man your father upon the earth**” (Matthew 23:9). Lucado seems to call every Catholic “priest” he meets “father.” This part of his ecumenical mindset is documented in his famous sermon/article “On the Good Ship Fellowship.” In this article he says, “Whenever I see a man call God father, I see a brother.” And I guess we can add to this, whenever he sees a Catholic “brother” he “sees a father.”

However Lucado’s doctrinal compromise did not end with the Catholics. Talbert fit right into the postmodern mindset on truth being personal and not universal when King asked him if Christianity is “the right path.” He said, I do believe for Christians, but we

are not here to settle which religion is right.” King tried to pin him down by following up with the question, “so you believe that your religion is right?” Talbert answered yes to that. But when King said, “So therefore the other religions have to be wrong,” Talbert responded, “I didn’t say that at all.”

That would seem like a good opportunity for a Christian to enter the fray and show Talbert the error of his way. However Lucado did not do that. Instead, MacArthur used John 14:6 and Galatians 1:6-9 to show that Talbert’s view was not Biblical. At this point Lucado probably thought he was off the hook on this issue, but King would not let him off so easy. King asked Lucado what his view of Islam was from a “religious point of view.” Lucado’s answer was very slick. He said “it is a different approach to God than the Christian approach to God. My understanding as a Christian is that we’re saved by what Christ did for us whereas the Islamic faith we’re saved by what we do for God.”

This was a kind of threading the needle answer. To the average Christian it looked like he was saying that Muslims are lost without trusting Christ for their salvation. To the postmodern thinker, he was saying the same thing as Talbert, while Christianity is true for me, I am not going to say that Islam is not true for Muslims. While Lucado was wishy washy, MacArthur was plain in his answer when he said, “All who reject his son Jesus Christ, the Bible says, are condemned to eternal punishment.”

This was Lucado’s last comment except when he said that America needs to be careful “and not think that we are righteous and smug.” This seems to also be his fear for the church as well as people like MacArthur who teach the truth on the concept that salvation is in Christ. However MacArthur does not understand how to get into Christ (cf. Galatians 3:26-27). If only a gospel preacher had been on Larry King to make the leap from MacArthur’s point to Paul’s point in Galatians concerning how to get into Christ. Perhaps some would have heard the truth and sought out their own local church of Christ to study this concept more. But alas, there was no gospel preacher on Larry King, only Max Lucado.

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THE GOSPEL IS STILL GOD'S POWER TO SAVE

Noah Hackworth

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested, and rightfully so, that Romans was not written to Romans because (1) one might be a Roman and not be a Christian; (2) one might be a Christian and not be a Roman, and (3) one might be in Rome and not be a Roman. According to 1:7, this apostolic letter was written to those called-to-be-saints. The third missionary trip of Paul and associates was begun in Acts 18:23, with establishing [to strengthen] the disciples as the primary goal. In Acts 19:1, he, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus where he stayed for more than two years (8, 10). He subsequently came to Corinth and stayed there three months (20:3). It is the consensus of scholarship that the Roman letter was written in 57 or 58 A.D.

THE POWER OF GOD

To demonstrate by proof that the gospel is God's saving power is the ultimate purpose of Romans. "Power" is an awesome word. In Matthew 28:18 it is the translation of *exousia*. In Romans 1:16 it translates the word *dunamis*. In "dunamis" we can see our word "dynamite." Dynamite is power. We could say with complete justification that the gospel is God's dynamite. The story is told of a man who took a copy of the New Testament to be rebound. The bookbinder finished the task but somehow left off the words "The New Testament" on the front cover. Instead, he put on the capital letters TNT, meaning The New Testament, but the letters also signify "dynamite."

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The only thing in this world that is going to save man from his sins is his obedience to the gospel of Christ, because therein (in the gospel) is revealed the righteousness of God (the way God makes men right). There is simply no other way salvation is going to be accomplished. Just as long as this is denied and/or rejected, salvation will not be obtained. A splendid example of this is found in Romans 10:1-3:

Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they might be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according

to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

The KJ translation says, "...My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Any doubt that it is the salvation of Israel that Paul has in mind will be removed when the last few verses of Romans 9 are reviewed. So many precious souls do not understand that the gospel of Christ, which they have either ignored or rejected, is the only means of their salvation. Ignorance of this fact will be costly when the great day of accounting arrives.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

More than two thousand years have passed since the gospel was first proclaimed to the world as God's saving power. And it was not without results. But now, gospel meetings do not seem to be as frequent. Is the day of the gospel meeting over, as some allege? God forbid [may it not be so]. It cannot be so. And it is not so. Faithful congregations of the Lord's church all over the country are still having gospel meetings. The purpose of which is (1) to strengthen and fortify the local membership, and (2) to reach out into the community for lost souls. The only thing that sometimes becomes a matter of concern is what is sometimes preached in a so-called gospel meeting. Such meetings cannot be less than soul-saving efforts, where the power of God is demonstrated by the courageous proclamation of the gospel by faithful gospel preachers; brothers who are faithful to their calling (II Timothy 2:1-2); who will "keep back nothing that is profitable," as well as "declare the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:20, 27).

—4525 W. Caldwell Ave.
Visalia, California 93277

THE CHURCH LIBRARY

Annette B. Cates

I know, I know. An article about the church library sounds about as interesting as watching grass grow or paint peel. However, this is an often-neglected topic that I would like to address. Some congregations have great libraries, while most shy away from the idea, thinking that it would be a useless and unused expense.

While there is no verse that says that a church library is a necessity, the principle of expediency applies. Properly set up and used by the congregation, the library is an integral part of the teaching program of a local work. Scripture backs up the necessity of study and continuing education. In II Timothy 2:15, Paul stated, **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** In Colossians 4:6 and I Peter 3:15, Paul encourages us to be ready to give an answer to those who would ask us concerning our faith. We cannot impart what we do not know. Further, we know that Paul valued and profited from reading and studying. When imprisoned in Rome, he asked Timothy to bring him his books and parchments (II Timothy 4:13). Paul understood the importance of continuing his learning, even while being held captive by the Romans.

The role of the library as an adjunct to the teaching program of a congregation is carried out by providing study materials for those who prepare class materials. Working in tandem with a teachers' resource room, the library provides the educational staff with the opportunity for research on the subjects they teach. This allows a teacher to go far beyond the few paragraphs that are offered in a teacher's manual that accompanies class workbooks. Thus the teacher's knowledge grows along with that of the students. The collection should also contain books on how to teach, how to prepare visual aids, and on other aspects of the teaching process.

A church library provides non-teaching Christians with resources for personal spiritual growth. Books and non-print materials that build and reinforce general Biblical knowledge, such as on Bible geography and archaeology, aid in Bible study. A library's holdings on specific areas like marriage enrichment, child-rearing, and interpersonal relationships enhance the development of an individual or a family on a day-to-day basis. Materials on how to do personal work and other aspects of evangelism directly impact the work of a local

congregation. The library can provide books that contain devotional ideas for mid-week invitations and small group gatherings. Items dealing with living the Christian life will encourage strength to stand and to resist the temptations of the world around us. While the preacher must not neglect developing his own library, the church library can supplement his holdings and provide greater depth to his preaching.



Children need the availability of good, moral, and factually accurate reading materials. While school and public libraries may provide books and media that present evolutionary theories as fact and that promote “alternative” lifestyles, the church library can counter that trend with materials that present the truth and do so on a level that a child will understand and accept. The same is true of young adult literature. The good books are out there, and our children should have access to them.

A library is the ideal place to assemble materials that have to do with the history of the congregation. Many individuals have photographs and other documents that are priceless but which would be meaningless to heirs who have no understanding of their meaning, nor recognition of the people involved. Tapes and transcripts of oral history where older members tell of their memories of days gone by and of the preachers, elders and other faithful Christians of the congregation are invaluable, but there needs to be a central gathering place for such memorabilia.

In order to be effective, a library has to be used by the congregation. The person(s) working with the library must be people-oriented. Someone who is not would make a good protector of the books, but a poor librarian. The goal of a library and its staff is to bring together the information and the user who needs to be informed. This means that the library will be located in a convenient area, where its very existence will be a reminder to the congregation that it is there and ready to be used. It should be open on a consistent schedule and available at reasonable times, such as prior to the mid-week service. It should be visually appealing. While a table and chairs are necessary for spreading out materials, some comfortable seating for casual reading is

a good idea. There should be low shelves for children's books and child-sized table and chairs for the younger patrons. A bulletin board can promote new additions to the library or highlight the availability of specific subject areas such as personal finance. At Memphis School of Preaching's N. B. Hardeman Library, we keep a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle in progress at all times. It allows a few minutes of diversion for the students and faculty who enjoy such activities. I hope this makes our facility a place where our patrons feel comfortable and enjoy being.

The books and non-print materials in the church library should focus on good, sound resources that promote and supplement Bible study. This includes concordances, dictionaries, atlases, commentaries, and devotional literature. Subject areas should cover history, biography, various aspects of Christian living, teach-

ing, and evangelism. There should also be some good periodicals, especially brotherhood journals. If possible, there could be a computer that is used for on-line resources such as CDs and for controlled internet access. All of these integral parts of a library go together to provide for the spiritual development of the congregation's members.

Naturally, as a librarian, I see this subject from an idealistic, but workable, point of view. However, I do know of the value of study and the importance for all to have every opportunity, thus the responsibility, to grow as Christians. It has been said that knowledge is power, and indeed it is, especially when it is knowledge of God's word to us.

—9194 Lakeside Dr.
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38654

The Last Word...

The Importance of Consistency As It Relates To Fellowship

Kent Bailey

Fellowship, as it relates to both deity and humanity, is a crucial Biblical component with which all should be concerned. The case being that such is properly defined as association, communion, or joint participation speaks a great deal regarding our relationship to God as well as one another.

John, by divine inspiration, set forth the basis of the spiritual fellowship that is found with God:

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (I John 1:3).

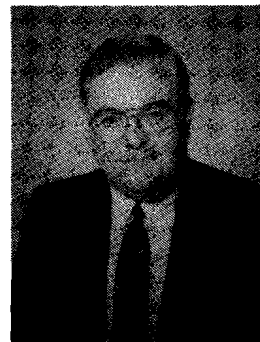
Biblical fellowship thus has Christ as its basis. It is therefore both vertical and horizontal. It must first reach upward to God and then it will reach outward to all that are joint participants in this spiritual fellowship. Those who have never obeyed the gospel have never been included in this particular fellowship of Christ thus they cannot and must never be viewed as our brethren. Only penitent believers who have confessed Christ and been baptized into Christ for the remission of past alien sins have entered into such a fellowship. This spiritual relationship is the body, or church of Christ

(Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23).

False teachers such as **Rubel Shelly, F. LaGard Smith, Marvin Phillips**, and others seek to blur and/or erase spiritual lines drawn by God and include within the fellowship of Christ those who have never obeyed the gospel and have never been added to the one true New Testament church (Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:18).

These same men also disregard the New Testament pattern regarding faithfulness for God's people and thus reject the divine principles of those who must be excluded from Biblical fellowship (Romans 16:17-18; II John 9-11).

Just because one has been baptized into the body of Christ does not in any way automatically guarantee faithfulness to the New Testament pattern. John wrote: **"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth"** (I John 1:6).



Truly, indeed blatant apostasy is a very real threat to individual Christians, and collectively as local churches. However, inconsistency, fence straddling and a willingness to compromise with liberals and false teachers is equally as dangerous. Case in point: When a congregation was called into question by faithful brethren about their willingness to use unfaithful preachers as speakers on their annual lectureship they responded with a written "speaker policy" in stating: "...*We are committed to a policy that does not in any way indulge a deliberate false teacher*" (II John 9-11). "*We are, however, equally committed to working with all who might be reclaimed*" (II Timothy 2:24-26); "*or who might be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly*" (Acts 18:24-28).

Question: What about sincere non-deliberate false teachers? The statement of necessity implies that they would be willing to make use of such men as well as explicitly stating that they are willing to enter into fellowship with those who need to be reclaimed and taught the way of the Lord more perfectly.

This particular "speaker policy" regarding the use of false teachers brings to mind a particular politician's written response to a constituent's letter asking him to clarify his stand on abortion. The politician responded by writing:

...If by abortion you mean the murdering of defenseless human beings; the denial of rights to the youngest of our citizens; the promotion of promiscuity among our shiftless and valueless youth and the rejection of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness—then, Sir, be assured that I shall never waver in my opposition, so help me God. But, Sir, if by abortion you mean the granting of equal rights to all our citizens regardless of race, color or sex; the elimination of the evil and vile institutions preying upon desperate and hopeless women; a chance to all our youth to be wanted and loved, and above all, that God given right for all our citizens to act in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience—then, Sir, let me forego my pursuit of these most basic human rights. Thank you for asking my position on this most crucial issue and let me again assure you of the steadfastness of my stand...

Brethren need to come to a basic understanding of the fact that fellowship is that of an either/or situation. Either we are in fellowship, or out of fellowship with God. Either we are in fellowship or out of fellowship with particular individuals.

Rubel Shelly with his "upper/lower case" fellowship and F. LaGard Smith with his multi-level fellowship concepts are fatally false.

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

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

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Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris PKWY NW Cartersville, GA 30120-4222. Tel. (770) 382-6775. E-mail: bdgayton@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Tel. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org Dan Goddard, Evangelist. Sun. 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, 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.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. 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.

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THE DISNEY LAND SAND IN THE DESERT

Jeff Sweeten

One scarcely knows where to begin in exposing the dog and pony show produced by the Golf Course Road Church of Christ (Hereafter referred to as GCR) called *Stream in the Desert* (ironically, the emcees of this spiritual fiasco never directly referred to themselves as the “church of Christ,” and after attending, I understand why.). Slated as “an experience with God,” the heavily orchestrated presentations offered everything from “altar calls” (“if God moves you...”) to prayer groups in special rooms and “response tents,” where one could retire in cloistered privacy and have someone “pray over you.” Testimonials about “share groups” and “how God has worked in (someone’s) life” were standard fare. It was GCR on TBN, where participants were told there are “no rules about anything,” and everyone was encouraged to “fall on your face” if the Spirit so moved you, since the atmosphere encouraged a total “lack of inhibition.” Music was performed by a polished choir behind **Ken Young**, who at one time joined with them in singing a round with such a mixture of unintelligible lyrics that one might dread playing it backwards for fear of discovering an encrypted, demonic message. The startling revelation that “Stream is not a place where you come and learn about God, it’s a time to ... experience,” and that it is “not for analytical thinking, but heart thinking,” was amply displayed throughout the weekend, in that submission to God was little in evidence and entertaining emotionalism was the flavor of the day. The most startling revelation was the con-

cession that GCR was the “Disney Land Church” in West Texas, and the context of that confession brimmed with pride, implying the title ought to be worn as a badge of honor. The weekend certainly lived up to its Disney Land image with thrills, chills, and frills on an emotional roller coaster ride of innovation and error.

The so-called Leadership portion of the show was introduced by **Ronnie White**, Senior Minister at GCR, set in the forefront of a “praise team” (four men and four women). An excellent sound system amplified the vocal band’s rising and falling crescendos as hand signals cued a willing audience’s participation in various expressions of approval: hands were raised and thrust forward to signal the assembly’s call to rise and wave, while lowered heads and squinting eyes allowed for a pious appearance while accommodating the team’s ability to sense the feedback of audience participation. In the case of waning theatrics, there was always the not-so-gentle chiding to remind the assembly that they “really do want to applaud,” and speakers slyly promised that elders in home congregations would not find out they had done so. Digression upon digression would naturally lead to their “resident **Patsy Cline**” being called upon to lead the praise team in a stirring, emotive number. It seemed for a moment that the natural revulsion to a woman song leader had gripped the audience, but I was mistaken; they were awaiting their cue, which was delivered with a boisterous “Let’s all sing” from a male member of the praise team. So, the

(Continued on Page 6)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

WHO IS IN AUTHORITY?

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:12 KJV).

[We continually get inquires concerning the meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12. Also, there are those who think when a male reads a woman's article the female author is exercising dominion over the male. Moreover, some think that the man in 1 Timothy 2:12 should be translated “husband.”

Regarding the view of the last sentence of the preceding paragraph please consider the following thoughts. I do not see how the word “man” in 1 Tim. 2:12 could be correctly rendered “husband.” The context pertains to male and female relationships in general. It does not only deal with the husband and wife relationship. It is not husbands pray, but men pray (verse 8). It is not wives dress modestly, but women dress modestly (verses 9-10). It is not husbands teach, but men teach (verse 12). It is not wives learn, but women learn (verses 11-12). Thus, Eve (the female) and not Adam (the male), was deceived and by the deception fell into sin. Adam, however, went into the sin with his “eyes wide open.” He abdicated his responsibility as the head of the race of man (1 Corinthians 11:3). Certainly Adam and Eve were husband and wife, but they were the only male and female on the earth at the time.

Women may be saved from sin (be faithful to God) by remaining in their God given role, which role is designated by the term “childbearing”—that which is peculiar to the female and not the male. It is my conviction (though I am not dogmatic) that “childbearing” is used in this passage as a synecdoche (where a part stands for the whole or the whole for a part). Hence, “childbearing” in verse 15 has reference to the sphere of activity in which God intended for women. Just as man sins if he abdicates his God given role, so also does a woman sin if she forsakes her sphere of activity assigned her by God (verses 13-15). In the great majority of cases this involves the home—husband, wife, children. However, such direction also covers the single woman and man. In other words it would govern Lydia of Act 16 as well as the apostle Paul. Therefore, a single woman

must respect the headship of a man, not in the husband and wife relationship, because such biblical principles peculiar to husbands and wives are not bound on the single person, but that set out in I Corinthians 11:3 and, I believe, elaborated on in I Timothy 2:8-15.

Thus, with the previous remarks added, the following editorial is offered to our readers once again with the hope that it will be helpful to them in understanding this important subject. It originally appeared in the May 2000 issue of CFTF.
-DPBJ

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. Such of course is palpably false. 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. Of course, this would mean that 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 even listen to his aged mother sing a gospel song lest the words of the song instruct 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

In This Issue..

The Disney Land Sand in the Desert Jeff Sweeten	1
<i>Editorial...</i>	
Who is in Authority? David P. Brown	2
<i>Assistant Editorial...</i>	
You Just Can't Warn Some People Michael Light	4
How was Lydia's Heart Opened? Geoff Litke	7
"You've Got Permission" Denny Wilson	8
More Than a Celebration of Spring (Letter from Central Church of Christ Web Page concerning it's Apostasy)	10
Faith Strengthening Opportunities Jason T. Carter	12
<i>Current Events that Concern Christians...</i>	
Pat Robertson Did Not Expect a Miracle Jerry Murrell	12
<i>Sermon Outline...</i>	
Showdown on Mount Carmel Tom Moore	14
<i>Restoration Reflections...</i>	
A Reply to "The Plain Truth about the Church of Christ" By James L. Melton Paul Vaughn	16
<i>One Woman's Perspective...</i>	
Not My Responsibility Annette Cates	21
<i>The Last Word...</i>	
Why We Fight Kent Bailey	22

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 he 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 as 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 (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 in a subservient state of mind toward 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.

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? If so, did they by such teaching alone usurp your authority?

—David P. Brown, *Editor-in-Chief*

Assistant Editorial...

"YOU JUST CAN'T WARN SOME PEOPLE"

I do not recall the first time I heard the late **Ira Y. Rice** use the above phrase, but it certainly has stuck with me. I knew he was right, but as time passes I have met more and more people who fit into the category he mentioned. There is a strong propensity on the part of many in the Lord's church to resist any information that deals with individual brethren or congregations leaving the truth and or teaching false doctrine.

I certainly believe and teach that we are to be

very longsuffering with all men (especially with brethren, Galatians 5:22-23; James 6:10, *et al.* I too would rather be guilty of moving too slow than too fast. But I am not discussing common biblical patience (which we should all have). I am discussing those who refuse (regardless of the amount of evidence presented) to acknowledge the fact that some brethren have left the truth.

It is a sin to refuse to follow what the Bible teaches concerning this matter of being pure in doc-

trine. Notice the words of the Holy Spirit through the pen of the apostle Paul in Romans 16:17, 18:

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.

Too many members act as if there is something non-Christian and immoral about doing precisely what this passage calls upon us to do. How is that?

We who from time to time are forced (due to our obligations to “mark and avoid”—with the hopes of correcting the one who is in error and to protect the simple) to call attention to certain brethren and their ungodly practices are often criticized and called, “mean-spirited,” “arrogant,” “bitter,” or “radical.” I would like to ask these critics, how exactly do you mark and avoid false teachers? The fact is, those who react in this fashion do not obey Romans 16 or passages similar to it.

I often wonder what goes on in the minds of those who cannot be warned. When a preacher or a congregation, or a paper such as this one, reports (with documentation) on certain false teachings and teachers, what do they think? Either the false doctrine was taught, or the one reporting it is honestly mistaken, or a liar. I recently attended the *Stream in the Desert* program, which is an annual work of the Golf Course Road (hereafter referred to as GCR) congregation in Midland, Texas. I knew that the congregation had some serious problems. I knew that **Jeff Walling** has been an enemy of the truth for some time now, yet I was still shocked at the enormity of the departure.

I asked **Jeff Sweeten** and **Denny Wilson** (both preachers at the Eisenhower congregation in Odessa, Texas) to attend the event with me. After setting through the Pentecostal style gathering, I asked both men to write articles for this issue of CFTF recapping the most egregious of the errors. We took careful notes, ordered the tapes and are determined not to misrepresent anything about this religious fiasco. But, I am sure some will squall and moan and call us all manner of names because we have had the gall to mark this congregation and this event.

I refuse to apologize for exposing this nonsense that was billed as some great “Spiritual Renewal Weekend.” The program featured a man named **Mike Lewis** known as “the Jesus Painter.” This man painted a large “portrait of Christ” during the Lord’s Supper. This raises several questions, one of which is, “How does he (or

anyone else) know what Jesus looked like?” How shallow have we become when we are “moved” by some one sketching on canvas. The group Hallal (a choir from GCR) led by **Ken Young** performed various songs throughout the event (They clapped, swayed, and encouraged the crowd to do the same. More on this is in the other reports.)

Two different singing groups (with instruments) performed as well. In the flyer, while advertising one of the groups, the material says:

FFH (Far From Home) has always placed a priority on sharing a unique time of worship with their audiences, where the *Holy Spirit fills the room with a lingering sense of God’s presence* [emp. mine] as they lift their voices to heaven.

How much more needs to be said? The Lord’s Supper was taken on a Saturday afternoon. “Prayer tents,” filled with “prayer warriors” were present. The Holy Spirit was abused and used to encourage subjective outbursts (everything from kneeling, swaying, clapping, falling down prostate, dancing and laughing). Never mind there is no authority in the Bible for such actions. The “if it feels good, do it” philosophy was certainly in full swing during this event.

I sincerely hope you will read the other reports in this issue about this event and compare what happened in Midland to what we read in the New Testament. These types of functions are not just a little different in style—they are different in substance. Churches like GCR have departed from the faith and are destroying the souls of men. They are denominational to the core and for us to fellowship them is sin (I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 5:11).

—Michael Light, *Assistant Editor*

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The Disney Land Sand....

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

whole assembly followed "Cline's" crooning. After only a few minutes into the performance, it became obvious that GCR's undermining of elders' authority could only play second fiddle to their rank disrespect for God's will concerning worship.

The keynote speaker for this year's *Stream* was well-known speaker, writer, and heretic, **Jeff Walling**. His witty repartee, his dramatic, quivering voice, and his infrequent use of scripture, all combined for great entertainment with very little substance, and with the exception of those few references to the Bible, one might mistake Jeff Walling for **Jeff Foxworthy**; great entertainment, damnable worship. With all the talk about *Stream* being a "spirit-filled" experience, it sounded more like a confessional, since Walling spent a healthy portion of his speech time apologizing for his mother's Bible training (apparently, the sanctity of communion was taught all wrong), his father's position on truth (he was apparently bound by tradition), and his own "heritage" (a disparaging reference to anyone who finds the principle of restoring New Testament Christianity honorable). He confessed at length his personal weakness in the area of preaching the "presence of the Holy Spirit" while having focused inordinate attention to baptism (which, by implication, held a much diminished position in the scheme of salvation). In a lengthy mockery of the Lord's church, he stated sarcastically, "My background didn't know how to deal with the Holy Spirit," suggesting three laughable positions (which the audience was all too willing to laugh about) that the church had purportedly taken in the past (none of which were accurate in any church of which I have been a member for the last twenty-five years). The church of yesteryear must have been compromised of such poor, ignorant souls until Jeff came along to enlighten us. However, he did manage to proudly exude terms of endearment for his dear old grandmother whose habit it was to bang out "Trust and Obey" on the piano. His mixture of truth and error would have made **Billy Graham** proud. While debunking emotional dependence in worship, he elicited the same in everything from videoed, tearful testimonials to watch during a closing prayer to keep the production in sync. It was quite a sight, Walling bowed humbly on one knee, while he ever-so-slightly raised his head, and through squinted eyes, signaled the praise team to scurry up behind him and begin their humming accompaniment to his intercessory invitational prayer, a beautifully choreographed and damnable performance. The staged spectacle was orchestrated to perfection, but as a worship service, smacked of charismatic showmanship, such as can be seen regularly on

"Christian" broadcasting networks. The only things missing in this production were tongue speaking and snake handling; maybe **Pat Boone** will accommodate them in next year's treat.

How could anyone mistake such pomp and ceremony for worship? The total lack of reverence, the distractions of Power Point faux pas, and the jig dancing in the pews all contributed to a Pentecostal-styled carnival. "Lift up your hands in celebration" was a call to applaud the variety show while the charismatic choir belted out miked harmonies of new, unfamiliar songs, often and obviously intended to entertain. How could solemn worship directed toward God Almighty be confused with the self-serving, entertainment-based confusion of *Stream*? How could these assemblies, with people running up and down the aisles, with chatter and conversation filling multiple pockets of the audience, and with participants imbibing in everything from sodas to suckers, be mistaken for focused praise to God? No picture of worship from Adam to the Apostles looks so ugly, with the exception of such divinely condemned heresy as the golden calf and Baal worship.

There was one significant moment during the program that should sober every faithful Christian to the reality of this departure from truth. During the first two sessions, a show of hands was solicited from all the "first-timers." The number was staggering, and convincing proof that this production by GCR continues to negatively impact the Lord's church. Participants caught up in this mind-wooing garbage are being led astray by professional recreants. Audiences are encouraged to verbalize error for emphasis during sermons. "Say it with me: 'the Holy Spirit,'" Walling stated in the mesmerizing tones of a skilled shaman to emphasize the direct Spirit on spirit work of God's indwelling. Parroting texts taken out of context to support his pretexts was one of Walling's favorite tools. Also, peer pressure is brought to bear through snide, derisive comments directed toward those who preferred not to participate in the circus of closed-eye hand waving and spontaneous outbursts of approval. "Even when we're not supposed to, we applaud," he chortled to a cacophony of giggles. Overt suggestions that home congregation elderships should be challenged and undermined were wittily woven into the fabric of *Stream*'s dirty linen. Those of us looking on at the mockery were easily identified as non-conformists, and to say we were unappreciated would be an understatement.

These observations are submitted as a call to arms. Christians everywhere need to rise up in righteous indignation against the bastardizing of godly wor-

ship. Fellowship with and participation in such vain worship consigns a soul to a Devil's hell (Matthew 15:8-9). We must warn friends and family members who have been led astray by these satanic pipers, for *Stream in the Desert* is nothing more than poisoned water in

the sands upon which a lost soul builds a fallen house, ... **"and great was the fall of it"** (Matthew 7:26-27).

—807 E. 21st Street
Odessa, Texas 79761

How Was Lydia's Heart Opened?

Geoff Litke

In Acts 16:14 we read about a certain woman **"whose heart the Lord opened."** This is an intriguing statement for many students of the Bible. There is no doubt (for any Bible believing person) that the Lord did indeed open this woman's heart. The question is not whether or not her heart was opened; nor, is the question whether or not the Lord did the opening. These questions are plainly settled by God's word.

The real question is "HOW?", or "in what way?" In answering this question some have supposed that Lydia was a wicked woman who was inclined to no good thing before her heart was opened. This is typically associated with Calvinistic Doctrines. However, when we are first introduced to her she is proclaimed as a worshipper of God. We ought to be impressed immediately with her nobility (I Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 17:11) in listening to the apostle. This is precisely how we find that her heart was opened.

The Lord was the one who authored the word of life, and it indeed is his word (Galatians 1:11-12). God gave his word through the Spirit (I Corinthians 2:13). The Spirit revealed that word through the apostles and prophets in the first century (I Thessalonians 4:2; I Corinthians 14:27).

The gospel's power over the human heart is quite astounding. The writer of Hebrews said:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

In this way we see how Lydia's heart was opened: (1) she listened, (2) her heart was opened. Lydia's heart was opened by the word of the Lord. The outcome of this was that she acted upon the things she heard, or **"gave heed"** (ASV 1901).

The words the Holy Spirit chose to describe this occurrence are quite significant in themselves. Often things are said to be **"opened"** in scriptures. The tendency especially frequent among the writings of the

inspired Luke. It simply means "to open." It designated the opening of the womb in Luke 2:23. It is used figuratively for "the opening of one's" understanding in Luke 24:45 just like in Acts 16:14.

If Acts 16:14 were the only verse in the Bible, one could not necessarily know the means used by the Lord (if any) to open the heart of Lydia. However, the entirety of the Bible reveals all we need on the subject. Namely, that God has chosen to save souls through the preaching of the gospel (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18). When we venture into God's all sufficient word (II Timothy 3:16-17), we find that God has never required some supernatural repair job on the heart of his creation for them to receive the gospel he has prepared for them (James 1:21). We do find some insight as to how one's heart is normally opened.

In Acts 17:3 we find Paul was doing the same work of the Lord by **"OPENING and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."** (Acts 17:3; Emphasis mine G.L.). The New King James Version translates "opening" in this passage as "explaining." Unlike Acts 16, this passage reveals the means by which Paul did this very thing: (1) he **"reasoned with them out of the scriptures"** (Acts 17:2), (2) he was in the process of preaching (Acts 17:3).

The same means are working today through the New Testament which God has provided us for our salvation. Those souls which will listen to the words and have their hearts opened thereby will give attention to the things spoken. This is the means by which they will be rescued from the dark recesses of sin. However, those who spurn the words of God have nothing ahead but certain destruction (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

—2535 North West Loop
Stephenville, Texas 76401

"You've Got Permission"

Denny Wilson

On March 28-30, 2003, Golf Course Road church of Christ hosted "Stream in the Desert: Spiritual Renewal Weekend." This weekend was billed as "powerful worship" and as "an experience with God." The hundreds, no, thousands of people in attendance at the Midland Chap Center met with the desire to draw closer to God. I do not doubt that many in attendance wanted to find help with the difficulties of life. Unfortunately, what I "experienced" made me physically ill. Stream did not provide those in attendance with worship that would be pleasing to God. Instead, it reminded me of the words of Christ in Matthew 15:9, **"And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."**

Saturday afternoon, during the second phase of the lessons on "Fire," **Ken Young**, the "worship leader," encouraged the audience after a song saying, "now lift up the Lord" and the audience erupted in applause, whistling, and shouting. Then **Jeff Walling**, the featured speaker, came out and mocked, "I saw some of you clapping. I've got pictures. I know where you go to church." Walling then encouraged the people to lift up their hands during the "worship." As he finished his comments he said, "You've got permission to praise God that way if you want to." This was followed by more clapping and whistling. During this event we were encouraged to "throw off any inhibitions." We were told there were "no rules." We were told that this was "not a time to learn but a time to feel closer to God" and that this was a place "not for analytical thinking, but for heart thinking." We were encouraged in an attempt at comedy to go back and "gig" our elders to embrace the things we saw during the weekend.

The question that needs to be answered is this, "Do we have permission to worship God any way that we want to?" Jesus taught the woman at the well saying, **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"** (John 4:24). Our worship must be done with all of our hearts and it must be done in accordance with the Lord's will. The emphasis of "Stream in the Desert" seems to be the emotions. The "Praise Team" and the "Praise Chorus" sang emotional songs while videos played. Lights were turned up and down based on the message of the preacher or the song. Patriotic images and songs were sung as a tribute to those in the military (my brother is fighting for our country as I write—I am not against patriotism, but where is the authority for this in worship—our tribute in worship is to God). The preacher, who is a master of

speech, planned each word, each drama presentation, each testimonial, each joke, and each point in such a way as to cause deep emotions. I am not opposed to having feelings during worship. Who can read about Christ on the cross without a lump in his throat? Who can sing "Hallelujah Praise Jehovah" without being encouraged? They did not fail to present love, they failed to present the TRUTH in love (Ephesians 4:15). This left those in attendance open to being **"children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive"** (Ephesians 4:14).

God requires the worshiper to follow the pattern set out by his word. Abel brought an offering to God, which was respected, but Cain's offering was not accepted (Genesis 4:1-9). God made it clear to Cain that if he had done well, the offering would have been accepted. Nadab and Abihu found out that "strange" (fire from an unauthorized source—Editor) fire was not acceptable to God. As a result of their improper worship they were destroyed by God (Leviticus 10:1,2). The children of Israel came to Mount Sinai to receive the Law. While Moses was on the mountain, Aaron had the people give him the gold they had brought from Egypt. He made a golden calf. The people worshiped the calf, ate, drank, and rose up to play (which Jeff Walling called the "Golden Calf Boogie"). God did not accept the worship. In fact, God told Moses that the people **"have corrupted themselves"** (Exodus 32:7). The point is that God does have requirements for the worshiper. We do not have the right, or the permission, to worship God in the way that we choose.

Stream in the Desert included many avenues of false worship. There were women in leadership roles, contrary to Paul's instructions to Timothy (I Timothy 2:11-12). Women were involved in speaking, such as giving testimonials. Women were involved in leading singing. Where is the permission from God?

The praise team and praise chorus sang songs to the audience on several occasions in performance. At other times, they sang two or three verses of a song then encouraged the audience to sing when they came to the chorus. Singing is not entertainment in the worship of the church. In song, we speak to one another (Ephesians 5:19). With those words we teach and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16). We are all to be involved in singing. The special group of singers cannot do my worship for me nor can they speak for me. In

order to meet the commands to sing, each person in the assembly is to sing.

The church is to give on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1,2). It is possible for a member of the church to give 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During "Stream" a collection was taken by passing big blue buckets (they looked like the Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets) to the audience to help pay for costs. The money was being solicited from anyone in the audience. There were people from a variety of denominations in the audience. During the event, Golf Course Road was referred to as "GCR," "Golf Course," "The Disney Land Church," and more, but they were not referred to as the church of Christ. In fact, terms like "our fellowship" were used to describe the group. Where is the authority for soliciting money from those outside the church? Where is the authority for charging \$20 for entrance into worship?

Saturday afternoon, about 4:00, the audience was served the "Lord's Supper." In reality, they had unleavened bread and grape juice because this was not the Lord's Supper. While there is much to discuss in regard to the Lord's Supper, let me just mention two main parts. First, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to

the disciples to eat. Then he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to the disciples to drink (Matthew 26:26-28). Yet, during Stream, Jeff Walling led a prayer for both the bread and the cup at the same time. Then the people were ushered in long lines to about 15 or 16 different locations that I could see to eat and drink. It reminded me of what you might see on EWTN (the official Catholic broadcasting network). Men would hand the bread to the individual then would give them the cup. During this time which should have been a sacred moment (if it were truly the Lord's Supper), people were walking all over the Chap Center. Conversations were being held in various locations. I walked behind the stage to see what was going on. Jeff Walling was down below reviewing his lesson for the upcoming session. **Ronnie White**, the preacher at GCR, was leaning on the railing talking to a few men. This certainly was not a memorial and there was nothing sacred about it. Paul's words of decently and in order were certainly lost on this crowd (I Corinthians 14:40). Second, the Lord's Supper is to be taken on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7): "**on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.**" The church of the Bible met for worship, including the Lord's Supper, on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1,2; Acts 20:7). Where is the permission in the New Testament for the church to partake of the Lord's Supper on any other day?

In the New Testament, one who responded to the gospel was baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:38-41; 8:35-39; 16:16, 32; 22:16). The leaders of "Stream" apparently had other plans. We were told that there were "prayer warriors" to "pray over us" if we needed prayer. We were told that there would be no "altar calls." This being the case they made these special arrangements. They had two rooms set up for prayer. In the handout, the "prayer ministry team" was made available for those who had requests for prayer. On page 23 of the handout, the entire page was an "Invitation To Prayer." The fourth paragraph begins, "Prayer for you is available right NOW. If the presence of God impacts you personally and you desire prayer by others, that opportunity is waiting!" It continues:

If you desire to talk and pray with an elder, or to be guided by the counsel of a minister or counselor, simply go to either area and one or more of those individuals will be made available to you.

The conclusion records these words, "If the presence of God stirs your heart to seek him in prayer, consider this your invitation to come to the designated prayer areas." The map on the back page of the handout shows where you can go for prayer. Here is the point. The emphasis of the "Stream" leadership was

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that one who would respond to the messages would need prayer and would need to be prayed over. At one point, very briefly, a man giving the introduction to the session mentioned that there was a baptistery set up "if you felt moved to be baptized." For those who are not Christians, prayer is not going to save them. The question is not whether or not you feel moved to be baptized. The question is, "Did God require one to be baptized in order to be saved." The answer is, "Yes!" Each one who responds to the gospel must be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:30; I Peter 3:21). Unfortunately, the area for baptism is not marked on the map. I looked for signs but could not find one. I looked for the baptistery in the handout, but could not find it. I suppose you needed permission from men in order to get access to the waters of baptism? If one is not a Christian, he must be baptized in order to be saved. If one is a Christian, he does not need someone to go to God on his behalf for his sins. Each of us has the av-

enue of prayer (I John 1:9). If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins. We do not need another mediator (I Timothy 2:5). Christ is our Advocate (I John 2:1).

Jeff Walling may have given us his permission to worship God anyway that we choose. The Golf Course Road leadership may have given us permission to come to God on our own terms. Ken Young may have given us permission to worship God with no rules and without inhibition. Even so, I reject their permission. My eleven year old son cannot sign my eight year old daughters permission slip for school activities. A parent or legal guardian must sign that permission slip. Accordingly, we must not accept permission from mere men. Our authority for worship and for salvation comes from God's word. Let us not follow the commandments of men. Instead, let us submit to God's permission.

—807 E. 21st Street
Odessa, Texas 79761

[The article, "More than a Celebration of Spring," is from the web page of the Central Church of Christ Amarillo, Texas. The news items are from different parts of the web page. The address is www.centralcofc.com. All were obtained as of April 23, 2003. The article speaks for itself regarding the congregation's apostasy. Obviously the congregation has repudiated New Testament authority and chosen to be denominational in policy and practice. The teaching of Colossians 3:17 and like passages mean nothing to these people. The news articles are more evidence of Central's departure from the divine pattern and move into denominationalism. — Editor]

More Than a Celebration of Spring

Welcome to our Resurrection Celebration! While Easter is generally recognized as a special celebration of the re-awakening of spring with bunnies, eggs and pastel colored new clothes, Easter is actually a much more important day. Easter is the anniversary of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. While Christians meet every Sunday to remember Jesus' death and resurrection, this Sunday is special because it is the same Sunday of the year the resurrection actually happened. While it is fine to have egg hunts and dress up, we need to remember the origin of Easter. Otherwise it will simply become another secular holiday.

Easter is about Jesus. It is about an empty tomb. It is about the power of God changing the world through Christ. What occurred on the first Easter morning was a future event that happened in the past. Jesus' resurrection is a sign of God's promise and his reward for everyone who puts their hope in Jesus in the future. As we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, we do not just remember

what happened 2000 years ago, we anticipate God's promise of eternal life for the future — hopefully very soon.

In our worship today, we want to travel from the grim picture of a life without the hope of resurrection, to the celebration of life we have because Christ lives. The great news of the resurrection can only be appreciated when we look at the bad news of what life is like without Jesus. I hope you will enjoy the journey with us today. More important, I hope you will leave today with a greater appreciation of the amazing love of God. His love is so great he sent his son to die for us that we might have hope for life eternal.



DanBouchelle
Senior Minister

[The following quotes are from www.centralcofc.com and appear here as they were on the web page.—DPB]

Christian Artists in Concert San Jacinto Baptist is hosting concerts by Rebecca St. James on Tuesday, **April 29** and the group NewSong on Thursday, **May 1**. Both concerts are at 7:00 pm. Tickets are available at San Jacinto or at High Plains and Family Christian bookstores.

Music Ministry — Praise teams (second service) facilitate worship. The Chorus participates in our services and offer music for weddings, funerals, and special events. **Central is excited to have so many talented singers and leaders. The Central Praise Team is made up of volunteers who rehearse for several hours each week in preparation for Sunday's service. All Central members who have the talent and desire for singing, and the dedication to practice 4 to 5 hours each week are encouraged to try out for the team.**

Promise Keepers Promise Keepers (promisekeepers.org) is having another Conference in Lubbock on **May 2-3**. Let's go as a group. Contact Brice Kelley @ 355-3814 **by April 20**. Cost is \$79 plus food & lodging. We may camp at a church.

Thanks from the Gideons Central members contributed over \$1700 on **April 13** for the Gideon's ministry. As a result, 353 more Bibles will be placed in key locations. Thank you for your generosity.

FAITH-STRENGTHENING OPPORTUNITIES

Jason T. Carter

How does one develop faith? "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Faith is one of the most prized possessions of Christians, because it comes from a study and understanding of God's word. The more we study, the stronger our faith becomes.

The apostle Peter wrote of some other virtues Christians should continually be striving for in II Peter 1:5-7. Among these "Christian virtues" is knowledge. He ended his second epistle by encouraging the brethren to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). It is important for Christians to have a proper knowledge of what the Bible says, for with a proper knowledge comes proper faith. This is not to say that one must know everything in order to be acceptable to God, but he must continue learning throughout his life. One does not stop learning as soon as he graduates high school or college. He continues learning about the world, improving upon the foundation which he received in school. The same is true spiritually. One does not stop learning once he is baptized into Christ. He continues feeding upon the word, learning the way of the Lord more perfectly and putting into practice those lessons.

We are fortunate to be living during a time in which opportunities to learn and to strengthen our faith are so

abundant. In addition to Sunday morning and Wednesday evening Bible classes, Christians can take advantage of the many lessons presented on the internet. The website for the *Online Academy of Biblical Studies* (<http://www.oabs.org>) has many sound classes, lectures, gospel meetings and sermons archived for easy viewing on your computer.

During the last week of February *Spring Bible Institute Lectures* (This years study was "Islam—From God or Man?") was broadcast. At the first of April, the *Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship* was broadcast live all over the world via the internet, and the lessons were recorded and are now available for anyone to watch at anytime (<http://www.oabs.org/Archives/Lectures/msop2003.htm>). Two more lectures are now on the website [The 24th Annual Phillips Street Lectureship (<http://www.oabs.org/Archives/Lectures/Phillips2003.htm>) and N.E. Oklahoma Gospel Journal Lectures (<http://www.oabs.org/Archives/Lectures/neok2003.htm>)]. If you have a computer with an internet connection, you owe it to your spiritual welfare to take advantage of these resources so that you may "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

—1630 N. 9th
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Current Events that Concern Christians...

Pat Robertson Did Not Expect a Miracle

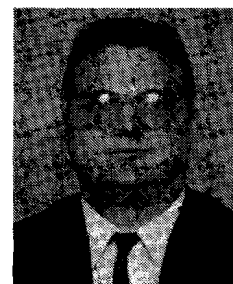
Jerry Murrell

I never cease to be amazed by the hypocrisy in the religious world round about us. When one thinks of hypocrisy, the Pharisees immediately come to mind. In part Jesus told us, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3). With Robertson's brand of hypocrisy my advice would be just the opposite. "All therefore whatsoever he bids you observe, do not observe; but do after *one* of his works: for he says one thing and does another."

Let me explain what I mean. Robertson tells others to depend on a miracle to heal them. Robertson tells people on his own website that there are three sets of gifts from the Holy Spirit that are the power of God. The three groups have to do with revelation, utterance, and power. He says of this third group that it

has to "do with gifts of healing, miracles and faith." He then asserts that, "there is no way the Church can go forth to witness to the unconverted world without the power of God." He says, "This is not optional."

Since Robertson believes that these gifts are part of the way the "Church can go forth to witness to the unconverted world," one would expect that he would rely on this healing power for his own sicknesses. This is why I was so interested when I heard that Robertson would be missing a few weeks of his television program because he would be recovering from surgery to help him to overcome prostate cancer. I



wondered if the media reports were correct, so I went to Robertson's own website. Under the dateline of February 17, 2003, I found these words:

Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson underwent successful laparoscopic surgery today for the removal of his cancerous prostate gland. According to his physician the surgery went extremely well and he is alert, stable and in extremely good spirits.

Why would a man who daily comes into contact with those whom he claims have the power to heal disease go to a doctor when he has cancer? Why would he not call on one of these men to heal him of his cancer? Would this not be an important "witness to an unconverted world?"

WHY WAS ROBERTSON NOT HEALED MIRACULOUSLY?

Some might wonder what Robertson has to say to others who are sick but fail to be healed. Surely he has an explanation since he says God provides him not only with gifts of healing but also with the gift of revelation. When one went to Jesus for healing, Robertson says, "To the best of my knowledge, He never turned down anybody for healing." When Robertson had a friend who had cancer he prayed to God and he said, "the word I thought I heard after a long period of prayer was you are going to live and the cancer is going to die." However his friend soon died. Listen to Robertson's amazing explanation for why this happened. He said after another prayer to God, "What I got back in response is that sometimes the symptoms will outweigh what the word says." The fault was with those like his friend. He and others like him are not healed because they lack enough faith to be healed. According to Robertson sometimes "people get into a belief pattern where they start to believe the symptoms more than they believe the word."

This was never a problem in the New Testament. The only "failed" miracle in the New Testament was only a temporary failure and it was caused by a lack of faith on the part of the apostles, who tried to heal a demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:14ff). This served as a lesson for us about the power of faith (Mark 9:29), but the boy was finally healed by Jesus (Mark 9:27). In the New Testament, no person who came into contact with a person who had true power from God to heal sickness ever went away sick. Even those like Lazarus, who was dead for three days, could be healed by Jesus (John 11). I wonder if Jesus had failed, God forbid, whether or not he would have asserted that Lazarus believed his symptom, death, more than he believed the word? When one of the symptoms of your disease is death, it is hard not to believe that you are sick.

One might say, "Well surely Robertson believes that some people are not candidates for healing." Since miracles are to produce faith, the healing of Robertson

would not have produced faith because so many would have doubted it. But alas, for his followers, Robertson asserted, "I believe that healing is for everybody." When I preach on Acts 17:30-31, I often say all men includes you. Likewise I must say to Robertson, "everybody" includes you.

The argument from Robertson that miraculous healing is for today is based on the "golden oldie" Pentecostal argument that healing is in the atonement. He said, "Jesus paid the price and by His stripes we were healed." To this we reply that the word translated "healed" in Isaiah 53:5 (*nafa*), like our English word "healed" can be used of spiritual as well as physical healing. It is apparent from the next verse that spiritual healing is under consideration. Isaiah diagnosed the problem from which we are healed in that very verse. He said that Jesus "was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). Sin requires spiritual healing and not physical healing.

Robertson did cite one case where he said Jesus "had problems getting people healed." This was in Christ's own home area. Robertson says, "Jesus says He could do no mighty miracles in their midst because of their unbelief." The Bible does say that Jesus "did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58). Robertson changed the phrase "not many" to the word "no." Jesus knew that his miracles would have no effect, so he did not attempt to perform many miracles there. The example of Jesus is not of one who tried but failed to perform a miracle. That never happened once during his time on earth.

I wish Robertson no ill will in this article. I do not hate him but I do hate his doctrine (Psalm 119:104, 128). I hope that he will get well and take any further time that God has given him to turn to the Lord and away from his false doctrine. Robertson developed cancer and went to a doctor instead of to a fellow Pentecostal preacher to be healed. If you are sick, I would advise you to do the same. The power that God displays today is found in his gospel. This is his power to spiritual salvation and not physical healing (Romans 1:16). Again we say of Robertson "All therefore whatsoever he bids you observe, do not observe; but do after *one of his* works: for he says one thing and does another."

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SHOWDOWN ON MOUNT CARMEL

Tom Moore

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Elijah (Jehovah is God) is one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament.
 - 1. Elijah's prophetic ministry took place in I Kings 17-19 and II Kings 1-2.
 - 2. Elijah prophesied during the time of Ahab (I Kings 16:29-33).
 - 3. Probably Ahab was the most evil king in the Old Testament.
- B. Elijah confronts Ahab.
 - 1. I Kings 17:1
 - 2. Punishment was to come as a result of Ahab's wickedness—no rain.
- C. The Lord then sends Elijah away (I Kings 17:2-9) after 3½ years (James 5:17), the Lord sends Elijah back to Ahab for the purpose of showing the power of God (I Kings 18:1).
 - 1. Elijah requests the help of Obadiah (I Kings 18:6-16).
 - 2. Note I Kings 18:3—Even in Ahab's house!

II. DISCUSSION

A. MISPLACED BLAME

- 1. Elijah comes before Ahab (I Kings 18:17-18)
- 2. Ahab was blaming the wrong person.
 - a. He blamed Elijah for the drought.
 - b. But Ahab was to blame because...
- 3. Today, many are blaming others for their personal troubles, or for their sins.
 - a. We are living in a time when people refuse to be blamed.
 - b. Most always have reasons why they are not to blame.
- 4. We love to "pass the buck" (Genesis 3:12-13).
- 5. Some blame those who stand for the truth for causing trouble—but it is those who do not stand for the truth that are causing the trouble.
 - a. Elijah was pegged as a troublemaker, but it was Ahab who was the troublemaker.
 - b. Today, many truth proclaimers are being pegged as troublemakers.

B. DISOBEDIENCE THE CAUSE OF TROUBLE

- 1. The drought had come upon Israel because of disobedience.
 - a. They had forsaken God's law.
 - b. They had decided to do things their own way

- 2. God's blessings has and always will flow upon those who are obedient to his will.

- a. Galatians 6:7-8
- b. Revelation 22:14—
Many today are making light of obedience.

- c. Notice what will happen to those who will not obey (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- d. We will be rewarded or punished on how we have handled the word of God.

- 3. Our own personal disobedience can also at times cause trouble for others, as was the case with Ahab.

C. THE SHOWDOWN (I Kings 18:19-40)

- 1. Elijah gathers the people (vs. 19-20)
 - a. Gathered all Israel.
 - b. Gathered 850 false prophets.
 - c. It is now time to put up or shut.
- 2. An important question is asked.
 - a. I Kings 18:21
 - b. Elijah is asking them why they are holding on to two sentiments—or, why are they in favor of two opinions?
 - c. Joshua 24:14-15
 - d. Matthew 6:24
 - e. Israel was going to have to choose, they could not have it both ways.
 - f. Who was Israel going to serve? Notice ...
- 3. The Test
 - a. I Kings 18:22-24
 - b. The prophets of Baal were to cut up two bullocks into pieces and lay them on a pile of wood and call on their god to put fire thereon
 - c. Elijah was to do the same.
 - d. The God that does so is the TRUE GOD.
 - e. Today we need to test the prophets.
 - 1) I John 4:1
 - 2) Revelation 2:2
 - 3) We need to check ourselves (I Corinthians 13:5).
- 4. The prophets of Baal begin (I Kings 18:25-29).
 - a. The prophets of Baal called upon their gods



- from morning until noon, but nothing happened.
- b. They leaped on the altar, cut themselves, cried even louder—but nothing happened.
 - c. Elijah begins to mock their gods ...
 - d. Today we need to realize that the things of this world cannot answer our cry (Matt. 6:19-21).
5. The prophet of God begins (I Kings 18:30-39)
- a. Elijah rebuilds the altar of God.
 - b. Elijah, though, makes the test even harder—trench is dug around the altar and filled with water.
- c. I Kings 18:38-39
- 1) God proved who he is—and the people feared and believed.
 - 2) Today we must prove that God is, that the Bible is his word, that the Bible is his message for us, and that we must obey those words.
 - 3) I Peter 3:15

- 4) Isaiah 41:21
 - d. The false prophets of Baal slain.
 - e. I Kings 18:40
 - f. This was God's commandment (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20).
 - g. In the Old Testament the false prophet was to be slain, in the New Testament the false prophet/teacher is to be withdrawn from (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; I Timothy 6:5).
- III. CONCLUSION
- A. Valuable lessons:
1. Look to blame ourselves first.
 2. God blesses those who keep his commandments.
 3. We cannot ride the fence.
 4. The world cannot answer our cry.
 5. The teacher will be punished.

—2406 Main
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (Psalm 119:2-6).

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A REPLY TO "THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST" BY JAMES L. MELTON

Paul Vaughn

The New Testament teaches that Christians are to be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks. **"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"** (1 Peter 3:15). This does not necessarily mean that a defense should be made to every mean person or skeptic who attacks Christianity. Jesus met inquires of some antagonistic people with silence when the situation warranted it.

James L. Melton has written a "religious tract" titled, *The Plain Truth About The Church of Christ*. In this tract Melton is very antagonistic and bitter towards the Lord's church.

This tract was distributed on the parking lot of the Church of Christ in Sneedsville, Tennessee during their worship service. Therefore, it will be refuted.

THE INTRODUCTION

In the introduction of the tract Melton stated that the church of Christ is "properly called Campbellites." He traces the history of the church of Christ to Alexander Campbell in the 1800's. This is inaccurate! No faithful member of the church of Christ looks to Alexander Campbell as the one who established the church.

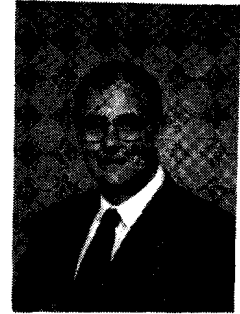
The church of Christ was established on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus. Before his death Jesus spoke of building his church in the future.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 17, 18).

In Acts chapter two it is easily seen that the church is spoken of as being established. Please note what is written in the scriptures. **"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"** (Acts 2:47). The church of Christ traces its beginning to Acts 2, the Day of Pentecost.

Melton called members of the church of Christ

"Campbellites." I have been a member of the church of Christ for over twenty years and I have never heard anyone in the church refer to themselves as "Campbellites." Faithful members of the church of Christ call themselves "Christians." It is the name given in the Bible. **"And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"** (Acts 11:26).



"A-MILLENNIALISM"

Melton charges that the church of Christ teaches that there "will be no millennial reign of Christ." Members of the Lord's church do not teach the false doctrine of premillennialism, a physical reign of Christ on the earth. It is not found in the Bible.

It was not the mission of Christ to establish a physical kingdom on the earth. In the tract Melton made reference to the book of Daniel (Daniel 2:44-45). Daniel was speaking of the establishment of the spiritual kingdom, the church of Christ. If Jesus had wanted to establish a physical kingdom, he could have. After he fed the five thousand, the Jews, wanted to take him and make him king (John 6:1-15). He rejected their effort to make him their physical king on earth. **"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone"** (John 6:15).

There are many prophecies relative to the establishment of the kingdom, the church (Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:44; Joel 2:28-32, Zachariah 13:1). They point to the mission of Jesus to suffer, be killed and enter Heaven. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, a spiritual work. Before Jesus was taken up to Heaven, he told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). In Acts chapter two, Peter preached the first gospel sermon. In that sermon

he quotes Joel 2 (a prophecy quoted by those who teach premillennialism). Peter said the events Joel spoke about were taking place in their day (Acts 2:14-21).

Melton teaches that the kingdom has not yet been established. There are two very easily understood verses that refute his teaching. In Paul's letter to the church at Colosse, he said they were in the kingdom. **"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom (emphasis P.V.) of his dear Son"** (Colossians 1:13). In the book of Revelation (a book often misapplied by those who teach premillennialism) one can easily see that John was in the kingdom.

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom (emphases P.V.) and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9).

Therefore, if the Christians at Colosse, were in the kingdom and John was in the kingdom, then the kingdom had to have been established. What were they in at that time? The church. Thus, the church is the kingdom. One who teaches otherwise is a false teacher.

"BAPTISMAL REGENERATION"

Melton said, "By carelessly charging through the Bible and mis-applying scripture, the Church of Christ has damned thousands and thousands of people by giving them a false hope to salvation." He teaches that "the main baptism of the New Testament is not water baptism, but rather the Holy Ghost baptism." Melton additionally said, "Acts 2:38 is another favorite Church of Christ text, and it has nothing to do with you and I (sic) today."

If anyone is carelessly charging through the Bible and misapplying scripture, it is James Melton and the Baptist Church. It is very serious business to twist the scriptures to make it teach something it does not. This is exactly what Melton does in his tract.

Where does the New Testament teach that "Holy Ghost baptism" is the main baptism to save people? In the tract Melton quotes Matthew 3:11.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

What does this verse teach? John, the son of Zachariah, had been immersing in the Jordan River those who had confessed their sins (Matthew 3:6). John's immersion was in water, but the time was coming when the Messiah would immerse the penitent with the Holy Spirit and the impenitent with fire. This immersion with fire is the final destruction of the wicked

at judgment. The Holy Spirit baptism was fulfilled when the apostles were immersed with the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:1-4) and the household of Cornelius received it in Acts 10. When Holy Spirit baptism was accomplished in those two accounts, it was terminated as part of the ordinance of Christianity. The New Testament does not teach that Holy Spirit baptism was for every believer in God. Thirty years later, Paul said there was one baptism (Ephesians 4:5).

The New Testament does teach that the one baptism for the forgiveness of sins is water immersion. In the first recorded gospel sermon, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter told those in attendance to be baptized for the remission of sins. **"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). This verse teaches that baptism is essential to salvation. Where in this verse or in Acts 2 does Melton get the idea that this verse "Has nothing to do with you and I (sic) today?" It is absurd to believe that the means to have sins removed, stated in the first gospel sermon does not apply to you and me today. It is absurd because of all the other evidence in the New Testament requiring immersion in water for the forgiveness of sin. Please note what some other verses in the New Testament teach about water baptism.

1. **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"** (Matthew 28:19).

2. **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16).

3. **"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"** (Acts 22:16).

4. **"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"** (I Peter 3:21).

In the book of Acts, in order for one to become a Christian, he had to be baptized.

In the tract Melton said that Acts 2:38 was a "favorite verse of the Church of Christ." In this reply one can see there are many verses which teach salvation comes when the penitent believer is baptized. The Christians in the first century understood this very clearly. Today when men fill their minds with denominational error, it leads them into direct opposition of the scriptures.

"NO SIN NATURE"

One of the most ungodly doctrines taught by man today is Calvinism. This is the doctrine Melton teaches in his tract. He said:

The Church of Christ also teaches that men are not born with a sin nature, but rather BECOME sinners later in life. Such a suggestion is almost funny to anyone who has taken time to read their Bible (Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Romans 3:10; 3:23; 5:12). Men are BORN sinners with a sin nature, which is why Jesus said we must be born again (John 3:3).

Melton takes a number of passages out of context, desperately trying to prove that babies are born sinners. There is nothing "funny" about his teaching. It puts innocent newborn babies in the fires of hell. It is sad that anyone would teach such damnable heresies.

In Psalm 51:5, David said, "**Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.**" Please note the verse does not teach that David was born a sinner! It does teach that he was born into the world of sin. No one reading Psalm 51:5 would ever come up with the idea that babies are born sinners except that they who have fallen for this false teaching and twist the scriptures endeavoring to prove it.

Melton also said that Psalm 58:3 teaches that ba-

bies have a sinful nature. Note what the passage teaches. "**The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.**" Can babies speak? David is using figurative language in the Psalms. All one has to do is read the verse in the context of the whole Psalm and one can plainly see that this verse is *not* a reference to babies. The Psalm is speaking of adults who have chosen a life of sin. The "estranged" means "to go astray, a wanderer," those who have gone astray from God. David likens those who have gone astray to poison of serpents and deaf adders. In verse 6, David asks God to break the teeth of the sinners described in verses 3-5. Do babies have teeth? NO! Therefore, he could not have been speaking about newborn babies.

Melton then gives Romans 3:10, 3:23, and 5:12 as proof of babies being born with a sin nature. Do these verse teach hereditary depravity? Again the answer is NO! Romans 3:10 and 3:23 are speaking of adult Jews and Gentiles. If you will read chapters one and two of Romans, you will see that Paul is speaking of men and women (Jews and Gentiles) who could have known God, but chose to turn from God. Does Romans 5:12 teach that babies are nothing but little sinners? What does the scripture say? "**Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and**



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so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Why did death pass upon all men? "For that all have sinned," "not" "all men were born in sin" or "all inherited sin." Where does it teach that babies are born sinners? It does not say anything at all about babies. It is saying that because of Adam's sin death entered the world. Not a SINFUL NATURE!

He also quoted John 3:3 stating that "men are BORN sinners with a sin nature which is why Jesus said we must be born again." What does the scripture say? "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Where is the baby in this verse? Who is Jesus speaking too? It was not a baby, but Nicodemus, "a man of the Pharisees" (John 3:1).

The passages Melton took out of context to prove his fatal error have come back to destroy his arguments. They do not teach man has a sinful nature. There is one thing I want us to look at before I go on to the next argument of Melton. The Bible plainly teaches that man's spirit comes from God (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zachariah 12:1). In the book of Acts, Paul said that "We are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). If Melton's doctrine that babies have a sinful nature is true, from where did they receive this sinful nature? Is he saying they get it from God from whom man gets his spirit? That would have God giving a sinful nature to his children. God would not do that because God does not have anything to do with sin (Isaiah 59:1,2)! So, Melton must be saying that babies get a sinful nature from their fleshly parents. The Bible teaches this is impossible. Ezekiel wrote:

Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. ²⁰The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him (Ezekiel 18:19, 20).

Sin is something we do, and not something we inherit (I John 3:4).

LORD'S SUPPER REQUIRED WEEKLY

Melton wrote,

The Churches of Christ teaches (sic) that the Lord's Supper is supposed to be observed on a weekly basis, but the Bible never says this once. There is certainly nothing wrong with a church observing the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis, but no one has a right to command it...

He goes on to reference Matthew 26:26-28 and I

Corinthians 11:23-26 as God's word about the subject.

Melton has selective memory, or else he is not very informed with the history of the church of Christ. The first thirty year history of the church is set forth in the book of Acts. Jesus established the Lord's Supper before his death (Matthew 26:26-28). Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for perverting the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Luke records for all to see that the early church observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Churches of Christ follow that example today.

Melton could say, "That verse does not say every first day of the week." He must also remember that under the Law of Moses the Jews kept every Sabbath Day, yet the passage which taught the Jews to keep the Sabbath did not say every Sabbath. When God said, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:7), the Jews were required to keep every Sabbath.

Taking the Lord's Supper every first day of the week is based on an approved example which shows how often the New Testament church observed it. Where is the example to observe the Lord's Supper monthly, quarterly, or yearly as the denominational world teaches? When men understand that salvation from sins is based in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus they will understand why the churches of Christ in the first century and today observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.

The denominational world has no problem receiving an offering every first day of the week. Yet, there are just as many scriptures authorizing the weekly contribution as the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper.

Melton said, "Weekly observance is adding to God's word." According to Acts 20:7 it is not. But, his remarks are taking away from the Lord's word (Revelation 22:18, 19).

"MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FORBIDDEN IN WORSHIP"

Of the various heresies taught by the Church of Christ, this may be the most foolish. The Bible is filled with musical instruments (Psa. 33:2-4; 1 Chron. 25:5-6; II Sam. 6:5; 1 Chron. 16:42; Neh. 12:27; Psa 150), and there are even musical instruments in Heaven (Rev. 5:8; 14:2; 15:2)! To forbid instruments in worship is simply another case of ADDING to God's word.

Two favorite tests for this heresy are Ephesians 5:19 and Col. 3:16, which speak of Christians music coming from the heart. Neither verse forbids instruments, and neither verse speaks of a worship service. Both verses are dealing with an individual believer's personal fellowship with Christ, not church worship services! (James Melton).

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The denominational world today is seeking greater and greater ways to entertain people. They have little or no desire to please God. When it comes to worship, their use of mechanical instruments of music is an example of the foolish things they will do to please the fleshly desires of man. Worship to God must be "in spirit." The worshiper must have the right attitude in his heart. His worship must be sincere, from the heart, without dishonesty. The worshiper must worship God according to "truth." God's word is truth (John 17:17). Melton has no idea about the worship authorized by Jesus in the New Testament. Yet, he is trying to teach people about worship.

In presenting his argument, he gave six Old Testament passages as proof that mechanical instruments of music were authorized for use in worship. His appeal to the Old Testament does not prove his argument. The Old Testament had a purpose and it was fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 3:24-29). Today there are many things we can learn about God and the history of man from studying the Old Testament (Romans 15:4). Any attempt to try to justify actions in the church today by appealing to the Old Testament is limited. Those actions would justify animal sacrifices, Jewish priesthood, temple worship, keeping of feast days, and circumcision. Paul said that those who try to justify themselves by looking to the Old Testament law have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4). Therefore, one cannot look to the Old Testament to justify mechanical instruments of music.

Melton also appealed to the book of Revelation to get authority to use mechanical instruments of music. Revelation was written in figurative language. In Revelation, harps are symbolic of praise to God with singing. Melton has spiritual beings in heaven playing on material harps. Why would he have citizens of heaven playing on mechanical instruments of music, which were never authorized for the church to use on earth, except to justify that which is sinful for Christians to do. What about the four living creatures? These are not men. Is Melton trying to justify animals playing on harps in the worship of God? If not, why not? The events written in the book of Revelation do not refer to worship on earth. The New Testament does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music in the church. It does authorize singing (James 5:13; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Basically, Melton is saying that everything mentioned in praise of God in Heaven is permissible for praise of God on earth. Will he accept the consequences

of his own argument? The burning of incense, the golden censer, and the golden altar are mentioned for the praise of God in heaven (Revelation 8:3,4). Will he take all of those, or just what he desires to have in worship? The events and things in heaven are not the standards for what we do on earth. If the harps are literal (I do not believe they are literal harps) God put them in Heaven, but he did not authorize them in the church on earth!

Melton said that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 do not forbid instruments and neither verse speaks of a worship service. The specific command to do one thing only authorizes that one action. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he commanded the use of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Luke 22:19, 20). Jesus only authorized these elements which eliminates any other. Can man substitute ice cream and candy? They are not forbidden in specific words in the Bible. Melton is teaching that you can do anything that is not explicitly forbidden. There are a great number of sinful things that are not explicitly forbidden in the Bible, but they are wrong because they are not authorized.

In the tract, Melton said that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 "are dealing with individual believer's personal fellowship with Christ, not church worship." Where do those passages teach that it is dealing with individuals and not the church? To follow his own reasoning, if it is written to individuals, then the individual Christian must sing and not use mechanical instruments of music at anytime. Will he teach that individuals who use instruments of music in worshiping God are sinning? That is what his doctrine teaches.

James L. Melton has made several unscriptural arguments in his tract, *The Plain Truth about the Church of Christ*. Members of the Baptist Church put the tract on the car windows of Christians while they were worshiping God. It did not take much courage to creep around while no one was looking to teach their errors. Do they have the courage to address these issues in public discussions? We will see.

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One Woman's Perspective...

NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY

Annette B. Cates

Recently, while having a meal in a relatively new restaurant, my husband noticed a barcode/price sticker that had been left on the end of an exposed beam. When the carpenter nailed the beam into place, he surely saw the rectangular strip of white paper. With the mentality so typical of today, he probably shrugged and said,



“Not my responsibility.” Next, a painter varnished the woodwork, brushing right over the barcode sticker. No doubt, he, too, thought, “Not my responsibility.” At some point, perhaps numerous times, a supervisor checked the work, spotted the sticker, and figured someone else would take care of removing it. Now it is there for all to see, paying tribute to passing off responsibility.

How many times do we pass off our responsibilities as Christians? Pleas must be made over and over again for someone to teach classes. There are visits to be made to the hospitals and nursing homes. Food needs to be taken to the shut-ins. The church property needs to be maintained. All too often the answer is, “That’s what we pay the preacher to do.” In other words, “Not my responsibility.” Do some really think that the preacher is paid to perform the members’ work? If he is working as he should be, he is on the job 26 hours a day, eight days a week. That is HIS responsibility.

The sin of the one talent man (Matthew 25:14-30) was that he did not use that which he had. He neglected to take advantage of the blessing that he had received. He had been expected to produce that which was in line with his ability. I perceive two basic reasons for Christians not participating as they should in the work of a congregation. One is that they do not have their priorities in order. The other is that they lack confidence in their own abilities, thus it is easier to let someone else do it.

We could consider the first reason for not attending to our responsibilities as “I don’t want to” thinking. When a Christian has as his first priority seeking God and his righteousness, he will seek to be involved (Matthew 6:33). This is part of growing spiritually. As one grows he should be taking on more and more responsibilities. Not all of us can teach, but those who can have

that responsibility. Not all men can lead a public prayer, but they can learn how. Not all can take food to those in need of that service, but they can pick up nutritious meals at a deli and deliver it. It is vital that new Christians be brought into the local work as soon as possible in order that they can develop an involved attitude. Many times, new Christians seem to be forgotten after they have been baptized. Children need to learn that there is service that they can perform, and be allowed to do it. From the time they learn to write, they can send notes to the sick and letters to missionary families. Regardless of the task to be done, when our priorities are where they should be, we will work together, using our time and talents to get the job accomplished. We will not be saying, “Not my responsibility.”

The second reason for not taking one’s part in the work to be done might be called “I can’t” thinking. When a Christian gains confidence in his abilities to serve, he will become more involved. Possibly, when one says, “Not my responsibility” what he might mean is “I want to, but I do not know how.” When God told Moses to go to his people, his first reaction was, “They will not believe me.” God answered his quibble. Next, he said that he was not an eloquent man. God responded, **“I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee...”** (Exodus 4:1-12). Developing the confidence to teach and to serve in any way one can is a part of Christian growth. This is where “Timothy” and “Dorcas” classes are vitally important for our young. Men’s training classes not only teach how to participate in worship services in a public way; they build the confidence to do so. Ladies Bible classes also give opportunity for us to learn to serve. Many congregations have teacher workshops. These are not just for those already teaching; they should also include prospective teachers. We must focus on what we are able to do, using our individual attributes. Too often we belittle ourselves, or sell ourselves short when we think we cannot measure up to the task before us. The end result is doing nothing, “Not my responsibility.”

It may be true, as has been said, that 90 percent of the work of the church is done by ten percent of the people. It is the responsibility of 100 percent of the members to do whatever is within their true ability to accomplish. When they do not do so, they are falling for the same thinking that the one talent man had. Whether his problem was “don’t want to” or “can’t,” does not matter. He was cast into outer darkness for having been an unprofitable servant. What is your response: “My responsibility? Yes, Indeed!” or “Not my responsibility”?

—9194 Lakeside Drive
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WHY WE FIGHT

Kent Bailey



As this article is being written our nation is at war. We are fighting to both protect our homeland from terrorist attack in addition to liberate the Iraqi people from bondage and tyranny. The cost of freedom is indeed expensive as it is purchased by the blood of America's sons and daughters.

For those who oppose our national effort, we remind them of September 11, 2001. While no sane individual desires war, neither should we, sacrifice our national liberty for peace at any price. Indeed, there are things for which we must be willing to fight and die. Paul, in Romans 13:1-4, sets forth a divine obligation for rulers of civil government to provide protection for its citizens. Whether danger is from enemies that are either domestic or foreign, the same principle is involved. We have an obligation to protect our families and homes.

While our fight for truth, justice, morality and national freedom is indeed important; as Christians we face even a more crucial conflict in the spiritual realm. Paul wrote:

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:11-12).

He also noted: **"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses"** (I Timothy 6:12).

Our fight for the aspect of God's divine truth is important for various reasons.

WE FIGHT BECAUSE OUR CAUSE IS JUST

We are involved within this conflict due to the fact that such involves the deity of Christ, the plenary verbal inspiration of the scriptures, the gospel scheme of redemption, the oneness nature of the church of Christ, the proper organization, worship and work of the local church, the purity of Biblical living, and the aspect of Biblical fellowship. All of these are crucial areas. To refuse to be **"set for the defense of the gospel"** (Philippians 1:17) and to fail in **"earnestly contending for the faith"** is nothing less than an act of cowardice. John notes that cowards will be lost eternally in hell (Revelation 21:8).

WE FIGHT BECAUSE OUR FOE (SATAN) IS STRONG

Paul noted that **"...we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Ephesians 6:12). When we make war against the enemies of God's truth, such is not a conflict based upon personal hatred. Such is based upon hating false ways while loving the sinner enough to tell them what they need rather than telling them what they want to hear (Psalm 119:128).

WE FIGHT BECAUSE WE LOVE THE SOULS OF HUMANITY

When truth comes into conflict with error, the souls of humanity are at stake. Our Lord noted the importance of truth and how only the truth makes individuals free from the horrendous bondage of sin (John 17:17; 8:32). We must involve ourselves in such a fight because of the importance of souls and the reality of eternal punishment (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). If we fail to do our best in both teaching and defending truth we fail both God and humanity.

WE FIGHT TO LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE

Upon our believing the gospel (John 8:24; 1:12); repentance of sin (Acts 17:30); confession of Christ (Romans 10:10); and baptism for the remission of sins to be added to the church (Acts 2:38-47), one receives forgiveness of all past alien sins; however, eternal life is reserved for the future life in heaven (I John 2:25; Titus 1:2). In I Timothy 6:12 Paul instructed Timothy to fight for this great prize. In Philippians 3:8-14 Paul realizes that he must seek to attain such. In being faithful to the cause, eternal life will be enjoyed in heaven by all of God's faithful (II Timothy 4:6-8; Revelation 2:10).

WE FIGHT DUE TO THE FACT THAT GOD DESIRES US TO BE VALIANT SOLDIERS

To the church at Corinth Paul wrote, **"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men"** (I Corinthians 16:13). We are facing a time within the church that sin like a mighty battering ram is being used by Satan to assault the very citadel of God's truth. Let us not grow weary in our task! May we be watchful, stand upon the solid rock of God's truth, behave properly in being brave and be manly in our conduct.

May God in his providence help us fight the good fight of the faith and lay hold on eternal life!

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW Cartersville, GA 30120-4222. (770) 382-6775. E-mail: bdgayton@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

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

-Missouri-

Farmington-Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, Sunday: 10:00, 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (573) 756-5925.

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, (919) 977-7556.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Wyoming-

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

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES?¹

B. J. Clarke

No one believes in the value and importance of Christian education anymore than I do. My parents sent my brother, my sister, and me to Christian colleges.² I served on the advisory board of a Christian school when I preached in Knoxville, Tennessee. I met my lifetime mate at a Christian college and fully desire to send my children to a Christian college. I say all of that to say this: This series of articles is not written by someone who has no regard for the value and importance of Christian education! I have no personal axe to grind against any particular institution of higher learning, nor do I relish the opportunity of writing about some of the things happening at some of our Christian colleges and universities. Furthermore, please understand that this author is not indicting all Christian schools of being guilty of misconduct. However, sticking our heads in the sand and refusing to admit that some Christian schools have some problems is blind loyalty and solves nothing. We must not be afraid to confront problems, even if they involve our alma mater or other prominent schools.

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Let us begin on a positive note by analyzing the value of Christian education. Restoration preacher and writer, **Jesse P. Sewell** said at the inauguration of Thorp Spring Christian College in 1910, "Brethren, I'm interested in Christian education. I don't believe we can ever estimate its importance." It was his prayer that every member of the Lord's church have the opportunity to

attend a school "in which children can be taught by Christian teachers and be taught the Bible every day just as they are taught grammar, arithmetic, etc." Children spend over 16,000 hours in school (K-12). The value of a Christian education is seen in what Biblical values can be inculcated within the student during these thousands of hours of instruction. What does true Christian education do?

1. *It nourishes and builds up one's faith in God and the Bible.* Most Christian schools require every student to attend chapel services each day and to attend at least one Bible class each semester or quarter. These opportunities give the students a chance to affirm their faith in the following truths: (1) God exists and created all things (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Psalm 33:6-9); (2) Jesus is the virgin-born Son of God and is the risen Lord and Saviour of the world (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Romans 1:4; 4:25; I Corinthians 15; I Peter 3:21); (3) The Bible is the inerrant and authoritative word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; John 12:48; Revelation 20:12); (4) There is a distinctive and blood-purchased body of Christ into which we must enter in order to be saved by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:4; 5:23); (5) Moral values are absolute and are determined by the teaching of the Bible (Proverbs 14:12; Colossians 3:17; Romans 1:20-32; Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:9-11); (6) God is a prayer hearing, prayer answering God (II Chronicles 7:12-15; Isaiah 38:1-8; Matthew 7:7-11; John 11:41; Luke 18:1-7); (7)

(Continued on Page 7)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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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.

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

Editorial...

OUR STANDARD AND STYLE FOR ARTICLES

When preparing an article for publication in *CFTF* we prefer that writers follow a certain standard and style. When articles are submitted without deference to these, the editing process can be more time-consuming and tedious than it already is or needs to be. To help forgo such on our part, please post these guidelines where you will have easy access to them while writing your article.

Now that so much writing is done by word processing on computers, where at all possible, we request that along with the "hard copy" of an article a disk containing the article(s) be included (We request a "hard copy" so we may have the convenience of scanning the article into our computers.). If possible send the article to us as an attachment to an email. This will be most appreciated and will expedite our layout of it in *CFTF*.

1. Titles should be in all caps one inch from the top of the first page.
2. The author's name should appear four spaces below the title.
3. Begin the article four spaces below the author's name.
4. Indent the first line of all paragraphs five spaces.
5. Double-space the entire article.
6. Leave one inch margins on the article. (This is necessary for making editing marks.)
7. Emphasis is at the discretion of the Editor.
8. Do not spell out scripture citations, such as FIRST JOHN, ONE SEVEN. Simply key the citation in as I John 1:7.
9. Use Roman numerals in referring to books of the Bible, e.g., II Chronicles (not 2 Chronicles).
10. Italicize names of papers, journals, magazines, and the like.
11. Resist abbreviation. For instance, spell out the

names of all books, such as Deuteronomy (not Deut.).

12. At the close of your article drop down two spaces, flush right, and key in your address double-spaced. Do *not* abbreviate. Spell it out.

13. Although there are exceptions (and we make them regularly), all other things being equal, an article that is written following this standard and style, and is no more than 2 ½ pages long, has a higher probability of being printed than one of greater length.

We recognize that persons from time to time desire to try their hand at writing and we are grateful for their efforts. Moreover, we want to encourage them in so doing and we welcome their work. However, when they submit their articles to *CFTF* we urge them to follow the standard and style herein set out.

—The Editor

Assistant Editorial...

"WAR – WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR"

In this article we are going to note some of the arguments set forth on both sides of the war issue. All of us should want to know what the Bible has to say on this matter.

NOTICE SOME ARGUMENTS AGAINST ANY AND ALL WAR

Some have quoted James 4:1: **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your own lust that war in your members?"** and made the assertion that since wars come from lust, and lust is sin, then war is sinful. To begin with, all violence is not necessarily the result of lust. Moses was not motivated by lust when he defended his kinsman who was being oppressed (Acts 7:23-24). In John 2:14-15 we find Jesus physically driving the money changers from the temple. It is obvious that Christ was not motivated by lust. When Peter grabs his sword in an attempt to prevent Christ's arrest, he was not motivated by lust. Although these are not specific acts of war, they do illustrate that physical force can be (and was) used to oppose some forms of evil.

This position also overlooks the fact that the

In This Issue...

What's Happening to Our Christian Colleges?

B.J. Clarke 1

Editorial...

Our Standard and Style for Articles

David P. Brown 2

Assistant Editorial...

"War – What Is It Good For"

Michael Light 3

Lee Davis Family Loses House and Car to Arson Fire

David P. Brown 5

The Leaven of the Pharisees

Gary Summers 11

Church to Cast Net for Youth

Marvin L. Weir 14

Sermon Outline...

Jonah's Running

Tom Moore 15

Restoration Reflections...

"Satan has Done it Before"

Paul Vaughn 16

Eulogy...

Opal Eileen Ferguson Andrews

19

Current Events that Concern Christians...

Hate Crimes—There May Be Charges Coming to a Pulpit Near You

Jerry Murrell 18

One Woman's Perspective...

A Luxuriant Vine

Annette Cates 20

The Last Word...

Baptized Into One Body

Kent Bailey 21

wrong-doing (lust) can be one-sided. From where did the strife come when one finds a thief in his room at night (with the ensuing conflict)? Lust yes, but it is one-sided. **Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein** and men like them do cause war as a result of their evil decisions to conquer and kill. It is not true that in every war both sides are guilty of wrong.

Others go to John 18:36, where Jesus affirmed, **“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.”** This passage is simple setting forth the fact that the kingdom of Christ is not the same as the kingdom of men. This is not a recipe for Christian living per se. It is simply setting out a general truism about the church.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS NOT SPREAD BY CARNAL WARFARE

Others use Matthew 6:10, **“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”** The charge is then made that since there is no war in heaven, and Jesus prayed that we have the same type of existence here, there should be no war here. Therefore, the participation in something Jesus prayed against would be sin. Again this is stretching the passage beyond its intended scope. Although it is true that if everyone complied with the will of heaven there would be no war, the fact is everyone does not comply with the will of heaven. If the will of heaven was done, there would be no theft, murder, rape, et al... But these things do exist. And when they are perpetrated, the guilty parties are responsible for the consequences of their actions. The same is true for nations. Likewise Matthew 26:52 is used, **“Then Jesus said unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”** Some men who have lived by the sword have died of old age. This proves that Jesus was not being literal. Peter was actually getting in the way of the redemptive plan of God. Defending his life, or the life of Jesus, was not the problem in this case.

Next notice the argument put forth from Matthew 5:44, **“Love you enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”** The position then states that killing your enemy is hardly showing him love. The execution of the law does not automatically indicate a malice in one's heart. If it did, how could God have commanded it in

the Old Testament? King Saul sinned because he did not kill king Agag. Did God command Saul to sin? Of course not. We know then, that it cannot be immoral in and of itself to kill. Do you love a would-be-rapist and murderer more than your mother? The Bible does teach a progression of love (God, family, church, etc... Galatians 6:10, I Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 5:25).

Then there is the golden rule, Matthew 7:12, **“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”** The opponents of any and all war argue that since you would not want someone to shoot you, you should not shoot someone else, and the like. I do not like getting a speeding ticket either, but is it a sin for a policeman to write me one? I do not like getting in trouble, is it a sin to punish my children? This passage relates to our basic conduct. It is not a passage giving license to every thug in the world to rape and pillage because Christians will let them do it. Paul stated that if he had done anything worthy of death he would not refuse to die (Acts 25:11). This shows that some things are worthy of death and the Christian is obligated to recognize such.

Finally, some appeal to Galatians 5:22-23: the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, et al.) The reasoning is that war is contrary to these things. Not necessarily. What if a brutal tyrant is raping and pillaging? A man could go to war because he loves peace and opposes lawless violence. A war can be a just war and one that needs to be fought.

THE STRONGEST PASSAGE APPROVING SOME WARS

Open your Bibles to Romans 13:1-4 and read it. This passage sets forth the fact that government is a God ordained institution. This fact does not mean that all governments are God approved. There are some wicked men who have gained power and who brutalize the societies over which they hold sway. This passage also states that these God approved institutions have the God given authority and obligation to punish the wicked and uphold or protect the good.

Since God gives the state authority to use force to execute its laws against evil-doers, such use of force is not contrary to Christianity or the nature of God. Consider the following scenario. A mob is rioting in your hometown. In an attempt to stop the violence the police are called to put down the rioting. Because

there are not enough police to stop the trouble, citizens are called on to help the police subdue the lawbreakers. Such would be in harmony with the passage.

Paul appealed to and received help from the Roman army (Acts 22:25-28). How could he use that which was sinful? He could not. Many pacifists do not mind someone else doing their fighting. If no Christian can be an agent of the government – then no one can.

For no man is allowed by divine law to do wrong. Yet, Romans 13 does allow men to bear the sword (kill) those who are wicked if the case so warrants. If a Christian cannot serve in the military, he cannot serve on a jury that sends thieves to prison and murders to death row.

Certainly all wars are not justified and some would be sinful to support. Acts 5:28-29 makes it clear that a Christian has to obey God rather than men. If a war is not justified, then a Christian could not support it. However, if it is just, we cannot oppose it and be in compliance with Romans 13.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Often we hear people say that Jesus would not support war. This is simply not true biblically. In the Old Testament we have repeatedly God (which includes Jesus) commanding the death of individuals and the militaristic destruction of entire cities and societies. It therefore cannot be categorically sinful to engage in war. God himself in various battles actually engaged the wicked. I recognize this is an emotional topic but there is nothing unchristian in supporting or fighting in a war for a just cause.

More could be said but this should suffice to get us to thinking more deeply on this subject. As with all subjects we need to look to the Bible to answer all of life's questions.

[Note – I wish to give a great deal of credit to Terry M. Hightower's work, "The Case for the Christian Policeman." Most of the arguments set forth in this article were gleaned from that fine work. ML]

—Michael Light, Assistant Editor

LEE DAVIS FAMILY LOSES HOUSE AND CAR TO ARSON

When brother Lee Davis arrived at the Nashville International Airport on March 18 after completing his first term of teaching at Four Seas College, Republic of Singapore he had no way of knowing what terrible news would meet him. Only two days before his arrival He, his wife Trish, and their six children lost their house and one car in a tragic fire. To make matters worse, if such could be the case, the fire that destroyed their house and car was deliberately set—it was a matter of arson! The people that set the fire probably knew that sister Davis and the children would not be at home on Sunday because they were attending Bible study and worship.

The fire started around 11:00 a.m. and the fire department was called at 2:30 p.m. Sister Davis and the children did not find out about the fire until they returned that night at 10:30 p.m. A representative from the fire de-



THE LEE DAVIS FAMILY

partment kindly waited for them on site to explain the situation to Trish. The Farm Bureau Insurance Company is the company that has the Davis' policy and they provided two hotel rooms for 10 days and are now providing an apartment for Lee and his family in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. They will remain at that location until the insurance settlement is completed. Then they will decide where they will relocate. Brother Davis reported that just this past November they had remodeled their house and had increased their insurance on their house.

With thankfulness Lee stated:

“There has been such an outpouring of kindness and generosity. Words cannot be given to properly describe what we think about it all. First, we are so very thankful for what many have done for us. ... It has made things so much easier. God has greatly blessed us and we are so thankful that no one was hurt. The Lord will take care of us and we will continue to trust in him.”

Though their insurance will help the Davis family in a great way we all know that there are some things that insurance will not cover. That being the case, the Woody Church of Christ, Crossville, Tennessee has set up and will administer the distribution of a fund for the Davis'. If any one desires to make a financial contribution to the Davis family, please make your contributions to:

Davis family fire loss fund: C/o Woody Church of Christ, Jerry Holman, Elder, P. O. Box 3001,



BEFORE



AFTER

Crossville, TN 38557. The Davis' new phone # is 865-483-7906. Please remember them in your prayers.

—DPB, Editor

What's Happening...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

There is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain (Matthew 7:13-14; 25:46).

2. *It provides a Christian atmosphere in which to live.* Although it is not a perfect atmosphere, the Christian campus is a marvelous place to grow. It offers plenty of opportunities for Christian fellowship and Christian dating. These associations often lead to Christian marriages. One of the strongest arguments for a Christian education that I can give is my lovely and godly wife, whom I met at Freed-Hardeman University. It was/is wonderful to be in the same classes with (and on the same campus with) those of like precious faith.

3. *It offers academic excellence.* Some have the mistaken notion that a Christian education is an inferior education. Nothing could be further from the truth. Statistics clearly demonstrate that students at Christian schools do not suffer academically. Rather, those who attend Christian schools consistently find themselves in the upper echelon of those accepted into graduate study programs. A Christian education well equips the student, both academically and spiritually.

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Although much and lasting good is done by Christian schools, all is not rosy in the realm of Christian education. Tragically, there are some serious problems at some of our academies and universities that vex the souls of those who are committed to truth and right. What is happening to our Christian schools?

Some are straying from the purpose for which they were founded. Before dismissing, please be patient enough to read the facts of the matter.

As a matter of fact, the problem of schools straying from the original purpose for which they were founded is not confined to one religious group. Remember that the very first colleges established in this country were established for the primary purpose of training ministers. Harvard University opened its doors in 1636. Its seal bears the motto, "Christo et Ecclesiae," which means "For Christ and the Church." The following statement is one of the early rules given to the students at Harvard:

Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

There were twenty-four colleges established in the United States before the nineteenth century and only one of them, the University of Pennsylvania, was

not the creation of a church or individual ministers. Yet, the Bible was a major textbook even at the University of Pennsylvania. **Benjamin Franklin**, founder of the University of Pennsylvania, said:

When human science has done its utmost and when we have thought the youth worthy of the honors of the Seminary, yet still we must recommend them to the scriptures of God in order to complete their wisdom, to regulate their conduct through life, and guide them to happiness—forever.

Where is the religious emphasis at Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania and other schools today? Can you imagine the administrators and professors of these schools being so overtly religious today? I well recognize that the aforementioned schools were founded upon false denominational doctrines, and thus were not really Christian schools. I do not bring up Harvard or these other schools to praise them for training ministers to go out and propagate false doctrines across America. However, what has happened to these schools is very instructive to us. How did these schools, founded upon religious principles and values, get to the point where they now teach against the very values upon which they were once founded? How did some of the seminaries become cemeteries where people's faith in God and the Bible were buried? These schools once encouraged their students to believe in God and the Bible as his authoritative word. They now do their dead level best to ridicule the concept of God and the inspired word of God. They tear the Bible apart bit-by-bit and shred-by-shred. Students who come to the university believing in God and the Bible are left with the carcass of a dead faith and the disillusionment of claiming to be religious while at the same time denying everything that the true religion of Christianity promotes. You can be certain of one thing: the founders of Harvard University would not recognize it today. They would be appalled at its modernistic, antisupernaturalistic content of instruction.

Someone might say:

Well those are denominational schools that left their religious moorings and became secular in their emphasis. What does that have to do with schools associated with members of churches of Christ?

Well, what gets into the world, yes, even the religious world, all too often infiltrates the Lord's church. It would be nice to say that we have no examples of such departures among our schools, but it just would not be true.

COLLEGES AND DIGRESSION

The first educational institution associated with the Restoration movement of churches of Christ, was

Bacon College, established at Georgetown, Kentucky in 1836. The school was moved to Harrodsburg in 1839. In 1840, President **James Shannon** said:

Still, however, when we have carried education with reference to intellect to the farthest verge of perfection, if we stop here, we have neglected that which is most important, and without which nothing has been done to any valuable purpose. Did man possess no higher faculties than those of intellect, he would be at best but a reasoning brute...there is in man something infinitely more noble than animal passions...That nobler something consists in man's moral and religious faculties, by which he is allied to God, to holy angels, to good men—and in short, to everything morally great and good on earth, or in heaven.

Thus, Bacon College began with a deeply rooted religious emphasis. The school discontinued in 1850, but was reopened as the University of Kentucky in 1858. Later, the College of the Bible was opened in connection with the University. It is a long story and the limitations of space prohibit full details, but Kentucky University and the College of the Bible gradually departed from the purposes for which they were founded and soon began to teach the opposite of what they were established to uphold.

One of the most prominent of early Christian schools was Bethany College, founded by **Alexander Campbell** in Bethany, Virginia in 1841. Campbell's philosophy of Christian education is worth noting. The following comments come from the October, 1839 edition of the *Millennial Harbinger*, a paper published by Campbell: The atmosphere of this institution, not physical only, but moral and religious, must be pure, perfectly pure, as the best state of present society can afford...None shall be received but those whose parents and guardians desire them to be taught the facts, precepts, and promises of the Holy Book, as well as its divine truth...

Speaking at the official opening of the college on November 2, 1841, President Campbell said:

We define education to be the development and the improvement of the physical, intellectual and moral powers of man, with a reference to his whole destiny in the Universe of God...Hence our position, our capitol position is that the Holy Bible must be in every school worthy of a Christian public patronage, and not in the library only, but daily in the hand of a teacher and pupil, professor and student. A dwelling house without a table, a chair, or a couch, would not, in our esteem, be more unfit for guests, than a primary school, an academy, or a college, without the Bible.

We could not agree more with the sentiments expressed by Campbell. Moreover, I do not know of a president of any Christian college who would disagree with his statement. However, it is one thing to say the words and another thing to live the words.

At the time of the takeover of the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky in 1917 by the liberal element of the Christian church, a man by the name of T.

E. Cramblett was president of Bethany College. He was distressed over events surrounding the demise of the College of the Bible and vowed that such would not happen to Bethany College. Not long after, the board of trustees of Bethany College announced the launching of a graduate school of religion at Bethany.

They stated that their goal was to assemble the most qualified and learned men to serve on the Bible faculty. The Board further stated that these men must be known for an outstanding loyalty to the truth of the Bible.

Despite the original good intentions of its founders, upheaval at Bethany College commenced with the sudden death of President Cramblett on June 15, 1919. **Wilbur Cramblett**, son of the college president, was later appointed as president of the college. Wilbur came directly from Yale with a Ph.D. to serve on the faculty. Consequently, Wilbur had been seriously tainted by the modernism and destructive criticism peddled at Yale, and it was not long before Bethany fell into outright liberalism.

More modern examples of Christian schools straying far from their charter and original purpose include Pepperdine and Abilene Christian University. George Pepperdine would certainly not recognize the school that bears his name. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that even Pepperdine does not make much of a pretense anymore about being a school affiliated with members of churches of Christ. Several years ago, **Pat Boone** was appointed to the Pepperdine Board of directors. Pat Boone, of course, is an apostate brother who left the church years ago to promote Pentecostalism. Furthermore, Pepperdine has adopted a policy of allowing women to lead in public prayers and other acts of worship.

Pepperdine has also compromised God's standard of morality in several areas. A male swim team coach posed suggestively for *Playgirl* (a magazine for women) a few years ago. The Battle of the Network Stars television competition used to be filmed on the Pepperdine campus in Malibu. As you may remember, many of the female celebrities appeared wearing no bras. How can a school that claims to promote Christian values allow such conduct to occur on its campus? In addition to the foregoing conduct, Pepperdine University continues to use and promote many of the rankest false teachers in the brotherhood today. Some schools cry for an exemption from II John 9-11 on the basis that they are schools and not churches. Their cry is invalid because every Christian is bound to follow the dictates of II John 9-11.

Abilene Christian University is another school that has forsaken the principles of its charter. Former President, **Don H. Morris**, made the following statement in an address to the faculty on May 14, 1968:

The Charter of Abilene Christian College, referring to the college, says, '...which shall be managed and con-

trolled as hereinafter set forth by a board of trustees, each of whom shall be a member of a congregation of the Church of Christ, which takes the New Testament as its only sufficient rule of faith, worship and practice, and rejects from its faith, worship and practice everything not required by either precept or example, and which does not introduce into the faith, worship and practice, as a part of the same or as adjuncts thereto any supplemental organization or anything else not clearly and directly authorized in the New Testament either by precept or example.'

Referring to this statement in the Charter, Morris later added:

Now there is not a person here today who doesn't know what that means. I know what it means, and I am honor bound by it. It means that religiously Abilene Christian College stands for the organization of the New Testament Church—that it stands for the law of conversion of the New Testament, the worship as taught in the New Testament and for Bible teaching in all matters. I am calling attention to this today as a review and as a reminder to all of us of our purposes and promises. We are all honor bound by these principles. It is not too much for the administration to expect that the teaching and influence of the college conform to these requirements. It is not enough not to expect it.

It is not difficult to prove that Abilene Christian University has forsaken its Charter. In his book, "Is Genesis Myth?" **Bert Thompson**, a former student at ACU, proves conclusively that the theory of evolution was being taught at the university. It possibly still is. Anyone who will take the time to objectively examine the evidence presented by Thompson will find this to be tragically true. Rather than dismissing the faculty members involved in teaching evolution, the university whitewashed the whole affair and accused Thompson of playing dirty pool.

Another ACU professor by the name of **Andre Resner** wrote an article entitled "Christmas at Matthew's House" which appeared in the magazine *Wineskins*. The article is, by implication, an assault upon the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. When the article created such an uproar, Resner and the university both claimed belief in the virgin birth, but if language has any meaning at all, Resner's article speaks for itself and can be interpreted as nothing but a denial of the virgin birth.

Some twenty-five years later after President Morris' address to the old ACC faculty in 1968, another ACU president, **Royce Money**, gave a speech of his own. In his speech, Money advocated unity in diversity and suggested that those who are unhappy with the direction of ACU are nothing but "radicals." The speech is full of contradictions and theological doublespeak. Though Money gave lip service to promoting the same gospel as the founders of the university, actions speak louder than words and the direction of ACU is obviously not parallel with that of its

founders. As is the case with Pepperdine, ACU continues to utilize and promote false teachers. In fact, the publishing house of ACU Press has circulated some of the most vengeful and caustic attacks against the Lord's church.

Whereas most Christian schools years ago emphasized the distinctive nature of the Lord's church and its New Testament authority, many modern day Christian schools are becoming like the denominations around them. Some years ago ACU created quite a stir when they appointed a Methodist preacher as editor of its student newspaper, "The Optimist." ACU professor **Douglas Foster** teaches the denominational doctrine of salvation by grace only. Salvation is unquestionably by grace (Titus 2:11; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2), but works of obedience are also unquestionably necessary for us to receive the gift of salvation (James 2:24; Acts 10:34-35; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21).

The cultural and denominational uproar concerning the role of women in the church has also affected our Christian schools. At a Christian academy not far from my home, a high school teacher started asking the girls in his class to lead in prayer. A couple of male students objected to this practice on the basis of Paul's teaching in I Timothy 2:8-15. The teachers allowed the boys to bring in a representative to offer objections to girls leading prayers in mixed groups. Subsequent to this presentation the board and school officials decided to leave this matter to the discretion of each individual teacher. The teacher in the classroom where the two boys attended announced his intention to continue to allow girls to lead prayer in class. When these boys objected and said they would remain in the hall during these prayers, they were told that they would be counted as tardy. In a meeting with one of the school officials the boys were asked, "Do you two tenth grade boys really believe you know more about this subject than the Ph.D.'s at this school?" One of the boys replied, "Well sir, we're just young men trying to do the will of a peasant carpenter." Perhaps this school official needs to go back and read John 7:14-15.

There is a movement among us that could well be described as the "Scholarship" movement. Those in this movement love to flaunt their credentials of higher education and seem to suggest that anyone who disagrees with them is simply uneducated and bereft of true scholarship. They act as if no true scholars have ever existed before they came along. They ridicule scholars of old like **J. W. McGarvey** and worship instead at the feet of denominational scholars and liberal theologians. The children of Israel wanted a king because they were determined to be like the nations about them (I Samuel 8:5). Some of our preachers are determined to be like the denominations about them. They sit at the feet of denominational professors and often leave these schools tainted and imbued with denominational theology. They

sit at the feet of modernistic professors and leave to go out and preach to members of the Lord's church such things as: (1) Adam and Eve were not actual historical characters and the events of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and not literal history; (2) The flood in Genesis was only a local deluge and not universal in scope; (3) The children of Israel crossed the Reed Sea, a marshy swamp and the ancient belief that they crossed the Red Sea with waters miraculously heaped up beside them is nothing but a traditional fairy tale; (4) They deny the miracles of the Bible. For example, Jonah was not literally swallowed by a great fish. Rather, this tale is simply an imaginative story concocted by the author to teach a spiritual kernel of truth; (5) Many deny the virgin birth of Christ, his miracles, his bodily resurrection, ad infinitum..

A phrase from Paul's epistle to the Romans well describes some of the so-called "scholars" in our brotherhood today. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22). Some of these brethren need to review some basic passages of scripture.

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom...But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?...Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men...Let no one deceive himself. If any among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become as a

fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness;" and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile" (I Corinthians 1:20, 25, 3:18-21).

Therefore let no one glory in men...For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

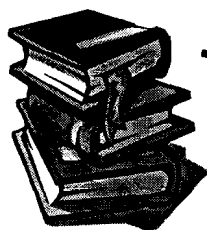
After receiving this liberal and modernistic education these brethren are then hired to be faculty members at our Christian schools and are entrusted with teaching our precious children. Is it any wonder that many of our children are coming home from these schools confused and disillusioned? Deny it if you will, but denominationalism and its errors are making inroads into our Christian schools via faculty members who have been thoroughly saturated with the doctrines, commandments and skepticism of men.

ENDNOTES

1. Originally appeared as two articles in the February and April 2002 issues of *Power*. Used with Permission.

2. I am using the term "Christian college" accommodatively. I am referring to colleges that are operated by individual Christians, who desire to advance the teaching of Christianity. I recognize that an entity is not capable of becoming a Christian; I am only using the term "Christian college" for the sake of brevity.

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THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

Gary W. Summers

For many years one of the most popular features of the day at the annual Freed-Hardeman University Lectures has been the Open Forum. Brother **Guy N. Woods** conducted it for a number of years and even compiled two volumes of books, which he titled *Questions and Answers*, based on the many topics he covered through the years. A little later **Alan Highers** did an equally admirable job before he decided, after ten years, to retire from that task. **Hardeman Nichols** conducted it well for a few years, assisted by **William Woodson**; for the past two years, however, it has been handled by **Ralph Gilmore**, a professor at the university.

QUESTIONABLE ANSWERS

Things have changed. Although brother Gilmore has a great sense of humor and is personally very likable, his answers to questions do not always match the quality of those given by Woods and Highers. This article is not a blanket putdown of his efforts; in all fairness we are happy to acknowledge that at times his comments are superb! But some of his teaching must be challenged. In fact, a great portion of the comments made the final day (February 6th) were objectionable. We will provide brother Gilmore's comments in quote format (transcribed from the tape) and then comment.

Okay, false doctrine of the Pharisees. To what extent should you as a Christian respond to false doctrine that is believed, taught, or practiced? Please explain that in light of Matthew 16:12 and what Jesus did.

We do not know the person who asked the question nor the reason for it, but in light of the current climate of apostasy it is natural for someone to ask it.

Well, in Matthew 16, the disciples have left without bread, and there's not enough to go around. And so Jesus says, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees."

Actually Jesus said, "**Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees**" (Matthew 16:6, see also verse 11). This may seem like a minor point, but it does relate to the answer given.

So now, to a lot of folks, then, that means, "See there? He's directly, specifically calling on the Pharisees as false teachers. He's drawing this to the attention of them, and therefore, you know, it's not wrong for me to go identifying false teachers for the rest of the brotherhood."

Why did Jesus do what he did here? The event preceding this conversation is found in Matthew 16:1-

4. Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees came "testing Him" by asking him to show them a sign from heaven (v. 1). His response was twofold.

1. He called them hypocrites because they could discern weather patterns but not the signs of the times (probably referring to the spiritual signs he had furnished—that is, his preaching of the gospel and his healings). Matthew 4:23-25 records this beginning. He had been teaching (Matthew 5-7) and doing miracles ever since (Matthew 8-9). Most recently he had fed 4,000 with seven loaves and few little fish (Matthew 15:32-39).

2. Jesus told them "**A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign...**" (16:4)—especially when they had already been provided in abundance.

Please examine the context. In Matthew 15 the Pharisees and the scribes are harassing Jesus. They will not leave him alone. They are following him, and they are sending out spies and coming back and reporting. These are not people who want to know the Truth—whether or not he was the son of God.

That the scribes and Pharisees did such things is true, although it is not evident in Matthew 15. The only mention of them at all there is in Matthew 15:1 when they asked why Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands when they ate bread. The remainder of the chapter does not mention them at all. We next see the Pharisees at the outset of Matthew 16—with the Sadducees this time, not the scribes.

It is true that they were not seekers of Truth and often asked him questions to trick him:

So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor (Luke 20:20; see also John 8:6).

John records that the Pharisees and the chief priests went so far as to send officers to take him (7:32); their purpose, however, was frustrated (7:46). But none of these things occurred in Matthew 15.

These are people, as one article I read, who are sin-smellers, and they are the inspection—let's call them the inspection experts for the brotherhood. They are therefore there to see who is doing false, and if there is, let me report this to the rest of the brotherhood.

It is at this point that Gilmore fuses together two different actions: one legitimate and one despicable. The actions of Jesus' critics fall in the latter category.

They did not believe him, and no amount of evidence was sufficient to change their minds—not the healing of a man born blind (before the cross—John 9) nor the healing of a man lame from birth (after Christ’s resurrection—Acts 3). These sorry souls were always looking for a way to trap Jesus or his apostles.

Those who, as **Marshal Keeble** put it, are “fruit inspectors” are not of the same mold. Jesus taught his disciples to be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:15-20). Trying to entrap a decent man whose life is dedicated to God differs greatly from determining whether someone’s life is in obvious conflict with the moral or doctrinal precepts of the gospel.

You know, in Matthew 16, that is not how Jesus handled that. But he did say, “**Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.**” And they said, “What are you talking about?” “Well,” Jesus said, “You know I have fed 4,000, and you know I have fed 5,000. All right, so now why is it that you cannot understand that I’m telling you to beware of this attitude?”

What? Anyone who knows the text had to be shocked by this “interpretation.” *First*, it was not just the leaven of the Pharisees; it was the leaven of the Pharisees *and* the Sadducees. *Second*, and most important, when Jesus explained to his disciples what at first they did not understand, he did not say that the leaven represented *attitude*; Matthew 16:12 records: “**Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees**” (emphasis GWS).

Is it true that the Pharisees had a bad attitude? Yes. But it was not because of their disposition that Jesus issued the warning in Matthew 16:6. He was warning them to beware of their *teaching*. The Sadducees, for example, did not believe in angels or in the resurrection (Acts 23:8). Obviously, this latter point is crucial to the gospel itself (Acts 2:32; I Corinthians 15:1-4), and it would definitely affect a person’s salvation (I Corinthians 15). The Pharisees were more concerned with form than substance (Matthew 6); they exalted manmade traditions above the law of God (Matthew 15), and they were more concerned about self-exaltation than glorifying God (Luke 18:9-14; Matthew 6).

Truth was important to Jesus; it is only by continuing in his word that we come to a knowledge of the Truth, which sets us free (John 8:31-32). We do not understand why Gilmore would replace the word *doctrine* in Matthew 16:12 with the word *attitude*. It seems unlikely that he simply “slipped” on this point, since his entire rationale was built around that idea.

SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS

Brian Kenyon, from the Florida School of

Preaching, asked a question (from the floor) concerning what to do when you know a preacher or elders are false teachers, because they have privately admitted beliefs that they will not own publicly or put into print. Most of us would find this to be a tricky situation. Many would advise that they should not put anything into print, since it might be denied and the only proof would be hearsay evidence. If anyone asked privately, however, they would be at liberty to divulge the contents of those conversations. Ralph takes an entirely different approach. After stating that it is estimated that we only have described about 40 days in the life of Christ, he observed:

Now, every day Jesus did not rebuke the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Every day Jesus did not drive out the moneychangers in John chapter 2. Every day he did not call Herod a fox. Yet these things are there.

The fact is, however, that Jesus did emphasize truth or denounce error on many of those forty days. He warned them of false prophets in Matthew 7:15-20. He denounced Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for rejecting the evidence which proclaimed the truth about his being the son of God (Matthew 11:21-24).

Jesus denounced the traditions of men which make the worship of God vain (Matthew 15:1-9). On another day he told them to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Matthew 16:12). He taught the truth concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Matthew 19:3-12). He cast the moneychangers out of the temple a second time in Matthew 21:12-13. He exposed the error of the Sadducees in Matthew 22, and he denounced the Pharisees in Matthew 23.

The apostle John records many conversations which are not found in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. One of those involves truth and error; he told them plainly that they were of their father, the devil, who had no truth in him and is the father of lies (John 8:44). We cannot mistake the emphasis in the scriptures that Jesus gave in teaching truth and exposing error. Gilmore seems to have a problem, however, with doing so.

It is somewhat addictive, once you start looking for false doctrine. It is addictive because you get in that mindset, and when you get in that mindset, it’s like everywhere that you go, you’re a building inspector.... If it’s your job to try to find false doctrine wherever you go, then the problem is: You’ll never be able to relax because there will be something that bothers you many places where you go.

Again, there is a mixture here of the legitimate with the erroneous. Yes, there may be some people who do nothing else but look for problems where none exist, whose only goal is to stir up strife. Such people are few and usually have very little influence. Their existence, however, should not be used as an excuse to forego what the Bereans did, who were commended

by Luke: "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

This preacher's philosophy has always been to assume the best about others and to maintain that posture unless they prove him wrong. Although it may not be our job to look for false doctrine (in hopes of finding it), it certainly is our responsibility to recognize its presence. The Bible admonishes us to think, reason, and evaluate what we are taught (I Thessalonians 5:21-22). John wrote: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

Since when is it a goal of a Christian to relax? Jesus spoke about *watching* (Matthew 24:42), which requires alertness. Peter warned: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (I Peter 5:8). That same apostle warned us that there would be false teachers among us (II Peter 2:1). Without *vigilance* (looking for false doctrine) how can we contend earnestly for the faith against those who have crept in unnoticed (Jude 3-4)?

Besides, there is, ironically, a value that false teachers (unintentionally) provide. Every time we examine a false doctrine, it is affording us an opportunity to look at the truth. Exposing error is never a waste of time, since it allows the truth to shine even more brightly by contrast, and we see some things even more clearly than we would have otherwise.

TWO DANGERS

There are two dangers that sincere brethren might fall prey to: the *first* is to become nitpicky and elevate matters of opinion and option to matters of doctrine. The *second* is to become arrogant and dependent on our own wisdom rather than the scriptures. The fact that some have fallen into these traps, however, does not negate the admonitions we have to seek Truth diligently. Gilmore concluded thus:

So it seems to me that we should be people who represent the balance of Jesus in our lives with regard to false doctrine and that we should not make it a hobby or an avocation to be people to identify false doctrine for the rest of the brotherhood. I just don't feel able to do that.

THANK GOD SOME DO

Well, thank God that some do! Jesus issued a general warning against the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Paul named Hymenaeus, Alexander, Philetus, and others by name (I Timothy 1:20; II Timothy 2:17). John lamented the high-handed tactics of Diotrephes (III John 9-10). Paul wrote time and again of the Judaizing teach-

ers, even referring to some as dogs in the epistle of joy, as Philippians is sometimes called (3:2). Paul's denunciation of these men gives rise to one of the loftiest passages in all of the New Testament (Philippians 3:1-21).

Why, if we possess knowledge about some one individual (like **Rubel Shelly**) or a group of men (such as professors at ACU), would we not warn others? Is this refusal "to identify false doctrine for the rest of the brotherhood" the answer to Kenyon's question?

If brethren are moving to an area where **Max King's** doctrine is being taught by one congregation there, should they not be warned? If a church in one city holds **Dan Billingsly's** false teaching, should brethren who are visiting for the day not be told there is a sound congregation seven miles down the road? We do not know how brother Gilmore would reply, but when some of us are asked, "Do you know anything about the church in this city?" (which occurs frequently), we are not reluctant to answer that there are unfaithful, apostate congregations in that region. Does that constitute identifying false doctrine for the rest of the brotherhood? If it does, then so be it.

There was a time when Freed-Hardeman University was not ashamed to do exactly that. How sad that at least some of their faculty lack the courage to mark those who teach error (actually, they invite some of them to speak)! Our allegiance remains with the word.

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"CHURCH TO CAST NET FOR YOUTH"

Marvin L. Weir

The above title was taken from the *Rockwall-Rowlett* section of the Wednesday, March 19, 2003 *Dallas Morning News*. In my estimation, a more appropriate title would be "Lake Pointe Church Sets Spiritual Snare For Youth." Such a title as I propose, however, would not be popular with the young folks this denomination is planning to net.

The paper says:

When designing Lake Pointe Church's youth activity center, the Rev. Steve Stroope took inspiration from both the Bible and Joe's Crab Shack. The 55,000 square-foot Pier 4:19, named for a verse in the book of Matthew, will have walls and ceilings covered with rusted tin and wood from old barns and bricks salvaged from a warehouse. The rustic decor is in homage to the popular look of urban lofts and newly minted restaurants that are decorated to resemble dilapidated shacks, Mr. Stroope said... Despite its rough-hewn look, the center will be a well-equipped, modern facility. The

two-story Pier 4:19 includes basketball cages for three-on-three matches, billiard tables and a video game room. It will also feature an 800-seat auditorium, numerous classrooms and a café. A mock pier in the back will overlook a skate park and sand volleyball court.

JOE'S CRAB SHACK CHURCH

Are you now ready for the revelation of a lifetime? Here it is — "The building takes its name from the Bible passage: 'And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" It is rather obvious to any Bible student that Joe's Crab Shack has far more influence on Stroop that does the word of God! It is a mockery of the inspired word to apply Jesus' statement in Matthew 4:19 to the recreation center that Lake Pointe Church is creating to attract young people. As the paper incorrectly states, "Holy and hip will mix at activity center to attract teens."

That which is holy does not mix with things of the world to save the souls of men! The gospel and the gospel alone "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." (Romans 1:16). Satisfying man's social and recreational desires is not the mission of the Lord's church. The Lord came to this world "to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10), and such is done today by proclaiming the one and only gospel to those who will hear (Galatians 1:6-9). Most people today are not alarmed that so many attempt to mix a little Bible with a lot of worldly things to lure folks to gather with them. Such is only possible, however, when people no longer study, honor, and respect the sacred scriptures.

It should not escape a student of the Bible that Jesus said, "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19, KJV). On another occasion the apostle Peter said, "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). Can one find an example where Jesus mixes the "holy" with the "hip" of his day? Did the Lord ever mention "entertainment" and "recreation" as a way of attracting the youth of his day?

WHAT PRODUCED TIMOTHY'S CHARACTER?

Does Paul say to young Timothy, "You are fortunate to have been a part of a recreation center that instilled deep faith in you and inspired you to become a Christian?" No, but Paul does say to Timothy:

But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a babe thou hast known

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the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:14-15).

Adam Clarke in his commentary notes:

Miserable are those... who presume to take the name fishers of men, and know not how to cast the net of the divine word.... Such persons, having only their secular interest in view, study not to catch men, but to catch money...

Those attracted by entertainment and recreation must continue to receive such worldly food or else they will not be content and happy. It is true that "whatever draws them keeps them." Try removing the fun and games in many congregations today and see if you can keep up with the families who depart for "greener" pastures!

Steve Stroop at one time was proud of being a Baptist, but now is content to be the "pastor" of the Lake Pointe Church. **Herschel H. Hobbs**, a Baptist preacher, has some words that Stroop and our liberal

preachers should take to heart. Hobbs says:

The kingdom of God [is] not to be founded on *razzle dazzle*. Men were to come to Him not for entertainment, but in faith unto salvation. The former is of the world; the latter is of God. You can draw a crowd by dealing in the spectacular. But this does not necessarily mean that you are building the kingdom of God.

Christ did not teach his apostles to use the glittering lures of recreation, entertainment, and worldly wisdom to save the souls of men. The apostle Paul said,

For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe (I Corinthians 1:21).

Let us make sure that the net the church is casting is not a snare to the souls of men!

—5810 Liberty Grove Rd.
Rowlett, Texas 75030

Sermon Outlines...

JONAH'S RUNNING

Tom Moore

INTRODUCTION

- A. Why should we study the Old Testament?
 1. Some say it is an old law—it is taken out of the way, so why study it?
 2. Romans 15:4.
 - a. The Old Testament provides patience, comfort, and hope.
 - b. This passage means that by patiently enduring sufferings, in connection with the consolation which the scriptures furnish, we might have hope.
 3. I Corinthians 10:11
 - a. The Old Testament is to be used as an example.
 - b. The Old Testament is for our admonition.
- B. Jonah had been referred to as the great fish story
 1. This is all many know about the book.
 2. If this is all we know we miss the main message of the book.
- C. Jonah is a great GOD STORY.
 1. This book presents God as a God of compassion, love, longsuffering, and strictness.
 2. The "glory of God and the salvations of man



through Jesus Christ" is the theme of the whole Bible.

3. Jonah deals with one great aspect of this theme: "God is the God of all nations."

DISCUSSION

A. RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD (Chapter 1)

1. The commission of Jonah (vs. 1-2)
 - a. We too are commissioned of God.
 - b. Matthew 28:19-20.
 2. The contrariness of Jonah (vs. 3-10).
 - a. Jonah tries to flee his duty.
 - b. Jonah's excuses:
 - 1) Nineveh was a Gentile nation
 - 2) He knew the affliction they had caused others.
 - c. How many times are we like Jonah?
 - 1) Do we use excuses for not doing the Lord's will?
 - 2) Do we let personal feelings get in our way?
 - d. Jonah thought he could hide from God.
 - 1) Do we try this maneuver?
 - 2) Remember: God is "ALL-SEEING" (Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24).
 - 3) We cannot hide from God!
 3. The Chastening of Jonah (vs. 11-17).
 - a. The men were frightened ... Jonah said, Throw me overboard.
 - b. They tried to save Jonah and row to shore
 - c. In verse 14 they realized they had to deal with God.
 - d. They threw Jonah overboard—the sea stopped, and they feared God.
 - e. Jonah was swallowed by a great fish.
- #### B. RUNNING TO GOD (Chapter 2)
1. Jonah's prayer for deliverance (vs. 1-9).

- a. Jonah in helpless terror realizes that salvation is only in the Almighty .
 - 1) This results in Jonah praying penitently.
 - 2) Many times it takes a great calamity before we will humble ourselves before God.
 - b. We need to remember that God can rescue us when no one else can.
 - c. Just as God forgave Jonah – so will he forgive us.
2. Jonah is delivered (v. 10).
- a. The result of penitent prayer is seen.
 - b. The result of our penitent prayer will be seen in the Day of Judgment.
- C. RUNNING WITH GOD (Chapter 3)
- 1. The commission renewed (vs. 1-4).
 - a. Jonah was still expected to do what he was told.
 - b. Jonah did not “beat around the bush” – we need to be straightforward in our teaching (II Timothy 4:2; Galatians 4:16).
 - 2. The consequences of repentance (vs. 5-10).
 - a. God accepted Nineveh’s repentance because it was true repentance.
 - b. This should give us confidence.
 - c. This chapter shows God’s great love for all mankind.
 - 1) Acts 17:30- wants all men to repent.
 - 2) John 3:16
- D. RUNNING AHEAD OF GOD (Chapter 4)
- 1. Jonah’s anger at Nineveh’s repentance (v. 1-3)
 - a. Jonah was wanting Nineveh to fail.
 - b. Perhaps Jonah fled in chapter 1 because he knew of God abundant love and mercy.
 - c. Is this the reason we fail to share the gospel as we should?
2. Jonah learns a lesson from the gourd vine (vs. 4-11).
- a. Notice that Jonah had more joy over the gourd than for the Ninevites.
 - 1) Are we like Jonah?
 - 2) Are happier over a new car than a conversion to Christ?
 - b. Jonah was first angered because Nineveh was not destroyed and then was angered because the gourd was destroyed.
 - c. Man is very concerned with the things that directly affect him.
 - 1) Man worries about himself.
 - 2) Many times man is indifferent to things that do not directly affect him.
 - 3) Jonah worried more about the gourd than he did Nineveh.
 - 4) Do we worry more about ourselves than we do others?
 - 5) I John 3:16-18
- CONCLUSION
- A. Valuable lessons from the book of Jonah:
 - 1. We cannot flee from God.
 - 2. God’s love is for all nations.
 - 3. There is a great need for penitent prayer.
 - 4. We are never relieved of our duty to God.
 - 5. The consequences of repentance are great.
 - 6. Do not be self-centered.
 - B. Let us use the example given in the Old Testament to make our lives more acceptable unto God.

—2406 Main
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

Restoration Reflections...

“Satan Has Done It Before”

Paul Vaughn

[The following article appeared in Triumph and Tragedy, a book I edited and is now out of print. The late Adron Doran, the author of the article, did a great amount of good for the church in Kentucky. He passed away on November 22, 2001.—Paul Vaughn]

The apostle Paul wrote a second epistle to the Corinthians to express his concern over matters facing the church there. In Chapter 11, he said that he was not merely indulging his “folly” but pointing out certain things of which saints should be aware. Paul wrote, “**I fear...your minds should be corrupted...**” (II Corinthians 11:3). He based his fear on the knowledge that the “**serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty**”

in the Garden of Eden. Since Satan corrupted Adam and Eve, in far away Eden, four thousand years before, he certainly could do the same thing in Corinth — hence, the warning of the apostle.

We ought to be sensitive today to the subtle approach, the crafty manner, and the corrupting influence of the Devil in the affairs of the church and in the classrooms of our Christian college and universities. Satan won a signal victory when the corrupting influ-



ence of instrumental music and the destructive influence of missionary societies were introduced into the congregations of the Restoration Movement. The practices of open membership, ecumenicalism, humanism, and sectarianism followed closely behind, to which many disciples succumbed. One of the most subtle of Satan's attacks against the Restoration came in his efforts to fill the pulpits, the elderships, and the pews of congregations with men who had been exposed to the teaching of higher criticism and the theory of evolution, as facts, in the schools, colleges and universities of the brotherhood. During the lifetimes of **John W. McGarvey, Isaiah B. Grubbs, Charles L. Loos, and Robert Graham**, "The Old Guards" at Kentucky University and the College of the Bible, the classrooms were free from the teaching of liberalism and evolution. But no sooner had they passed away than the serpent began to manifest his subtle ways.

A liberal president was named by the joint boards as the chief executive officer of both Transylvania University and the College of the Bible. He moved quickly to employ four new faculty members who had been trained in the "New Theology." Only **Hall Laurie Calhoun** was left, in the College of the Bible, who represented the "Old School" of teachers and administrators. However, many of the more mature students saw the corrupting influences of destructive criticism and evolution in the classrooms and protested.

The first public charges were filed in a letter written by a student, **Benjamin Franklin Battenfield**, on March 12, 1917, and mailed to three hundred Christian ministers, accompanied by a petition to the Board of Trustees, signed by other students. The plea of the students to the Board was for an impartial investigation into their charges that the University and College had come under the control of destructive and skeptical critics. The students contended that members of the faculty claimed to be "hard evolutionists," taught that the "first chapter of Genesis is poetry," called Jehovah "the tribal God of the Jews," and accepted "The Pithecanthropus Erectus as the missing link between man and the lower animals." One of the professors was accused of believing theistic evolution and denying the physical resurrection of the body of Christ.

On March 24, 1917, Dean Calhoun released a statement to the *Christian Standard*, in which he said, "In response to certain inquiries which have come to me, I feel that candor compels me to state that for more than a year, I have been fully convinced that destructive criticism was being taught in the College of the Bible." President **R. H. Crossfield** and the accused faculty mounted a counterattack against the charges and the individuals who made them, but to little or no avail. However, on May 2, 1917, the Board of Trustees met to investigate the Calhoun-Battenfield charges. After fifteen sessions held by the Board, the members voted to completely exonerate the accused faculty

members whose teachings were found to be harmonious with the best traditions of the Christian Church. The findings were a complete cover-up and a perfect whitewash. The final report of the Board stated, "The Board believes that the disposition to preserve the good of the past, combined with the ability to improve the task of the present, should be the underlying principle to its trusteeship of the institution." The faculty was given a "clean bill of health," and the University and College continued in a liberal vein. Calhoun resigned the deanship of the College of the Bible and, along with the head of the chemistry department of Transylvania University, joined the faculty of Bethany College. Calhoun served as a professor at Bethany until he detected the same corrupting influences invading Bethany which had gained control of the College of the Bible. He left Bethany, severed his connections with the Christian Church, and joined **N. B. Hardeman** as Associate President of Freed-Hardeman College, in 1925. It is altogether possible for the "Firestorm in the Bluegrass", which swept the College of the Bible in 1917 to sweep some of the campuses of our Christian colleges and universities today. It can happen in what may seem to be an innocuous effort to contrast the theory of evolution with the facts of creation in a biology class. The Devil will do his best to confuse the effort and turn it to his advantage. He did it before, and we must not permit him to do it again.

—Deceased



Hate Crimes—There May Be Charges Coming to a Pulpit Near You

Jerry Murrell

For many years, it has seemed obvious to some that the inmates are running the asylum. There is almost no “special-interest group” (there is that evil characterization again) more powerful than the homosexual lobby. They seem to have begun their power-grab by taking over the entertainment industry in America. I have made this challenge and it has thus far gone unanswered. Pick any night of the week and watch the three major television networks. See if you can find one night where there is not at least one actor or actress who plays an “out-of-the-closet” homosexual.

Unfortunately from this powerbase, they have begun to have a great influence over legislation. In the United States of America the Democrat Party is heavily influenced by the homosexual agenda and the Republican Party seems to be giving more and more power to the so-called “Log-Cabin Republicans.” According to a May 12 2003, AP report:

On Friday, about 200 gay members of the GOP met for more than an hour with three White House officials at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building — **Joseph O’Neill**, the White House AIDS czar, **Brett Kavanaugh**, associate White House counsel, and **Holly Kuzmich**, associate director of the White House domestic policy council.

As these people receive more power the basic constitutional rights (see the first amendment) of Bible believers are being eroded. We may look to our neighbors to the North to see the bleak future if things are not turned around soon. **Randall Palmer** writes:

An attempt to broaden Canada’s hate-crimes laws to include protection for homosexuals has sparked a fierce debate in Parliament over whether the Bible and the Koran could be branded as hate literature.

If this law passes anyone who incites or promotes “hate against homosexuals” may be punished by up to two years in prison. Those who of us who keep up with the news, know that the media accuses anyone who believes that homosexuals, who fail to repent of their sins, will be eternally lost and who does not toe the politically correct line, regarding the homosexual agenda, are seen as “hating” homosexuals.

Lest one think that this legislation is simply de-

signed to deal with people who would murder homosexuals, given the chance, Palmer provides more information concerning the “digression” of homosexual “rights” in Canada. There was a court case in Saskatchewan, five months ago, that ruled that one is not allowed to quote passages that condemn homosexuality in a paid newspaper ad. “The judge ruled that a Biblical passage in Leviticus ‘exposes homosexuals to hatred.’” Many politicians are looking toward Canada to set an agenda for the United States to follow (see socialized health care).



Some churches of Christ who have signs have put passages from Romans 1:26-27, Leviticus 18:22, et. al. on their signs have seen the other side of the “hate crimes” as their signs have been destroyed. Like all liberals, the pro-homosexuals community, is loving as long as you do not turn you back on them. They will quote passages like “judge not” to judge anyone who does not agree with their agenda. Although I am not for stoning these people, but like the loving Savior, I am willing to tell them go and “sin no more” (John 8:11).

If Christians sit idly by and allow the culture to be overtaken by these “homosexual activists” we deserve what we get. When it comes to getting your agenda enacted into legislation “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.” For a long time homosexuals have been squeaking and squawking. It is time that Christians begin to take the culture back before it is too late. By the time they come for the Bible it may be too late.

SOURCE

<<http://www.swissinfo.org/sen/Swissinfo.html?siteSect=143&sid=1862043>>

—4340 Lylewood
Indian Mound, Tennessee 37079



OPAL EILEEN FERGUSON ANDREWS

JULY 25, 1923 - APRIL 4, 2003

Opal Andrews of Miami, Oklahoma willingly gave up this life and stepped over into the keeping of God on April 4, 2003.

Only her nearest family and closest friends were aware of her protracted heart disease—cardiomyopathy. She lived for the glory of Jehovah God from her getting up until her lying down. She was the epitome of Proverbs 31:10ff. Her husband of 61 years, **Delmer Andrews**, lovingly speaks of her as a true God-given help-meet who supported their every effort to serve the Lord.

In their early years of marriage she diligently taught and carefully persuaded to win her husband's soul over to the Lord. When her husband decided to enter fulltime local work as a preacher of the Gospel, her counsel was her pledge. (Ruth's pledge to Naomi describes her commitment—Ruth 1:16-17.)

The lifetime of faithful service as a minister's wife produced an influence that reaches beyond human calculation. She and her husband served the Lord, side by side, while working with congregations in Kansas, Mis-

souri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Her influence for the Lord reached into the next generation through one of her two sons, **Patrick Andrews** of San Antonio, Texas, who has preached the gospel on three continents (Asia, Europe, and North America) and served local congregations as deacon, elder, and preacher in Germany, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Thailand. (Patrick is in his ninth year with San Antonio's Southeast church of Christ.)

Additionally, the third generation of "her preachers" is currently serving as the pulpit minister for the Randolph church of Christ in Universal City, Texas. Her grandson, **Sean Andrews** has done local work in New Mexico and Texas. Those who knew her can attest to how vocally proud she was of "her preachers."

Her time honored request was fulfilled as her son (Patrick) gave her honor and tribute in a memorial service conducted at the facilities of the Miami church of Christ on April 9. Her grandson (Sean) led the congregation in song. The fitting favorites of *Precious Memories; Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All, If We Never Meet Again; God's Choir; and Savior, I Look To Thee* were comforting to the many friends, family, and neighbors who came from near and far to pay their last respects to one of God's best Christian ladies.

She was taken to G.A.R. Cemetery in Miami, Oklahoma as her final resting place. In the stillness of the late afternoon those gathered at her graveside sang *Walking Alone At Eve*.

Opal Andrews is survived by her husband **Delmer**, two sons, **Lewayne Andrews** of Cherokee Village, Arkansas and **Patrick Andrews** of San Antonio, Texas, five grandchildren, **Patrick L. Andrews** of West Kingston, Rhode Island, **Sean Andrews** of Universal City, Texas, **Shelly Harrison** of Warwick, Rhode Island, **Sheri Boggess** of Phoenix, Arizona, and **Shona Pruden** of Mountain View, Arkansas, and eight great grandchildren, plus a host of friends and fellow Christians.

The family is very grateful to the church in Miami, Oklahoma. Long time minister **Bobby Key** and the current minister, **Richard Chambers** were ever so kind with their words of sympathy, comfort, and tribute. Equally important are all of the flowers, food, and thoughtfully expressed sympathies offered by so many of her family, friends and brethren. In this hour of need, we solicit your continued prayers.

One Woman's Perspective...

A LUXURIANT VINE

Annette B. Cates

We have two clematis vines growing in our backyard. One has gorgeous foliage, providing a little shade for our porch as it climbs a nearby trellis. There are no blooms, just plentiful leaves. On the other hand, the other plant is not as well endowed with the greenery. Instead, it is covered with blossoms. Last year, both plants pleased us with their blossoms. One of the vines is putting all of its energy into a show of leaves while the other is going about the business of producing beautiful flowers, which will in turn provide the seeds from which future plants can develop. One is luxuriant, while the other is productive.

Our clematis vines remind me of Hosea 10:1, "Israel is an empty [KJV, compared to the ASV 'luxuri-

ant'] vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself...." The verse goes on to tell of the altars and images that Israel worshipped. The next verse tells us that their heart was divided and they would be found faulty. We, too, can fall prey to the allure of a façade of righteousness, bearing no real fruit for the Lord.



A luxuriant vine places numbers above substance. "Just look at our numbers; we must be doing something right!" Well, "doing something" may be dispensing feel-good religion, just as our leafy clematis provides a little shade and nothing more. It is true that mega-churches seem to be growing. What percentage of their membership actually attends faithfully? What percentage returns for Sunday evening and mid-week services, assuming they meet more than once a week? Numbers can be made to look good, but are the members of these congregations learning the truths necessary to take them to Heaven?

A luxuriant vine appears to be a paragon of spirituality. There may be a bumper sticker or two on the car that announces, "I love [heart symbol] God" or a related message. There is nothing wrong with that until the driver operates the car discourteously or in an unsafe and unlawful manner. Then the world knows that the bumper stickers are meaningless. This type of vine will lace his conversation with religious references and "testimony" of his faith, but goes about living as if he has no idea of what is involved in living the Christian life. Jesus spoke of this luxuriant vine in Matthew 15:8, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."

A luxuriant vine is concerned with appearances as if what is on the outside is the only thing that is important. The scribes and Pharisees were luxuriant vines. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). This person may attend worship services, but not to worship. He is there because it looks good to the community. He may give

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generously to various causes, but not in order to advance the name of the church. His house may be beautiful and well-tended on the outside, but there is no home within. He needs to be reminded that **"...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).

In contrast, a productive vine recognizes that true growth takes time and effort. Sometimes there are growing pains as numbers do not come as quickly as one would like. A little pruning may be necessary in order to strengthen and to clear the way for productivity. Where there is a solid foundation, an organization will thrive. For the productive vine, service to the community, local and world evangelism, and inner strength take priority. When this is the case, growth will come.

A productive vine does not have to announce his spirituality. Like Dorcas, he is **"full of good works and almsdeeds"** (Acts 9:36). The Christian will conduct himself in such a way that others will recognize that Christianity is the fabric of his life. All of us, not just the wives to whom Peter spoke in I Peter 3:1, influence others by the way we live, in conversation and in action, even when we may have no other opportunity to teach them.

A productive vine is what he appears to be. He worships God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). He gives cheerfully and liberally (II Corinthians 9:7), not expecting a return on his dollar. His house may not be the biggest and the finest, but it is home to his family. There is beauty in the productive vine. The blossoms come from beauty within. For men, as well as women, **"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman [or a man] that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised"** (Proverbs 31:30).

We need to take stock of ourselves. Are we luxuriant or are we productive? Paul wrote in Galatians 6:3, **"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."** According to verse 4, it is our works, our substance, our blooms that define our true value, not that which merely looks good, but produces no fruit. Jesus' parable of the barren fig tree shows that if we are unproductive, we will be cast out. Christians are planted by God and cultivated by his word. Let us bloom and bear fruit for him.

—9194 Lakeside Dr.
Olive Branch, Mississippi 38654

The Last Word...

BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY

Kent Bailey

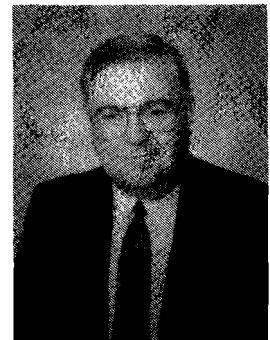
God's plan for the redemption of humanity finds its culmination in the spiritual body, or church of Christ. Two passages of scripture affirm this fundamental doctrine:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Colossians 1:13-18).

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to

be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).

When one carefully studies these passages one will properly conclude that the body, the church, and the kingdom are all one and the same. Such being the case means that salvation is found within the confines of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). To thus be **"in Christ"** (Galatians 3:27) and to be **"in the one body"** (I Corinthians 12:13) speak regarding the same thing. To be baptized into Christ is therefore also being baptized into the one spiritual body of Christ, the New Testament church. If one believes that remission of sins is



accomplished prior to being baptized, then one has not obeyed from the heart, has not been made free from sin, and thus has not been added by the Lord to the New Testament church (Romans 6:17-18; Acts 2:38,47). The same would be true of those who are baptized to join a particular religious denomination, or who are baptized with the false concept of a trans-denominational view of the church being composed of various individuals scattered throughout the various religious groups of the world. One could not be baptized into one body without proper knowledge of its very nature.

The "administrator" of baptism is not the issue. The core of this controversy deals with the specific design regarding the institution of baptism. Although the design of New Testament baptism is stated in varying expressions (salvation, remission of sins, entering the one body, et al.), they all speak regarding the same thing. To understand the essence of salvation, or remission of past alien sins, implies the essentiality of the New Testament church because such is found within

its confines (Colossians 1:13-18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23). Although one is not required to know what the church (both collectively and distributively) is required to do in order to become a child of God, one must know what the church because its universal extension is essentially connected to redemption from past alien sins (Acts 2:47). Such being the case proves that denominational baptism is not New Testament baptism.

In an attempt to escape the force of truth regarding I Corinthians 12:13. Dispensational preachers and debaters deny that the passage discusses water baptism at all and seek to apply it to that of Holy Spirit baptism. Such will not work for the following reasons: (1) Holy Spirit baptism is a promise and not a command. Dispensationalists cannot prove that the baptism of I Corinthians 12:13 was a universal promise to all individuals. Furthermore, the New Testament reveals that those recipients of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism were limited to the apostles of Christ (Acts 1:8) and the household of Cornelius (Acts 10 and 11). (2) Holy Spirit baptism was never for the remission of past alien sins. The design of Holy Spirit baptism was to grant the apostles of Christ apostolic authority (Acts 1:8) and

demonstrated to the Jewish members of the church that God had given to the Gentiles the opportunity of Salvation (Acts 11: 17-18). The baptism of I Corinthians 12:13 is an essential component of entering the "one body" wherein there is salvation; therefore such a baptism is water baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). (3) A grammatical analysis of I Corinthians 12:13 disproves the dispensational position that such is Holy Spirit baptism. Paul wrote: "**dai gar en pneumati hemeis pantes eis hen soma ebaptisthemem,**" or literally, "**for indeed by one Spirit we all into one body were baptized (immersed).**" The Greek preposition **en** used with the dative case **pneumati** is grammatically required to be translated causally thus meaning those in Corinth were baptized by the revealed instruction and command of the Holy Spirit. Such is water baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 18:8).

The New Testament therefore teaches and we affirm: Resolved: Water baptism, to the penitent believer, is for (unto; in order to) the remission of past alien sins and into the one body of Christ.

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

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

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW Cartersville, GA 30120-4222. (770) 382-6775. E-mail: bdgayton@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

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

-Missouri-

Farmington-Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, Sunday: 10:00, 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (573) 756-5925.

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, (919) 977-7556.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Wyoming-

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

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ACU

Rick Popejoy

In the March 19, 2003 Bowie Street Bulletin, Wellington, Texas (Volume VI, Issue 21, page 2), I ran an article entitled "Rising Star Elders." In that article, there were four basic statements (accusations) made against Abilene Christian University. Before running the letter in our bulletin, I picked up the phone and called the preacher at Rising Star to see where the elders had gotten their information. I then asked for the information to be sent to me and ran the article. I received the information in the mail and filed it away for reference later. Just a few days later, I received an email from **Jack Reese**, the dean of the College of Biblical Studies at Abilene Christian University. In his letter he stated, "None of the four accusations made against ACU are true... They (the elders at Rising Star, rlp) assumed certain statements in the local paper were true."

ACCUSATION NUMBER ONE:

The first accusation was that Jesus was not the only way. Later in the same e-mail Reese clearly stated: "To believe such a thing is heresy. It is a belief that we strongly oppose at ACU." In Jack Reese's letter to the Rising Star elders, which Dean Reese sent me, he states:

No one at ACU believes that any person could go to heaven other than through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way to the Father. By no other name will anyone be saved other than the name of Jesus. Every faculty member affirms this essential Christian belief. If anyone were to believe or teach that an individual could be

saved by being a follower of Muhammad or Buddha or by following any other religion, that person would be fired immediately. And if any non-ACU person taught such a thing at Lectureship, it would be publicly disavowed. This assertion is unequivocally false.

At this point I knew that I needed further information on the subject at hand and began to investigate the matter further. Therefore I requested the tapes of **Chris Altrock's** class and began to listen. I emailed the staff writer of the *Abilene Reporter-News* who generated the articles in question and continued my discussion with Jack Reese. In the class, "The Church of Oprah" Altrock quotes a statement by **Oprah**, "The biggest mistakes humans make is to believe that there is only one way, actually there are many diverse paths that lead to what you call 'god.'" He also gives two prime examples of Post-modernism. One of those examples was from a member of the church at Highland, that Altrock called "Valerie", a class member (incorrectly reported by the *Abilene Reporter-News* as a teacher at Highland). After listening to the tapes again and speaking directly with Altrock, he confirmed that "Valerie" was not a teacher.

The Bible is full of information concerning how evidence is to be treated. For example, "Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). In Deuteronomy 19:15, the Law states:

(Continued on Page 10)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
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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.

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

In This Issue...

Accusations Against ACU
Rick Popejoy 1

Editorial...
May We Trust God's Word to Mean
What It Says and Say What It Means?
David P. Brown 3

Assistant Editorial...
"Judge Not that Ye be Not Judged"
Matthew 7:1
Michael Light 13

Current Events that Concern Christians...
Baghdad Bob Gets a Preacher's Job
Jerry Murrell 14

Restoration Reflections...
Is the Restoration of New
Testament Christianity Dead?
Paul Vaughn 15

Sister Marie Choate
Wayne Coats 19

One Woman's Perspective...
Be There
Annette B. Cates 20

The Last Word...
Identifying False Teachers
Kent Bailey 21

Editorial...

MAY WE TRUST GOD'S WORD TO MEAN WHAT IT SAYS AND SAY WHAT IT MEANS?

"What's Happening To Our Christian Colleges?" by B. J. Clarke was our lead article in the June 2003 issue of *Contending for the Faith*. I have never seen a better answer, but a very sad one, to Clarke's question than what is found in a letter written by L. Ken Jones, President of Lubbock Christian University, Lubbock, Texas in his answer to a letter written to him from Roelf L. Ruffner, a faithful gospel preacher of Carlsbad, New Mexico. Although I am sure President Jones did not realize he was revealing a fundamental reason why, to one extent or another, the so-called Christian universities have been and are the centers for apostasy in the Lord's church, he certainly revealed as much. Following are the complete letters of Ruffner and Jones. Please read each letter carefully.



May 2, 2003

Roelf L. Ruffner
3418 Meadowlark
Carlsbad, NM 88220
rlruffnersr@zianet.com

L. Ken Jones
President
Lubbock Christian University

Dear brother Jones:
I read recently in the *Christian Chronicle* regarding the "Betenbough Lectures" featuring Duffy Robbins. I then read the complete news release on your website. It did not say that Mr. Robbins is a denominational preacher associated with an American Baptist school. I was saddened that LCU felt the need to bring in a false teacher to lecture future and current youth ministers.

As a Christian and a preacher of the gospel I would like to ask you the following questions:

1. Do you believe that Mr. Robbins is a Christian?
 2. Do you believe that there are Christians in denominations?
 3. Do you believe and practice 2 John 9-11?
- I thank you for your time in this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Roelf L. Ruffner, Gospel preacher

May 12, 2003

Mr. Roelf L. Ruffner
3418 Meadowlark
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220

Dear Mr. Ruffner:

I received your letter of May 2, 2003 and want to try to respond as best I can. I would prefer to respond in person rather than by letter. Letters often leave out a portion of the overall communication needed in subjects such as you have addressed.

First, Lubbock Christian University is an educational institution. It is not the church. There are times when we bring resource people to teach facts or techniques that are outside of the church of Christ. For example, a few years ago, we brought a noted archeologist from Notre Dame to speak on a set of facts he had studied. In doing this, we do not endorse the individual's particular religious belief system. We are careful to express to our students exactly what our purpose is in these events.

In reference to your three questions, I assume you are wondering about my convictions regarding baptism. I very much believe that baptism is for the remission of sins and is an expression of faith. Concerning what God will do with those who are in denominational groups who express their faith in Jesus Christ, I do not know what will happen. I hope God saves them. However, I am very careful in how I speak to those people in regard to salvation. I feel we must teach, in love, what is expressed in scripture.

Perhaps there are some who have expressed faith in Jesus Christ and have been baptized for remission of sins and who are in denominations. I just do not know how God will deal with these. As you have heard many times, we are not God, and we do not know how God will react in every situation. All we can do is handle and live by the truth the best we can and leave the rest to God.

As far as Lubbock Christian University, we try to honor and promote our heritage in the church of Christ. Yes, we have many students that are not members of the church of Christ. In all cases, we try to teach the Bible openly and allow students to question, challenge and grow in their ability to rightly handle truth from scripture.

Sincerely,

L. Ken Jones
President

LKJ:ap

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Having both letters before us let us now engage in a thorough study of President Jones' reply to Ruffner's letter. We shall examine it paragraph-by-paragraph and item-by-item.

In his first paragraph Jones laments the fact that he could not visit in person with Ruffner. And, what is the reason for his lament? He wrote, "Letters often leave out a portion of the overall communication needed in subjects such as you have addressed." By this answer one would think that Ruffner had asked questions the nature of which were extremely technical and difficult. However, as anyone can read, they are simple and to the point. Especially, is this the case for faithful members of the church of Christ. Many times it has been reported of the late **N. B. Hardeman** that while he was President of the old Freed-Hardeman College he could tell one the position of FHC pertaining to any subject on the back of a penny post card and still have room to say, "How is your aunt Sally?" Here are the answers I would give to the questions Ruffner put to Jones.

1. "Do you believe that Mr. Robbins is a Christian?" *No.*

2. "Do you believe that there are Christians in denominations?" *Only if they were members of the Lord's church first, then apostatized from the truth of the gospel and joined a denomination. If a member of a denomination has never been a Christian (a member of the Lord's church) before becoming a part of a sect such a person is not a Christian and is lost in sin.*

3. "Do you believe and practice II John 9-11?" *Yes.*

In all due respect to President Jones, if one believes the New Testament of Christ, what is so difficult about the answers to Ruffner's three questions? Of course, if one desires to know the biblical reasons for my answers to the questions that would take more time and space, but that is one thing and giving the answers to the questions, is something else. And, in view of the persons involved in the correspondence, there would be no need to give all the scriptures having to do with the answers or the reasoning pertaining thereto. However, as earlier noted, if such were needed, it could be done in further correspondence. Also, what "portion of the overall communication needed in subjects such as you (Ruffner-DPB) have addressed" is left out in the answers I gave to the questions? In fact, I wish I knew exactly what President Jones fully meant

by the last sentence of his first paragraph.

BECAUSE IT IS A SCHOOL IT IS OKAY TO INVITE FALSE TEACHERS TO SPEAK

In the first two sentences of his second paragraph President Jones informs Ruffner, as if he did not know, that LCU is an "educational institution" and "not the church." (If Jones can discern the difference in an "educational institution" from the Lord's church, why can he not discern the difference in a sectarian denomination from the Lord's church or a denominational pastor from a gospel preacher? In passing, I thought these observations were timely and appropriate in view of Jones' whole letter.) Now back to where we were in our examination of Jones letter. While it is true that LCU and schools of like nature are not the church, the people who make up their boards, administrations, and faculties, et al. are members of the Lord's church (I suppose that continues to be the case). Therefore, they are under obligation before God to do *only* what is authorized by the New Testament and leave undone what is not authorized and what is prohibited by the divine volume (Colossians 3:17). Educational institutions such as LCU, ACU, OCU, and so on, have New Testament authority to exist because the Godly home is under obligation to God to "**bring them (the children-DPB) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**" (Ephesians 6:4). LCU et al. are to be expedients and thus advantageous to Godly homes because they are to aid or help Godly parents to obey Ephesians 6:4 and other scriptures of like sentiment. I dare say that most if not all of the so-called Christian colleges have forgotten this truth regarding their authority to exist. No doubt, some of them never knew it and some do not care one way or the other. One would think that a university president would certainly know the biblical authority giving a school the right before God to exist. Furthermore, regardless of the Biblical obligations of the home to conduct itself according to God's word, wherever a Christian is and whatever a Christian is doing he must have Bible authority for everything he believes and practices (Colossians 3:17). What is our point? It is this; any way one cuts it, because LCU is not the church does not give it license to use people who will teach matters contrary to the truth of the gospel.

WHAT THE NEWS RELEASES DID NOT SAY ABOUT ROBBINS

The "LCU: News Release" announcing the

“Betenbough Lectures” states that **Duffy Robbins** is “Chairman of the Department of Youth Ministry at Eastern University located in St. Davids, Pennsylvania...” Furthermore the News Release states that Robbins is a

twenty-two year veteran of youth ministry. He is a well respected author and speaker in the area of youth and family ministry. He has written many books on the topic of youth ministry and excels in this area of service. He will be the featured speaker for both days. Duffy has spoken across the country at youth retreats and conventions, conferences and workshops for youth workers, and at major Christian music festivals like Creation, Cornerstone, ICHTHUS, and Blackstump (Sydney, Australia). His international ministry has ranged from youth conventions and training conferences in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and all over North America to a national pastor’s conference in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

As an Associate Staff member of Youth Specialties, Duffy works throughout the year in training events for youthworkers (sic), appearing each spring in about fifteen cities coast to coast as a part of the National Youthworker (sic) Resource Seminar and at the National Youthworkers (sic) Conventions each fall. Duffy’s speaking schedule also takes him each year to several different college campuses as part of the Staley Distinguished Christian Scholars Lectureship.

The Betenbough Lectures at LCU are free. This is made possible by a generous donation from the Betenbough Foundation. The Lectures will give full-time, part-time, volunteers and the student leaders in each group and opportunity to attend together (www.lcu.edu/news/030306a.asp).

The “LCU: News Release” did not state the religious affiliation of Duffy Robbins. Also, the Report in *The Christian Chronicle* did not tell of Robbins’ religious connection (www.christianity.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,P_T_ID25485|CHID127205|CIID1558462,00.html). *Why would LCU and The Christian Chronicle fail to report the religious persuasion of Robbins?*

LCU AND ACU ARE ON THE SAME TRACK

The following information is very interesting. Duffy Robbins is from the same university from which **Tony Campollo**, Professor Emeritus, is associated. “Campollo School for Social Change,” a part of Eastern University, is his brainchild. Sometime back Abilene Christian University brought in Campollo to speak at ACU’s chapel service. At the time the following was reported by the *Abilene Reporter-News*: “**Esterine Bernard** was so inspired by Tony Campollo’s speech that she rushed to the front of Moody Coliseum to volunteer to join his team Monday morning” (See **Michael Light’s** article in *CFTF*, February, 2003, pp. 4, 5; Also the last part of **Rick Popejoy’s** article in this

issue of CFTF, pp. 8, 9). It is obvious that the powers that be at LCU and ACU are of the same mind set regarding the use of denominational preachers. (And, they are not the only school men who have this attitude.) We can be sure that no one at either university attempted to discuss with Campollo and Robbins their lost condition. Of course, there is a reason they would not engage in such an effort—*LCU and ACU believe that Campollo and Robbins could very well be acceptable to God as they are.*

AMERICAN BAPTISTS ARE ACCEPTABLE TO LCU AND ACU, BUT DOES GOD ACCEPT ANY OF THEM?

Here is what Eastern University says about itself.

Eastern College was founded in 1932 as a department of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1952, the college became a separate institution called Eastern Baptist College and was accredited two years later. The name was changed to Eastern College in 1972 to increase the appeal of the college to all evangelical Christians, though the college retains its relationship to the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. Eastern was granted University status in 2001 by the PA Department of Education (www.eastern.edu/welcome/historyandfacts.html).

The following is from the universities’ “Doctrinal Statement” and “Mission Statement” respectively. The full doctrinal statement may be found at the web address recorded at the end of the Section II and Section III quotes.

Section II

Every member of the Board of Trustees, every administrative officer of the institution, professor, teacher, and instructor shall annually subscribe over his or her signature to the foregoing Doctrinal Basis, excepting only that a non-Baptist individual occupying any of the foregoing positions shall not be required to subscribe to that part of the Doctrinal Statement regarding the mode of water baptism and to the definition of the New Testament church, as stated in subparagraph J of Section I.

Section III

Whenever a member of the Board of Trustees, administrative officer, professor, teacher, or instructor is not in complete accord with the foregoing Doctrinal basis (set forth in the preceding (sic) statements, Sections I and 2), he or she shall forthwith withdraw from the Board and all positions and connections with the University, and his or her failure to do so shall constitute grounds for his or her immediate removal from such positions by the Trustees. Recognizing the validity of the Christian faith and dedicated to Christian living, the instructor is given freedom to pursue his or her studies and present his or

her teaching as he or she wishes. A non-Baptist faculty member shall not be required to subscribe to the statements regarding the mode of water baptism (www.eastern.edu:93/welcome/doctrinalstatement.html).

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH

We affirm our conviction that the Church of Jesus Christ, as a visible community of believers inclusive of persons of all cultures, races and nationalities, is central to faithful obedience in living the Christian life and advancing the work of the Gospel. We highly value our established relationship with the American Baptist Churches in the USA. We seek to maintain and strengthen this relationship while we also serve the larger Church in ways appropriate to our mission (www.eastern.edu:93/welcome/missionstatement.html).

It is obvious for anyone who can see through a ladder that President Jones and LCU have joined ACU along with her President **Royce Money** as well as the Dean of ACU's College of Biblical Studies, **Jack Reese** (and other like-minded institutions of higher learning) in using denominational preachers to help them in their work.

In the last two sentences of his second paragraph in his letter to Ruffner, Jones attempted to excuse himself and LCU from any guilt in using a sectarian denominational preacher by saying "... we do not endorse the individual's particular religious belief system. We are careful to express to our students exactly what our purpose is in these events." By these sentiments is Jones telling us that someone at LCU informed the students before Duffy Robbins spoke that he was not a Christian and possibly Robbins could say things not in harmony with the New Testament? Did Robbins know that LCU did not consider him a Christian? Or, is it more likely that he thought that LCU considered him to be a Christian? Again, did anyone at LCU attempt to study the Bible with Robbins and thereby show him the error of his beliefs? If you think they did then you could very well find yourself the owner of oceanfront proper on top of Mt. Everest.

A REVEALING ANSWER TO A QUESTION NOT ASKED

In the third paragraph of Jones' letter to Ruffner he assumes that Ruffner is "wondering about my convictions regarding baptism." Jones then writes, "I very much believe that baptism is for the remission of sins and is an expression of faith." Ask a Baptist preacher such as Duffy Robbins if he believes Peter's statement—"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). I would be very surprised if a Bap-

tist preacher would answer such a question in the negative. But we all know (or should) that Baptists teach that the word "**for**" of the passage means "because of" and not "in order to" obtain the remission of sins.

Baptists erroneously teach the moment a sinner believes in Christ he/she is saved and as a saved person he/she is baptized because Jesus was baptized. They believe in salvation by faith only. Remember what Eastern University affirmed as a part of its statement regarding its commitment to the church: "We highly value our established relationship with the American Baptist Churches in the USA."

However, when it comes to whom they fellowship, they do not let what they think the Bible teaches regarding baptism and the church stand in their way. That is obvious from sections II and III of the previously quoted doctrinal statements of Eastern University. Notice that any non-Baptist who is a part of Eastern University is exempt from what Baptists believe regarding baptism and the church. So, if one is on the payroll of Eastern University, and that person claims to be a Baptist, he/she must subscribe to Baptist doctrine. However, if one is on the board, administration, faculty and so on, one does not have to believe in Baptist doctrine on these matters. *It does not take a Solomon to conclude this is the case because Eastern University does not think their beliefs regarding baptism and the church should be tests of fellowship.* And, that is sectarian denominationalism through and through. It is the false idea of "if one is sincere it does not make any difference what one believes." Expressed in another way, it is the false belief of "you go to your church and I will go to mine and we will all get to heaven together." Obviously LCU, et al. follow the same guidelines regarding who they fellowship and who they do not. Mark it down: Eastern University is one of the patterns by which LCU, ACU, and their sisters in apostasy are seeking to mold themselves. And, they are well on their way to reaching their goal. Jones admits as much in his letter written in answer to Ruffner's letter.

WILL THE BIBLE READ THE SAME WAY ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT AS IT DOES NOW?

In the third paragraph of his letter to Ruffner, President Jones wrote:

Concerning what God will do with those who are in denominational groups who express their faith in Jesus Christ, I do not know what will happen. I hope God saves them. However, I am very careful in how I speak to those people in regard to salvation. I feel we must teach, in love, what is expressed in scripture. All we can do is handle and live by the truth the best we can

and leave the rest to God.

Again Jones wrote in his fourth paragraph:

Perhaps there are some who have expressed faith in Jesus Christ and have been baptized for remission of sins and who are in denominations. I just do not know how God will deal with these. As you have heard many times, we are not God, and we do not know how God will react in every situation. All we can do is handle and live by the truth the best we can and leave the rest to God.

Because of the sentiments set out in the preceding quotes I chose the title for this article. Jones' statements manifest a complete lack of confidence and trust in God and his infallible, absolute, objective, all-sufficient, complete, humanly attainable, and final message to man, the Bible (John 12:48; Romans 2:16; II Timothy 3:16, 17; James 1:18, 21, 25; II Peter 1:19-21; I Peter 4:11). It is God's word of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:19). Will God's word of reconciliation not read the same way on the Day of Judgment as it does today? Will it not mean the same thing then that it does now?

It is always interesting to note how these fellows think it is possible for God to change his mind from what he has said in the Bible so he can populate heaven with more people than the Bible says he will. However, if one cannot trust God's word to inform us pertaining to who is going to heaven, why do we think we can trust his word when it tells us who is going to hell? If God is going to allow more people into heaven than the Bible says is going there, then God may send people to hell that the Bible said were going to heaven. If God does not mean what he says and say what he means in the Bible, no one can know where he/she will exist in eternity. Indeed, it would be the case that no one could know whether he/she is presently saved or lost. If God can change his mind from what he said in the Bible about one thing, he can change it about anything. However, I doubt Jones wants to think about a fickle and untrustworthy God sending people to hell when his word said they were going to heaven.

Jones knows that Robbins has not been baptized into Christ for (unto, in order to) the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26, 27). Furthermore, he knows that Robbins does not believe and teach that baptism will *only* save the person who has previously believed in Christ, repented of sin, and confessed faith in Christ (John 8:24; Romans 10:17; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9, 10; I Peter 3:21). Moreover, Jones knows that Robbins believes the false doctrine that the moment a person believes in Jesus (without any other acts of obedience) that

person is saved. Indeed, Jones knows that Robbins erroneously teaches people they are not obligated before God to be baptized in order to be saved from their sins. Also, President Jones knows Robbins believes the false view that any such action is an attempt on the sinner's part to earn salvation. But, Jones says that he "hopes God saves them." I suppose when he uses the word "hope" he means that it is his wish or desire that God would save them. What faithful person in the church of Christ does not desire for all men to be saved? But, if those who are accountable to God will not believe and obey the gospel as it is set out in the words of the New Testament, they will *not* be saved (II Peter 3:9; Acts 20:24; Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15, 16; I Corinthians 15:1; II Thessalonians 1:8; Colossians 1:5; 3:16; Titus 1:9).

Note again that President Jones also stated in his letter to Ruffner, "As you have heard many times, we are not God and we do not know how God will react in every situation. All we can do is handle and live by the truth the best we can and leave the rest to God." Indeed, I have heard many things numerous times regarding what men think concerning how God saves a person, but most of what I have heard, I am sad to write, is false. I know that because I can read and understand my Bible and discern all things in the light of it (II Corinthians 13:5; II Timothy 2:15; II Peter 3:1-3; I John 4:1; II John 8-11). Has President Jones not read, and if he has, does he not believe our Lord when he asked, "**And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say**" (Luke 6:46). Again, does President Jones not believe Jesus when he said, "**Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven**" (Matthew 7:21; Also see verses 22, 23).

WHAT WE LEARN FROM II PETER 2:4-9 ABOUT THE INTEGRITY OF GOD

In this section of Peter's second letter the apostle argues that God keeps his word when he warns of the punishment of the wicked and promises blessings to the faithful. In II Peter 2:4-9 Peter offers evidence and reasons to prove that God keeps his word concerning what he says will happen to the wicked and the saved (II Thessalonians 5:21).

Peter begins with the wicked angels (verse 4). The Bible states that evil angels will be punished (Galatians 1:8-9). Was God true to his word? The apostle informs us that God kept his word and such angels were punished (verse 4).

Peter points out that God meant what he said concerning the sinful people of Noah's day (verse 5). Moses by inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells us that Noah's world before the flood was wicked (Genesis 6:5). He then records God's declaration of destruction to those sinful people (Genesis 6:7). Did God do what he said he would do to the wicked people of Noah's day? Indeed, he did (Genesis 7:21, 22).

Peter records that God said he would save Noah (verse 5). Moses tells us that Noah was righteous (Genesis 6:8). God promised to save Noah (Genesis 6:17, 18). Was God true to his word to Noah? Indeed, he was (Genesis 8:1).

Peter tells us that God meant what he said regarding Lot's wicked world (verse 6). The cities of Sodom and Gomorah were wicked (Gen. 13:13). God declared he would destroy them (Genesis 19:13). Did God keep his word in this matter? God did destroy the cities (Genesis 19:24, 25).

God meant what he said pertaining to righteous Lot (verses 7, 8). Lot was a righteous man (Genesis 19:1-8). God said he would save Lot from the destruction of Sodom, Gomorah, and the cities of the plain (Genesis 19:15). Was God true to his word regarding saving Lot? God kept his word to Lot and saved him (Genesis 19:16).

In view of the fact that these matters recorded in the Old Testament were written to help us live the Christian life under the authority of Christ as it is set out in the New Testament (Matthew 28:18; Romans 15:4), we may conclude that God will punish the wicked. That is exactly what the inspired apostle Peter concluded (II Peter 2:20-22). Please notice that he specifically had in mind unfaithful, thus wicked, brethren. Also, as with Noah and Lot, we may rest assured that God will save those who are righteous (1 John 1:7; II Timothy 4:1-9; Revelation 2:10).

President Jones tells us he does not know what God will do with people who do not teach that the believer must be baptized to obtain salvation from their sins. He tells us that he does not know what God will do with one who has been baptized for the remission of sins and is a member of a denomination. Listen well and be warned—Since God meant what he said to all those people Peter included in II Peter 2:4-9, then we may correctly conclude that he means what he says to those who do obey him and those who do not. God means what he says and he says what he means. The problem with President Jones, LCU, ACU and sister institutions of like persuasion is this—*they do not believe the Bible.*

THE SIN OF JUDGING ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE

Another of Jones' false statements is, "... we are not God and we do not know how God will react in every situation." (See Michael Light's Assistant Editorial on "Judging" in this issue of CFTF). The Bible does not teach such a doctrine as set out in Jones' last quote. Therefore, I must disagree most strenuously with this statement. In matters of salvation we *can know exactly* how God will act or react toward those who have not been baptized for the remission of their sins and who do not live the Christian life as mandated in the New Testament (II Timothy 3:16, 17; John 12:48; Hebrews 5:10; Revelation 21:8; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Colossians 3:17; Galatians 1:6-9; Matthew 12:37). We are obligated before God to "**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment**" (John 7:17). Since "**all**

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of God's commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172), and we are to "**judge righteous judgment**" *it is obvious that a part of being acceptable to God is to judge or discern things in the light of the commandments of God.* Not to do such is sin (I John 3:4). I strongly declare that President Jones and others of his false persuasion are guilty of "**judging according to the appearance**" and not engaging in "**righteous judgment.**" Nevertheless Jesus said, "**If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:31, 32; Also see 17:17; John 14:15; II Peter 1:2-13; I John 2:3-6; 5:2, 3; II John 4-6; Revelation 2:10; I Corinthians 15:58; II Timothy 4:6-8; Titus 2:1; James 4:17; I John 3:4).

President Jones ends the fourth paragraph of his letter to Ruffner with, "All we can do is handle and live by the truth the best we can and leave the rest to God." However, President Jones is not handling and living by the truth to best of his ability. He does not believe what the Bible says about who is saved and who is lost. This is the reason he is not sure what God is going to do with the Baptists, Methodists and the like on Judgment Day.

But, what is "the rest" Jones is leaving to God? According to his statements in his letter the answer "the rest" of necessity includes the Independent Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Community Churches, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, the various kinds of Pentecostals, Catholics, and the like. I wonder if "the rest" is broad enough to include "Jehovah's Witnesses", Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, and Christian Scientists? What is Jones' view? Let him answer in his own words. Remember he wrote, "Concerning what God will do with those who are in denominational groups who express their faith in Jesus Christ, I do not know what will happen. I hope God saves them."

In the first sentence of his fifth and last paragraph in his letter to Ruffner he wrote, "As far as Lubbock Christian University, we try to honor and promote our heritage in the church of Christ." Jesus tells us that in religious matters we are to be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:15-20). Our Lord makes it clear that we know what people really are by the fruit they bear in their lives. Therefore, Jones and LCU along with her sisters in apostasy are not honoring and promoting their "heritage in the church of Christ." To the con-

trary, in their embracing of sectarian denominationalism, the biblical concept of the church of Christ as that term is defined and employed in the New Testament of Jesus Christ is dishonored and repudiated.

In the last sentence of his letter to Ruffner he writes, "In all cases, we try to teach the Bible openly and allow students to question, challenge and grow in their ability to rightly handle truth from scripture." Does President Jones and the rest of his LCU company honestly think that sectarian denominational preachers who deny one must be baptized in order to be saved along with other false doctrines they believe and teach help the LCU students to "grow in their ability to rightly handle truth from scripture." A Baptist pastor can help one be a sectarian denominationalist and a Baptist; a Methodist pastor can help one become a sectarian denominationalist and a Methodist and so on. They cannot help Christians be better Christians when they do not know how to become a Christian or what the church is. Talk about dumb and dumber.

It takes the pure unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ to make a Christian, nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else; a member of the church Jesus built and that he purchased with his own precious blood (Mark 16:15; Romans 1:16; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). It is the church that is revealed on the pages of the New Testament. It is to that church and that church only that Christ adds all the saved (Acts 2:38, 41, 42, 47; Ephesians 1:3; Romans 16:16). Therefore the church of Christ is composed of "Christians only and the only Christians," President Jones, LCU, ACU, OCU, Harding U., FHU, DLU, *The Christian Chronicle* or any other university, school, church, paper or person that denies it not with standing.

There are as many churches acceptable to God the Father as there are sons acceptable to him. And there is only one only begotten son acceptable to him (Ephesians 4:5; John 14:6; Luke 9:28-35). There is only one church that is God's family and, unlike reprobate men, God has all his children in his own family (Luke 8:11, 15; John 3, 3, 5; Acts 2:47; 1 Timothy 3:15). *He that has understanding let him understand!*

— David P. Brown, Editor-in-Chief

Accusations Against ACU

(Continued From Page 1)

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Hebrews 10:28).

With the Bible's injunction against "tale-bearing" (Proverbs 26:22) and based upon this information gathered, I offer this apology to ACU and to Chris Altrock, who I have already contacted personally about this matter.

But in an email to Jack Reese, I also stated the following; "past speakers in your lectureship series have made this controversy much easier to be believe." (Rodney Plunkett, who appeared on the 1999 ACU Lectures, believes that the Bible does not establish any pattern for the church today, this included the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians. Also, a professor of New Testament studies at ACU wrote:

There should be room in the Christian fellowship for those who differ on... whether the Lord's Supper must be taken every Sunday, or whether instrumental music is used in worship. There should be room in the Christian fellowship for those who believe that Christ is the Son of God, but who differ on eschatological theories such as premillennialism, ecclesiological matters such

as congregational organization, or soteriological matters such as whether baptism is "for" or "because of" the remission of sins (*The Peaceable Kingdom*, by Carroll D. Osborn, pp. 90-91).

Why not publicly disavow ACU professors who teach denominationalism or lectureship speakers who teach against "pattern theology"?

It is evident that ACU is continuing to drift from the pattern of the New Testament. Consider this link, *if we fellowship the denominations and they fellowship Judaism and Islam—where does that leave us?*

ACCUSATION NUMBER TWO:

The second accusation made against ACU by the Rising Star elders was that "A new style of worship was taught called 'Taizé.' Jack Reese, taught that Taizé is a popular style of worship that focuses on wholeness and healing through contemplative songs, silence and prayer. It originated in a community of Roman Catholic brothers." Again, I must remind you that Reese denies what the elders have written. He states, "The bottom line is this. None of the four accusations made against ACU are true." He further stated in a letter to the Rising Star elders:

No one taught or practiced Roman Catholic worship during the Lectureship or at any other time. **Loretta Fulton**, religious editor of the *Abilene Reporter-News* and a practicing Roman Catholic (actually she is an Episcopalian, rlp), indicated that Taizé worship is a style of worship that comes from a community of Roman Catholic brothers... Roman Catholic worship was not taught, advocated, or practiced.

On the official website for ACU, Reese was involved in two of the three originally scheduled sessions of "Out of the Quiet" subtitled, "Taizé Worship as a Source of Renewal and Reconciliation." The description for the lecture reads:

The river of worship renewal should be fed by many streams. This class will explore possibilities for renewal emerging from the Taizé movement, an international fellowship committed to simplicity, confession and reconciliation. Come learn about and experience the ancient yet contemporary worship that characterizes the Taizé community.

I must confess that this is enough information for me to draw the conclusion that Christians should not want anything to do with this style of worship. Notice that Taizé worship is a part of a movement which is described as "an international fellowship". Christians want nothing to do with anything that will involve them in fellowship with any denominational movement. Christians are not looking for "an international fellowship"

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regardless of the style of worship. If it did not come from God, then it is a work of darkness and therein Christians will have no fellowship (Ephesians 5:11).

Without sanctification no man can be saved (Hebrews 12:14, ASV). A man is **“sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints”** (I Corinthians 1:2). The baptism of a penitent believer for the remission of his sins puts him into Christ (cf. Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 2:38). Dean Reese states during his lecture on “Out of the Quiet” that he went to a denominational church to learn how to Taizé. But you might be saying to yourself, “OK preacher enough, just what is this Taizé style of worship that you are talking about?” Because I have never been to a Taizé worship service, I cannot with experiential knowledge explain just what it is, but I can tell you what those who have been and enjoy it say. So here goes.

In 1940, a 25-year old man from Switzerland, Brother Roger, came to a small village of Taizé in the Burgundy Region of France with the dream of starting an ecumenical community for contemplation and for the reconciliation of Christians of all faiths. Today, the community made up of brothers from several continents and various denominations, draws tens of thousands of people from all parts of the world. They come as part of their search for trust and communion in their lives. Three times each day they join with the brothers for prayer in the Church of Reconciliation. An important part of the Taizé experience is the singing of simple, meditative songs that were developed for the prayer service.

The Taizé experience, as it is called, also includes silence as an important part of its worship yet I find absolutely no authority for this in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament. Where is silence as worship enjoined by direct statement, example, or implication upon the worship of the assembled saints? After listening to people who love and describe it, one cannot help but compare it to Eastern Mysticism. It is an appeal to the emotions and not the intellect of a man. Let us all ask the question, “By what authority?”

ACCUSATION NUMBER THREE:

Third, the statement made by the Rising Star elders was “Oprah Winfrey was called ‘one of the most influential spiritual leaders in America.’” I have listed below the quote as it appears in the *Abilene Reporter-News*, Tuesday, February 25, 2003. “The ‘Church of Oprah’ class filled quickly at Abilene Christian University. ‘Oprah (Winfrey) is one of the most influential spiritual leaders in America,’ the leader of a lecture said Monday.”

In his letter to the Rising Star elders, Jack Reese clearly stated that a mistake was made by **Loretta Fulton**, the news reporter. “Again, the *Abilene Reporter-News* article was not as clear in its report as it should have been, but that’s an issue for them to an-

swer.” I (RLP) think that Dean Reese is correct. After listening to the tapes of the class, Chris Altrock was quoting a *Christianity Today* article. A 1994 *Vanity Fare* magazine article said basically the same thing.

This, it seems to me, is but a minute point, except if we were to argue that this is a good thing. I happen to agree with *Christianity Today* in this sense; Oprah Winfrey is, unfortunately, one of the most influential “spiritual” leaders in America today. If this were not so sad it would be laughable. To use a phrase coined by a preaching friend of mine, we are living in the “New Dark-Ages.” The Bible is no longer chained to the Catholic Church pulpit; today it is chained to the feelings and whims of individuals who know absolutely nothing about this Spirit-inspired book.

Altrock gave five ways to connect with post-moderns who are pluralistic: (1) Preach messages that highlight the inclusiveness and tolerance of the gospel; (2) Explore the basis for Christian exclusiveness - what gives Jesus the right to say that he alone is the source of salvation (the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, identity of Jesus and the credibility of the gospel); (3) Show the exclusiveness of other religions; (4) Preach messages that will help people see the inaccuracies of pluralism; (5) Preach on the inadequacies of pluralism. Although we agree that these five ways are legitimate ways to connect to post-moderns, the one important item left out of Chris Altrock’s lessons on *The Church of Oprah* is the exclusiveness of the Lord’s church. He spoke of “relationship”, “community”, “church” and “the Christian Church” but never spoke of the distinctive nature of the Lord’s body. He spoke of a:

two-pronged strategy for connecting with people who are anti-institutionalism; (a word he uses for people who are anti-church, rlp) and both of these prongs have to do with helping people to understand, at a pragmatic level, the blessings and rewards and benefits of being a part of the Christian community.

He lists the kinds of teaching and preaching about the church that will connect with post-moderns: *You must stay away from doctrine, no orthodoxy*. This sounds familiar, does it not? Altrock’s connection to post-moderns will establish a social gospel. Maybe we should be more concerned about preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), rather than connecting with society? Answer me this, which is condemned in scripture, not preaching the whole gospel or not connecting with post-moderns? Noah, that preacher of righteousness, did not connect with the people of his day (I Peter 3:20). This he did by faith (Hebrews 11:7). Lot, **“that righteous man,”** did not connect with the wicked men of Sodom, but was **“vexed in his righteous soul from day to day”** (II Peter 2:6-8).

Altrock, like **Rubel Shelly**, espouses a “grace greater than God’s grace” in the following:

As one author says, “Christianity is spelled *done* and most other faiths are spelled *do*. Because most other

faiths offer salvation based upon what we do, if we do enough good things then we gain salvation. Whereas Christianity says, I offer you salvation based on what Jesus has already done on the cross. Its by grace and a God who has created that kind of faith system again has some credibility to say, 'if your looking for salvation, your not going to find any better than right here with me, because I've already done everything necessary.'

If I remember correctly, every quote in the two lessons given by Altrock is from denominational preachers and teachers. Could Altrock not find one faithful gospel preacher that has ever dealt with the subject of post-modernism? Could it be that Altrock has been lingering too long at denominational wine and is seeking after mixed wine? **"Look thou not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder"** (Proverbs 23:31-32). Denominationalism, like alcoholic wine, is beautiful to the eyes so that one can be caught up in its beauty. Eve saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree **"was pleasant to the eyes"** (Genesis 3:6b; cf. II Corinthians 5:7). Denominationalism, like alcoholic wine, is smooth to the taste so that one may be trapped by its splendid flavor. The **"woman saw that the tree was good for food"** (Genesis 3:6a; I John 2:1-17) and did eat.

ACCUSATION NUMBER FOUR:

One of the accusations leveled against Abilene Christian University is that they invited "a denominational preacher named **Tony Campolo**" to speak "at the university's chapel service and openly recruited students to work in his denominational ministry." Let us examine the simple facts: (1) Tony Campolo did speak at the university's chapel service. (2) Tony Campolo is a denominational preacher. (3) Tony Campolo did recruit students to participate in his work or ministry in the inner city. To this agree all the witnesses. Loretta Fulton of the Reporter-News, writes, "Esterine Bernard was so inspired by Tony Campolo's speech that she rushed to the front of Moody Coliseum to volunteer to join his team Monday morning." Fulton also described Campolo as the founder of "Evangelical Asso-

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ciation of Education and a nationally recognized evangelical speaker and author." Campolo will be returning to Abilene in November for a "Festival of Faith sponsored by the Abilene Association of Congregations." According to Fulton, Tony Campolo "is a favorite in evangelical circles with his powerful delivery and emphasis on transformation through Christ." Tony Campolo described himself as a "radical follower of Jesus Christ." The program for which he was recruiting during the lecture was entitled "Mission Year" according to the news reports.

The next witness is Jack Reese, dean of the College of Biblical Studies. Reese writes in a letter to the Rising Star elders that "Tony Campolo...spoke on our campus in January." Brother Reese sought to justify this by calling Campolo "a sociologist" rather than a denominational preacher. The truth is that he is both a sociologist and a denominational preacher. Dr. Reese continues,

Like all universities, from time to time we have speakers from across the country address a variety of issues with our students. Dr. Campolo challenged our students to spend their lives serving the poor and not abandoning the inner cities of our country, and he encouraged anyone who was willing to come to Philadelphia to help the poor there.

In fact, Reese says "the very next morning, I spoke to our students about numerous opportunities sponsored by ACU or by Churches of Christ that they could be involved in." I do not understand, if it is just sociology, what is wrong with Dr. Campolo's organization? By the way, Tony Campolo's web site describes him as "an ordained minister."

The following information was obtained through the *Gospel Journal* and confirmed on the West Islip Church of Christ web site:

Minister **Katie Hayes** was recently invited to preach to the student body of Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas. In response to those who have expressed interest, we are pleased to provide a manuscript of her sermon.

On the web site you will find this information, "Katie Hayes serves the congregation through preaching, teaching, and pastoral care;... Her husband, **Lance Pape**, shares in the preaching, teaching, and pastoral care." Both ministers "serve under the guidance of the Council." The Council is a group of shepherds of either gender. Lance Pape "works to promote gender justice in Churches of Christ through his website, Gal328.org."

All who know their Bibles realize that ACU is in a mess when it comes to serving God. And, in closing we thank the Rising Star elders for their willingness to demonstrate a little backbone and **"earnestly contend for the faith"** (Jude 3).

—1200 Bowie St.
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"Judge Not That Ye Be Not Judged" Matthew 7:1

Of all the verses in the Bible this is probably one of the most commonly quoted. Though many people can mouth the words of this verse, there are very few who use it correctly. Usually as persons cite this text they are doing so in an attempt to justify some erroneous position that they are holding.

This verse is often referred to by persons being shown the error of their ways. The general consensus among these individuals is that "you are not perfect so who are you to judge me." Others will cite this text as "proof" that no one has a right to pass judgment on anyone else.

WHAT DOES THIS VERSE REALLY MEAN?

It is the intent of this piece to show that those who take this approach to Matthew 7:1, are in error. This will be done in three ways.

The first is to show that the idea of judging being wrong is in direct conflict with many verses in the New Testament which teach that judging is precisely what is demanded by God in many situations. The second will be an examination of an actual example in which judgment was passed and God approved. Finally, we will show that without passing judgment it is impossible for anyone to become a New Testament Christian.

1. *Some verses that clearly show that Matthew 7:1 cannot be condemning all judgment.* It needs to be kept in mind that any time students of the Bible draw a conclusion from a text that contradicts some other passage, we can conclude that we have made a mistake. An example of this would be the interpretation some have given to John 3:16. It is stated that based on this verse, ("**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life.**" John 3:16) anyone who believes on Christ is saved.

And yet, if we will but read James 2:14-27, we see clearly that "faith only" cannot save. In two verses in particular the Holy Spirit through James states in very emphatic style, that faith alone will not do. In verse 17 we read, "**Faith without works is dead being alone.**" This verse makes it clear that faith alone results in a dead faith. Again in verse 24 we have,

"For by works are ye justified and not by faith only." These two verses alone are enough to forever destroy the idea of salvation by faith only.

We may conclude then since James 2 clearly teaches against faith only, any verse that is interpreted to teach just that, has been misinterpreted. This approach will be used now on Matthew 7:1.

The first verse that will be cited in this argument is Romans 16:17, 18 which states:

Therefore my beloved brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses 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 with good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

The apostle Paul is certainly teaching that some judgment is to be passed. It is important at this point to keep in mind that the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that is, he was writing precisely what the Holy Spirit gave him.

Based on this section of scripture we are commanded to pass judgment on false teachers. This can only be done in light of biblical truth. Paul therefore, shows that we can determine what truth is, and then pass judgment on individuals based on that truth. Other verses that re-enforce this statement are John 7:24; II John 1:9-11; II Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17; and several others. Based on the above verses we can see that Matthew 7:1 cannot possibly be condemning all judgment.

2. *Some examples that shed light on Matthew 7:1.* In Acts 13 we have an approved example of an apostle passing judgment. In the text Paul condemns a man quite severely. Speaking of Elymus, he says, "**...Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of God.**" Here we find Paul putting into practice Romans 16:17-18. Elymus was wrong and is here receiving a strong rebuke. This action is approved of God based on the fact that after these words, Elymus was struck blind. Notice what the Apostle Paul adds:

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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding

to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (I Timothy 4:1-4.)

In I John 4:1 we are taught, **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”** We are obligated to constantly compare what we are hearing from teachers and preachers with the word of God (Acts 17:11). The reason is simple, not every teacher is faithful. We must “judge” every message we hear. A refusal to do this is paramount to being unfaithful as God’s children.

3. *Reasons Judgment is needed if one is to become a Christian.* Let us notice some things that we cannot know without passing judgment: (1) that God exists, (2) that the Bible is his word, (3) that Christ

is his son. The same is true concerning the plan of salvation. The only way these things, or anything for that matter, can be known is by gathering and examining all available evidence, and then drawing the justified conclusions (passing judgment—if you will). The Bible teaches that we must: (1) Hear the truth (Romans 10:17), (2) we must believe in Christ (John 3:16), we must repent (Luke 13:3), we must confess (Romans 10:10) and we must be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:37).

4. *Conclusion.* Simply put, in Matthew 7:1 Christ is condemning a hypocritical judgment and that is all. Later he says that we are to pass righteous judgment (John 7:24). May we have the courage to do so.

—Michael Light, *Assistant Editor*

Current Events that Concern Christians...

Baghdad Bob Gets a Preacher’s Job

Jerry Murrell

It seems that poor, **Mohammad Saaed al-Sahaf**, affectionately known as “Baghdad Bob,” and called “Comical Ali” by the British Press, though I preferred the name “Minster Magoo,” is out of a job. The American reporters could always count on Baghdad Bob to give them the “lie of the land.” After twenty-one days it was discovered that he had mistakenly reported that American soldiers were committing suicide at the Gates of Baghdad. They had actually taken the city. He too was captured.

BAGHDAD BOB NEEDS A NEW JOB

I have decided that he could come to the United States and become a preacher in many “churches of Christ.” No matter how badly the war was going for Iraq, he always had a positive message for the Iraqi people. It was comical to see the Fox News Channel go to the split-screen during his briefing. On one side of the screen you could see Baghdad Bob saying, “I triple guarantee you there are no American soldiers in Baghdad.” On the other side you could see American soldiers riding unmolested in the armored personnel carriers through downtown Iraq.

It was at this point I decided that Baghdad Bob simply must have been auditioning for a preaching job in America. Compare him with preachers in the mold of the opponents of an Isaiah or Jeremiah. During their day the people wanted them to **“prophecy not unto us right things: speak to us smooth things; prophecy deceits** (Isaiah 30:10). Jeremiah had been com-

missioned by God, **“to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant”** (Jeremiah 1:10). With this job, no matter how many times he was called the “weeping prophet,” his message would be unpopular and his “spirit” called “non-irenic.”

Instead of preachers like the prophets, many people want men to fill their pulpits, who, like Baghdad Bob, cry **“peace, peace; when there is no peace”** (cf. Jeremiah 8:11). Let me conjure up a scenario in which Baghdad Bob and a preacher in the mold of Jeremiah apply for the same pulpit position. For the sake of brevity we will disregard the third candidate, though we know that the Bible requires that at least three preachers “try-out” when the “pulpit position” is open (for proof of this statement see III Hezekiah). After all concerned finish their “try-outs,” the elders meet to discuss what their final decision will be. Let us go inside their meeting and together observe it.

THE ELDERS MEET AND CONSIDER HIRING BAGHDAD BOB

After the “try-outs” the elders of the Spineless Church of Christ meet to decide which preacher they should hire. Elder Smith begins by saying, “That



Jeremiah preacher preached a powerful scripture-filled sermon and proved every point by the Bible, but his message was not uplifting. You cannot build a church by telling them that seventy years of captivity are coming even if you have a “thus saith the Lord.” Elder Jones then said, “It is true that we met for three hours with Jeremiah and the same with Baghdad Bob. And, brethren, you know we quizzed them furiously about what they believed, but after checking their references, I am not sure which one we should ask to come.” Elder Doe said, “I met privately with the three guys that have gossiped so much about all the previous preachers and they promised me that this time they will not cause trouble as long as we hire Baghdad Bob.”

Elder Smith said, “I took a poll and it was four to three in favor of hiring Baghdad Bob. I took it on Sunday morning.” Then Elder Hoppy spoke up and said, “I saw what you were doing, why did you only take your survey on Sunday morning? I thought that Jeremiah had the far better Sunday night sermon.” Elder Smith said “I had to be fair, because you know that many of Baghdad Bob’s supporters were not back on Sunday night.” Elder Jones says, “Besides, my daughter-in-law told me that Baghdad Bob’s sermon was 10 minutes shorter than Jeremiah’s.” Elder Smith, “I had forgotten that. Good point.”

Brother Hoppy said, “But don’t you remember that Baghdad Bob admitted to us in the meeting that he was actually still a Muslim.” Elder Doe said, “There you go again talking like one of those elders that thinks it is his job to ‘oversee the church.’ Do you not remem-

ber that the former preacher told you that you do not smell enough like sheep, when you talk like that.” So Brother Hoppy said, “Well, I do not want to cause a conflict, I will go along with you fellas’, judgment.”

So Elder Hoppy went along with the decision of the majority of the elders and the other three elders went along with the “majority” of the congregation. Baghdad Bob was hired.

CHECKING IN A YEAR LATER

A year later at the Spineless Church of Christ, Baghdad Bob had convinced the church that they need an elder reaffirmation to remove that “stick in the mud,” Brother Hoppy. Brother Hoppy was removed in short order. He is now attending “elsewhere” where he is frequently heard to ask, “What is happening to the church?”. Sometimes Baghdad Bob “accidentally” mentions Allah. Anyone who hears it is immediately labeled as a troublemaker and marginalized.

Jeremiah’s ninety-day agreement ran out so he took a job pumping gas. He is still preaching every Sunday to a smaller audience than he has spoken to in the past. He says he has mixed emotions but in some ways he feels freer than he has ever felt before. He just found out he was a “bi-vocational preacher” and did not even know it. Baghdad Bob is thinking about moving to a larger congregation. No one wants him to leave because he is doing such a “good job.” Everyone that is except Jesus—he has a candlestick in his hands. Now we know another reason why Jesus wept.

—4340 Lylewood Road
Indian Mound, Tennessee 37079

Restoration Reflections...

IS THE RESTORATION OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY DEAD?

Paul Vaughn

There are many advancing the idea that the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is dead. Some have plainly taught that the churches of Christ have entered the “termination stage.” While others declare, “By the 1960s, the theological house that Churches of Christ had built for themselves in the nineteenth century had all but collapsed.”¹ The harbingers of the demise or ruin of the church of Christ have blinded their eyes and made their ears heavy to the truth. In our great brotherhood there are thousands, yes millions, who are seeking to follow the ancient pattern in the scriptures. But, numbers are not the indicators of the death or life of the church of Christ. It is the desire on the part of man to faithfully cleave to God’s word. As long

as there are those who seek to walk in the light of the scriptures and nothing else, the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is alive.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE RESTORATION

There are indispensable principles that keep the Restoration of New Testament Christianity alive in each generation.

These foundation principles glorify God and his word. They anchor each generation on the foundation of the New Testament and Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone



of the church.

When Christians teach that the New Testament is the supreme authority for the practice of the church of Christ, the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is alive. In the second epistle of John it is written:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (II John 9).

Those who are progressing in the way of Christ, seeking to continue in the doctrine of Christ, fan the fires of Restoration for the next generation.

When Christians teach that there is one church, the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is alive. Jesus taught that he would build his church. **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”** (Matthew 16:18). Therefore, the denominations in existence today do so without the authority of Christ. They teach and practice doctrines contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Paul condemned sectarianism in the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:10-13). It is just as sinful today! Christians seeking to maintain the principle of the one true church close the door to the harbingers of death.

When Christians teach that the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is both possible and desirable, the Restoration Movement is alive. It is accurate

and reasonable to believe that God has given mankind the Bible to instruct all in the way of righteousness. The “Book of Books” must be taught in its purity, without adding to it or taking away from it. Paul told Timothy to **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”** (II Timothy 4:2). Again it is written, **“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained”** (I Timothy 4:6). Faithfully teaching, preaching and adhering to the pattern in the New Testament keeps the Restoration desirable in the minds of Christians and puts a shield between the church of Christ and the “Winds of Change” that are blowing across the brotherhood.

CONCLUSION

The history of God’s people throughout the ages is one of apostasy and restoration. The children of God would be faithful for a period of time and leave God for the idols and gods of this world. In the 19th Century men began to seek out the purity of God’s teaching in the Bible and began a grand and immense Restoration of New Testament Christianity. The truth of God’s word was the common ground among the early restorers on which they met and stood.

May all Christians today renew their commitment to the endeavor of keeping the Restoration Principle alive and well in this generation and future generations. We do this by searching out God’s will for all men from the Scriptures, being faithful to that time-honored pattern given in the New Testament, and leading the next generation in that “Ancient Order.”

Barton W. Stone wrote:

Wearied with the works and doctrines of men, and distrustful of their influence, I made the Bible my constant companion. I honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully sought for truth, determined to buy it at all the sacrifice of everything.

The heart that is honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully seeking truth and is willing to sacrifice everything to have it would never advance the idea that the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is dead. The important question we must ask our self today is, “Do we view the Restoration of New Testament Christianity as possible and desirable as did the early restorers?”

ENDNOTES

1. Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving The Ancient Faith*, Eerdmans, pub., Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 352.

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10:30 a.m. Wisdom In Proverbs
7:00 p.m. The Fear of The Lord
8:00 p.m. Receiving Instruction vs. Refusing Reproof

Ted J. Clarke
B. J. Clarke
Curtis Cates
Billy Bland

Monday, August 4th

9:00 a.m. Honesty In Proverbs
10:00 a.m. Pride vs. Humility In Proverbs
11:00 a.m. Work and Laziness In Proverbs
1:00 p.m. The Fool In Proverbs
2:00 p.m. The Attributes of God In Proverbs
2:00 p.m. Ladies Class: The Gracious Woman
3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion
7:00 p.m. Husband/Wife Relationship
8:00 p.m. Proverbs For Parents

Paul Meacham, Jr.
Bobby Liddell
Gary Summers
Kevin Beard
Dub McClish
Irene Taylor

Keith Mosher
David Brown

Tuesday, August 5th

9:00 a.m. How Not To Treat Our Fellow Man
10:00 a.m. The Tongue In Proverbs-How To Use It
11:00 a.m. Anger In Proverbs
1:00 p.m. The Immoral Woman In Proverbs
2:00 p.m. Miscellaneous Proverbs
2:00 p.m. LadiesClass:
"The Woman With The Attire Of An Harlot"
3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion
7:00 p.m. Proverbs For Youth: "Listen To Your Parents"
8:00 p.m. Proverbs For Youth: "Watch Your Companions"

Scott Lambert
Michael Light
Don Walker
Allen Webster
Dave Watson

Celicia Grider

Ronnie Hayes
Cliff Goodwin

Wednesday, August 6th

9:00 a.m. How To Treat Our Fellow Man
10:00 a.m. The Tongue In Proverbs-How Not To Use It
11:00 a.m. Money In Proverbs
1:00 p.m. The Wise Man In Proverbs
2:00 p.m. The Righteous Man In Proverbs
2:00 p.m. Ladies Class: "The Foolish Woman" (Prov. 14:1)
3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion
7:00 p.m. Wine In Proverbs
8:00 p.m. Abominations in Proverbs

Sam Wilcutt
Barry Gilreath, Jr.
Gary McDade
Wayne Jones
Steve Yeatts
Tish Clarke

Michael McDaniel
Garland Elkins

Thursday, August 7th

9:00 a.m. The Merry Heart In Proverbs
10:00 a.m. The Wicked Man In Proverbs
11:00 a.m. Reward vs. Punishment in Proverbs
1:00 p.m. How To Treat Our Friends And Enemies
2:00 p.m. Kings/Rulers In Proverbs
2:00 p.m. Ladies Class: "The Virtuous Woman" (Prov. 31)
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8:00 P.M. The Need to Continually Emphasize the Restoration Plea B. J. Clarke

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2003

9:00 A.M. The Early Restorers Contended with Denominationalism Michael Light
10:00 A.M. The Early Restorers Contended with Calvinism Lynn Parker
11:00 A.M. Barton W. Stone Contending with Error Russell M. Kline
12:00 P.M. **LUNCH - Provided at Cane Ridge**
1:30 P.M. "The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery" Paul Vaughn
2:30 P.M. Attitudes Necessary For The Restoration of New Testament Christianity Steve Johnson
3:30 P.M. The Influence of the American Christian Missionary Society Jerry Murrell

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2003

*10:00 A.M. How Error Captured The College of The Bible Danny Douglas
*11:00 A.M. The Restoration Plea Glorifies God Everett Donaldson
3:00 P.M. The Need For Christians to Stand Firm in The Faith Bobby Liddell

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"Wearied with the works and doctrines of men, and distrustful of their influence, I made the Bible my constant companion. I honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully sought for truth, determined to buy it at all the sacrifice of everything."—Barton W. Stone

SISTER MARIE CHOATE

Wayne Coats

Myriad of hearts were made heavy and eyes were bedimmed with tears due to the demise of our beloved sister **Marie Choate**, age 86, wife and companion of brother **J. E. Choate, Jr.** Sister Choate had been battling cancer for some time and seemingly had improved. About two months ago she began a downward slide. She was too weak and frail to undergo more chemotherapy. With brother Choate by her side, she slipped silently and easily across times side of eternity on Friday, May 30, 2003. Visitation with the family was Sunday afternoon, 2:00 to 8:00 PM, at Woodbine Funeral Home Hickory Chapel in Nashville, TN. Funeral services were at 2:00 PM, Monday, June 2, 2003 at the Oak Grove Church of Christ in South Fulton, TN, with **Wendell Byrd** and **Robert Crittenton** officiating. Interment was in Oak Grove Cemetery.

Brother and sister Choate entwined their hearts and enlarged their love for one another as husband and wife for seventy years. To that marvelous union two children were born. In addition to her husband, Dr. J. E. Choate, she is also survived by a son, **Jerry Choate** of Louisiana, a daughter, **Dr. Teresa Choate** of New Jersey, a sister, **Jo Smelser** of Nashville, and two grandchildren, **Allison Odle** and **Angela Youngberg**.

During the past few years I have occasionally stopped by for very brief visits to see how sister Choate was progressing. I was always deeply impressed with the tender loving care of Dr. Choate for his good wife. In recent months he has told me that he had to put aside his pen in order to care for his beloved. Thousands have profited, not only by his preaching, but by the writings from the facile pen of brother Choate. Sister Choate was always happy to be the "help-meet" for her illustrious husband as he fulfilled his job as a college professor and as he preached for various congregations. One of her great specialties was baking the most delicious rolls one could imagine. I cherish the memory of the hospitality of brother and sister Choate. Our genuine sympathy is extended to brother Choate in his great loss. I feel sure a note of concern and sympathy sent to him would be deeply appreciated. His address: Dr. J. E. Choate, Jr., 3714 1/2 Belmont Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37215.

—705 Hillview
Mt. Juliet, Tennessee 27122

SHENENDOAH CHURCH BUILDING BURNS

Dub Mowery

A fire set by arsonist (s) early Saturday morning of June 14th severely damaged the meetinghouse for the Shenandoah church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas. Damage to their building is estimated to be about a quarter of a million dollars. **Arson Captain Art Villarreal** said, "Within the last six weeks there have been approximately eight fires at churches." The method of setting the fires seems to be with Molotov cocktails (a crude bomb made of a bottle filled with a flammable liquid, such as gasoline, and usually fitted with a wick or a saturated rag that is ignited just before the bottle is thrown).

Don Walker is the preacher for the church. Its mailing address is **11026 Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, Texas 78230**.

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BE THERE

Annette B. Cates

A popular phrase that has come into our language in recent years is "be there" as used in "I will be there for you." The best way I can think of to define it is to be an encouragement to another person(s) when the way is rough. Obviously, it is more than lending one's physical presence. It includes remembering that person through prayer and in doing all we can to help in that time of need. James tells us there is no profit in telling someone, "**be ye warmed and filled,**" then going our way doing nothing about the situation (James 2:14-16). While there are infinite numbers of people for whom Christians should "be there," the focus of this article is on our fellow members of the church.

We should "be there" for our leaders and for our prospective leaders. It is serious business when we select those who lead our congregations, whether that leader is the preacher, teacher, elder or deacon. Just one person "off the beam" can destroy an otherwise great work for the Lord. God told Moses to encourage



Joshua in order to strengthen him in his leadership of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 3:28). Josiah encouraged the priests in their service of the house of the Lord (I

Chronicles 35:2). We encourage our leaders through our respect, our prayers, and our willingness to serve wherever we are needed. This level of being there includes preparing our young people to desire to be the kind of leaders and followers that would be pleasing to God. It is impossible to lead if there are no followers. It is impossible to lead if everyone takes off on a tangent of his own, and will not get behind the work. I well remember a young woman who was half of a trouble-making couple. She made the statement that she never had believed in going through channels. Such an attitude will not succeed in the secular world, and has no place in the work of the Lord. We must "be there," holding up the hands of our leaders in their good works.

We should "be there" for new converts and for those in need of strengthening. Just as children are not born full grown, those who have recently obeyed the gospel are not yet full grown in the faith. The Bible speaks of them as being newborn babes in need of the milk of the word in order that they may grow (I Peter 2:2). It takes time to grow a strong Christian. Those who are new to the Kingdom, or who have not been as strong as they should have been, need to be involved in the congregation, both through fellowship and through work opportunities. They cannot be left on the outside. If they are, more than likely they will be lost to the cause. Further, they need to be treated gently, not with

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harsh criticism, as they mature. For many, the Christian life is a world far away from what they have known. If we do not fill the void left at the time of conversion, the world will come back in full force (Matthew 12:43-45). Jesus prayed for Simon Peter, that his faith would not fail him, then that Peter would be a strength to his brethren (Luke 22:32). Should we not do likewise for those who are growing in Christ? We must "be there" for those who are tender in the faith, teaching and entreating them with love, wisdom and care.

We should "be there" for those who are discouraged. Many things can rise up to discourage the Christian. Someone has accurately said that into every life some rain must fall. While discouragement may be in the form of the obvious, such as illness or bereavement, there are also trials that others never notice. Therefore, it never hurts to greet others with a smile and an up-lifting word. A word of thanks for those who serve, especially in areas that are behind the scenes, will boost that person and let him/her know the work is appreciated. There are those who are lonely but are

lacking in the social skills necessary to make friends. They would welcome some attention from fellow Christians. Solomon wrote of the one with a heavy heart, whose heart is made glad because of a good word (Proverbs 12:25). Isaiah knew the importance of speaking a word in season to him that is weary (Isaiah 50:4). Our God **"comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"** (II Corinthians 1:4). Yes, we must "be there" for those who are discouraged.

There are needs all around us, always have been and always will be (Matthew 26:11). As Christians, we have an obligation to relieve the suffering of others as much as we can. While doing so, however, let us not forget those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We need one another in order to strengthen our bond together. Let us "be there."

—9194 Lakeside Dr.
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The Last Word...

Identifying False Teachers

Kent Bailey

Some of the most stringent warnings set forth in the scriptures deal with the reality of those teaching concepts in opposition to God's revealed truth. In Matthew 7:15-20 our Lord noted:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

A study of this particular passage denotes a divine warning concerning the reality of both false teachers and false teaching in descriptive language. As we note the words used by Christ, the specific and intended message to be received indicates the seriousness and obviously fatal outcome of both teaching and accepting false religious concepts. Note in particular that our Lord referred to false teachers as "ravening wolves" indicating just how dangerous they really are. The question has been raised by some, **"What about the unin-**

tentional teaching of error?"

While indeed not all mistaken views regarding the scriptures necessarily lead one into sin, a great many do and must be opposed with all of our might. Just because one may be sincere does not change the consequences of his action. Will the sincerity and unintentional action of one engaged in agriculture in the planting of a corrupt tree produce good and wholesome fruit? The words of Christ give clear meaning to the situation. One may be sincerely wrong; however one's sincerity does not change the fact that one is wrong, and the outcome remains just as fatal as if one knew better and acted out of rebellion! If such is not the case, then why did Christ state:

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).

It is indeed possible for one to be blinded by the teaching of fatal error and not only lose his own soul,



but also lead others astray as well. Just because one is blind does not eliminate the danger of falling into the ditch! Again, sincerity does not change the consequences of following fatal error.

With regards to the affirmation of fatal error, Paul was inspired to write the following:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ 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).

In this particular passage we note the term *mark*. This word is translated from the Koine Greek term *skopeo* which is defined as meaning "to look at, behold, contemplate, or watch." The noun form *skopos* is used in Philippians 3:14 as a "mark on which to fix the eyes." In Romans 16:17-18 we are instructed to take note of, watch, and/or fix our eyes on false teachers. If we do not identify false teachers by name and fail to specify the heresy that they advocate, we will never obey the divine instructions of Romans 16:17-18.

In seeking to escape the force of this divine requirement, compromisers unsuccessfully attempt to argue that such a course is both unloving and unbecoming the spirit of Christ. However, Jesus Christ did the very thing that the religious politicians among us seek

to condemn (Matthew 23). They end up seeking to array Jesus against Paul, which only demonstrates how hard pressed they are to prove their case. Is it any wonder that such a false position is the spawning ground for a total repudiation of being set for the defense of God's truth?

Others seek to evade their responsibility by attempting to limit Romans 16:17-18 to individuals who bind their opinions in the elevation of them as matters of law. Indeed such would be included in such a classification, however the immediate context of the passage does not identify any particular false doctrine and therefore does not limit our identification of false teachers to those who bind where God has not bound. The passage applies equally to those who loose from God's requirements also.

The scriptures do require that we be both honest and fair in dealing with all of humanity. Certainly we must always have proper evidence before any individual is identified as a false teacher. However, regardless of the facts before us, there will always be religious politicians desiring to play both sides of the issues and always bring pseudo-charges against faithful defenders as being mean spirited Pharisees because of their love for God's truth, the church, and lost souls.

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Directory of Churches...

-Alabama-

Holly Pond-Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026.

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

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

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW Cartersville, GA 30120-4222. (770) 382-6775. E-mail: bdgayton@juno.com. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist.

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

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

-Missouri-

Farmington-Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, Sunday: 10:00, 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (573) 756-5925.

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, (919) 977-7556.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (409) 438-8202.

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Wyoming-

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

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FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

SPREADING AND DEFENDING THE GOSPEL

David P. Brown

From time to time our readers inquire about my schedule and work outside of the pages of *CFTF*. I, therefore, thought it good to make the following information available on the pages of this paper. Except for some alterations the following news appeared in my most recent issue of *THE BROWN REPORT*. This is the name of my newsletter through which I report on my work to my supporters. A number of the subscribers to *CFTF* receive this newsletter. However, most of you do not receive it.

IF THE LORD WILL WE DO THIS OR THAT

I had planned two trips overseas for the Spring of 2003: one trip to Murmansk, Russia and the other to Manila, Philippines. The time that I had planned to be in Russia was during the war with Iraq. Thus, I planned a later trip. I also canceled my trip to the Metro Manila School of Preaching where I was to teach a seminar and speak at their graduation in May. Because of the SAARS epidemic and some fighting going on with Muslims around Manila, I decided this was not the best time for me to travel to the Philippines.

During the last week of February 2003 we conducted the *Spring Bible Institute Lectures*. This year's theme was "Islam—From God or Man." The attendance was good with several non-members including some Muslims in attendance. The book was sold out only a week after the lectures ended. And now the sec-

ond printing is half gone. Our 2004 lecture theme is "Judaism—From God or Man." The dates are February 22-25. Why not make your plans to be with us?

In March and early April my wife, **Joann**, and I attended and I spoke on the *Memphis School of Preaching Lectures*. I was also invited to speak at the annual MSOP banquet held each year on Tuesday night of the lectures. We always enjoy attending the lectures and appreciate the invitations to speak on two occasions this year.

In April I preached in two gospel meetings—Stephenville, Texas, where **Geoff Litke** preaches and Chalmette, Louisiana, where **Mark Lance** is the local preacher. In May I preached in the *West Visalia Church of Christ Lectures*, Visalia, California where **Sean Hochdorf** has recently started preaching. Following the Visalia lectures I preached in a gospel meeting in Lenoir City, Tennessee where **Kent Bailey** preaches. Following the Spring Bible Institute's graduation ceremonies on May 18, my wife and I traveled to Pensacola, Florida where I spoke on the *Bellview Church of Christ Lectures* held June 6-11. **Michael Hatcher** is the local preacher and director of the Bellview Lectures.

Yes, all of this activity along with the work at Spring as well as teaching the book of Jeremiah for *OABS (Online Academy of Biblical Studies)* on each Saturday over the Internet from January through May.

(Continued on Page 5)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

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

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

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

EDITORIAL...

LUKE 18:18-25

Among other things these verses tell us of a man whom the savior could not save. It was not because Jesus did not love him, for Mark's account tells us Jesus did love him (Mark 10:21). Also, it was not because our Lord lacked the power to save him, for John states Christ had the power to save man (John 17:2). The problem was in the man who needed salvation. The young man had declared his obedience in certain areas of his life. However, the divine record reveals the young man was not willing for Christ to exercise authority over all areas of his life. Thus, we see this young man lacking in one thing—he rejected the authority of Christ over a certain area of his life. Having rejected the authority of our Lord in that one area of his life, the love of Jesus Christ for and the power of Christ to save him could not attain to that end. How so many today need to learn this tremendous lesson!

BECOMING GUILTY OF ALL

Among other things, we may deduce from the information provided in the sacred text that submission to God's word in many areas does not provide one with license to set it aside in even one area. As James wrote, "**For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all**" (James 2:10). The meaning of James is this, when one article of a body of law is transgressed, the whole body of law condemns the transgressor.

To illustrate: If we are confined to a room with four doorways, one is not compelled to exit all the doorways before one is outside the confines of the room. To leave by one doorway places one outside of the room and one is, therefore, outside of the whole room. This is not only the nature of leaving such a room but also what happens when one violates one article in a body of law. The whole body of law condemns the person who violates only one principle of it. Thus, the young ruler of our text stood outside Christ's love and power to save him because he would not submit to the entirety of the Lord's requirements.

POINTS TO SERIOUSLY PONDER

The following points are other much needed lessons deduced from this passage of scripture. (1) Deeds

done by sincere people, but done without the authority of God's word, can never be deeds of love. (2) No level of love or "spiritual plane" ever transcends our submission to the authority of God's word and the letter of his law. (3) To live outside the authority of God's word is to live outside the power of his love (II John 9). To emphasize point three note the Bible's teaching on this point. **"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."** **"For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments..."** (I John 2:5; 5:3). It is no wonder Paul concluded all that really matters is **"keeping of the commandments of God"** (I Corinthians 7:19; See Ecclesiastes 12:13). And, thus he charged Timothy to **"keep this commandment without spot unrebukable..."** (I Timothy 6:14). To the Colossians Paul declared the need for all persons to operate within the confines of Christ's authoritative will (Colossians 3:17). Indeed, Jesus clearly stated the proof of one's love for him is one's obedience to him (John 14:15). The same thing is true regarding faith—the faith that saves is the faith that obeys (Hebrews 5:9; James 2:24, 26).

—David P. Brown, Editor-in-Chief

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In This Issue...

Spreading and Defending the Gospel David P. Brown	1
<i>Editorial...</i> Luke 18:18-25 David P. Brown	2
<i>Assistant Editorial...</i> "Choices" Michael Light	4
Bible Versus Feeling Brock Hartswigsen	7
When Textual Criticism Joins Forces With Destructive Criticism Darrell Broking	8
Satan is an "Incrementalist" Geoff Litke	9
"Bruce Amighty" — Innocent Fun Or A Blasphemous Attack Against the God of Heaven? Steven E. Yeatts	10
Too Many Chilies In New Mexico Roelf L. Ruffner	13
<i>Restoration Reflections...</i> John Smith-From Calvinism to Christianity Paul Vaughn	14
<i>Current Events that Concern Christians...</i> The Supreme Court Has Taken Sides in the Culture Wars Jerry Murrell	16
<i>One Woman's Perspective...</i> The Righteous Chase Annette B. Cates	18
<i>Sermon Outlines...</i> David and Bathsheba Tom Moore	19
<i>The Last Word...</i> A Bridge to Apostasy Kent Bailey	21

"CHOICES"

A couple of years ago **George Jones** sang a song entitled "Choices." The first time I heard it I wrote a sermon on the back of a piece of scrap paper. The theme of the song struck me as being obviously true and worthy of comment. Jones was looking back over his life and bemoaning bad decisions he had made as well as good advice he had ignored. No doubt the song touches on a universal truth.

Our entire life can be summed up in one sentence. When you boil it down your existence on this earth really all adds up to just one thing. **Our life is the collection of the results of all the decisions that we have made or will make.** That is it. If God grants us five minutes of reflection just prior to our death, this is what we would recall. Since this is true, we must be very careful when it comes to life-altering decisions. Let us look at a few decisions that will affect our lives both here on earth and in the life to come.

WE MUST CHOOSE OUR GOD

In Joshua 24:15 we find:

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.

As Joshua did we too must choose our God. In our land many serve the God of Mammon (Matthew 6:24). This love of money is vain and will bring heartache to those who serve it (I Timothy 6:6-10). Why oh why do we refuse to see the emptiness of financial gain without God? Like the rich man of Luke 12, many fools will learn the hard way of the fleeting nature of material wealth.

OTHERS ARE TOO INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT OF ENTERTAINMENT

As a wealthy nation all of us have expendable income. Many get so caught up in their hobbies that they forget God. An over involvement in fun and games can blind us to the brevity of life (James 4:13-17). When we add to this the fact that many of the world's enticing forms of entertainment are carnal and ungodly, the danger is magnified (I John 2:15,17). It is hard to fathom how some brethren will watch and listen to filth and all manner of immorality and still deceive themselves into thinking they are right with God. If God is

not first in our lives, then in truth he is not in them at all.

SOME PEOPLE WILL PUT THEIR FAMILIES BEFORE GOD

It is not all that uncommon for a preacher or an eldership to run across members who will not do what is right when it comes to their flesh and blood. In Matthew 10:34-38 we read:

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 a daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be 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. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me.

In this text Jesus makes it plain that he must come first. It is sad indeed to witness people who will not receive warnings concerning their children, spouse or other family members. This is a danger for us all. I suppose we all have a built in blind spot when it comes to our kin, but we must strive to keep God first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).

THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO SIMPLY REFUSE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Perhaps apathy is the most common problem when it comes to choosing to serve God. There are multitudes of people who simply have no position or inclination when it comes to God and his word. But the Lord does not allow us to remain neutral in the realm of religion. In Matthew 12:30 we read, "**He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.**" A failure to submit to him and his word is a sure way to doom and destruction (Acts 4:12).

No generation in recent history has been as biblically ignorant as the one in which we now live. The great tragedy of this fact is the certainty of hell for those who are without knowledge of God's word (Romans 10:1-3). In Hosea 4:6 the great prophet of old decried the misery of being biblically ignorant. He stressed the fact that if we reject God's word God will in turn will reject us. Once we realize this fact, the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:7 are far more meaning-

ful. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

CONCLUSION

We must do our best to show the power of God's word in our lives (Matthew 5:16). We must teach the

whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). We must do our best to get men and women to realize the seriousness and the enormity of the effect some of life's decisions will have on us.

—Michael Light, Assistant Editor

Spreading and Defending...

(Continued from Page 1)

Of course, with the August issue we have put out eight issues of *Contending for the Faith* as well as written several manuscripts for future lectureships.

FUTURE EVANGELISM TRIPS

This is the morning of July 10 and I am writing these words just a few hours before my wife, and I leave for Russia via Finland. In Helsinki, Finland we are to meet the **Billy Blands** and the **Timothy Wilkes**. Over the next two weeks along with Bland and Wilkes I will be teaching Hebrew History II in the Memphis School of Preaching extension in Murmansk, Russia where **Cliff Lyons** is the director, and preaching in gospel meetings.

Following that work we plan to fly to Moscow where, after a night's rest, we are to board a train for a three-hour trip to Kaluga, Russia. This is a city of about 400,000 people. The church does not exist in Kaluga. We intend to start it. Advertisements for the meeting should have been run in the local paper and a hall rented by now in which hall we intend to preach. This will also afford us an opportunity to visit and encourage a sister in Christ who was converted some years ago in Murmansk and has since moved to Kaluga following her husband's retirement. He is not a Christian but is friendly to the church. Please keep this effort in your prayers.

The Lord willing, on our return from Russia I will be speaking in the *Power Lectures* at the Southaven Church of Christ, Southaven, Mississippi (August 3-7). **B. J. Clarke** is the local preacher and director of the lectures. From August 24-27 I am also scheduled to preach a gospel meeting in Point Comfort, Texas. September 7-10 are the dates for the Spring Church of Christ's gospel meeting with **Michael Light** doing the preaching. I am scheduled to speak in the lectures held at New Braunfels, Texas Sept. 26-28. **Lynn Parker** is the preacher for the Northside Church of Christ and director of the *Northside Church of Christ Lectures* (See the Northside Lectureship advertisement in this issue of *CFTF*). The Parker family is presently supported

by the Spring congregation.

FIRST ANNUAL CFTF LECTURES

From October 3-5 we will conduct our first *Contending for the Faith Lectures* at the old Cain Ridge meetinghouse, Bourbon County, Kentucky. **Paul Vaughn** and I co-direct these lectures. Please note the advertisement for the lectures in this issue of *CFTF*. Make your plans to be with us in our first effort to have a *CFTF* lectureship.

THIRD ANNUAL PREACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD LECTURES

On October 9 we plan to leave for the third annual *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God Lectures* in England, directed by **Keith Sisman** (England) and **Gary Grizzell** (U. S.). This year's theme is "God's Plan For The Home." The lectures will be held in Hinchingsbrooke House, Cambridgeshire, England on Saturday, October 11. This house is the ancestral home of **Oliver Cromwell**. The speakers are from Australia, the United States, and England. You may contact Keith Sisman at his telephone number 01487-710552, his fax number: 01487-813264, or his email address sisman@enterprise.net. The web address for the lectures is www.The-English-Lectures.org. Gary Grizzell may be contacted at (931) 432-6984 or by email at tracts@charter.net. Visit the website for the England lectures and plan on being with us.

Following the trip to England, I am scheduled to speak in a gospel meeting in Burkburnett, Texas on October 26-29 where **Steve Wiggins** works as the gospel preacher. On the weekend of November 7, I am to speak on two lectureships—the Bethlehem Church of Christ's lectures, Murfreesboro, Tennessee where **Steve Yeatts** presently preaches and the East Side Church of Christ's lectures, Muskogee, Oklahoma where **Preston Silcox** preaches. I am scheduled to speak in the Schertz, Texas Lectures (formally the Denton Lectures). The dates for the Schertz Lec-

BELIEF VERSUS FEELINGS

Brock Hartwigen

We live in a society that is turning its back on belief and more and more relying on feelings. Although feelings and belief have similarities, they have one major difference. When it comes to the similarities, they both are a state of mind. A person either believes or feels that something is correct or should be done. This belief or feeling is a state of mind. Also, if the beliefs or feelings are strong enough, each can serve as a guide for action. People say or do things based on what they believe or feel.

They differ, however, on the direction they point. Belief points outward to some external, objective evidence for its basis, while feelings point inward (they are subjective) to some emotion for its basis. Belief is based on evidence that can be examined. Feelings are based on hunches that cannot be examined. Belief should be logical and reasoned since the external evidences can be examined and weighed. Feelings, however, cannot be logical or reasoned since hunches cannot be examined or weighed.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with making some decisions on feelings. When it comes to minor things that have no long-lasting negative significance, then following one's feelings is not necessarily wrong. Even if it is wrong, since it will not necessarily have a lasting negative effect, it does not really matter. A person might feel like trying something new and thus order something he has never tried before in restaurant. One might like it. One might not like it. It does not really matter. All it cost the person was a few dollars. But, when it comes to decisions that can have a lasting effect, especially an eternally lasting effect, we need to base our decisions on more than feelings. We need belief. We need objective absolute outside evidence that can be examined.

Contrary to modern man's practice, religion is not to be feeling based. It should be belief based. Feelings come from within a man and God stated that He knows that **"the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"** (Jeremiah 10:23). Feeling based religion is exactly the opposite of what God knows. Feeling based religion is man directing his own steps from within himself.

Christianity is belief based not feeling based. John 3:16 clearly states, **"that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,"** not "feeleth" but "believeth." Jesus clearly stated in the great commission **"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"** (Mark 16:16), not "feeleth" but "believeth". The Christian faith is not based on internal feelings, but on external evidences, i.e., God's word. Regarding an absolute objective standard as the basis for one's faith, please consider the following two scriptures.

Romans 10:17: **"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."**

John 20:31: **"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ."**

Feelings are blind. In the first Star Wars movies, Obi-Won-Kenobi tells Luke Skywalker to ignore the evidence of his eyes and to trust his feelings. There is a scene where Luke is using a light-saber and sparing with a mechanical floating ball. He could not defend himself with the light-saber until he puts on a helmet that blinded him. Then, trusting his feelings, he was able to deflect the floating ball's attacks—this makes for good fantasy fiction. But, it is exactly that – fantasy and fiction. When it comes to trusting our blind feelings (and feelings are blind), we need to remember the warning issued by Jesus. **"And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch"** (Matthew 15:14).

When it comes to decisions that can have an eternal effect on our souls, then we need to ignore our feelings and trust God's inspired word. It does not matter how we may feel about something. Wherein God has spoken we must follow his instruction whether it feels right to us or not.

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*"Many folks want to serve God,
but only as advisors."*

When Textual Criticism Joins Forces With Destructive Criticism

Darrell Broking

Because of destructive criticism and scholarly opinion, textual criticism is undergoing a metamorphic transformation that will be enjoyed by many who love not the truth of God's word. Jesus once said, "**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). Eclectic critics, generally speaking, have abandoned the idea that the same words spoken by Jesus can be known.¹ The best that can be hoped for, they allege, is obtaining the text shaped by the early church community. **D. C. Parker** asserts, "The concept of a Gospel that is fixed in shape, authoritative, and final as a piece of literature has to be abandoned."² Furthermore, "material about Jesus was preserved in an interpretive rather than an exact fashion."³ Accordingly, the same word spoken by Jesus cannot be known, only what the early church thought was important enough to preserve. Thus, what was preserved was what the early church thought Jesus said, not what he actually said.

Where will this kind of teaching take its students? Consider a subject like marriage, divorce, and remarriage. How will preachers and teachers who believe the source/form theories of the gospel accounts handle this issue? This question is pertinent inasmuch as theories like Parker's are gaining prominence. Consider Parker's work on this subject:

Rather than looking for right and wrong readings, and with them for right or wrong beliefs and practices, the way is open for the possibility that the church is the community of the Spirit even in its multiplicities of texts. . . . Indeed, we may suggest that it is not in spite of the verity but because of them that the church is that community.⁴

The church is the community of the Spirit? What Parker means is that the Bible is the product of the church! According to the aforementioned theory, when it comes to a teaching like marriage, divorce, and remarriage, "we find the sayings of Jesus on this subject had, as one might say, a life of their own."⁵ Since they had a life of their own "the people of God have to make up their own minds. There is no authoritative text to provide a short-cut."⁶ No wonder liberals view adultery as a non-issue, or as alleged in *Core Gospel Theology*, a peripheral or side issue.

DO PROFESSED MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE WAS SHAPED BY THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY?

On the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, **Duane Warden** of *Harding University* states, Assuming that Matthew had Mark's Gospel before him when he wrote, he made notable additions. First, he added "for any cause" to the question of the Pharisees. . . . Second, Matthew included, as he had in chapter 5, the exception clause⁷

Assuming? If the Bible student understands the import of II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:19-21, he will never assume that Matthew copied from Mark. Matthew was inspired of God and recorded the truth given to him by his source, the Holy Spirit! Make no mistake about it; many have abandoned what the Bible teaches about its inspiration.

Cukrowski, Hamilton, and Thompson allege that the use of the term "inerrancy" is not helpful to one's understanding of Biblical inspiration.⁸ After stating, "the gospels call attention to the core gospel story of divine grace manifested at Golgotha," this triad of critics alleged:

The earliest gospel is probably Mark, from which both Matthew and Luke drew material. As Chapter 2 pointed out, these three are called the Synoptics owing to their close resemblance to one another; John reflects a different perspective on the story of Jesus—again reflecting God's apparent love of diversity. Matthew and Luke follow Mark's basic outline, though they smooth out his rough-and-ready Greek, compress his episodes, and fill in some of the blanks he leaves. . . . (Mark 16:9-20 is a later addition not present in the earliest Greek manuscripts).

Matthew and Luke also share much material, especially sayings, that are not in Mark. Scholars often call this group of sayings "Q" from the German word for "source." Whatever the precise origins of this material, the gospel writers combined them into a coherent whole that bears witness to the power of the gospel in the ongoing life of the church.⁹

Notice how the authors reinvent God and make God after the image of man. This they allege when, in the context of how the accounts of the gospel were delivered, they say that God loves diversity. What happened to passages like I Corinthians 1:10; Romans 16:17; Jude 1:3; et al? When it comes to Biblical inspiration and inerrancy, God offers but one choice.

The Bible is either God's word, inerrant and plenary inspired, or it is the word of men. Cukrowski, Hamilton, and Thompson work to make the Bible a combination of the two to support their *Core Gospel Theology*. Yes, they allege that God used this method to deliver the Bible, just as liberals allege that God created this world through an evolutionary process. Since liberal textual critics and destructive higher critics work together for Satan's cause, the Bible is attacked in a significant and damaging way. The end result of this process is a people without any clear and authoritative standard of guidance in religion.

ENDNOTES

1. Caution needs to be exercised when discussing eclectic criti-

cism. Although not all eclectics hold this view, it does represent the general consensus of today's eclectic critics. Historical-documentary critics are generally supportive of Biblical inspiration.

2. D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 93.

3. *Ibid.*, 15.

4. *Ibid.*, 212.

5. *ibid.*, 94.

6. *Ibid.*, 212.

7. Duane Warden, "The Words of Jesus on Divorce," *Restoration Quarterly* 39 (1997), 145.

8. Kenneth L. Cukrowski, Mark W. Hamilton, and James W. Thompson, *God's Holy Fire the Nature and Function of Scripture*, (Abilene: ACU Press, 2002), 39.

9. *Ibid.*, 109.

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SATAN IS AN "INCREMENTALIST"

Geoff Litke

Paul warned the Corinthians about their actions lest Satan gain an advantage over them. In doing so he declared, "**we are not ignorant of his devices**" (II Corinthians 2:11). Christians ought not to be naïve about the way that Satan works. The scriptures teach the children of God to, "**Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**" (Ephesians 6:11). The word Paul used for "wiles" is from the Greek word *methodeia*. Anyone can clearly see the connection to the English word "method". The children of God know Satan's methods and devices. Throughout the Bible, God revealed the various ways that Satan works. He works through lies (John 8:44; Genesis 3:1-5) that are always and only propagated by wicked men (John 13:3; Ephesians 4:27; I Timothy 4:1). Nevertheless, knowing these methods has only helped minimally. Satan has gained advantage at the expense of the ignorance of God's people.

God's children have a long history of forgetfulness (Jeremiah 2:32). In this way Satan has time after time been allowed to cause trouble among God's people. Whereas mankind is impetuous, Satan is quite patient. He was content to work for generations to ensnare the people of the land (Judges 2:7-10). About a generation ago things about which faithful members of the Lord's church were warning their brethren were dismissed and ignored because they "aren't any trouble here" or "we are sound and don't have that problem," but when the barking of the "watch dogs" were ignored the foxes moved in.

"CHANGE BY DEGREES"

Incrementalism is a policy or advocacy of a policy of political or social change by degrees (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed.). The same thing could be said about change in religious matters. Doctrines that were once thought settled will inevitably "re-clothe" themselves. The saddest thing is that those who teach against them have been, are, and will be labeled as ones who beat dead horses and refuse to let things die. Those who are concerned are labeled as "living in the past" and "airing out dirty laundry".

Once, the majority of Christians agreed that the Holy Spirit worked only through God's word, and never separate and apart from it (or in conjunction with, in concert with, alongside of or any other verbal gymnastics one can do to get a direct "zap" of power, wisdom or strength from the Holy Spirit to and on the mind or spirit of the Christian). The unity on these views was rarely (if ever) taught or thought to exclude God's providential works which continue today or the miracles limited to the first century. Thus the majority stood united against the errors of Calvinism and Pentecostalism, but now many brothers embrace and preach that the Holy Spirit operates directly on the inward man of the Christian. That is palpably false (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Luke 8:11).

At one time Christians understood the difference between evangelism towards those lost in denominationalism and fellowship with denominations, but now it is common for "Churches of Christ" to plan, partici-

pate, and fellowship with denominations—and their motives are AT BEST unclear (Ephesians 5:11). Modernism was warned against extensively in the '60's and '70's, but ignored by many "sound" churches because it was only something occurring in extremely "progressive" churches (churches that digress from the truth, II John 9). However, now it is difficult to find folks not heavily influenced with the fundamental idea that truth is subjective (to some degree – most still do not realize they are affected). Many accept as fact the perverse and heinous teachings that the writers of the Gospel needed "source material" and that many "redactors" (rewriters) participated in composing today's Bibles, as well as canonicity being "determined" hundreds of years after the apostles died. Now these very views are pouring forth from pulpits. Indeed, Satan has accomplished much by being patient.

"THIS MEANS YOU"

The only question is this, "Where will it stop?" Only we can answer that question. Each Christian is responsible for continually preaching the word and defending the faith (I Timothy 4:2; Jude 3) And, we must not allow the passing of time to make us complacent. As the faithful apostle Paul was so we must be zealous and jealous for the purity of the body of Christ. The peerless apostle to the Gentiles wrote,

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (II Corinthians 11:2-3).

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"Bruce Almighty"— Innocent Fun Or A Blasphemous Attack Against The God Of Heaven?

Steven E. Yeatts

Hollywood never seems to grow weary of reaching for even greater depths of blasphemy and vicious attacks on Christian values and principles. The garbage masquerading as "art" that is produced annually by iconoclastic directors, producers, and actors is an abomination to the God of heaven. One of the latest entries from the sacrilegious swamp known as Hollywood is a blasphemous film entitled, *Bruce Almighty*. This film capped off the Memorial Day weekend as the number one movie in America, *earning \$86.4 million in its opening weekend*. I have read and heard (and seen) several reviews regarding this movie, most by purely secular sources (e. g., **Roger Ebert**), but also including one by a "religious" reviewer. The premise for the movie is that a frustrated local television reporter, Bruce Nolan (played by **Jim Carey**), in Buffalo becomes angry at God because the reporter has failed in his efforts to become the news anchor at the local television station. In his anger at God, reporter Nolan vehemently blames God for failing him. Later, God appears in the form of actor **Morgan Freeman**, a man in a white suit. The premise further develops that since Bruce Nolan is so dissatisfied with the job that God is doing, God gives him control of the universe for a day.

Are you anxious to see it yet? The "humor" of

course is that Bruce Nolan uses the powers he is granted in a purely selfish and abusive way. In fact, the movie trailer that has been advertised on TV shows a scene where the Bruce Nolan character (remember he has allegedly been granted his powers from God) causes a woman's dress to fly above her waist, to which the Bruce Nolan character says, "*and he saw that it was good*" (obviously a blasphemous take on the Creation statements made by God (Elohim) regarding his handiwork (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)). Could this indecent and blasphemous attack against the Righteous God possibly be funny for a child of God to view? Paul told the Ephesians, "**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret**" (Ephesians 5:11-12). I certainly believe that this kind of trash would fit into the category of that which finds its source in worldly darkness and that which is shameful (indecent). Bruce Almighty is rated PG-13, so numerous children (whose parents lack control and common sense) will see this movie and will come away with a gross misperception of and disrespect for Almighty God. On Hollywood's movie rating scale, apparently foul language and sexual innuendo are totally appropri-

ate for those of at least 13 years of age. Not so, saith the scripture! Christian youth are told to be examples “of the believers in word, in manner of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Timothy 4:12, ASV 1901). The charge is no different for Christian adults either (II Corinthians 6:14-18, et al.).

Admittedly, it has become more and more difficult for a Christian to naively support the Hollywood movie industry. The majority of movies (in some cases including PG movies) contain inappropriate language, sexual situations, raunchy humor, nudity, and blasphemous references to God and his son. I recently purchased a DVD player that has *TV Guardian* built in that will read the closed-captioning on the DVD and automatically mute out any inappropriate references and replace them with inoffensive words. This is a good tool, but of course, the TV Guardian will not remove scenes involving sexual suggestiveness or nudity, so serious caution must still be used when choosing to watch any movie.

Christian parents must know what movies their children are watching and renting. Conscientious parents must control the movie-viewing habits of not only their children, but also of themselves, being mindful of influence and example. Thankfully, for those who are so inclined, there are alternatives to Hollywood that can be enjoyable for families and not harmful. There is a website www.familytimemovies.com from which mainstream Hollywood movies can be ordered that have been strictly edited, removing all objectionable content. Also, there is *Feature Films for Families*, a

company that produces movies containing wholesome storylines and teaching at least basically moral principles to our children. As children of God we have an obligation to be acutely aware of what our families see and hear. If we have allowed bad habits to develop in our movie-viewing tastes, then we need to make a change for the better. I know there are movies I wish I had never seen. Unfortunately, in regard to inappropriate movies that we view, the visual images and/or offensive language stays in our minds a long time after the fact. As Christians we are told to think on the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of a good report (Philippians 4:8). It is difficult to think on such spiritually-minded things when we are absorbing that which is detrimental to our souls. Let us strive to be consistent in our Christian comportment and to walk worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1). Would we go see Bruce Almighty with our Saviour seated beside us? Well, wherever we go and whatever we do, he is there also (Hebrews 3:5). It is not that we cannot appreciate comedy and enjoy a good laugh or that as Christians we have to be uptight, but would it be worth it spiritually to get our laughs in a movie that mocks the God of heaven and his son, our Saviour Jesus Christ? Think on these things before you purchase your next movie ticket or rent your next movie.

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7:00 P.M.	Is The Restoration Principle Scriptural?	David P. Brown
8:00 P.M.	The Need to Continually Emphasize the Restoration Plea	B. J. Clarke

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2003

9:00 A.M.	The Early Restorers Contended with Denominationalism	Michael Light
10:00 A.M.	The Early Restorers Contended with Calvinism	Lynn Parker
11:00 A.M.	Barton W. Stone Contending with Error	Russell M. Kline
12:00 P.M.	LUNCH - Provided at Cane Ridge	
1:30 P.M.	"The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery"	Paul Vaughn
2:30 P.M.	Attitudes Necessary For The Restoration of New Testament Christianity	Steve Johnson
3:30 P.M.	The Influence of the American Christian Missionary Society	Jerry Murrell

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2003

*10:00 A.M.	How Error Captured The College of The Bible	Danny Douglas
*11:00 A.M.	The Restoration Plea Glorifies God	Everett Donaldson
3:00 P.M.	The Need For Christians to Stand Firm in The Faith	Bobby Liddell

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2003

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"Wearied with the works and doctrines of men, and distrustful of their influence, I made the Bible my constant companion. I honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully sought for truth, determined to buy it at all the sacrifice of everything."—Barton W. Stone

TOO MANY CHILIES IN NEW MEXICO

Roelf L. Ruffner

As a Christian and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ it grieves me to no end to see the spread of liberalism in the Lord's body in the United States. This spiritual equivalent of the AIDS plague has swept through congregations leaving carcasses in its wake. Actually liberalism is nothing new. It is as old as Adam and Eve. It is quite simply rebellion against the word of God.

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).

Many are attracted to its siren song of subjectivism, cock-eyed hermeneutics and warmed up denominational doctrine. We are only now seeing the fruit of a generation of digression from the truth of the gospel.

In October of 2002 our congregation received an announcement from the University Church of Christ in Las Cruces, New Mexico, concerning "Chile Bowl 2003," scheduled for February 13, 2003. It was to be a Bible Bowl for young people followed by a performance by the singing group "Acappella". I was dismayed by their use of this group which has caused so many problems in the Lord's church. I decided to write a letter to the eldership of the University Church of Christ expressing my concern. The letter contained the following objections concerning the use of Acappella from the scriptures:

1. Acappella tries to imitate musical instruments with their voices which is unauthorized (Ephesians 5:19). It would be hypocritical for us to disavow mechanical instruments of music in worship yet allow their imitation.
2. Their concerts appeal more to the flesh than the spirit, with a lot of clapping, stomping, screaming and cheering by the audience. It certainly does not fulfill Paul's command that **"all things be done decently and in order"** (1 Corinthians 14:40).
3. Acappella conducts concerts for denominational groups, encouraging them and joining in fellowship with them. The Bible says the Christian should not fellowship denominations (Ephesians 5:11).
4. One of the founders of this group, **Keith Lancaster**, and his family divided the East Wood church of Christ in Paris, Tennessee in 1987 and started their own apostate church. The Bible says we should avoid those which cause division in the Lord's church (Romans 16:17).

I have sent out similar letters over the past several years, rarely receiving a response or at least one of substance. This is why I was surprised to receive a response from **Larry Hawkins** writing for the elders.

The following excerpt amazed me for its candor and ecclesiastical stubbornness:

Briefly stated, we feel that scripture taken in context gives no indication that God cares one way or the other about instruments of music. Our decision to not use instruments in our general assemblies is based on congregational preference and respect for the consciences of some of our members. You are correctly consistent in believing that if the instrument is wrong in one worship setting, then it is sinful in all worship settings. We believe that such uses are not sinful according to our understanding of scripture.

I was amazed by this response. Please notice the use of the subjective phrases "we feel" and "we believe". You mean that they cannot KNOW what the scriptures teach regarding the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship? Jesus said that **"ye shall know the truth"** (John 8:32). One can only surmise that they and their flock are headed for eternity on the sandy foundation of doubt (Matthew 7:26). Both the Greek scholar and the school boy can see that Paul's command for "singing" does not include "playing" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). And when is the singing of **"psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"** **"one to another"** (Colossians 3:16 -ASV) NOT in the context of worship? Are we ready to stand before Jesus Christ someday and say, concerning the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, "We're still studying that"? **"...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin"** (Romans 14:23).

Notice also that their decision NOT to use the instrument is based on "congregational preference". Let me see, shall we have blue or red carpet in the auditorium? Shall we burn incense in the worship service or not? Shall we use the piano or not? Why do we not just stick our finger in the air and see which way the wind is blowing? Certainly there are times when the congregation should be consulted on matters of individual preference, but the use of the instrument in worship of Jehovah is not one of them. This public relations mentality leads to apostasy. I am forced to conclude that the day will come when "congregational preference" (i.e., the objectors either move or die off) will swing the back door open to bring in the unauthorized. **"And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit"** (Matthew 15:14). As I read this pitiful excuse I thought of the old warriors for the Lord of yesteryear. Men such as **Ben Franklin, David Lipscomb**, and others who fought the valiant fight against the introduction of the organ into the worship assembly of the saints. With resolution lacking among many today they used the

“sword of the Spirit” together with the printed page and polemic platform to combat apostasy. By the world’s standards they were not successful, since a majority of brethren sided with the devil. But some stayed with New Testament Christianity and we are blessed today by their faithfulness and courage. It is amazing that almost one hundred-fifty years later we are again fighting the same battles. **“Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us”**(Ecclesiastes 1:10).

We must understand that “Acappella” and even the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship are only symptoms of a greater problem—a rebellious heart. The same folks who trusted the instrument in the Nineteenth Century went on to embrace Modernism and Ecumenism in the Twentieth Century. Rebellion against God knows no bounds. Its rejection of the authority of God’s word is self-perpetuating **“because**

they received not the love of the truth” (II Thessalonians 2:10).

And what must we do? As followers of Jesus Christ love compels us to write letters, make phone calls, and even personally plead with those who would pollute the “truth”(John 4:24) of the restored worship of God. The Master would do no less! And, if pleading and rebuking do not work, we must mark (“note” - NKJ) those who go against the doctrine of Christ and **“avoid them”**(Romans 16:17).

In the last of three letters to the University church elders I concluded with these words: “Again, brethren, I must admonish you to reconsider your decision to have this group perform. Souls are at stake, including your own”. Unfortunately, they did not.

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Restoration Reflections...

JOHN SMITH FROM CALVINISM TO CHRISTIANITY

Paul Vaughn

The creeds and doctrines in the religion received from one’s parents are very powerful moorings to cast away. There are untold numbers of people who would prefer eternity in the fires of hell than to reject the religious teachings of their parents. The early restorers in the Restoration of New Testament Christianity had to do that very thing if they desired to follow the Bible over the creeds in which they grew from children. **John Smith** was one of those hardy pioneers who blazed a trail to the Bible for the simplicity of God’s word over the traditions in which he was born and grew to manhood.

JOHN’S PARENTS

About 1735 **George Schmidt** with his German parents moved to Virginia and made their home near the head of James River. George was soon orphaned on the frontier of an unfamiliar land. He was then befriended by a **Colonel Buchanan**, a farmer of Botetourt County, Virginia. After a period of time he met and married **Rebecca Bowen**. George and Rebecca were very strong adherents to the Baptist Church and its Calvinist teaching. The only book in their home was the Bible, a collection of hymns and the Philadelphia Con-

fession of Faith. In the early years of their marriage the “Schmidt’s” changed their last name to the English “Smith.”

In spring of 1784 George Smith moved his family, which had grown to eight children, “westward to the valley of Holston.”¹ Holston was located during that time period in North Carolina. But by the summer of 1784 the area seceded from North Carolina forming the Commonwealth of Franklin, named after **Benjamin Franklin**, the statesman. It later became part of Tennessee. “In the autumn of 1784...John Smith was born, the ninth of thirteen children.”² Eleven years later in 1785 the Smith family moved to Stockton’s Valley, which is in present Clinton County, Kentucky.



OVERCOMING CALVINISM

When John Smith was about the age of twenty, he desired to be saved and follow God. He grieved often for a conversion experience, but the teaching of

Calvinism was a heavy burden on his shoulders that keep him from the simplicity of God's word. Isaac Denton, one of the Baptist preachers who influenced Smith, would say,

The sinner is utterly dead, so that he could not obey God if he would; and utterly depraved, too, so that he would not obey if he could. He reminded him that he could not please God without faith, nor have faith till it pleased God to give it; that though he might acknowledge, he could never truly feel his desperate wickedness till the Holy Spirit should show him how vile and wretched a thing he was.³

John Smith studied the scriptures and understood that he was a sinner, but there was the absence of a "Divine calling" or "experience" in his life. He had been taught, that without this experience he could not be converted. He was under the conviction of sin and Calvinism was a heavy obstacle that was not going to let him get rid of his sins until he had a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in his life. The experience did not come and this caused Smith an extreme amount of anguish.

John was determined to be a Christian. "On December 26, 1804, Smith appeared before the Baptist Church, made a simple statement of his religious struggles, and was voted into the Baptist Church."⁴ It would be a number of years before he would totally reject the doctrines of Calvinism and the Baptist Church.

FREEDOM FROM CALVINISM

The prospectus of the *Christian Baptist* was published on July 4, 1823 by Alexander Campbell. It was his desire to publish a monthly paper dedicated to the restoration of the "ancient order" given in the New Testament. The paper was soon circulated throughout the Baptist Church in Kentucky. "In fact, Jeremiah Vardeman, whose word at that time was authority, declared, that if all the Baptist preachers in Kentucky were put into one, they would not make an Alexander Campbell!"⁵ John Smith received a copy of the prospectus and subscribed to the paper.

In October 1823, Alexander Campbell debated W. L. McCalla, a Presbyterian, on the subject of baptism. The debate was held at Washington, Kentucky,

the county seat of Mason County. Campbell was impressive in his victory over McCalla in the debate. As a result, his influence grew among the Baptist preachers in Kentucky.

Smith began to read the articles of Campbell and appreciated his logical approach in the study of God's word. He soon came to the conclusion that the Philadelphia Confession of Faith was not in agreement with the scriptures but was still slow to condemn the denominational teachings of the Baptist Church. Smith did desire to "accept no doctrine, and renounce no error, till compelled to do so by the Word of God."⁶

Alexander Campbell came to Flemingsburg, Kentucky in the spring of 1824. Flemingsburg was located about twenty miles from Mt. Sterling, Kentucky where John Smith lived at that time. Smith chose to ride to Flemingsburg to hear Campbell speak. He was so interested in the words of Campbell that Smith thought he spoke for thirty minutes and it was two hours and a half. After the sermon Smith rode with Campbell toward Mt. Sterling spending the night with a Mr. Cannon. During this journey Smith confided in Campbell of his beliefs and that he was suspicious of Campbell's teaching. Campbell used this opportunity to teach Smith more clearly the word of God.

By 1825 John Smith began to teach that all men could obey God's word and that Calvinism was not in the New Testament.

CONCLUSION

The life of John Smith is one of many accomplishments and much anguish. It is not within the scope of this article to chronicle all the events of his life. That will come in future articles. It can plainly be seen how the doctrines of men have and can keep one from the purity of God's teaching. John Smith struggled to overcome the error he had been taught from childhood. Because of his love for God and the scriptures he was able to be victorious.

All men can be victorious in Christ if they humble themselves before God and respect his word by obedience to it!

ENDNOTES

1. John Augustus Williams, *Life of Elder John Smith*, *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, 1956, p. 8.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.* p. 37.
4. Dabney Phillips, *Restoration Principles and Personalities*, Hester Pub., Henderson, 1975, p. 108.
5. Williams, p. 121.
6. *Ibid.* p. 128.

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The Supreme Court Has Taken Sides in the Culture Wars

Jerry Murrell

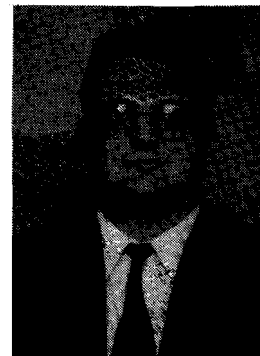
Let me preface this article by saying that I am not a lawyer. However, I have spent a portion of my life reading the Constitution of the United States while observing our highest court and wondering “how long Oh Lord?”. On June 26, 2003, the Supreme Court decided to strike down the Texas law prohibiting gay sex by a six to three vote. The case was called *Lawrence v. Texas*. The three dissenters were Chief Justice **William H. Rehnquist** and Justices **Antonin Scalia** and **Clarence Thomas**. This decision reverses the court’s decision from seventeen years ago called the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision. During the intervening years only **Sandra Day-O’Conner** changed her vote. Rehnquist and **John Paul Stevens**, the only members of the court still serving that were on the court in 1986, did not change their votes.

As recently as 1960, every state in the union had similar laws prohibiting this behavior. Before the *Lawrence* decision, only thirteen states had these laws and they all will be struck down as unconstitutional based on the Supreme Court’s new ruling. In 1986 twenty-four states still had such laws on the books with the other nine having repealed their laws between the times of the two landmark Supreme Court cases. It would seem that opponents of these laws, those who push the homosexual agenda, appear to have believed that they should work in state legislatures to have these laws repealed by the political process (by votes not courts).

The use of the political process by the pro-homosexual groups to change these laws is very interesting to me. These people are many of the same ones who tell us that we cannot “legislate morality.” What their actions actually demonstrate is that they instead want to legislate immorality.

The *Lawrence* case is a poster-child for the old judicial adage that “bad facts make bad law.” The facts were that **John Geddes Lawrence** and **Tyron Garner** were seen by police committing homosexual acts and subsequently arrested. Their neighbor, with whom they were feuding at the time, called police and said that there was a man “going crazy” in Lawrence’s apartment. When police pushed the door open, they found the men in the apartment engaging in unnatural acts. The lie by their neighbor was the true cause of the arrest.

Justice Scalia read his dissent from the bench and said “the court has taken sides in the culture war.” He also added “the court has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda.” The majority opinion was written by Justice **Kennedy** who proved Scalia’s point by writing that homosexuals “are entitled to respect for their private lives.” Not only does the court allow this activity, they now demand that we respect those who commit such vile acts. He added, “The State cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime.”



Kennedy pretended to base his decision on the so-called “right to privacy” found in the “penumbras and emanations”¹ of the “due process clause” of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment was ratified in 1868 in a very different America than we live in now. The first clause of the Fourteenth Amendment actually reads as follows:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Basically this amendment guarantees a person citizenship in the state wherein he resides and the right to a “fair” trial by jury before he is deprived of “life, liberty, or property.” The same phrase, “due process” is found in the Fifth Amendment where it applies to the federal government, while in the Fourteenth Amendment it applies to the states.

The phrase “due process,” before the 1960’s referred to “how” and “why” a law was enforced. Now the “due process” clause is a lake where the judiciary goes fishing to discover new rights. Surely the states who passed the fourteenth amendment in 1868 did not intend to overturn the laws on their own books prohib-

iting homosexual behavior. If they had wanted to do so, they would have repealed those laws, which all states had at the time, when they ratified the Fourteenth Amendment. This kind of violation by the ignoring of the intent of these state legislatures as well as the amendment's authors, is based on postmodernism. This is called "deconstructionism" by the fathers of postmodernism, linguistic analysts. This is where the text does not reign supreme in determining meaning. The intent of the author takes second place to the meaning read into the text by the reader. It matters not what the authors of the Constitution meant by any amendment or phrase, it only matters what the Court says that it means. Deconstructionism was anticipated by Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland* when he wrote "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more or less.' 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean different things.' 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master — that's all.'"

This brings me to the point. The question of

whether a state should have sodomy laws is not under the purview of the Supreme Court; they are not the masters in this area. This is because it simply is not addressed in the Constitution. The Constitution neither condemns such behavior, nor prohibits such laws. If homosexuals want a "right" to engage in homosexual acts in the Constitution, they should propose an amendment rather than asking a court to manufacture for them such a right out of thin air.

Much like there is no "right" to a tattoo in the Constitution, there is no "right" to engage in homosexual behavior. More importantly, there is no "right" to the oxymoronic idea of "homosexual marriage." Now the Supreme Court has "found" the right to engage in homosexual activity in the Constitution and to pass a law prohibiting this activity is to deny a homosexual's "due process rights." The Constitution now includes a "right to sodomy." If the right to engage in homosexual behavior can be found in the Constitution, given enough time, there is no doubt that Justice Ginsberg et. al. will find "homosexual marriage" protected by the "due process" clause. Surely we do not want these homosexu-

Practical Lessons From The Book Of James

September 27-28, 2003

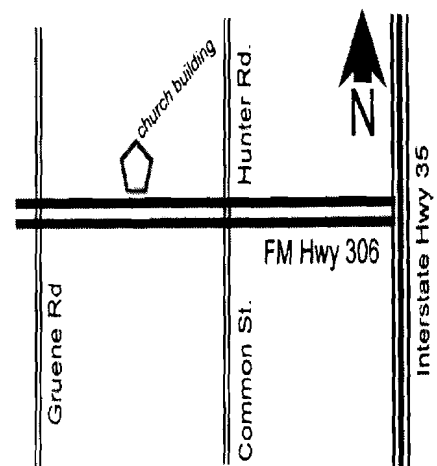
Saturday

10:00 am	James: Overview & Introduction	Glenn Williams
11:00 am	Trials & Temptations (1:1-15)	Ken Ratcliff
Noon	Luncheon	
1:30 pm	Pure Religion (1:27)	Tim Kidwell
2:30 pm	Living Faith (2:17-26)	David Brown
3:30 pm	The Tongue (3:1-18)	Michael Light

Sunday

9:30 am	Materialism (5:1-6)	Jason Rollo
10:30 am	What Is Your Life? (4:13-15)	Billy Bland
11:30 am	Luncheon	
5:00 pm	Restoring The Erring (James 5:19-20)	Billy Bland
6:00 pm	The Prayer Of The Righteous (5:13-18)	Jason Rollo

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als, to use an outdated phrase, to continue “living in sin.” This is not simply the ravings of one who sees the “slippery slope” when it is not present. Already one of the “top” homosexual newspapers is trying to take this decision there. *The Washington Blade* began their coverage of this decision with this sentence:

In sweeping language, the Supreme Court struck down the Texas sodomy law, and with it similar laws in 12 other states, as violating gay Americans’ right to due process, but the debate among the justices was far broader, and in many ways set the stage for the court to address the issue of marriage, the next looming battle in the “culture wars,” in Justice Antonin Scalia’s parlance.

Also this decision is the next step in legalizing the homosexual agenda for the purposes of giving the liberals a new beachfront in the culture war. Maybe next they will go along with the *North American Man Boy Love Association* and legalize sexual relations between adults and “consenting” boys. Surely you would not want

to take away a young man’s “due process” rights simply because he is not yet sixteen, or eighteen, or twelve. If the authority for a “right to sodomy” is in the Fourteenth Amendment, one would be on the same legal ground to deny a teenager a right to a trial as to deny him the right to be sodomized by an adult. I am sorry to be so explicit, but if both are a part of our “due process” rights, they stand or fall together. Maybe the culture wars are over, or maybe the liberals have just bombed Pearl Harbor.

SOURCES

AP “Supreme Court Strikes Down Gay Sex Ban” www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A35196-2003Jun26.html

Chris Crain, “Ruling May Impact Sex Laws, Sets Stage for Marriage Fight” <<http://www.washblade.com/2003/6-20/news/breaking/sodruling.cfm>>

1. This phrase actually comes from the majority opinion of the 1965 case of *Griswald v. Connecticut* written by Justice Douglas in a case concerning “contraceptive products.”

—4340 Lylewood Rd.
Indian Mound, Tennessee 37079

One Woman’s Perspective...

THE RIGHTEOUS CHASE

Annette B. Cates

We suspect that our cat, Tigger, is one-quarter mountain lion. Her mother was born in the rural hills of northwest Georgia. It has taken her several years to mature into a normal, loving cat. Most of the time she is a house-pet, but occasionally she goes outside. Recently, she “asked” to go out the front door. At the time, I did not realize that a large dog was in our front yard, but Tigger knew. As soon as the door was opened, she bristled up and headed after the dog, chasing him from our property. The dog used wisdom in getting away as quickly as he could, thus avoiding Tigger’s fury, teeth, and claws.

This incident reminds me of Nehemiah 13. Nehemiah and his fellow Jews had labored to restore the city walls of Jerusalem while under constant harassment by Sanballat, Tobiah, and their followers. Their society was in a terrible state. The house of God had been forsaken (13:11); their people had intermarried with Ammonites and Moabites (13:23); and their children spoke in those foreign tongues, not knowing the language of the Jews (13:24). Nehemiah relates in verse 28 that one of the enemies was Sanballat’s son-in-law Joiada, and that “I chased him from me.” This should be our righteous reaction to anyone or anything that would hinder our spiritual security. Let us con-

sider a few of the many things that would be our enemies, if we allow them to, and do not chase them far from us.

CHASE AWAY HARMFUL ATTITUDES

Nothing takes away from one’s appearance more than nourishing a negative, critical attitude toward life. A frown usually accompanies such a demeanor, darkening the entire face. A smile, on the other hand, lights up one’s countenance, welcoming a smile in return. Those who focus on how bad things seem to be usually turn away the people who would otherwise bring cheer. It is possible to turn such negativity around. It takes determination and a conscious decision to do so. Positive attitudes come from within, not from all the material wealth one might wish to possess. The verses that we know as the “Beatitudes” (Matthew 5:3-12) are all about positive results we receive when we reverse typical human values. Living as a Christian and growing in knowledge of God’s word (II Peter 3:18) result in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23), all of which



are positive traits. If we think on the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8), we will not have time for the attitudes that will pull us down and away from God.

CHASE AWAY THE WRONG INFLUENCES

Just as it is easier to float downstream (a dead fish can do that) than it is to swim upstream, so it is with the pull of the world. It takes strength to determine to do that which is right. Moses warned the Israelites, **“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil..”** (Exodus 23:2). We would do well to follow that concept. Hosea spoke of Israel as having followed **“Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved”** (Hosea 9:10). When people become addicted to drugs and alcohol, they will not be able to overcome that addiction until they get completely away from their former friends. Solomon wrote, **“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not”** (Proverbs 1:10). Surrounding ourselves with friends and associates whose interests are spiritual will help us on our journey toward Heaven.


CHASE AWAY TEMPTATIONS

Temptation is the original avenue of sin. It was the method that Satan used to lure Adam and Eve into sacrificing their perfect Eden (Genesis 3). It was the design that Potiphar’s wife used with Joseph (Genesis

39:1-13). Joseph, however, did not fall for her wiles. Temptation brought about David’s sin with Bathsheba (II Samuel 11:2ff). David could have turned away, but he chose to allow temptation to lead him. Satan used this ploy with Jesus at his temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus withstood Satan’s attacks, answering him each time with scripture. In Hebrews 4:15, we read that Jesus **“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”** Good knowledge of the scriptures will help us in overcoming temptation. Knowledge of the Bible will teach us the difference between right and wrong, then it will guide us in following the way in which we should go. **“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”** (Psalm 119:11).

The dog in our front yard that evening was larger and stronger than Tigger, but he was no match for a small animal determined to defend her property. Satan is no match for us when we have the strength to say, “You have picked the wrong person. Get away from me. I will defend my Christianity.” It is up to us whether we follow after evil, or take up a righteous chase against it. Sin will fill our lives if we allow it to do so. We should view sin with fear, because it can cost us our eternal souls. **“I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word”** (Psalm 119:101).

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DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

(II Samuel 11-12)

Tom Moore

INTRODUCTION

- A. It was during the battle with Rabbah that King David found himself conquered and led captive by his own lust.
- B. What David said of the mournful report of Saul's death may more fitly be applied to the sad story in II Samuel 11-12, **"Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon."**
 - 1. We wish we could draw a veil over it, and that it might never be known, might never be said, that David did such things as are here recorded.
 - 2. The scriptures are faithful in relating the faults even of those whom it most applauds.

DISCUSSION

- A. THE SIN (II Samuel 11:1-5)
 - 1. These verses show quickly we can fall into the depths of sin.
 - 2. Regarding David
 - a. Since David did not go to war, maybe he had too much time on his hands.
 - 1) There are certain dangers in idleness.
 - 2) Amos 6:1 ... **"An idle mind is the devil's workshop."**
 - b. David looked and kept looking.
 - 1) When David saw the woman bathing, instead of heeding the example of Joseph resisting Potiphar's wife), he sent and inquired about the woman.
 - 2) Had David turned and walked away, things would have been much different (Job 31:1).
 - c. David's only concern was the gratifying of his own flesh ... Hebrews 13:4.
 - 3. Regarding Bathsheba
 - a. Why was Bathsheba exposing herself so openly before the king's roof?
 - 1) Was she trying to seduce the king?
 - 2) There is a warning in the Bible against indecent exposure (I Timothy 2:9).
 - 3) Women need to be very careful how they dress, for many are knowingly or unknowingly seducing men to evil actions or thoughts ... men, be careful too!
 - b. Bathsheba was just as guilty as David (Proverbs 6:25).
 - 4. Their sin found them out.
 - a. Bathsheba said, **"I am with child."**
 - b. No doubt they were both in great anxiety over being found out (Leviticus 20:10).
 - c. Today, God's laws on morality are being

greatly ignored.

- d. Our world, to a great extent, has lost its understanding of what sin really is.

B. THE ATTEMPTED COVER-UP (II Samuel 11:6-13).

- 1. How do men often respond to their sin?
 - a. Adam blamed someone else.
 - b. Achan tried to hide his sin.
 - c. David, tried to cover up his sin.
- 2. David tries to conceal his sin by bringing Uriah home from the battle.
 - a. The purpose: To get Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba, so he will think the child is his.
 - b. The plan:
 - 1) Plan 1- Sent home but he slept at the king's house, note II Samuel 11:11.
 - 2) Plan 2- Got Uriah drunk —still didn't go home.



C. DAVID PLANS A MURDER (II Samuel 11:14-25).

- 1. When David's last two cover up schemes had failed, he resorts to the third and final plan.
 - a. David plans the death of Uriah, and makes sure it is carried out.
 - b. David sends a letter to Joab (a letter which was ironically carried by Uriah) and commands him to put Uriah in the hottest battle, then retreat from him.
- 2. Can you believe that a man like David would resort to murder to cover up his sin? What about abortion?
- 3. Can you believe that David had the gall to say II Samuel 11:25.

D. DAVID MARRIES BATHSHEBA (II Samuel 11:26-27).

- 1. There seems to be a significance in the use of Uriah's name in II Samuel 11:26.
- 2. Why did David and Bathsheba get married so quickly after Uriah's death? Was it not another plan to cover up their sin?
- 3. God though, did not overlook it! God was sore displeased!
- 4. We can be sure that our sin will find us out

(Numbers 32:23).

E. NATHAN REPROVES DAVID (2 Samuel 12:1-14).

1. David has now remained impenitent for at least nine months.
 - a. The baby is now born.
 - b. God is still displeased with the whole situation
2. II Samuel 12:1-5.
 - a. Without realizing it, David had condemned himself.
 - b. David could see the sins of others, but he could not see his own.
 - c. David was no better than the rich man
3. David, being stirred with anger, hears some horrifying words "Thou art the man."
 - a. David did not get mad at Nathan as many would today.
 - b. Nathan loved David enough to tell him the truth.
4. Notice II Samuel 12:9
5. Galatians 6:7
 - a. David had sown to the flesh, and was told **"the sword would not depart from his house."**
 - b. Four deaths came to David's house as a result of this sin:

- 1) Baby conceived out of wedlock died (II Samuel 12:18).
- 2) Amnon was killed by Absalom for raping their sister Tamar (II Samuel 13:32).
- 3) Absalom died in a rebellion against David, his father (II Samuel 18:15).
- 4) David's son, Adonijah, was killed by Solomon (I Kings 2:25)
5. Sin brings trouble into a family.
 - d. David's sin was done in private, but was soon known openly.
6. The message that Nathan delivered pricked David's heart and brought him to his knees.
 - a. David repented, this was why he was a man after God's own heart.
 - b. Psalm 51:1-3
 - c. David repented and was forgiven, but he still had to suffer the earthly consequences of his sin, the consequences could not be reversed.

CONCLUSION

—2406 Main Street
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The Last Word...

A Bridge To Apostasy

Kent Bailey

The Midway Church of Christ in Hurricane, West Virginia began on September 5, 1993 with eleven individuals comprising this congregation. This local church met in the homes of various members as they grew to approximately thirty in attendance.

As the congregation continued its growth, a search for property on which to build a meeting house was begun. A section of land midway between the communities of St. Albans and Hurricane on Route 60 was purchased, and in November of 1993 construction on a new building was under way. The first worship assembly was conducted in this new structure on February 20, 1994 with an attendance of 52 individuals. As time progressed the attendance continued to increase with brethren working together in peace and harmony. The first gospel meeting brought about an attendance averaging more than ninety individuals.

As the congregation continued in their growth, a

new addition was built to the existing structure to house the congregation's Bible classes in 1996. It was during this time that an annual lectureship was started and various faithful gospel preachers were brought in to assist in these efforts as well as to preach in gospel meetings. In these particular efforts the truth of God was proclaimed forcefully, and a stand was made against the encroaching errors of liberalism. It was my privilege to speak on a number of lectureships and preach in one gospel meeting for this congregation.

In September of 1993, **Don Mash** was invited to become the preacher for this congregation. He continued to faithfully proclaim the word of God, teaching the truth, warning against fatal errors found both in the denominations and among our own brethren until May 11, 2003. Due to health problems of both him and his wife, and also due to the increasing stress he was under, his physician indicated to him that he needed to diminish

his workload. This was announced to the congregation, and it was agreed that he would teach Bible classes on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. It was also agreed that brother Mash would continue to preach on Sunday mornings with faithful brethren in the area being invited to preach on Sunday evenings. This plan worked just fine for a short time, however, on May ninth brother Mash was informed that another preacher had been employed and that brother Mash's final Sunday with the congregation would be May 11, 2003. It was announced that **Charles Brown**, who lives in the Barboursville/Culloden area of West Virginia would be the new preacher. When faithful brethren of the Midway congregation inquired as to information and recommendations of Charles Brown, they were rebuked and accused of creating problems. An investigation by concerned brethren brought to light some interesting information: Charles Brown is not a gospel preacher at all. *Charles Brown is a preacher for the Independent Christian churches.*

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Brown, brother Mash was informed by Mr. Brown himself,

that he was indeed a Christian Church preacher; that he consider the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God as "a matter of opinion". Brown admitted that the New Testament did not authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship unto God, but that he could and has preached for congregations on both sides of the issue with some congregations using mechanical instruments and others not using such.

Brown also indicated he received his undergraduate and graduate education from Kentucky Christian College (a Christian Church school) and that he received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern Christian University. The telling factor in the entire discussion with brother Mash was that Mr. Brown stated it was his intent to be "*a bridge between the acapella and instrumental churches.*"

Due to such compromise Don Mash along with other faithful brethren are not in fellowship with the Midway congregation and are worshipping and working with faithful congregations in the area.

It is with great sadness that this article is written regarding the apostasy of a one time faithful congregation. In light of II John 9-11 and Romans 16:17-18 we send forth this article to identify the Midway Church as now being in fellowship with the Christian Churches. Obviously the New Testament pattern and the authority principle means nothing to those remaining at Midway. Let us not bid them God speed nor partake of their evil deeds!


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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

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

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

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

-Missouri-

Farmington-Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, Sunday: 10:00, 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (573) 756-5925.

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, (919) 977-7556.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

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

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

CHURCHES AND PUBLIC CHARITIES

Kenneth D. Cohn, CPA

Recently, I read an open letter to the brotherhood authored by the eldership of a certain church in which a brother (hereafter referred to as the "accused brother") was accused, falsely I believe, of all manner of contemptible conduct for using a tax-exempt public charity to preach and teach the Gospel. Although appalled by the libelous and slanderous nature of the letter, it occurred to me that perhaps some information on public charities, including churches, would be helpful, particularly to those in receipt of this letter. Since I do not know who received this open letter, I use this open means of disseminating information.

BACKGROUND

Some background information will enhance, I believe, the usefulness of the information provided herein to those non-recipients of the open letter. Furthermore, it will allow the discerning reader, particularly the recipients of the open letter, to rightly conclude for themselves, after proper analysis of the requisite and sufficient evidence, the veracity of the accusations contained in the letter. Therefore, I am providing the following background information.

The accused brother is a preacher of the Gospel engaged in "preaching and teaching the Gospel" in meetings, lectureships, seminars, and missionary trips. He set up a religious public charity to handle the contributions funding his preaching and teaching efforts. His

work was overseen by the aforementioned eldership for the past ten years. An elder in said eldership announced to his fellow-elders that he holds a certain false doctrine that declares a direct influence or working of the Holy Spirit on the spirit of man. The accused brother, also part of said eldership for the past two years, opposed this doctrine and, after it became apparent that the elder in error and the other two elders would not change (although now, in the light of brotherhood scrutiny, they deny that any of them has ever believed such doctrine), the accused brother was forced to resign from the eldership and move the oversight of his work to the eldership of another church. It was only then that the remaining three elders penned and disseminated the open letter to the brotherhood.

In the open letter, the elders apologized for being so "naive and trusting" during their years of the accused brother's oversight. One of said elders was also the church treasurer who handled the accused brother's support funds. He had issued a monthly support check payable to the accused brother's public charity for more than ten years, and neither this elder nor his two fellow-elders (who have served only a little over two years) ever questioned the reasons for the use of the public charity operated by the accused brother. After the split mentioned above, they suddenly were not "so naive and trusting." They expressed great surprise upon

(Continued on Page 8)

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

Editorial...

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL LAW

In the July 13, 2003 edition of *The Washington Times* in an article entitled "Gay 'Marriages' Ahead" Cheryl Wetzstein wrote:

...High court decisions in Canada and the United States and a pending lawsuit in Massachusetts will finally force "gay marriage" to the top of the nation's legal and cultural agenda....

...The high court ruling followed a June 10 decision by Canada's Ontario Court of Appeal that restricting marriage to "a man and a woman" was unconstitutional. From now on, the court said, "two people" can marry in Ontario....

DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HOWARD DEAN DECLARES HIMSELF

...Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, who as Vermont's governor signed that state's landmark civil-union law (in a post-midnight act, without ceremony), has promised that as president he would "insist that every state find a way to recognize the same legal rights for gay couples as they do for everybody else."

"If a [homosexual] couple goes to Canada and gets married, when they come back, they should have exactly the same legal rights as every other American," Mr. Dean recently told an interviewer on NBC's "Meet the Press."...

Wetzstein pointed out that many do not think that what has happened in Canada or the recent decision of the U. S. Supreme Court's on June 26 "that a Texas ban on homosexual sodomy was an unconstitutional violation of privacy" will lay the ground work for homosexual marriages. However, she also quotes Stanley Kurtz of the Hoover Institution saying: "Once you start redefining marriage on civil rights grounds, the process will not stop." Kurtz argues, "that polygamy and 'polyamory' will become marriage battlegrounds as well. Polyamory is the practice of either sex having multiple spouses."

Wetzstein also quoted Maggie Gallagher, an author and columnist who frequently writes on the issue. Gallagher argues that:

...Marriage is not some 'warm and fuzzy' lifestyle choice. If marriage is turned into some kind of benefits system for sexual partners in which 'every individual makes up what marriage is and registers it,' marriage as a social institution will lose both its identity and its historic power....

...What's not being articulated in much of the media, says Mrs. Gallagher, is that "gay marriage is a complete

innovation,” and even though other cultures have accepted homosexuality, “none of them confused these relationships with marriage.”...

SEEKING GOD “AFTER THE DUE ORDER”

It is very important for Christians to understand that people may correctly act only when they take action according to God’s authorization (Colossians 3:17). Thus, *whom* God has authorized to marry is of the utmost importance. To do something without authority from God or contrary to his authority is not to seek **“him after the due order”** (I Chronicles 15:13). The consequence of such unauthorized action is death (Please carefully study the following scriptures: II Samuel 6:6-9; I Chronicles 13: 4, 7, 10-12; 15:2, 5, 13-15; Also see Leviticus 10:1, 2 and Romans 15:4). Thus, we are extremely interested in seeking God **“after the due order”** in everything, especially concerning whom God has authorized to marry.

We ask, therefore, who is it that has God’s authorization to enter into a marriage? To correctly answer this question or any other question of a religious or moral nature, we must understand the following material.

NECESSARY REQUISITES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE


To understand the Bible the student must possess the necessary requisites of the inward man (spirit, heart) to profit from a study of the Bible. These requisites are set out in the following scripture references— Luke 8:15; Matthew 5:6; John 7:17; James 1:21. Furthermore, the fundamental principles of Bible study to follow (though not exhaustive) are necessary if truth is to be attained on any subject. The only way to know God’s thinking about anything is by the revelation of his thoughts in the words (signs of ideas or vehicles of thought) of the Bible (II Timothy 3:16, 17; I Corinthians 2:9-16; II Peter 1:2-4; 19-21; Deuteronomy 29:29). And, coming to the proper understanding of God’s word on any subject demands a correct handling of it (II Timothy 2:15). Of necessity, such means we must know *how* to ascertain God’s authority from the words of the Bible in general and the words of the New Testament in particular (II Timothy 2:15; Colossians 3:17; Luke 8:11; John 8:31, 32, 17:17; Acts 11:14; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 4:6 (Also See *1901 American Standard Version*); Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:25; I Peter 1:22, 25; John 12:48).

WE MUST KNOW HOW LANGUAGE AUTHORIZES

We must understand that all languages authorize through *direct statements, examples* (patterns), and

In This Issue...

Churches and Public Charities Kenneth D. Cohn, CPA	1
EDITORIAL... Marriage and Civil Law David P. Brown	2
ASSISTANT EDITORIAL... Abigail—Overcoming Marriage to a Fool Michael Light	7
Stone of Remembrance Mike McDaniel	12
RESTORATION REFLECTIONS... The Effect of the Restoration Plea on Denominationalism Paul Vaughn	15
The Village Square Church of Christ Mark Lance	17
SERMON OUTLINES... It Is Time to Renew the Work of God (Haggai 1:1-15) Tom Moore	18
ONE WOMAN’S PERSPECTIVE... Another Tool for Satan Annette Cates	20
THE LAST WORD... Bill Flatt, Louisville Bible College, and the Christian Church Kent Bailey	22



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It’s Time To Renew

implication. There is no other way for any language to authorize anything. Why is this the case? The answer to the previous question is: *it is the very nature of any language to communicate (authorize) by means of direct statements, examples, and implication.* Thus, the three preceding terms of the previous sentence are not the arbitrary invention of man. These terms simply are a part of man's systematic identification, defining, and labeling of a part of what comprises the communicative nature of language and, thus, how a language authorizes. For example, in the parts of speech of a sentence there is what has been identified and labeled a verb. However, before anyone ever labeled this particular part of speech a "verb" it was already doing what verbs do in the mechanics of a sentence. Moreover, before any one identified, defined, and labeled a certain arrangement of words to be a sentence, the sentence was already a working reality in the communicative nature of language.) Man discovered what God created regarding the communicative element of language. *To discover, identify, label, and define a thing does not mean that man invented it.*

MAN'S SAVING FAITH IN GOD IS DEPENDENT ON LANGUAGE

Without a proper understanding of the manner by which language communicates there can be no saving faith produced in a person—*for saving faith in God, Christ, and so on is not accomplished without language* (Romans 10:17; II Corinthians 5:7; I Corinthians 14:37; Ephesians 3:1-4; Hebrews 11:1, 6; II Peter 3:1, 2). Furthermore, reaching a right conclusion entails *correct thinking with the totality of the Bible information on a given subject.* Thus, can people have all the information on a given subject available to them, but fail to arrive at a correct conclusion because they have not thought the information through correctly (I Thessalonians 5:21; Isaiah 1:18; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 24:25; I Peter 3:15). With these salient points in mind let us pursue our study.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD OF TRUTH THAT REGULATES THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE?

Marriage and the home originated with God. Yes, they are for the good of man, but they are God originated, God ordained, and God regulated (Matthew 19:4-9). Furthermore, as is true of anything else that is God originated and placed in the hands of men, it is capable of (and in time most often is) abused and corrupted.

The word "marriage" is used as God intended when it has reference to a Matthew 19:6 marriage as

originally instituted by him (God) in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18-25). However, in the scriptures and in our vocabulary the word "marriage" is also used in an accommodative sense. It is used to refer to relationships that God did not authorize and/or forbids. And, therefore, he did not join in marriage the people involved therein. Hence, they are not Matthew 19:6-God joined marriages. Thus, we have corrupted marriages such as "homosexual marriages," "polygamous marriages" and so on.

The following is a good example of the correct use of the word "marriage". Matthew 19:6, informs us that God joins an eligible (for marriage) man and woman together in the marriage relationship. God marries them when (and only when) they meet his conditions necessary for a man and a woman to be married. This is marriage as God ordained it (Matthew 19: 4-6).

MARRIAGE AND HEROD, PHILIP, AND HERODIAS

The inspired writers also use the word "marriage" in an accommodative sense (Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11; 6:17, 18). *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines the word "accommodate" as: "to make fit, suitable or congruous" (page 49). Thus, the inspired writers "fit" the word "marriage" to persons living together as *if* they were joined together by God in a Matthew 19:6 marriage (but they are not).

A scriptural example of an accommodative use of the word marriage is found in the case of Herod, Philip, and Philip's wife Herodias, whom Herod had "**married**"—Yes, the scripture says that Herod married a woman who was already married (Mark 6:17-19). The Holy Spirit employed the word "**marriage**" in Mark 6:17 "to fit" Herod's relationship to Herodias. And, the Holy Spirit did it while she (Herodias) remained in a scriptural marriage to Philip, Herod's brother. In no uncertain terms we are informed that *Herod married his brother Philip's wife.* (If certain people do not like the way holy writ refers to the matter, let them take it up with the Lord.) If Herodias was Philip's wife (and the scripture *explicitly* [in just so many words] says she was), how could Herod contract a scriptural marriage with her? The answer is that Herod could not enter into a scriptural marriage with Herodias because she was ineligible for marriage. This is because she was in a scriptural (God joined) marriage with Philip. But, the scripture plainly says Herod "**had married**" Herodias (Mark 6:17). Thus, the word "**married**" is used to accommodate the un-

lawful and thus perverted relationship Herod and Herodias had with each other. And, no doubt, being who Herod was, the civil law fully sanctioned Herod's relationship with Herodias, Philip's wife.

Therefore, when in Mark 6:18 John declares it is "**unlawful**" for Herod to be married to Herodias, John had reference only to God's Law which Herod and Herodias in their marriage to one another had violated. Thus, God did not join Herod and Herodias together in the marriage relationship. Simply put, they were living together with only man's law to sanction their union, which law was not in harmony with God's law on marriage. Thus, it had no power at all to bind Herod and Herodias together in a scriptural marriage. In reality they were only living together. We know this because after Herod and Herodias were "**married**" the scriptures continued to call Herodias, Philip's wife. Regardless of the declarations of civil law that may have made Herodias' marriage to Philip legally null and void, God's law was not changed to conform to any such human declarations—Herodias remained Philip's wife. Moreover, and, therefore, civil law did not have the authority to join Herod and Herodias together in a scriptural marriage. Why is this the case? The answer: *Herod and Herodias were not scripturally eligible to marry one another*. This is the force of John's statement to Herod when he declared: "**It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother Philip's wife**" (Mark 6:18). Did John speak falsely when he called Herodias "**Philip's wife**"?

In the case of Herod, Philip, and Herodias it is obvious that God does not join people in the marriage relationship when they are not authorized by him (God) to contract a marriage with each other. Thus, from the case of Herod et al., as well as other scriptures dealing with marriage, we may deduce that God will not join people of the same sex together in marriage because God does not authorize such persons to be joined together in holy matrimony (Matthew 19:4-6).

SOME THINGS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE CASE OF HEROD, HERODIAS, AND PHILIP

We learn several things from the preceding scriptural case.

1. According to God's law Herodias was Philip's wife. This is the case because God had joined her to him in a scriptural (God-joined) marriage.

2. Herod had "**married**" Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. However, God had not joined her to Herod in his (God's) marriage bond because Herodias was not eligible for marriage.

3. Therefore, we learn that the word marriage is

used by inspiration in an accommodative sense as well as its true sense.

4. John the Baptist made it clear that in God's sight Herodias remained Philip's wife. That being the case, it was not scripturally lawful and, therefore, impossible for Herod and Herodias to be scripturally married (a marriage where God joins two together in the marriage relationship).

5. Whether civil law declared Herod and Herodias eligible for marriage or not, God made it clear that Herodias and Philip continued to be married. And, regardless of who concludes otherwise, that does not change the truth of the matter. Thus, we may deduce from the scriptures that civil authorities have no authority from God to attempt to legitimize things God has pronounced illegitimate.

6. We may therefore correctly conclude, that if and when civil authorities decide that same sex marriages are legal (man's law), and Bob and Bubba "**tie the civil law marriage knot**", God does not join them together in a Matthew 19:6 marriage.

7. Faithful children of God will follow John the Baptist's Godly example and not give such civil laws credence or seek their sanction. To the contrary we shall openly oppose and condemn them.

8. God does not join persons together in marriage when, according to the scriptures, they never were authorized to be married. In other words, civil law not with standing, Nell and Natalie have no authority from God to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage—*the only kind of marriage whereby God joins two persons together in a scriptural marriage*.

9. Civil law does not have authority from God to alter moral or religious law; that is civil law (man's law) is always subservient to God's laws.

10. Civil laws change from country to country, but God's law is inviolate.

11. Only as far as human laws are in harmony with God's law are we to obey or comply with them (I Peter 2:13; Acts 4:19; 5:29).

12. As is true of all unscriptural marriages, homosexuals are married to one another in the same way that the scripture says that Herod "**married**" Herodias—in an accommodative sense.

AN EXAMPLE

Suppose two Canadian men who have never previously engaged in any kind of marriage union, marry each other (as Herod and Herodias were "**married**"). In time they are taught the gospel and in

the process thereof they learn the truth of God about marriage. Therefore, having learned from the Bible that same sex marriages are not authorized by God, and, thus, according to Matthew 19:5, 6 they were never joined together in marriage by God in their legal Canadian same sex marriage, they realize they must end said marriage. Understanding the Bible's requirement for repentant persons to correct their mistakes where such is possible, and also understanding God's law of acting expeditiously, the two men of our example dissolve their legal homosexual marriage in the only way it may be accomplished—through a Canadian civil divorce. Thus, following their obedience to the gospel, with all other things being scripturally equal, each man of our example is authorized to engage in Matthew 19: 5, 6, marriage. Question: *In our previous example, did God join the two men together in a Matthew 19:6 marriage when they were legally (but contrary to Matthew 19:5, 6) married to one another in their Canadian same sex marriage? The answer is, no.* Thus, God never had married the two men in our example to anyone. All other things being scripturally equal, on what scriptural grounds, therefore, could anyone forbid either one of the men of our example from contracting a Matthew 19:6 marriage?

In the light of all we have studied on this subject, who will answer *false* to the following precisely stated proposition?

TRUE or FALSE—“*The scriptures teach that persons who are scripturally authorized to marry have at least the right to one Matthew 19:6, God joined marriage.*”

But come some saying of the two men in our example that they were divorced contrary to Matthew 19:9—there was no fornication on either man's part. Thus, there was no innocent party to put away or divorce the one who was guilty of fornication. Since the marriage ended contrary to Matthew 19:9 we are asked, “How, then could either one be authorized to scripturally marry anyone?” Those who have raised the previous question have made the mistake of thinking that a scripturally unauthorized marriage must be dealt with as if it were a Matthew 19:6, marriage. Nothing could be further from the truth and reveals why some are so confused on matters pertaining to marriage. Some have evidently overlooked at least the following important point. The overlooked point I have in mind is this: *Jesus only applied Matthew 19:9 to a Matthew 19:6 marriage.* To apply Matthew 19:9 to a homosexual marriage (or any other unauthorized

marriage) as if it were a Matthew 19:6 (God joined marriage) is to do so without God's authority. *To treat the scriptures accordingly is to ignore and repudiate the divine pattern application as set out and applied by Jesus himself. It is to make a mockery of “rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).* Thus, there is all manner of tortuous and absurd conclusions drawn causing all sorts of confusion in the Lord's church.

At this point in our study it is also needful to emphasize that all other things being scripturally equal, *no one has authority from Jesus to forbid the application of Matthew 19:9 to a Matthew 19:6 marriage when conditions warrant such application; which conditions themselves are set out by our Lord in Matthew 19:9.* Again, and with much emphasis we must declare that *to do so is to ignore and repudiate the divine pattern and our Lord's application of it. Indeed, It is to manifest discontent and dissatisfaction with our Lord's arrangement.* Furthermore, it is to forbid what the Lord allows.

To loose where God has not loosed or bind where God has not bound in his word is a mendacious intermeddling with the will of God, and invites his wrath upon those who do such things. Who will, therefore, answer *false* to the following precisely stated proposition?

TRUE or FALSE—“*The scriptures teach that the only marriage to which Jesus applied Matthew 19:9 was a Matthew 19:5, 6 marriage—a God joined marriage.*”

CONCLUSION

Through civil law or court decisions man may declare same sex unions to be marriages; that unborn babies are not human beings (thus abortion is not murder); that Islam is the legal religion of the land; that it is illegal for citizens to become Christians; that it is illegal for Christians to marry; that animals may marry one another; that humans may marry monkeys; that it is illegal to own a Bible, and so on. However, mere human civil law or court decisions (the meager will of man) authorizing such things as noted in the previous sentence does not change God's laws concerning them. God is not going to join two persons together in his holy estate of matrimony if he (God) has not authorized both of them to marry—all the civil law in the world to the contrary notwithstanding.

—David P. Brown, Editor

ABIGAIL-OVERCOMING MARRIAGE TO A FOOL

BACKGROUND—A BRIEF NARRATIVE

One of the most intriguing women in the Bible is a lady named Abigail. This woman's excellent character is first revealed to us in I Samuel 25. After the death of the great prophet Samuel (vs. 1), David and his men moved into the wilderness of Paran. While in this region David became aware of a man named Nabal. This man was extremely rich. His possessions included three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. David and his men were in need of food. He sent some messengers to Nabal to ask for help. David had them remind him that they had been careful not to take any of his stock and that they had protected him from all dangers (vs. 6-9).

Abigail was unfortunately married to Nabal. We are not told how the marriage came to be. It might have been an arranged marriage, it might have been for love, we simply do not know. What we do know is that she was a wise and discerning woman, while Nabal was a churlish (vs. 3) and foolish man. In fact, it is fair to say that he was a hardheaded, belligerent male with little or no understanding. Not only did Nabal fail to render aid to David, he insulted this future king of Israel and sent his men back empty-handed.

ABIGAIL'S COURAGE

As soon as Abigail heard of her husband's insulting behavior toward David she began to make preparations to make up for his foolish actions. She and her servants prepared a large amount of food and drink and traveled to where David and his six hundred men were. This was a good decision on her part, for David was moving into position to destroy Nabal and all of his family and servants.

It took a great deal of courage on her part to approach David. He was known as a man of war, he had been insulted by her husband. She could have reasoned that David would do her company harm. She could have reasoned within herself, "Nabal made this mess, let him fix it." But she did not. It was not her fault that trouble was coming her way. And yet, she simply faced the problem head on.

ABIGAIL SOUGHT DAVID'S GOOD

Surely Abigail knew there was something spe-

cial about David. Perhaps, she had heard of his exploits in battle; in fact, she may have even been aware that he would be the next king. Her actions and her words indicate a desire to see only good come to him. Many a woman would have defended their husbands regardless of their conduct. But she did not. She knew he was a fool. She knew he was wrong, and she freely admitted it. Not only did she admit it, she was determined to undo his evil deeds even though she knew he would be furious for her doing so.

ABIGAIL WAS QUITE CUNNING

When she approached David she was very humble. She and her servants bowed themselves before him. She freely admitted her husband's mistake and appealed to David's sense of justice. She basically said, "we know you will not punish the innocent for the mistakes of another." She then mentioned to David that it is better to let God bring retribution against Nabal than to stoop to vengeance. This appeal to David's sense of right and wrong had the desired effect. He decided not to destroy all of the house of Nabal, and left the man's punishment in the hands of God.

ABIGAIL'S FUTURE WITH DAVID

When Abigail returned from the exchange with David she found her husband drunk and boisterous. The next day she informed him of all she had done and how David's wrath was abated. When Nabal heard the news we are told that his heart died within him and he became as stone. A short ten days later God smote Nabal and he died. After David heard of Nabal's death he blessed God for bringing justice to the situation. Later David and Abigail were married. Her wise dealings with David saved the lives of many of her servants and in time help make her the wife of the king of Israel.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ABIGAIL

The writer of Proverbs wrote, "**a soft answer turneth away wrath.**" Abigail knew this and practiced it years before it was written into the Holy Text.

This wife was willing to put what was right above her own family (Matthew 10:34-38).

She also practiced the "golden rule" (Matthew 7:12). She did for David and his men what she would have liked to have done for herself.

Abigail trusted in the Lord's ability to save and to render unto all men according to what is right (II Corinthians 5:10). God's providence worked in her life. He delivered her from the hand of a foolish and brutal man, into the family of the greatest king the chil-

dren of Israel ever had.

We too need to have the same attributes. She was wise, patient, industrious and trusting in the grace of God Almighty. She refused to be locked into do-

ing wrong because of the poor choices of another—even when it was her husband. May we ever draw strength from her example.

—Michael Light, *Assistant Editor*

CHURCHES AND PUBLIC CHARITIES

(Continued From Page 1)

discovering, after so many years of oversight, that the accused brother's public charity really was just what he said it was—a public charity. The eldership also expressed a suspicion that this public charity was established to obtain tax-exempt status. They pointed out that the accused brother's public charity is among other IRS-approved public charities established by religious, denominational, ecumenical, non-religious groups, and our liberal brethren. (I add, but they did not, that many faithful brethren have organized and presently operate public charities as well.) They stated that the mission of the accused brother's public charity is to "preach and teach the Gospel." They then asked if this were not the mission of every Gospel preacher. If so, could other preachers do the same things for which this accused brother claims a tax-exempt status and thereby enjoy the same exemption benefits? Was tax exemption the only reason the accused brother set up the public charity or were there other (presumably dreadful) motives at work? They then informed the reader that an unnamed "Christian brother, who is a lawyer familiar with such public charities, stated that [such public charities] were legal, but barely within the law, and that we should 'warn the brethren of this man'..." (bold theirs—kdc). (Perhaps some day, the light of honesty and integrity will dispel the darkness surrounding the identity of the "Christian brother, who is a lawyer," but the light will not shine today nor will any starlight twinkle from this eldership.) The eldership concluded that this accused brother is not worthy of brotherhood support, and any support going to him should be redirected to another brother this eldership supports whom they deem to be more in need and more deserving. (This supported brother adroitly dodges and deflects [in politics, known as the "Texas two-step"] when questioned concerning his view of the direct working of the Holy Spirit). In an attachment to their letter, the elders state that one public charity, such as the one organized and operated by the accused brother, cannot lawfully speak out against another public charity, such as an abortion clinic or other "unchristian" organizations. Furthermore, they allege, a public charity cannot lawfully take a public stand against abortion or homosexuality.

INTRODUCTION TO DISCUSSION

The federal law controlling the tax exempt status

of a public charity is set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 ("IRC"), as amended, and the regulations thereto. As anyone who has prepared a federal income tax return can appreciate, the rules and regulations concerning public charities can be overwhelmingly complex and insufferably tedious. I will endeavor to treat the topic as succinctly as such a technical subject will allow, but I solicit the reader's patience and longsuffering. Furthermore, I will limit this treatise to churches and public charities having religious purposes, e.g., the advancement of religion. Therefore, this treatise will not be exhaustive.

PURPOSE OF EXEMPTION

All churches, organized and operating as religious organizations, are public charities, but not all public charities having religious purposes are churches. A church or charity is not required to be tax exempt in order to carry out its religious or charitable function. The only substantive reason an organization applies to the IRS for tax-exempt status pursuant to IRC Section 501(c)(3) is the exemption from income taxes available to qualifying organizations. An additional, and important, reason for qualifying under Section 501(c)(3) is the income tax deductibility of contributions to Section 501(c)(3) public charities, including churches. There are, of course, rules governing deductibility of contributions to Section 501(c)(3) public charities.

BASIS FOR EXEMPTION

Some may reasonably assume tax exemption of churches and religious public charities is required by the "free exercise of religion" and "non-establishment of religion" clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, many courts have held (and it is the position of the IRS) that exemption is a matter of "legislative grace" rather than being constitutionally mandated. The general tax rule that applies to individuals and businesses also applies to churches and public charities—all income is taxable unless statutorily exempted.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EXEMPTION

Public charities seeking exemption from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3), with one major exception, must make application to the Internal Revenue Service by filing Form 1023. There are essentially six

requirements: (1) the public charity is a corporation; (2) the public charity is organized exclusively for tax exempt purposes (the “organizational test”); (3) the public charity is operated exclusively for tax exempt purposes (the “operational test”); (4) none of the public charity’s net earnings inures to the benefit of any private individuals; (5) the public charity does not engage in substantial efforts to influence legislation (the “lobbying” limitation); and (6) the public charity does not intervene or participate in political campaigns (the “campaign” limitation). Churches are not required to be incorporated. Furthermore, a church is automatically exempt from federal income taxes provided the church complies with requirements (2) through (6) above. A church may, however, seek IRS recognition of exempt status in order to facilitate the deductibility of donors’ contributions. Generally, churches and qualified public charities are exempt from federal and state unemployment, state sales, and property taxes. State tax exemptions vary from state to state. Each of the above six requirements is discussed further as follows.

(1) Although it would appear from Section 501(c)(3) that only incorporated churches are exempt, the IRS maintains that unincorporated churches are eligible for exemption. In its *Exempt Organizations Handbook*, the IRS states that “the typical nonprofit association formed under a constitution or bylaws, with elective officers empowered to act for it, would be treated as a corporation....” Ideally, an unincorporated church (and most churches of Christ are unincorporated) should set forth in a writing its exempt purpose. Generally, other public charities must be incorporated.

(2) Under the organizational test, the income tax regulations state that an organization will be deemed to be “organized exclusively” for exempt purposes only if its articles of incorporation (or similar writing) (a) limit the purposes, however broadly or narrowly defined, of the organization to one or more of the exempt purposes listed in Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC; and (b) do not expressly empower the organization to engage, otherwise than as an insubstantial part of its activities, in activities that in themselves are not in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes. Therefore, any stated purpose not enumerated in Section 501(c)(3) will defeat the organizational test. What constitutes “an insubstantial part” is dependent on facts and circumstances and oftentimes is established by the courts.

The regulations further state that an organization is not organized exclusively for exempt purposes unless its assets are dedicated to an exempt purpose. This is deemed satisfied if an exempt organization’s assets would by reason of its articles of incorporation (and like writings) be distributed to another exempt organization upon dissolution.

One of the exempt purposes enumerated in Section 501(c)(3) (and certainly one contemplated by the

forementioned open letter to the brotherhood) is “religious purpose” (and similarly, the “advancement of religion” purpose). It is difficult to define what is meant by “religious purpose.” The IRS, in its *Exempt Organizations Handbook*, acknowledges that the term “religion” cannot be defined with precision. The IRS agrees with federal court rulings defining “religion” to include beliefs not encompassing a Supreme Being in the conventional sense, such as Taoism, Buddhism, and secular humanism. The IRS also maintains that religion is not confined to a sect or a ritual. Activities carried on in furtherance of the belief must be exclusively religious. There are numerous rulings and court cases finding (or failing to find) a religious purpose in a myriad of activities.

(3) Under the operational test, a church or public charity must be operated exclusively for exempt purposes. The regulations specify that an organization will be regarded as “operated exclusively” for one or more exempt purposes only if it engages primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of the exempt purposes enumerated in Section 501(c)(3) and if no more than an “insubstantial part” of its activities are not in furtherance of an exempt purpose. Since an “insubstantial part” is not defined in regulations, its application is dependent upon facts and circumstances. When “facts and circumstances” are used to define the application of a statute, one can be certain that it is the courts that ultimately decide the application.

(4) A church or public charity is not entitled to exemption from federal income taxes if any part of its net earnings inures, or accrues, to the benefit of a private individual. A church’s or public charity’s members, trustees, officers, employees, contributors, and the like, may receive reasonable compensation, fair market value of goods and services, or other expenditures in furtherance of exempt purposes. Those in control may not, by reason of their position, acquire any of the charitable organization’s funds or divert funds to private use. If they do so, exemption is in jeopardy. The *IRS Exempt Organizations Examination Guidelines Handbook* elaborates further on the distinctions between “inurement” and “private benefit” which we need not go into here.

(5) To be exempt from federal income taxation, no “substantial part” of the activities of a church or public charity can be the “carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.” Congress enacted this limitation in 1934, but it is not clear from the congressional record why the limitation was passed into law. It must be pointed out that this limitation has seldom been enforced against churches despite many potential violations. Many churches and religious denominations have lobbied actively for or against specific legislation concerning civil rights, alcoholic beverages, gambling, lotteries, abortion, homosexual agenda,

welfare issues, treaties, and so on. One reason for this is the limitation's ambiguity, namely, what is meant by "substantial part", "legislation", and "attempting to influence." These definitional problems, along with the legislation's uncertain purpose and the reluctance of the courts and the IRS to attack the exempt status of churches, have contributed to the sporadic enforcement of this limitation.

The regulations to the IRC provide that

...an organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if the organization (a) contacts, or urges the public to contact, members of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation; or (b) advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation. The term "legislation" ... includes action by the Congress, by any State legislature, by any local council or similar governing body, or by the public in a referendum, initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. An organization will not fail to meet the operational test merely because it advocates as an insubstantial part of its activities, the adoption or rejection of legislation.

In other words, a Gospel preacher, as an employee of a public charity (including a church), **can** attempt to

influence legislation (e.g., a constitutional ban on gay "marriage"), and the public charity **can** expend funds to the same end provided that such efforts are only occasional and expenditures small. In a 1970 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that "[a]dherents of particular faiths and individual churches frequently take strong positions on public issues including... vigorous advocacy of legal or constitutional positions. Of course, churches as much as secular bodies and private citizens have that right." The Supreme Court in a 1983 decision held that the government is under no constitutional obligation to support lobbying efforts of Section 501(c)(3) organizations. If an organization wishes to engage in substantial lobbying efforts, it may form a tax-exempt Section 501(c)(4) lobbying organization. Why is this distinction important in view of the tax-exempt status of both Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations? A 501(c)(4) organization **cannot** receive tax-deductible contributions whereas a 501(c)(3) organization can.

(6) In order to qualify for and maintain tax-exempt status, a Section 501(c)(3) organization may not "participate or intervene in any political campaign." The "lobbying" limitation discussed above permits "insubstantial" activities. The "campaign" limitation is absolute and unconditional. None is permitted. Presumably one isolated event could result in a loss of tax-exempt status. The prohibition against political activities was first proposed in 1954 by then Senator **Lyndon Johnson** as a floor amendment to the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (a massive rewriting of the Code), and passed without comment. Apparently, Senator Johnson was trying to limit the political activities of a private foundation (a type of a Section 501(c)(3) organization) that had supported one of his opponents in a Texas election. Undoubtedly, few legislators contemplated that such legislation could be used against churches and other public charities. Nevertheless, this limitation is often violated without consequence although the IRS is becoming more active in this area. Reasons for non-enforcement are definitional problems (exactly what are "participation" and "intervention"), the limitation's uncertain purpose, and the reluctance of the IRS and the courts to attack the tax-exempt status of churches. For example, in the 1988 presidential election, many churches took up collections to support the campaign of presidential candidate **Jesse Jackson** without being subjected to any enforcement action. A representative of Mr. Jackson's campaign committee justified their efforts on the ground that the appeal


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for contributions was directed to “members” and not to the “churches.”

The participation by churches and church leaders in political campaigns is an American tradition. Churches have for years without number invited candidates to speak during worship services, distributed “voter education” literature purportedly reflecting candidates’ views on selected topics, engaged in voter registration activities, enlisted volunteers and collected contributions for particular candidates, and allowed statements by preachers during worship services either supporting or opposing particular candidates. None of the above activities is illegal although some breach the “campaign” limitation of Section 501(c)(3). In a “tax guide for churches” issued in 1994, the IRS described the ban on political activities as follows:

Whether a particular activity, action, or expenditure constitutes the conduct of prohibited political activity depends on all the facts and circumstances. For example, certain voter education activities (including the presentation of public forums and the publication of voter education guides) conducted in a non-partisan manner may not constitute prohibited political activity, while other so-called voter education activities may. Contributions to political campaign funds, public statements of position (verbal and written) in favor of or in opposition to candidates for office, or provision of a forum for expression of candidates’ views on a partisan basis, however, would clearly violate the prohibition against political activity. The political activity prohibition is not intended to restrict free expression on political matters by leaders of religious organizations speaking for themselves as individuals. Ministers and others who commonly speak or write on behalf of religious organizations should clearly indicate, at the time they do so, that public comments made by them in connection with political campaigns are strictly personal and are not intended to represent their organization. Partisan comments by the employees or other representatives of an organization regarding political candidates must be avoided in official organization publications and at official church functions.

Therefore, Gospel preachers may, without violating the “campaign” limitation, express their personal views of candidates provided they clearly indicate at the time of such expression that their comments are strictly personal and are not offered in the capacity of a representative of the church.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As mentioned earlier, organizations, except churches, seeking exemption from federal income taxes must apply to the IRS on Form 1023. Once an organization has been determined by the IRS to be exempt, it may rely upon such determination as long as “there are no substantial changes in the organization’s character, purposes, or methods of operation.” Accordingly, all exempt organizations are under a duty to notify the IRS

of any substantial changes in character, purposes, or methods of operations. Every tax-exempt organization is required to file an annual information return (Form 990) with the IRS. Form 990, which is open to public inspection, consists of more than one hundred questions requesting detailed information about the finances, services, and administration of the exempt organization. Churches, however, are not required to file Form 990. Unrelated business income, that is, income from a trade or business not related to exempt purposes, generated by the exempt organization is required to be reported to the IRS.

PERTINENT POINTS AND APPLICATION

With the foregoing information at hand, some pertinent points and applications may be made respecting the open letter to the brotherhood cited in the first paragraph of this article.

“Churches are public charities, but not all public charities are churches. Some public charities are organized to advance religion. Their religious purpose may be stated as “preaching and teaching the Gospel.”

“Churches and public charities are subject to federal income taxes unless specifically exempted by law. Churches and religious public charities may, but are not required to, qualify as tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC. Tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) is not a “right” but a “grace” bestowed by Congress.

“Non-church public charities must apply for exemption to the IRS. Churches, regardless of incorporation status and otherwise conforming to the rules of Section 501(c)(3), are tax exempt even in the absence of application to the IRS for exemption. (The church mentioned in the first paragraph of this article is a Section 501(c)(3) religious organization exempt from income taxes.)

“The primary benefit of such qualification is exemption from federal income taxes and tax deductibility of contributions. (However, officers and employees of a tax-exempt organization are not personally exempt from income taxes and must report compensation received from such organization as taxable income on their personal Form 1040 tax returns.) Some degree of exemption from income, sales, and property taxes is available in most states to such organizations.

“Funds contributed to a Section 501(c)(3) religious organization must be used for tax-exempt purposes. Only an insubstantial part may be used to influence legislation. Political campaigning is strictly forbidden and will jeopardize tax-exempt status.

“A Section 501(c)(3) organization is either fully qualified or fully non-qualified; it either meets the threshold requirements for qualification or it does not.

“Almost all Gospel preachers operate under the umbrella of a Section 501(c)(3) organization, that is, a

church or public charity, and enjoy the tax benefits provided thereby.

“A Gospel preacher, operating under the umbrella of a Section 501(c)(3) organization and as its representative, may speak out against the unscriptural doctrine and practices of denominational churches, churches of Christ, abortion clinics, homosexual groups, or any other Section 501(c)(3) public charities without jeopardizing the organization’s tax-exempt status. The Section 501(c)(3) church mentioned in the first paragraph of this article may (and did) speak out against the Section 501(c)(3) religious public charity operated by the accused brother without jeopardizing its Section 501(c)(3) exemption (the libelous and slanderous content of the letter is not here addressed).

“A Gospel preacher may speak or write in support of or in opposition to any candidate for public of-

fice provided the preacher, at the time of such speaking or writing, makes it clear that he is expressing only his own viewpoint and his comments are not offered in the capacity of a representative of his umbrella Section 501(c)(3) religious organization.”

It is my sincere hope that this article has been helpful and will dispel the “assertions and surmisings” contained in the “open letter” to the brotherhood regarding the purpose and operation of religious public charities. If one wishes to explore this subject further, there is much source material available to the patient inquirer. But, then, IRC rules and regulations make for boring reading and are on the bestseller list only of tax lawyers and certified public accountants.

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Email: texankdc@hotmail.com

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE

Mike McDaniel

Most children learn by asking questions. Once there was a teacher in a little country school who was at the blackboard explaining math problems. One boy, who was not very smart, raised his hand to ask a question. Thinking the boy finally had his mind on learning, the teacher asked him, “Do you have a question?” He said, “Yes’m, I got one to ask – where do them numbers go when you rub’em off the board?”

ROMANS 15:4

Young inquisitive minds often ask questions. God expects parents to be able to answer their Bible questions. We see this illustrated in Joshua chapter four. The children of Israel were ready to cross the Jordan River into Canaan. The signal was given that the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, borne by the priests, would go forward. As soon as the feet of those priests dipped in the river, the water stopped flowing. It stood up as a heap and the lower portion flowed down toward the Dead Sea, leaving behind a dry riverbed. The priests advanced into the middle of the river’s bed with the ark, and there stood firm until all the people had passed over Jordan. Meanwhile, twelve chosen men, one from each tribe, took twelve stones from the spot where the priests had stood firm, and brought them out of the river, leaving in their place twelve other stones from the dry land.

When all of this was done, Joshua commanded the priests to come up out of the Jordan. The moment that their feet touched the dry land, the waters of the

river returned and overflowed the banks as before. They encamped that night at Gilgal in the plains of Jericho. Joshua set up the twelve stones, that had been brought out of the river’s bed, for a perpetual memorial of the division of the water before the Ark of the Covenant to allow God’s people to pass into their land.

And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever (Joshua 4:20-24).

They were only a heap of ordinary stones, but what an extraordinary message they proclaimed! God expected the children to become interested in this event. The stones were to awaken their curiosity. Then they would be told about the blessings and mercies of God. The stones of Gilgal would be of little use to those children whose parents did not keep freshly in their minds the events they commemorated.

How are we doing at letting our children know? What can happen if the next generation is not properly taught? We can see the consequences of such in Judges 2:10. **“And also all that generation were gathered**

unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10). Apostasy is the consequence for a failure to teach successive generations the way of the Lord.

QUAIL SPRINGS CHURCH OF CHRIST

I was appalled when I looked at the web site of the Quail Springs church of Christ in Oklahoma City (www.quailchurch.com). It would do others good to look at it as well for the purpose of learning the consequences of a failure to let our children know the way and truth of God. Clicking on one icon about the Oklahoma City **Billy Graham** Crusade will allow one to “read more about Quail’s participation in this life-changing event.” How can we participate or have fellowship in any way with one who does not preach the gospel of Christ?

THE QUAIL SPRINGS CHURCH-WIDE CENSUS

Another icon is entitled *In Your Dreams*. It gives the “results from a church-wide census” which was filled out by over 250 members at Quail Springs. Notice the following concerning the subject of instrumental music. “I believe we should not use instruments in our Sunday corporate worship out of respect for our tradition in the Church of Christ, but we should be free to use them in any other ministry area” – 35% agreed. “Using instruments is not a sin, but my personal preference is to worship without instruments” – 31% agreed. “I prefer instrumental music and would be in favor of including instruments in our Sunday worship” – 14% agreed. Finally, one comes to the statement that teaches the truth. “The use of instruments in praise and worship is a sin, so we shouldn’t use it in any of our church activities” – 2% agreed.

Where were the sermons and Bible classes on Bible authority, the silence of the scriptures, aids and expedients, and why we do not use instrumental music in worship today? How is it that only two percent of the over 250 members who turned in this census believe the truth on this issue? It must be the case that a generation or generations failed to be taught the truth. Many today are more concerned with their likes and dislikes rather than God’s will.

On the subject of baptism, Quail Springs’ members gave the following responses: “I received remission of sins when I was immersed into Christ” – 88% agreed. However, what follows after this will be in direct contradiction to the preceding statement. Notice closely: “I believe that since only God is the judge, we can’t know if others have to be baptized to be saved” – only 45% agreed even though the standard by which God will judge us, His holy word (John 12:48), says baptism puts us into the body of the saved (I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:23). This reminds one of **F. LaGard Smith’s** statement:

Are unbaptized believers destined to hell? Are those who have received only infant baptism in eternal jeopardy? Only God knows. On one level, these are questions we have no right even to ask. As seen in this study, there is an abundance of scriptural language that, on its face regards baptism as an essential part of our turning to God. Nevertheless, I would hope that God might apply the ‘common law marriage’ approach for those who have lived a lifetime of service in His name without having participated in the wedding ceremony of baptism.”¹

While it is true that final judgment belongs to God (II Timothy 4:1), the standard of judgment for people in our time will be the New Testament (John 12:48) Jesus said in Mark 16:16, **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”** Would God continue to be just, righteous, and holy if he went back on his word and saved someone who did not obey that? If God’s word is not going to mean anything at the judgment, then how would you and I ever know that we were saved? If I cannot know whether others must be baptized in order to be saved, how do I know if I do? Upon what basis could we conclude anything? And, how could we ever obey the great commission and seek to convert anyone if we could not determine their lost condition based upon the word of God? We do not serve a God of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33).

“I believe one can become a Christian by asking Jesus to come into his/her heart in prayer to God” – 41% agreed even though the Bible nowhere teaches the salvation of the alien sinner by prayer. When Saul was praying, he was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins. He was still in his sins. He needed the blood of Christ to wash them away and that would occur in baptism (compare Acts 22:16 with Revelation 1:5).

“I believe one must be immersed to be saved” – 31% agreed. It is incredible that 88% agreed that they received remission of sins at baptism while only 31% agreed that one must be immersed to be saved. What a contradiction! Is there more than one way to be saved today? What happened to the remaining 57% who do not agree with Jesus when He said, **“He that believeth and his baptized shall be saved”** in Mark 16:16?

The results of this census are shouted to the world by means of their web site. They are shocking, astounding, and tragic for a religious body that calls itself a church of Christ. It is blatantly apparent that children have gotten some wrong answers to some important Bible questions over the years. It is likewise apparent that some parents were unprepared to give the right answers. When such occurs, in time, apostasy results. We simply must do a better job at instilling God’s truths in this generation.

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7:00 P.M. Is The Restoration Principle Scriptural? David P. Brown
8:00 P.M. The Need to Continually Emphasize the Restoration Plea B. J. Clarke

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2003

9:00 A.M. The Early Restorers Contended with Denominationalism Michael Light
10:00 A.M. The Early Restorers Contended with Calvinism Lynn Parker
11:00 A.M. Barton W. Stone Contending with Error Russell M. Kline
12:00 P.M. **LUNCH - Provided at Cane Ridge**
1:30 P.M. "The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery" Paul Vaughn
2:30 P.M. Attitudes Necessary For The Restoration of New Testament Christianity Steve Johnson
3:30 P.M. The Influence of the American Christian Missionary Society Jerry Murrell

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2003

*10:00 A.M. How Error Captured The College of The Bible Danny Douglas
*11:00 A.M. The Restoration Plea Glorifies God Everett Donaldson
3:00 P.M. The Need For Christians to Stand Firm in The Faith Bobby Liddell

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2003

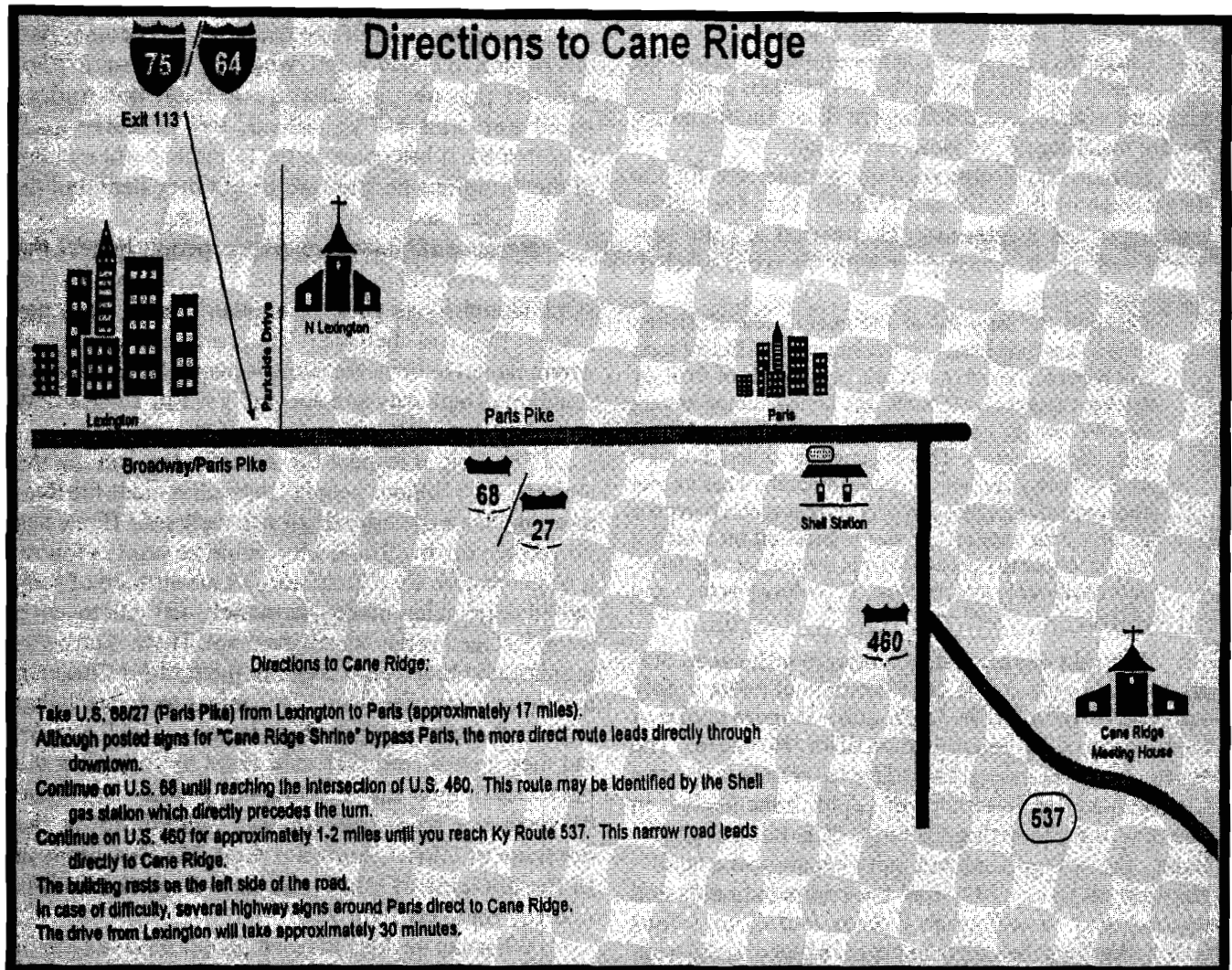
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"Wearied with the works and doctrines of men, and distrustful of their influence, I made the Bible my constant companion. I honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully sought for truth, determined to buy it at all the sacrifice of everything."—Barton W. Stone



Restoration Reflections...

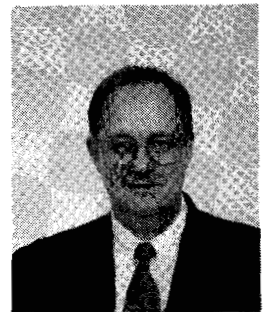
THE EFFECT OF THE RESTORATION PLEA ON DENOMINATIONALISM

Paul Vaughn

The last of the seventeenth century and the first of the eighteenth century saw many religious leaders and members in the denominational world close the door on sectarianism for the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. Men began to study their Bibles and thereby saw the creeds they had been following had taken them away from God's word. It was not long until many of the residents of denominationalism renounced their citizenship of that dark and blinding land, for the beauty of being a Christian only.

THE FRONTIER OF THE RESTORATION

The horizon of the return to the simplicity of the scriptures opened the eyes of many to the blessings of just being a Christian. **Rice Haggard** was in the forefront in reviving the name Christian. In 1794, during a meeting of the Republican Methodists he stood up with his New Testament in his hand and said,



Brethren, this is sufficient rule of faith and practice,

and by it we are told that the disciples were called Christians and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply.¹

Haggard rejected the teachings of denominationalism for the teaching of the New Testament.

Barton W. Stone was another pioneer for the Restoration of the "Ancient Order." He rejected the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith saying it was not in accordance with the word of God. Stone later wrote,

Through the subtily of the enemy, the Christian Church has long been divided into many different sects and parties. Each has a creed, confession of faith, or brief statement of doctrines, as a bond of union among its members, or rather a separating wall between itself and other societies. This is generally called the standard of such a church. If the word standard has its true and usual signification, it imports that such a book is a pillar which supports it; the foundation on which it stands; or the rule by which it is formed, or regulated, both as doctrine and practice. This sets aside the word of God...²

The first generation of restorers influenced others to abide only in the New Testament as their only standard of religion. In 1825, **John Rogers** spoke of his abhorrence for denominationalism. He wrote, "The sects are making great efforts, especially the Cumberland Presbyterians, to establish themselves in this new and promising Country. O, Lord! Let gospel liberty prevail here...let not partyism curse the land!"³ He went on to say, "O, may the commandments and doctrines of men—human Creeds and Confessions which shackles the conscience, give place to the truth of God!"⁴

The early restorers loved God's word more than the teachings of men. They chose to take their stand on the foundation that would not wash away.

DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TODAY

The denominational world today is different from the time of Haggard, Stone, and Rogers. In the 1700's and 1800's most of the preachers in denominationalism believed the Bible to be God's inspired word. Therefore, when they studied their Bibles, they saw the doctrines they were following contradicted God's word. Thus, the great Restoration of New Testament Christianity had its beginning in those honest hearts of years ago.

Today, in the sectarian world some preachers are taught that the Bible is not plenary and verbally inspired. They may give lip service to the scriptures, but that is all! The denominational world does not view the Bible as the world's most essential and critical possession.

Because of the lack of respect for the word of God in denominations, the majority of the "religious

people" are ignorant of the Bible. They become like the people in Isaiah's day when the Lord said, "**Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not**" (Isaiah 6:9). It has come to the point that when many of the "religious people" are taught they hear, but do not see. They see, but do not understand.

Because of biblical ignorance, people believe the statements told them by their leaders. Someone says, "One church is as good as another" or "It does not matter that you believe." Their preachers, some of whom do not believe the Bible is inspired, become the standard of authority and not God's word. The result is the people are anchored in denominational error.

The lack of respect for the scriptures among the majority of "religious people" today, has made the Restoration Plea a useless clanging in their ears. If one has no respect for the Bible, why would he want to follow it as the pattern for Christianity? This attitude of self-willed religion has made it extremely difficult to teach those fastened in denominationalism. There is no common ground to develop between the faithful Christian and those in sectarianism. Some might try to teach that Jesus is the common ground to began to teach people, but they have already rejected Jesus by following the doctrines of men and rejecting the doctrine of Christ. "**Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son**" (II John 9).

What can be done to teach people? Have faith in God's word! It is the power to save if one obeys. Paul said, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek**" (Romans 1:16). There may not be as many honest hearts as in the early days of the Restoration, but there are still many who want to know the truth. It just takes more work and time to find them.

ENDNOTES

1. Colby Hall, *Rice Haggard The American Frountier Evangelist Who Revived The Name Christian*, University Christian Publishing, Fort Worth, 1957, p. 28.
2. Barton W. Stone, "*Biography of Barton W. Stone*" *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke Dickerson, Cincinnati, p.50
3. John Rogers, *The Life and Times of John Rogers 1800-1867*, Lexington Theological Quarterly, Vo. 19, number 1 and 2, January-April, 1984, p.44.
4. Ibid.

—1415 Lincoln Rd.
Lewisport, Kentucky 42351

THE VILLAGE SQUARE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mark Lance



CHARLES WHITLEY, MARK LANCE, CHRIS KRAMER, J.V. RUSSELL

The Village Square congregation is located in Southeast Louisiana four miles outside of New Orleans. The major job market comes from the seafood and oil industry. The congregation is in St Bernard Parrish with Chalmette being the largest city in the Parrish. Between seventy and seventy-five thousand people live in St. Bernard. Catholicism is by far the predominate religion in the area, with its influence being easily seen in the community.

The congregation was begun in the late 60's after hurricane Betsy hit. Attendance usually runs between fifty-five and sixty-five people. However, what may seem like a small congregation can certainly be a shining light in an area where the church of our Lord is not very strong overall. The congregation at one time was averaging in the eighties and nineties before the "oil bust" took a toll on the area. Many members were forced to move away to seek employment elsewhere.

VILLAGE SQUARE A SOUND CONGREGATION

The congregation is blessed to have a qualified eldership. There are currently three elders **Chris Kramer, J.V. Russell and Charlie Whitley**. This eldership not only allows the truth to be preached, they demand that it be preached,

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 domin-

ion for ever and ever. Amen (I Peter 4:11).

All three elders are active in the work of the church.

There are four deacons serving the congregation, **Julio Calix, Scott Russell, Wayne Schulz and Mike Swanner**. Each deacon brings different talents to the work of the congregation. The deacons as well as the elders have faithful wives that enable them to do the work that they do.

The congregation employed **Mark Lance** in 2001 as their evangelist. He and his wife **Tina** have two girls, **Jessica and Katelyn**. They are originally from Tennessee, although they are glad to claim Louisiana as a second home due to the love shown them by the members at Village Square.

Believing the Bible as the only guide for man, only those sound in the faith are invited to speak in the pulpit at Village Square, "**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). In the last two years the congregation has been blessed to have The Memphis School of Preaching come and hold a door knocking campaign with brother **Bobby Liddell** doing the preaching. The ladies have begun an annual ladies' day with **Annette Cates** conducting the first one and **Lavonne McClish** the second. Following both ladies' days, which were

conducted on a Saturday, **Curtis Cates** and **Dub McClish** did the preaching and taught the Bible classes. The ladies again have a ladies' day scheduled in September with sister **Maggie Colley** doing the speaking, and her husband **Gary Colley** preaching the following day. The congregation recently finished a very successful gospel meeting with **David Brown** doing the preaching.

VILLAGE SQUARE

A MISSION-MINDED CONGREGATION

The Great Commission of our Lord is taken as a serious charge, "And he said unto them, 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). Several efforts are being put forth locally and abroad to carry out this commission.

Here in the states the congregation is supporting two students at The Memphis School of Preaching, a radio program with **Kermit Webb**, The Old Land Marks, is being supported and a mission work with the South Terre Bonne congregation is also supported.

Overseas three different works are being supported, **Curry Montague** in Budapest, Hungary, **Tony Pullium** in Norway and **Buck Hall** in the Ukraine. All three of these men have been here in person to report on the work they and their families are doing.

The congregation meets at 200 De La Ronde in Chalmette. The phone number is (504)279-9438. If you are ever in our area for business or vacation we would be delighted to have you come by and worship with us.

—2229 Veronica Drive
Chalmette, Louisiana 70043

Sermon Outlines...

IT IS TIME TO RENEW THE WORK OF GOD (HAGGAI 1:1-15)

Tom Moore

INTRODUCTION

- A. Israel throughout its history went in and out of faithfulness to God.
 1. God would send a prophet or use a godly king to bring his people back into a proper relationship with him.
 2. Because Israel would not learn its lesson, it became necessary for them to learn through adversity, what they refused to learn from the word of God.
 3. Accordingly, Judah spent 70 years in Babylonian captivity, and was stripped of the comforts of Jerusalem.
 4. Mercifully, God had once more intervened by raising the pagan king Cyrus, who released the people and assisted them in reestablishing their place of worship.
- B. So it was that in 538 B.C. the decree was signed and a small band of less than 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity.
 1. Some estimate that only 1 out of every 6 Jews wanted to and did return home.
 2. What was even more discouraging was that the ones who did return to Jerusalem evidenced little spiritual concern.
 3. It is true that they immediately began work on the temple by laying the foundation, but discouragement quickly set in, and the work ground to a halt.

4. During the next 16 years, not one ounce of energy was expended on the building of the temple, the people were content to let the matter drop.



- C. Suddenly in the midst of this lackadaisical attitude, God sent the prophet Haggai to rekindle the vision and the hearts of his covenant people.
 1. It was the 6th month, the season for summer fruits was now ended, and the time of harvest was over.
 2. You can almost hear the mournful cry of Jeremiah: "The summer is over and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).
- D. After 16 years of no temple, no worship, no concern for spiritual things, Haggai comes declaring four ways Israel can renew the work of God:

DISCUSSION

- A. THE TIME IS NOW FOR THE WORK OF GOD
 1. Haggai 1:2
 2. Haggai's message was direct and simple
 - a. The message was what God had observed of his people: This people say, "The time

- has not yet come to build the Lord's house"** Thus ...
- b. Notice the distance that had grown between God and Israel ("This people..."— not My people)
 - c. In like manner, many today have strayed from God and are no longer his people.
3. The lament of the people was most telling.
 - a. For 16 years they found the time and material to build their own houses.
 - b. But they had no time for the Lord's house!
 4. In effect they were saying, "If the Lord wanted us to build his house why didn't he give us more time and see to it that we were better off?"
 5. Today we need to realize that for the one who wants to do what is right, the time is now and available.
 - a. Man is ingenious when it comes to making excuses for why he cannot do God's work.
 - b. The time has never been more ripe for doing the work of the Lord (John 4:35).
 6. The time for excuses is past—the time to do the work of God is now! (John 9:4).
- B. SETTING PRIORITIES FOR THE WORK OF GOD**
1. Haggai 1:3-6
 2. The problem with Israel was not that they had fine paneled homes, but that they had their priorities out of line.
 - a. They were more concerned about themselves than they were about the things of God needing tending to.
 - b. They were complaining about being too poor to carry out the Lord's work, yet they lived in a fine house!
 - c. They were living in nice house while the house of God laid in ruins, their priorities were wrong!(Matthew 6:33)
 3. There has always been a connection between the moral and spiritual condition of a people and their material and economic condition.
 - a. Modern man completely fails to recognize that there is often a moral cause for the seasons of drought and plenty.
 - b. We must evaluate what is happening to us from a spiritual / moral perspective.
 - c. It is time to re-order our priorities.
 - d. Matthew 10:37-39
- C. GETTING INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF GOD**
1. Notice the purposes of obedience—Haggai 1:7-8.
 - a. "Please Godglorify God.
 - b. It is not that God is pleased with a building per se, but the building represents their attempt to express praise and worship to God; to that degree it brings him pleasure and magnifies his name.
 2. Notice the wonderful effects that Haggai's preaching of the word of God (Haggai 1:12).

- a. The people as well as the leaders obeyed.
 - b. They feared God and thus obeyed him.
 - c. They became involved in the work of the Lord.
3. It is time for us to get involved in the work of God.
- D. RECEIVE GOD'S HELP IN DOING HIS WORK**
1. Haggai 1:13-15
 2. Simply, God will help his people discharge their mission.
 3. Many to day cry, "I would like to do the work of the Lord, but I just can't."...God has never asked us to do anything that he has not enabled us to do (Philippians 4:13).
- CONCLUSION**
- A. We must stop giving God the scraps of our time and energy.
 - B. We must stop whining about the blow that life has dealt us.
 - C. If we really want to do the work of the Lord we must reajust our priorities.
 - D. We must stop making excuses—we must stop pretending.
 - E. Now is the time to renew the work of God!

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ANOTHER TOOL FOR SATAN

Annette B. Cates

Nothing good comes along without Satan doing his best to subvert it for his own purposes. After all, he is as a lion that walks about seeking prey (I Peter 5:8). An example of his cunning can be seen in the abuse of the Internet. The Internet began as a military communications project, then expanded to general governmental use, then to larger educational facilities, and from there on down to widespread public use. In and of itself, the Internet is capable of great good. Never before has information and communication been more readily available, and with amazing speed. The greatest good comes from the increased opportunities to teach the gospel worldwide. Business can be conducted globally with a mere keystroke. Friends and loved ones around the world can "visit" online instantaneously through e-mail, buddy lists, and chat rooms. Within hours of my husband's diagnosis of cancer, we were receiving messages from the other side of the world offering prayers to God on his behalf. Thus, personally, and as a librarian, professionally, I know the great good that is offered by the advent of the Internet.

The same characteristics that make the Internet so advantageous also make it ripe for abuse and for the destruction of good people and good works. Therefore, Satan has moved in to claim the Internet as his own personal tool. We know that Satan will use anyone and anything to advance his fight against righteousness. Let us examine a few of the ways that Satan uses the Internet against God's people.

The Internet can be a tool for Satan because it does not always carry documented information. People have a tendency to think that if they see something on the Internet, it must be true. We have an individual responsibility to check out claims to see if they are true or false (Acts 17:11). There is a lack of depth of information available for free. Yes, there are great databases and resources out there, but they often re-

quire sizable fees for access. Public libraries usually have these subscriptions and make them available to their patrons at little or no cost, but most people do their searching from home computers. There is no control that prohibits an individual or group from posting anything with whatever claim they choose, representing themselves to be anybody they wish. Such misinformation may come through our own searches, or it may come unbidden into our e-mail accounts in the form of "spam" messages. We must view the Internet with at least a degree of cynicism and understand its limitations.

The Internet can be a tool for Satan because it can be a major time waster. Time is a valuable resource (Psalm 90:12; Proverb 27:1, James 4:13-15, et al.) Even if all we do is delete e-mail, time is involved. Many people spend hours a day with e-mail and chat rooms. A lot of chat room space is filled with pooled ignorance, argument, and gossip. Little or nothing constructive is accomplished with the time spent in this manner. Workplaces have had to place limits on employees' personal use of company computers because of this very abuse. Again, these are potentially great methods of communication, but we must use our time wisely.

The Internet can be a tool for Satan because of the opportunities for malicious gossip. Somehow, people who would not participate in passing along gossip by mouth, seem to think it is all right if done by computer. I constantly hear of rumors, innuendo, and out-right lies traveling with no restraint as widely and as quickly as the touch of the "send" button. Nobody seems to check them out; they assume it must be so, thus continue the cycle of destruction. The same ones who pass along misinformation never come back to correct their error when proven wrong. The fires are fed with the wood of contentiousness (Proverbs 26:20). Just as with the tongue, the computer can be a blessing or a curse (James 3:2-12). There is no difference.

The Internet can be a tool for Satan because he uses it to destroy marriages. Every few



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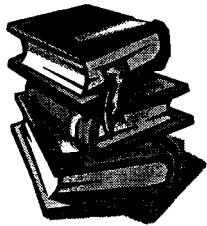
days we learn of another couple whose lives are destroyed because one of the mates "fell in love with" someone he/she met online. Adultery takes place in the heart, and then is carried out through clandestine meetings with the cyber-lover. At that point, nothing else seems to matter, not even the innocent children that are the real victims. Related to this is the destruction of young lives (especially girls) who meet someone "wonderful" through a chat room. The person who said he was nineteen is more likely to be in his forties and a pedophile. It is not unusual to hear a news account of a youngster who has vanished because of this type of situation. In many instances, the child is the victim of sexual abuse, kidnapping, and even murder. Adultery and sex outside of marriage are, and will always be wrong, regardless of how those involved meet, or what their ages are (Matthew 19:4-6).

The Internet can be a tool for Satan because of the increased availability of pornography. One who would not consider buying such garbage or going to a strip joint, or to an "adult theater," will allow the filth to enter his home and his mind by way of the Internet. Such a person thinks that no one else will ever know, forgetting that God sees all. **"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"** (Proverbs 15:3). Further, his family can easily access the files he has been using, possibly

exposing children to the junk. Parents must set up safeguards to prevent their children from being able to get into websites that would have such material. Viewing pornography is not a "victimless" sin. Even if the one who indulges in pornography is the only one who knows, he is a victim. He is in Satan's clutches and steeped in sin. One who practices the works of the flesh will not inherit a home in Heaven (Galatians 5:19-21). Pornography is described in three of the terms that are listed as works of the flesh: fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness. Any of these can lead one deeper and deeper into immorality. That which we allow to enter into the mind controls our life (Proverbs 23:7). Paul's words to Timothy, **"Keep thyself pure,"** apply to all of us.

We hear a lot about computer viruses. We are all too familiar with physical viruses. However, there is a far worse type of virus, and that one is spiritual. There is no inherent sin in using the Internet as a means of communicating and obtaining information. When we abuse it through relying on erroneous information, mismanaging time, gossiping, and engaging in perversion, it is Satan's tool to infect us with fatal illness.

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Bill Flatt, Louisville Bible College, And The Christian Church

Kent Bailey

The July and August 2003 edition of the *Founder And Builder* (advertised as the voice of Louisville Bible College) announced the upcoming annual **Kentuckyiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges** Faculty Convocation Banquet scheduled for August 18, 2003. **Bill Flatt**, retired Dean and Registrar of Harding University Graduate School of Religion was the special guest speaker at this particular gathering. His subject for this gathering was entitled, "*Building Blocks For Effective Ministry Education.*"

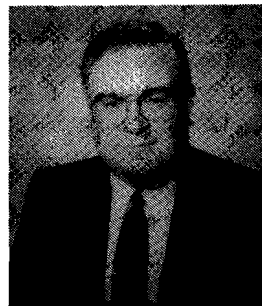
The **Kentuckyiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges** is an association of Louisville Bible College and the College of the Scriptures (colleges operated by members of Independent Christian churches) along with that of the Portland Christian School of Biblical Studies (a preacher training school operated by those of the Premillennial churches of Christ) as an endeavor of formal academic cooperation of training preachers for Independent Christian churches and Premillennial churches of Christ. This information has been posted on the LBC Web Site (<http://louisvillebiblecollege.org/About%20LBC.htm>).

When one considers the crucial nature of religious fellowship as per II John 9-11 it is indeed a tragedy to take note of Bill Flatt extending fellowship to teachers of error in seeking to aid and abet them in "*Building Blocks For Effective Ministry Education.*" Is Bill Flatt unaware that in so participating with these particular colleges that he is endorsing and encouraging Independent Christian churches along with Premillennial churches of Christ in the training of men to preach "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9)?

Independent Christian churches do not respect the New Testament pattern regarding the designation, organization, worship and work of the church that God has set forth in the scriptures. It was the Christian Church that brought about the formation of the *American Christian Missionary Society*. It was the Christian Church that introduced the usage of mechanical instruments of music into the worship assembly and drove then wedge of division among local churches. It was the Christian Church that advocated the "open membership" heresy of receiving into the membership of local churches those who had not obeyed the saving gospel of Christ.

Errors advocated by Christian churches continue to develop. The use of women in leadership positions, special singing groups, observance of religious holy

days, fellowship with the protestant denominations (and even in some cases the Roman Catholics), unauthorized schemes of raising money, the development of unauthorized religious organizations within the local church, the direct influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, the all of life is worship heresy, Premillennialism, and a host of additional false doctrines totally permeate this particular religious group. Those comprising the Independent Christian church have no Biblical concept of the one true New Testament church and are denominational to the core.



The Premillennial movement among churches of Christ began during the early twentieth century largely through the influence of **R. H. Boll**. Following the debate between **L. S. White** (a faithful and able defender of the New Testament pattern) and **Charles T. Russell** (founder of the Watch Tower Society), Boll became infatuated with Russell's millennial heresies and eventually developed his own version of *Dispensational* Premillennialism. It was especially during the 1930s and early 1940s that **Foy E. Wallace, Jr.** masterfully exposed this heresy and limited its influence among churches of Christ. Like the Independent Christian churches the Premillennial churches will embrace any religious movement that will identify with their brand of *Dispensational* Premillennialism.

During the early 1970s this writer (who was a Christian Church preacher at that time) completed my undergraduate education at Louisville Bible College. It was during this time frame that I came into contact with God's truth and two years after my college graduation renounced my identity with The Christian Church and was later baptized into Christ. The words that have been written in this article are from a firsthand experience with personal knowledge of that particular religious body. One thing is indeed for certain; had some of our compromisers among us today participated as a guest speaker on the campus of Louisville Bible College when I was a student there, it would have been a stumbling block to my acceptance and obedience to the truth in addition to their participation in sin (II John 9-11; Romans 16:17-10).

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Directory of Churches...

-Alabama-

Holly Pond-Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026.

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

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

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

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

-Indiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

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

-Missouri-

Farmington-Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, Sunday: 10:00, 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (573) 756-5925.

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Church of Christ, 1040 Hill St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801, (919) 977-7556.

-Oklahoma-

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

-Tennessee-

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

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

-Texas-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Wyoming-

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

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

Did God Really Make Things "Fuzzy"?

Lynn Parker

Imagine this now – one God, one faith, one Spirit but multitudes of interpretations on doctrinal matters. Indirectly, many blame God for the confusion by claiming, "It's impossible for us to understand the Bible alike."

Remember, God **"is not the author of confusion..."** (I Corinthians 14:33). In a sermon entitled, "How To Study The Bible," our prodigal brother **Max Lucado** takes upon himself the prerogative of God to establish the platform for religious unity. Lucado says that the only religious essential upon which all must agree is the "death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ." But Lucado does not stop there. Carefully read this excerpt from one of his taped sermons:

And the question surfaces, "Can you and I be in fellowship or in unity and disagree on any issue in the Bible?" And my response to that is, it depends on the issue.

If you and I do not agree on the cross of Christ, if you think that Jesus was a good man who died a bad death, I don't think we stand in the same spirit of unity. Does that make sense?

But if you and I agree that Jesus was the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, that He died a bodily death, and rose on the third day, and He's returning again, and He sent His Holy Spirit to hold us together, and His grace is sufficient to wash away our sins, I think we can be in unity, regardless of how you or I might feel on some secondary issues. Secondary not meaning unimportant, but secondary in comparison to the cross.

It's not surprising to you, for me to tell you, that right here under this roof, you're worshipping, you're breaking bread, partaking of communion, singing songs with people with whom you'd probably have disagreements on certain things.

You would disagree with me; I would disagree with you. You'd be wrong; I'd be right, but we could all worship together. [Laughter] No, I'm just waking some of you up!

The point is this: unless we understand this principle of priorities in the Bible, the church cannot remain united. Does that make sense?

Unless we understand the principle of priorities in scripture, the church cannot remain united. Either we'll say there's nothing about which we need to agree, and we'll water down everything, or we'll say we all have to agree on every little thing and there'll be no unity at all.

It seems to me the proper response is, there is one area — absolute essential upon which we must stand in common ground, shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand, and that's the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are other things, which godly people throughout centuries, with towering intellects have talked about and discussed and still not quite come together in agreement on, and my thinking sometimes is well maybe God left that just a little bit fuzzy to teach us to get along with each other...just to help us to learn to accept each other, to be patient with each other, and to learn to grow in love. We do not compro-

(Continued on Page 6)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

THIS IS NOT A CHURCH OF CHRIST

The headline across the top of page 7B of the *San Antonio Express-News*, Saturday, September 6, 2003 read, "Oak Hills drops 'Church of Christ'." One may read Oak Hill's full explanation of the reasons for their changes in an article titled "A Call to Greater Vision" on their web page at <<http://www.oakhillschurchofchrist.org/>>.

Other articles in this issue of *CFTF* deal with Oak Hills and Max Lucado's reasons for deciding to remove what they perceive to be "barriers" that hinder people from being converted to Christ (In "A Call to Greater Vision" they say that the term church of Christ is "an insurmountable barrier"). However, I too have somewhat to say on the subject.

Having read Oak Hills' material there came to my mind the following question: How did our Lord respond to Oak Hills "dropping" the term "Church of Christ"? Of course, Jesus is all-knowing. That being the case, when the powers that be at Oak Hills decided to separate themselves from the term "church of Christ," how do we know that it was not the case that a proclamation was issued from the right hand of the Father in Heaven that Jesus Christ had dropped Oak Hills? Indeed, our Lord has been known to warn churches, saying,

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent (Revelation 2:5; Also see 2:16).

Jesus meant what he said and said what he meant in Revelation 2:5 as elsewhere. And, while our Lord's admonition and warning does not apply only to such churches as Oak Hills, if it does not apply to Oak Hills, then pray tell to what church would it ever apply?

DIFFERENT USAGES OF "CHURCH" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The word church finds three usages in the New Testament. As Christ used the word "church" in Matthew 16:18 it includes all the saved (this is also its meaning in Acts 2:47). As it is used in I Corinthians 1:2 it references the saved in a certain geographic location. And, it is used in I Corinthians 11:18, 20 and

14:23 to reference assemblies of Christians convened for religious purposes. In the case of Romans 16:16 the word church is use by the apostle in its geographic sense without referring to a certain geographic location.

“Church of Christ” is not a proper name. Therefore, it is not subject to the rule that proper names are to be capitalized. However, when one begins a sentence in English (as I earlier did) with the term church of Christ, the “c” in the word “church” is capitalized. This is the case because in the English language the rule is that the first letter in the first word of a sentence is capitalized. Furthermore, when one refers to the church in Jerusalem as the Jerusalem Church of Christ it is being used as a proper noun and proper nouns have their first letters capitalized. If because of scruples of conscience one does not desire to ever capitalize the word “church” in the term “church of Christ” then one should abide by the rules of capitalization in English and not use it as the first word of a sentence or as a proper noun. If one is not going to capitalize the letter “c” in the proper noun “Jerusalem Church of Christ” then be consistent and do not capitalize the letter “c” in the term church of Christ when you begin a sentence with said term. Maybe no one will ever affirm that under any and all circumstances the scriptures teach that in print it is a sin to capitalize the letter “c” in the term church of Christ. Since, I attempt to write in English I try to abide by the rules that govern our language

**OAK HILLS
IS NOT A CHURCH OF CHRIST**

The following will demonstrate how the term “Church of Christ” (whether the first letter of “church” is in the upper or lower case) is not quite the “insurmountable barrier” that Oak Hills and Lucado would have us believe it is. I humbly suggest that under that part of their sign that reads “Oak Hills Church” (or any other place where they advertise themselves as Oak Hills Church) the wise moguls thereof should place the following statement: “This is not the Church of Christ.” Of course these apostates will never do such a thing. The reason? Because down deep in their corrupted hearts they know that the term “church of Christ” shows a correct relationship of the saved to their savior, Jesus Christ and vice versa. In their wrong headedness they do not mind *passively* repudiating the term “church of Christ,” but *explicitly* (in just so many words) they will never declare that Oak Hills is

In This Issue...

Did God Really Make Things “Fuzzy”? Lynn Parker	1
<i>Editorial...</i>	
This Is Not A Church of Christ David P. Brown	2
<i>Assistant Editorial...</i>	
“Are You Sure” (That Oak Hills Is Wrong?) Michael Light	5
Grandbury Church of Christ: Going-Going-Gone Jess Whitlock	7
The “Mother Church” Speaks* Johnnie Scaggs, Jr.	9
Division Has Its Evils Noah A. Hackworth	12
“Salvation Is From the Jews” Bruce R. Curd	13
“Oak Hills Drops ‘Church of Christ’” Wayne Price	16
Same Names Can Confuse Ken Young	18
<i>One Woman’s Perspective...</i>	
Back In the Good Old Days Annette B. Cates	20
<i>The Last Word...</i>	
Midway Revisited Kent Bailey	21

not a church of Christ.

**OAK HILLS CHURCH—
WHAT AN IMPROVEMENT!**

Look at what the revised version of their name, Oak Hills Church, literally means—“*called out hills with oaks on them*” or is it “*called out oaks on hills*” or maybe it is “*oaks on hills called out*” (For what it is worth, please notice that I did not capitalize any of the letters). “Whatever the case, the words “Oak,” “Hills” and “Church” (first letters all in upper case) were more important than the word “Christ”—they dropped that unsavory word. But, we are expected to believe that Oak Hills Church is a far better term of identification than any scriptural term referencing the proper relationship of the saved to their savior.

**OTHER SCRIPTURAL TERMS
OF IDENTIFICATION**

Yes, I know there are a number of other terms used in the New Testament whereby God references and identifies the institution of the saved. However, those who are wedded to sectarian denominationalism more than gospel truth will not accept any of them. Regardless of the scriptural term used to identify those saved by Christ in the first century, if the members remain faithful to Jesus, they all believed and practiced the same things (I Corinthians 1:10; 4:17; Philippians 3:16; Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 4:5; Jude 3). In reality the “insurmountable barrier” is the truth of the Bible on any subject that exposes and condemns denominational or any other error.

The “Oak Hillians” and other trees of the same religious bark barely know the text of the Bible and the few who know some of it do not understand it. Moreover, the very few who do understand it, do not believe it. Read any of Lucado’s books and one readily sees the superficial sugary, sentimental, subjective, romanticized, emotionalism, the design of which is to make people feel that God accepts them in their sins. Thus, when one realizes that Lucado is a “best seller,” one is quickly made to realize the mental state of his readers—intellectual and emotional adolescents.

In removing these so-called “barriers,” all that the Oak Hillians and company have accomplished is this: they have turned the Lord’s church into a just another man-made, man-directed sectarian denomination. This is their goal and the goal of all those who walk down the path of least resistance.

**“TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED
ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF
DOCTRINE” (EPHESIANS 4:14)**

On every side there is the cacophony of sound-

ing brass and tinkling cymbals noised about by the sectarians in and out of the Lord’s church. However, we are not forced to sing off key with Satan’s Choir. Indeed, we may continue to turn to the same unchanged and unified notes of the Bible’s gospel message; we can follow the direction of Jesus Christ in his infallible word; participate in heaven’s symphonic melody, and in concert one with another, sing the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3-6). Moreover, we can and must abhor, repudiate, and reject all things that are not authorized by the New Testament of our Lord along with those things that are forbidden (Colossians 3:17; Galatians 5:19-21; II John 8-11). The divine volume has not changed. It will read on the Day of Judgment as it reads now (John 12:48). Therefore, no matter how many digress to the sad spiritual level of the Oak Hillian’s apostasy, what is that to you and me? The Bible teaches and authorizes the same thing today as it always has. While I am very sorry that many in the church are not content and happy with what the Bible says, their rejection of it does not mean that I must go along with them down the road of apostasy and perdition. If Noah could stay with the truth God revealed to him regarding salvation from the flood, then any one today can learn and hold to the truth of the New Testament (Genesis 6:8, 22; Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:20-21).

**WILL WE STAY
WITH THE TRUTH?**

In your life and mine, when all is said and done, it comes down to whether we will adhere to and stay with the truth of the gospel at all costs or whether we will not. Max Lucado and his cohorts are declaring to everyone that they will not continue in the pathway of righteousness. Thus, they have made their decision. However, the “Bible only continues to make Christians only and the only Christians,” members of the Lord’s church of which we may all read on the pages of the New Testament. The gospel of Christ believed and obeyed does not sectarian denominationalists make—the Oak Hillian variety or otherwise.

—David P. Brown, Editor

"ARE YOU SURE" (That Oak Hills Is Wrong?)

As you read this issue of *CFTF* it should be apparent that the Oak Hills congregation (and **Max Lucado**) have completed a journey they began several years ago. For the better part of a decade many men and women have labored to encourage them to stay with the old paths, but to no avail. This being the case it was no real surprise to read in a San Antonio newspaper recently that the congregation had decided to remove the name "Church of Christ" from its sign, and to introduce mechanical instrumental music into the services (in truth, they have been using the instrument for some time at "non-Sunday-morning-services").

A couple weeks ago I read a letter written by Lucado explaining how they arrived at the decision to make the aforementioned changes. The following Sunday I happened to be preaching on the subject of being spiritual and alluded to a congregation changing its name and bringing in the instrument (I did not mention Lucado or the congregation by name – for that was not the real point of the sermon). I referred to this congregation asserting that God was moving them in this particular direction. Of course I flatly denied such nonsense. At this point in the sermon I noticed a visitor getting somewhat upset. As I moved on to another subject this man got up and left the auditorium. He stood in the foyer for the remainder of the service.

At the conclusion of the service, once most of the crowd was gone, this man approached me and wanted to talk. I had noticed earlier that we had some visitors from San Antonio that morning and coincidentally (providentially?) this man and his wife were (are) members of the Oak Hills Church. He took strong exception to my challenging their decision to make the changes alluded to earlier.

The young man was friendly and we had a good discussion (about an hour and a half). As we talked I truly felt sorry for this young man. He was so confused about so many fundamental matters that I had to spend much of the time simply showing him how the Bible authorizes. He affirmed that: (1) we still have apostles today, (2) miracles still occur, (3) instrumental music is a matter of prefer-

ence, (4) the Lord's Supper can be taken at any time, (5) the Holy Spirit leads us directly, (6) the Holy Spirit gives us special spiritual gifts, and (7) denominationalism is legitimate. There were several other troubling comments as well, but this should suffice to show how far they have drifted. Every time I would give a scriptural answer to his questions he would respond, "Are you sure?" Even on the most fundamental matters, "Are you sure?" It was obvious to me that he was unsure on almost every point we covered.

At one point in our discussion I asked him about the necessity of baptism. To my surprise he affirmed that baptism was for the remission of sins. I then asked him if he was aware that Lucado disagreed with this point. I referred him to the sermon Lucado had preached in Lubbock a couple of years ago in which he affirmed the "sinner's prayer." Later in the same radio message he told the listeners who had "accepted Christ" to find a church and be baptized, not to have their sins forgiven but because they were already forgiven. This man said he disagreed with Lucado and that Oak Hills' core doctrines still affirmed baptism. I asked him what good that was doing since the most powerful and influential man in the congregation denied it. I also asked him if he had approached Lucado about this doctrinal error. He said, "no." I then pointed out what I saw as an inconsistency. He did not hesitate to challenge me (someone he had never even met before) over a fairly minor point (he did not like the way I answered the question "Who is a spiritual person?"), and yet, he worships on a weekly

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basis listening to a man preach who denies the essentiality of baptism and says nothing. He did say he probably should ask Lucado about it. I wish him the best in that endeavor.

He finally told me that every point in my sermon was doctrinally and scripturally correct, but I had missed it. Now, that is a new one. It is doctrinally and scripturally right yet wrong. Friends, if a sermon is doctrinally and scriptural correct then it is correct. Anyone who has a problem with it, has a problem with the doctrines and scriptures of God. At the conclusion of our discussion, I was very aware as to how people in the Oak Hills congregation can go along with the nonsense Lucado and the elders are putting

forth. Many if not most simply do not know better. They are in fact denominationalists to the core and do not even know it. They have no understanding of biblical authority and therefore are destined to fail in their spiritual life (Hosea 4:6; Romans 1:1-3).

I sincerely hope the material contained in this issue of *CFTF* will be educational. I do not foresee any changes in Max Lucado or the congregation for which he preaches (though we certainly hope and pray for such). But, perhaps others who are teetering on the brink of liberalism will be awakened by this occurrence and will turn back toward the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16).

—*Michael Light, Assistant Editor*

DID GOD REALLY...

(Continued From Page 1)

mise when it comes to the cross. We don't budge there. There are matters of essential doctrine. There are matters of controversy. We will discuss those — sometimes vigorously. But we can't divide over those.

Did you get that? Max Lucado tells us that there are two areas in the Bible: the "one area" which is an "absolute essential" is "the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ." Everything else is in the "fuzzy" area. Max says that "towering intellects" have discussed the other matters (the "fuzzy" area) for centuries and failed to reach agreement. He tells us that "maybe" God left these things "a little bit fuzzy" intentionally.

Now to suggest that God intentionally left doctrinal matters "fuzzy" is to wrest the scriptures, and it displays gross Bible ignorance on the most fundamental level. Max Lucado suggests God may be the cause of disagreement. The Bible teaches that God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). And too, Bible truth is available to both the uneducated and to Lucado's "towering intellects." Disagreement among smart theologians does not mean the truth cannot be ascertained. It simply means that their love for truth was not there (II Thessalonians 2:10-13). Most will be lost eternally (Matthew 7:13-14). The truth is available to all (John 17:17). It is ascertainable and understandable (John 8:32). But it is ignored or rejected by those with and those without college degrees.

What "principles of priorities" has Max found that categorizes the commands of God as primary (essen-

tial) and secondary (optional)? I have been in correspondence with a homosexual "Music Minister" who claims to believe in Christ, the cross, and God's grace; he also believes that homosexuality is perfectly acceptable to God. Now we cannot help but wonder if Max Lucado will call homosexuality a "secondary" issue and extend fellowship to the "Music Minister." After all, Lucado says that he can fellowship anyone who stands with him "shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand," on "the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Max Lucado sees division among those professing belief in Christ and seeks to lower the bar; that is, he replaces God's standard of fellowship with his own looser version. Make no mistake—Lucado understands that many religious people will be left out of heaven if the criteria for fellowship with God and his children includes such things as baptism for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), the pattern for Christian worship (Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:17), and being a member of the one church for which Christ died (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-5; Acts 20:28). That is untenable to Max Lucado, even though Jesus said as much in Matthew 7:21-23. Too, book sales would not be nearly as lucrative among a small group of the saved (wink).

Is the truth of God's word fuzzy? Only to blinded eyes (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

—1650 Gander Slough Rd.
Kingsbury, Texas 78638

GRANBURY CHURCH OF CHRIST: GOING-GOING-GONE

Jess Whitlock

INTO APOSTASY!

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and Offenses 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).

Under date of March 17, 2003, I wrote a two-page letter to the elders of the Granbury Church of Christ. I was asking for clarification on something they referred to as their "Funival Committee." This was their "Halloween alternative" for the community. However, they had decided it was time for something new—"Spring Fling." This program was designed to promote "a community wide Easter egg hunt." Sure enough, they put in their bulletin:

Spring Fling is an opportunity to invite friends we know to church followed by a picnic lunch and an Easter egg hunt ... We wanted to bring something primarily for out reach, not just entertainment ... through great Bible classes as well as an Easter egg hunt ... to see how many families will return on the next Sunday which is Easter Sunday.

ELDERS REFUSE TO ANSWER LETTER

In my letter I asked them if they were aware that Halloween and Easter Sunday were man-made holidays. I also asked if they would observe Palm Sunday, Lent, Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Whit-Sunday. In addition, I enclosed a questionnaire of eight questions to be answered by the elders concerning Easter Sunday and related matters. Under date of April 2, 2003, I received this thorough reply:

Dear Brother Whitlock,

We are acknowledging receipt of your letter and we thank you for your concern. May we all work together in a way that glorifies God and serves His kingdom. Sincerely,
The Elders of the Granbury Church of Christ.

That was the extent of their defense of the faith! When the elders of the Granbury Church of Christ sent me their "NON ANSWER" letter, I wrote to them again under date of April 12, 2003. I asked them if there was

some reason why they had refused to answer my questions. I also explained to them that we could not join forces in pagan practices nor align ourselves with the man-made holidays of the denominations. Once more, I enclosed a copy of eight questions asking if one of the elders would take five or ten minutes of his time to give a Bible answer to my questions (I Peter 3:15). As of September 1, 2003 there is still no answer. Here are the eight questions that I submitted to the elders:

1. Where is Easter Sunday taught by command, inference, or by example in the New Testament?
2. Read Revelation 22:18-19 and ask if celebrating Easter as a holiday is an addition?
3. Where is the authority in God's word for a special Easter service or commemoration?
4. In light of I Peter 3:15, where is your answer for a "Funival" or a "Spring Fling" complete with an Easter egg hunt and encouraging visitors to attend an Easter Sunday service?
5. Do you believe the Lord's supper is to be observed on the first day of every week and at no other time?
6. Is it right to participate in and/or attend the functions of the man-made denominations?
7. Is it your conviction that Bible authority is needed for everything done in religion?
8. Does the Bible authorize the Lord's church to be involved in entertaining the community? If so, where?

Can you think of any good reason why elders in the church of the Lord would be afraid or ashamed to give a Bible answer to any of those eight questions? The only thing that enters my mind is the fact that they cannot give Bible authority for their observance of man-made religious holidays. I wonder if any member of the Granbury Church of Christ would attempt to answer the above questions using the word of God as the final authority? If not, why not?

THE PREACHER REFUSES TO ANSWER

Since it was apparent the elders of the Granbury Church of Christ would not even attempt to answer my eight questions, I thought that maybe the pulpit minister, **Dr. Stan Reid**, would have the courage of his conviction. So, under date of May 1, 2003, I wrote to him. Once more I expressed my concern about their observance of Easter Sunday. I reminded him that I still had

not received an explanation to even one of my Bible questions. Also, I challenged him to meet me in public debate on this issue. I signed the affirmation, "The New Testament Scriptures do not authorize the Lord's church to commemorate and celebrate man-made religious holy days, i.e., Easter Sunday, Lent, Christmas, etc." Of course, I wrote that in reverse for him to affirm, if he so desired. As of September 7 I have not heard a word from Dr. Stan Reid. I have learned that on August 7, 2003 he accepted an offer to become president of *Austin Graduate School of Theology*, an extremely liberal school among us. I am confident that with Dr. Stan Reid as President, the school will continue to depart further from the teaching of God's word. Christ taught, **"Let them alone. they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch"** (Matthew 15:14).

It is noteworthy that the Granbury Church of Christ paved the way and paid the way for Stan Reid to receive his doctorate from Southern Methodist University. With his background in Methodism he can continue his observance of Easter, Lent, Christmas, and other religious holidays of the denominations.

The leadership of the Granbury Church of Christ would do the Lord's church a great service by changing the name on their sign. In view of their recent departures from the New Testament pattern, it would be preferable to change the name to the Granbury Community Church. In that way all the various man-made religious groups in the area who believe, teach, and practice the very same things can "join" them. They would applaud your liberation from legalism.

With all these things in consideration we can understand why neither the elders nor the past minister would attempt to answer eight Bible questions. There is simply no respect for the authority of God's word.

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 (II Timothy 4:3-4).

We have noted the leadership in the Granbury Church of Christ has no respect for the authority of God's word. However, a few years ago the elders did

answer certain questions about the Bible. Their answers explain their "praise teams," "cluster groups," approval of the NIV, re-evaluation and re-affirmation of the eldership, observance of religious holidays, Christmas cantatas, and so on into infinity. The questions are in italics and the elders' answers in the current font. My comments are underscored.

SOME QUESTIONS OF YESTERYEAR THE ELDERS ANSWERED

Do you believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God?

Yes—but they then discussed the Corinthian correspondence where Paul wrote, "the Lord says," and "not the Lord, but I," and observing the second was Paul's opinion. One elder then asked, "So what is inspired and what is opinion?" Has he never read II Timothy 3:16-17?

Do you believe that all true faithful Christians are in the church of Christ, and that none are to be found in the denominations?

No—one elder knew a Methodist couple that wanted to be baptized. So, the church baptized them. They then went and worshipped with the Methodist Church. Where do you read about the Methodist Church in the word of God?

Do you believe that instrumental music in worship is sinful, unscriptural, and that one will be lost for so sinning?

No—however, another elder disagreed sharply. Another elder commented, "this church will never have an instrument because it is too divisive." Notice the elder did not say sinful or unscriptural, but the reason given is that it would be TOO DIVISIVE!

Do you believe the Lord's Supper has to be observed each first day of the week and not any other day?

Yes—to "the first day of the week." But, No—to "not any other." "Early Christians broke bread daily, was this the Lord's Supper or a meal?" Is this an elder talking? "Some observe it on Thursday because that is when Jesus took it."

Do you participate in denominational activities? Do you believe such is permissible?

Yes & Yes—"I've gone to different denominational functions." Why is this man an elder? An elder is to be an example to the flock, is he not?

It is obvious that there is no respect for the authority of the scripture. These are just a few of the questions put to the elders of the Granbury Church of Christ. Now we understand why they refused to answer my eight Bible questions. These men do not know the word of God!

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THE "MOTHER CHURCH" SPEAKS*

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

The so-called "MOTHER CHURCH" says that they "want to follow the example of Jesus with the Samaritan woman." I wonder, do they mean to say as Jesus said,

... Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

I submit to you that the "MOTHER CHURCH" does not have the spirit or the truth when it comes to her worship and to the doctrine she teaches. Jesus was not teaching the Samaritan woman that she was okay in her lifestyle or in her worship. He taught her and all others that God would require all mankind to come together and worship him in the ONE body of which the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 4:4. Also, that all would be required to be united upon and by the one body of truth or the ONE faith of which Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5. **Max Lucado** parallels the Jews and the Samaritans to the denominations of our day and teaches that God will accept them as they are. Lucado does not believe they need to make any changes.

The "MOTHER CHURCH" asks, "What barriers exist between our church and Christ seekers?" It would seem to me that no barriers exist if one is speaking about "our church", "their church", "your church", or "my church". The church does not belong to the people who make her up. Jesus purchased his church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Jesus, alone, built his church (Matthew 16:18). However, if one is speaking about the Lord's church then there are many barriers. Mainly, it is Satan who is the one who stands between the sinner and the true church. Satan does not want the world to know the truth. He wants them to feel good about the sin in which they are living and would like to convince them that it does not matter how one worships God, just as long as one does, Cf. Lev. 10:1-3. Let's remember what the Bible says, "**God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth**" (John 4:24).

The "MOTHER CHURCH" states:

Recognizing the power of contemporary music, these new assemblies will be instrumental. A soft keyboard

beneath an altar call, the sound of a cello during communion service...these tools enhance outreach. After fifteen years and several thousand sermons, I am convinced instrumentation reaches hearts. ...Motivated by a desire to touch more souls, we feel it is wise to use this tool.

Whatever happened to being motivated by the truth? Whatever happened to Bible authorization for all one believes and practices (Colossians 3: 16, 17)? Is it a wise thing to use the tool of the Devil? Does the wisdom of men surpass God's wisdom? The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah. 55:8-9).

It does not matter how wise men may think that the use of mechanical instrumental music in worship is, God still says that he wants us to SING.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; (Ephesians. 5:19-20). 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 (Colossoians 3:16).

Where do we find God authorizing one to use mechanical instrumental music? There is no authorization for it. The "MOTHER CHURCH" says it is okay, but God the Father says no, it is not okay.

The "MOTHER CHURCH" declares, "The three Sunday morning services in the main Worship Center will remain non-instrumental. In this way, ample choices will be offered to all members." "Choices"—where in the Bible does it teach that mere men have a choice in the kind of music used in the worship of God? Where is the passage of scripture that authorizes any other kind of music other than singing to be used in our worship to him? It sounds to me like the phrase I have seen on the back of many trucks, "Attend the church of your choice today." By whose authority do they make such statements? The only choice God has given us is to decide whether we will worship him or the god of this world. As Joshua declared to Israel of old so it is with us today:

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).

More and more we are seeing the trend to have contemporary and traditional worship periods. Of course these things are done without the authority of the Lord. Those who have these unauthorized worship assemblies cannot be pleasing to the Lord. They are trying to please the masses. They are looking for numbers and have no true love for God or the souls of men.

If Max Lucado had lived during the days of Noah prior to the great flood, he and those who think as he does may very well have reasoned in the following manner. "We want to give the people a choice. Let us have a traditional ark and a contemporary ark." Look as diligently as you can and you will find only one ark authorized by God. If there were other arks, contemporary or otherwise, the only one mentioned by the Bible was the one God authorized and Noah built (Genesis 6:22). If there were other arks they did not make it to the other side of the flood. Those who believed God were on the ark that Noah built and they were saved by their loving and faithful obedience to the word of God. All others died in the flood. According to the inspired apostle Paul there is a message in the inspired account of Noah, the ark, the flood, those who were saved, and those who were lost (Romans 15:4; Also see Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:20-21).

The "MOTHER CHURCH" says, "Let's create a safe-place for seekers to hear a risky message." What "risky message?" From their viewpoint what is risky about a message that teaches a social gospel that encourages one to do his own thing? I ask again, what is risky about that message from the worldly view? Nothing! However, from God's perspective, it is not only risky, it is a doctrine that has absolutely no regard for his authority and, thus, if believed will damn one's soul to an eternal hell. Again Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians. 3:17). "In the name of the Lord Jesus," means by his authority. Therefore, the only safe place to hear the message of salvation is in faithful church of our Lord. The only safe message is his gospel. As Paul wrote,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:16-17).

Max Lucado and his followers are ashamed of the gos-

pel of Christ. What they preach is a brand x gospel, which Paul said is,

...not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:7-8).

The "MOTHER CHURCH" says, "We will equip them (multi-site churches JS) with prayer, preparation, perhaps even a staff of two or three ministers and a healthy start-up gift. Our multi-site churches could stay linked together by viewing a video of the sermon from the 'mother church.'..." How does one group of elders (over one church, the "MOTHER CHURCH") scripturally oversee many churches? Does that sound somewhat like the beginning of another Catholic Church. Where is the authority for one church to call itself the "Mother Church" as Lucado called the Oak Hills Church? There is no place found in the word of God where we find one church in charge of another church. Each church was self-governed—autonomous. Paul told Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). The New Testament teaches that each church had its own elders. Also, no eldership is authorized by the New Testament to oversee the work of another church. With the thought that someone can have such a low, if no regard for the beauty and sacredness of the Lord's church as well as the authority of our Lord, I am made sick to my stomach. They blaspheme the name of our Lord and Saviour. May these apostates be brought to repentance.

The "MOTHER CHURCH" says:

Some people find the name "Church of Christ" to be an insurmountable barrier. Scripture urges us to remove cultural hindrances while remaining scripturally true. Paul writes: "When I am with the Jews, I become one of them so that I can bring them to Christ...When I am with the Gentiles who do not have the Jewish law, I fit in with them as much as I can. In this way, I gain their confidence and bring them to Christ. But I do not discard the law of God; I obey the law of Christ...Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings" (I Corinthians 9:20-23 NLT).

What a perversion of the word of God. However, even in this so-called translation, truth can still be found and it contradicts virtually all that Max Lucado writes. Listen to these words, "...But I do not discard the law of God; I obey the law of Christ." Max Lucado and his followers have all but abandoned the law of God; they know not what it means to obey the Law of Christ. By denying the truth on mechanical instrumental music, on baptism, on the name of the church, and so on, they have denied the name of Christ.

Jesus said, **“But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven”** (Matthew 10:33). Yes, we do need to become all things to all people, but this never gives us the right or authority to ignore what the word of God obligates us to do in order to be saved. Cultural differences do not give us the right to set aside the Law of God on any matter.

Is it scriptural to call those saved by Christ, the “church of Christ?” Absolutely (Romans 16:16), if so, then what is the real “insurmountable barrier?” It has nothing to do with cultural hindrances or people just not liking the name “church of Christ.” The real reason is because of the doctrine that is taught by faithful men in the body of Christ. Truth is what separates us, not cultural differences.

The “MOTHER CHURCH” says, “We can reach more souls by modifying “Oak Hills Church of Christ” to “Oak Hills Church.” And, we have always been told by these folks that there is nothing in a name. Maybe they were wrong after all. Why would anyone want to take the name of Christ out of the term used to reference those saved by the Lord? I for one am glad that they have finally taken the name Christ off their sign, for they took Him out of their lives and worship a long time ago. I wish others, if they will not repent and come back to the truth, would do likewise. At least this way, we know they do not want to be identified with the body of believers who correctly call themselves the “church of Christ”—that body of people who believe in speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent, who call things by Bible names and do things in Bible ways.

Oak Hills Church claims they are not abandoning their roots. But that is exactly what they are doing. They have abandoned their roots with Christ. They say that they seek to be a “non-denominational church” when in fact they really seek to be an any and all-denominational church. That is, they want to accept anyone regardless of what they believe.

The “MOTHER CHURCH” says “We are not altering any of our core values. We still preach the cross, edify the saved, and love the lost.” Jesus said, **“If ye love me, keep my commandments”** (John 14:15). He further stated, **“...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him”** (John 14:23). Our “core values” ought to be to love the Lord and keep his

commandments. Looking at the truth of the gospel and then looking at Lucado’s “core values,” it is obvious that he has disregarded gospel truth. He then put the Bible through his human filtering system and evolved his own idea of what the weightier matters of the law are. This allows him and “MOTHER CHURCH” to inform everyone else regarding which truths are more important than others. We do not have to go to the Pope in Rome for we have one in San Antonio—his Eminence, the Right Reverend Max Lucado.

Our duty is to keep on doing what we know the New Testament teaches us to do and we will safely reach heaven (I Corinthians 15:58: Revelation 2:10). This is the way that is right and cannot be wrong. May God help us to remain true to his divine word, the Bible.

**All quotes referencing what Max Lucado or the Oak Hills Church has said are from “A Call to A Greater Vision” by Max Lucado found on the Oak Hills Church Internet Web page at www.oakhillschurchofchrist.org*

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DIVISION HAS ITS EVILS

Noah A. Hackworth

It staggers our imagination when we think about the by-products of **division**. For example, “bother,” “irk,” “trouble,” “vex,” “beset,” “distress,” “smite,” “torment,” “assail,” “harass,” “molest,” “worry,” and “badger” are all fruits of division. Just thinking about the effect these words can have on our lives should cause all of us to seek with a more intense determination the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1). However, *peace at any price* is not a desirable alternative. Our brotherhood is greatly troubled and unfortunately division has become necessary in some cases because some have departed from the truth; but if we can remind ourselves that division among God’s people is always costly, perhaps some of it can be avoided.

DEFINITIONS

A look at the words that are used in the Greek New Testament to describe division will be of benefit to every student of the Bible.

1. DICHOSTASIA

This word means “a standing apart *diche*, asunder, apart, *stasis*, a standing; the root *di* indicating division.” This word appears in Romans 16:17 where Paul says,

Now I beseech you, brethren mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned and turn away from them (cf. Galatians 5:20).

2. SCHISMA

This word “denotes a cleft, a rent.” Jesus used this word in Matthew 9:16,

No man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made (cf. John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; I Corinthians 1:10; 11:18; 12:25).

3. HAIREISIS

Hairesis means “a choosing, is translated ‘sect,’ ... 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 a party or sect in contrast to the uniting power of ‘the truth,’ held in toto; a sect is a division developed and brought to an issue...” To Felix, in Acts 24:14, Paul said,

But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which

they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets (cf Galatians 5:19-21).

5. ERITHIA

This word “denotes ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes party-making. It is derived, not from *eris*, strife, but from *erithos*, a hireling; hence the meaning of “seeking to win followers.”

APPLICATION

To understand what causes division can be of great benefit in helping us to avoid it. However, we will apparently be subjected to occasions of stumbling as long as we are in this world, but Jesus pointed out the magnitude of such when He said,

... It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling will come, but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him if a milestone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble (Luke 17:1-2).

Just like discipline, the prevention of division begins with our personal selves. Paul said, “**But I buffet my body, and bring it unto bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected**” (I Corinthians 9:27).

CONCLUSION

The words of the Psalmist, a thousand years ago, relate to what we are discussing perhaps better than anything else we could mention: “**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity**” (Psalm 133:1).

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"SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS"

Bruce R. Curd

In discussion with the Samaritan woman of John 4, they talked about several objects; namely, water, weddings and worship. This much married woman preferred to discuss religious matters with our Lord rather than her moral life, so she quickly dismisses the Master's statement in verses 16 and 17 and hurried to the subject of worship. It is good that she did, for without such a change of subject, we might never have had the saviour's masterful observation we are now considering.

Jesus replied to her question about where men should worship by telling her, "**Ye worship what ye know not. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews**" (John 4:22).

By no means did Jesus seek to convey the idea that salvation was for the Jews in any exclusive sense. Romans 1:16 affirms, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**" And again, in Galatians 3:26,27, Paul wrote:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Then in what way is salvation from the Jews?

IT IS TRUE THAT PHYSICAL PRESERVATION IS FOR THE JEWS

Consider the problem of the Jew. It is a problem of the athiest. Frederick the Great asked his chaplain to show him a miracle and was answered by his servant, "Sire, the Jews." Like the burning bush in Midian's desert the Jew is never consumed. Let the athiest or anyone else attempt to explain the Jew's continuous existence. The Jew is a problem to the nationalist. Be the Jew an American financier, a German scientist, a French philosopher, or a Russian general, he remains identified as a Jew. Even Hitler could not destroy the Jew.

THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE JEWS

The gentile prophet, Balaam, and the Hebrew

prophet, Moses, prophesied of the Jews' separation and desolation. Take Numbers 23:9 which says, "**For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.**" Here the heathen prophet affirms that the Jews would not in any future time comprise a nation. Then in Deuteronomy 28:47-57, Moses, in a long and melancholy statement, threatens that God would destroy the nation of Israel for her disobedience—and he did. Read this magnificent prophecy carefully!

Jeremiah, sometimes called "the weeping prophet", many years later, foretold the humiliation and physical preservation of the Jews. Hear the prophet as he thunders God's warning, "**And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.**" (Jeremiah 23:40.) Again and more explicitly, "**And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them**" (Jeremiah 21:49). And once more the same inspired seer wrote:

For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee, though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: (ital. mine, BRC) but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished (Jeremiah 30:11).

All of Jeremiah's prophecies relative to the scattering and humiliation of the Jews have been wonderfully fulfilled to the letter and their permanent preservation is known to all. The great historians, Josephus and Eusebius, both record the final breaking up of the Jewish nation on August 10, A.D. 70, fulfilling the prophetic warning of Jesus in Luke 21:20, 21. The record says:

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Let no one be misled by the present Zionist state called "Israel" located in Palestine. It has not the slightest relation to ancient Israel, the nation whom God once

loved and treasured above all peoples. (cf. Deuteronomy 7:1-26.)

Just what is the relation of present world Jewry to Old Testament Israel? We think they have little, if anything, in common. Are the majority of so-called Jews, whether living in Israel or anywhere else, related to God's people of the Old Testament? This is an all-important question in view of the current thinking about the tiny nation at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. (Lest anyone think that this scribe is anti-Semitic or prejudiced in any manner toward the Jew or any other people, we insert this note at this point in our study. We love all men intently and would have them to saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.)

But are there really any Jews in the world today? If so, there are not many, as we shall see. It is a fact that no claimant to be a Jew (a descendant of Jacob through Judah) today can trace his lineage—if his very life depended upon it. Then, how can he be sure of his ancestry?

Regarding the first question, the authorities inform us that no "Jew" living today is related to Old Testament Israel. The Jewish Encyclopedia, the Britannica and the Americana Encyclopedias all speak to the point. I have carefully examined all articles pertaining to the subject in these massive volumes.

These sources all agree that the Ashkenazim Jews, which make up nearly 90% of the world's Jews, are of Khazar ancestry. The Americana has this, "Ashkenazi are the Jews whose ancestors lived in German lands." (Vol. 2, p. 436.) Again, "In Israel the supervision of religious life is divided between an Ashkenazi (80%) and a Sephardi (20%) chief rabbi" (Ibid.) Then, "In the late 1960's Ashkenazi Jews numbered some 11 million, about 84% of the world Jewish population" (Ibid.)

The Jewish Encyclopedia says concerning the origin of the Ashkenazi people, "A people traced back (Genesis 10:3; I Chronicles 1:6) through Gomer to Noah's son Japheth." (Volume 2). Therefore, the Ashkenazi are not Semites, as Semites (all Hebrews, the nation of Israel, the Arabs, and the Jews) descended from Shem, not Japheth—And since Abraham came through the line of Shem, and so of Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and the "**Deliverer was to come to turn away ungodliness from Jacob**" (Romans 11:26.) It is evident, therefore, that the Jews (so-called in present-day "Israel", cannot be descended from Jacob, and they are not, therefore, in any way, shape, or form related to the Israel of the Old Testament. The Lord has never made any special promises nor granted any special privileges to these athiestic Zionists, other than that he will save them, along with all other men, who will come to faith and obedience (Acts 15:9). (See a fuller discussion of

this subject in the author's book, "Dispensational Premillennialism Refuted, Again!" Chapter 14.)

Note one final pertinent point from Jeremiah with reference to Jewry. The prophet tersely wrote:

Then shalt thou break the bottle (see verse 1) in the sight of the men that go with thee. And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; EVEN SO WILL I BREAK THIS PEOPLE AND THIS CITY, AS ONE BREAKETH A POTTER'S VESSEL, THAT CANNOT BE MADE WHOLE AGAIN... (emp. mine, BRC) (Jeremiah 19:10-11).

This great prophecy shows conclusively that the premillennialists interpretation of Romans 11:26 and other passages is false to the extreme and that any attempt to formulate a separate nation for the Jews is futile.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE JEWS AS A PEOPLE IS A PROPHETIC PROOF AND A RE-WARNING TO US

The Jews (7) are scattered worldwide yet distinctly preserved, not as a proof that they are still yet the "pets" of God (Acts 10:34, 35; 15:9), but of the sureness of God's prophetic word concerning them.

Moreover, whether Christians or not, physically, they are a monument of warning to the present people of God. Paul wrote, "**Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, (the Roman Christians, BRC) goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off**" (Romans 11:22).

IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS

Paul declares that the "oracles of God" were given to the Jews (Romans 3:1, 2) and to no other people (See also Acts 7:38). The "oracles" were primarily the Old Testament law, and possibly other revelations as given directly through the prophets over the years. In I Peter 4:11, Peter enjoins, "**If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.**" This reference to "the oracles of God" cannot mean the Old Testament law, but rather the apostle is talking about the everlasting gospel of the son of God.

Again, with the exceptions of the books of Job, Luke, and Acts, it is likely the entire Bible was written by Jews. And Luke, in the book of Acts, always puts the answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" in the mouth of Jewish people—unless the Jailor is the lone exception.

The well-known Psalms, Isaiah 53, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Daniel 2:44; 7:12, 13, and a host of others, were all written by Jews. Paul forever sets the standard of the gospel we must preach and obey to be saved. It is the gospel that a Jew, Paul himself, preached (Galatians

1:8, 9). In that gospel we have a sure criterion by which to judge between true and false religion.

Moreover, it was Jewish blood that coursed through the veins of the son of God, and Mary's genes were transferred into this God-man (Matthew 1:1; Hebrews 7:14). Recall the many Jewish types of Jesus:

The Passover Lamb (John 1:39; I Corinthians 5:7).

The Prophet like Moses (Acts 3:17-26).

The Great High Priest (Hebrews 8:2).

A King greater than David (Acts 2:29-31).

Again, the church of God is from the Jews. It had its beginning in the Jewish capital city, Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:8); on a Jewish holy day, Pentecost (Acts 2:1); with Jewish sinners repenting and obeying the gospel (Acts 2:5, 36-47); with Jewish preachers, like Peter and the other apostles, announcing the divine prescription for man's sins (Acts 2:37-39.)

Still again, the church was built upon Jewish prophets and apostles as a foundation, with Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20; I Corinthians 3:11.)

The church is typical of the old "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16), the City of God (Matthew 5:14; Psalms 46:4); the Temple of God (I Corinthians 3:15); Jerusalem itself (Isaiah 66:8; 54:1-3); in fact, many another Jewish type is fulfilled in the church.

Isaiah 2:1-4 is fulfilled in Acts 2

Isaiah 28:16 is fulfilled in Acts 4:11

Isaiah 52:8 is fulfilled in Acts 4:32

Isaiah 62:2 is fulfilled in Acts 10,11

Psalms 118:22-24 is fulfilled in Acts 20:7

Thus salvation is from the Jews because the word of God, the Son of God, and the church of God are all from the Jews, and for the first ten years of the history every single Christian was either a Jew or a proselyte to Judaism.

ALTHOUGH SALVATION IS FOR THE GENTILES IT IS IN NO SENSE FROM THE GENTILES

Many years ago, C. A. Westapher, a noted Bible scholar and preacher, wrote, "In our country there are about two hundred and seventeen kinds of religions, which is two hundred and sixteen too many, nearly all of which originated by Gentile men and women after the days of the apostles, in Gentile countries and established under presumptuous Gentile leadership. But no Divine institution has come from Gentile creation. Those religious institutions whose doctrines were first preached elsewhere than at Jerusalem lack the seal of genuineness. Any gospel or system of faith that was not first preached by our Lord's chosen witnesses—Peter, Paul, and others, Jews according to the flesh—is a spurious

and perverted gospel. Men, then, are trusting in Gentile-originated creeds and churches, not yet knowing that "salvation is of the Jews."

Any church beginning at any other place than Jerusalem, or at any other time than the Pentecost following Jesus' ascension into heaven, cannot be the Lord's church.

Any creedbook, manual, confession, book of discipline, manual or catechism, written by Gentiles, or even modern-day "Jews" does not meet the standard—the word of God.

Creeds of men, if less than the Bible, are not enough; if more than the Bible, they are too much; if the same as the Bible, they are unnecessary because inspiration had given man the Bible long before any such human production came along.

The church of our Lord began at Jerusalem on Pentecost of Acts 2, fulfilling the word of God which was from the Jews, and believing and obeying the son of God, who was a Jew according to the flesh (Romans 1:3.) All of God's inspired spokesmen were Jews and all whom they taught and converted, in the beginning years of the church, were Jews as well.

How shall we obtain this precious salvation which is for Jew and Gentile alike? Just do as the Jews did on Pentecost (Acts 2:38, 47.) But to become a member of a Gentile-originated denomination you must do something different from, or in addition to, those things commanded by the apostles.

Have you obeyed the gospel but have become unfaithful? Then remember Romans 11:22 and come back to the Lord in his appointed way (Acts 8:22).

Jesus wept bitterly overcoming demise. Hear him:
O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. And ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate (Matthew 23:37, 38).

Jesus is likewise concerned about you and me. Jerusalem would not obey! Will you?

—64 Caraway Drive
Marion, North Carolina 28752

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. Hear the Gospel—Acts 5:7
2. Believe The Gospel—Mark 16:15-16
3. Repent of Sins—Acts 17:30
4. Confess Christ—Romans 10:9-10
5. Be Baptized for the Remission of Sins—Acts 2:38

"OAK HILLS DROPS 'CHURCH OF CHRIST'"

Wayne Price

The above announcement from the September 6, 2003 *SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS* brings both sadness and gladness. The latter because this religious group (the Oak Hills Church of Christ) having decided to cease following the New Testament pattern, and becoming just another denomination, it will now be easier to explain to others that this church of Max Lucado's is not a New Testament church. However, it also brings sadness, because no doubt there are some in that congregation who do not like what has happened. They may eventually quit attending there and find their way to a church patterned after the New Testament order. However, a number will continue to stay with them, feeling a closeness to the building itself, and not desiring to move elsewhere. These weak members have slowly changed priorities, and in many cases, since the congregation's move to liberalism was slow, they (like many) evidently felt that a few changes "here and there" were not enough to warrant their protest.

The elders bear the brunt of the blame for this congregation ceasing to be a New Testament church. **"Woe be to pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord"** (Jeremiah 23:1). As overseers of the flock, it is the elders' task to care for and feed the flock over which they have the oversight (I Peter 5:2). It is obvious they have failed in "taking care of" the church of God (I Timothy 3:5). How, one may ask? If the above facts do not manifest a dereliction of duty on their part, how about the following information gleaned from the above newspaper article?

Lucado says:

When it comes to strategy, when it comes to approach, we want to do whatever seems most effective at the time. That's what these initiatives are: changes of strategy, not changes of doctrine or core values.

The article continues:

Oak Hills' core values are similar to those of other evangelical churches, emphasizing the need for faith in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection for salvation. Oak Hills also believes **salvation doesn't come through baptism, but that baptism is the initial step of obedience after salvation**. Most Churches of Christ feature only a cappella singing, a tradition King (Vic King, their minister of missions and outreach) says is based on the absence of the use of instruments in the New

Testament churches. But for the first time, **Oak Hills will add instruments** to a new Sunday evening service, which will be geared toward young adults and will begin early next year.

It took centuries (after the first century) to make such changes and introduce instrumental music into worship assemblies, but it took Oak Hills about 15 years (Max Lucado has been there 15 years). The New Testament still says that baptism is necessary for salvation (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38, and Acts 22:16), regardless of what Lucado teaches. And he, like all of us, will be judged by what Jesus taught (John 12:48), not what Lucado teaches. Max Lucado had the gall to say that the name change does not change core values at all. Well, that can mean one of two things: Either Oak Hills has believed all along that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, or they have made changes in core values after all, despite his denial. Which is it?

Now that Oak Hills has severed ties with Christ's church, can Quail Springs (Oklahoma City) be far behind? In a poll of its members, leaders found out the following facts regarding the thinking of their members at Quail Springs:

"forty-five percent of its members believe one can be saved by merely asking God to 'come into his heart.'"

"two percent of its members believed the use of instruments in worship was a sin."

Any congregation, constantly fed by liberals and their doctrine, will eventually wind up rejecting New Testament teaching, while believing themselves to be okay with the Lord. But Jesus says: **"Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things which I say?"** (Luke 6:46). Furthermore, we are not to teach **"for doctrine the commandments of men"** (Matthew 15:9); we are not **"to be carried about with every wind of doctrine"** (Ephesians 4:15); but rather we are to **"mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them"** (Romans 16:17). The above two groups should consider themselves marked!

The Lord's church today will be the same in organization, worship, doctrine, and practice as the first century church (whose pattern we find in the New Testament), else it will cease to be the Lord's church (Revelation 2:5, and 1:28). Though we love all, even false teachers, we dare not allow our love for others to

cause us to disregard what the Lord has taught in the New Testament. In fact, love for others motivates us to try to restore them, even though 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...” (II Timothy 4:3-4). Please check the warning of Colossians 3:17!

Those of the late first century and early second century, as they deviated from New Testament doctrine, no doubt also thought they could improve on what the Lord taught in his inspired word, but they were wrong then too. Hence the result, today as then, is the making of just another denomination, and a crucifying of the son of God afresh (Hebrews 6:6) as they rip his body (the church — Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18, 24) to shreds.

Since overseers are responsible for the sheep of their flock, they need to be reminded of the seriousness of their task in tending the flock. Hebrews 13:17 says “they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...” That is serious business indeed! It is pathetic to see an apathetic Christian with no sympathy for the lost due to not having empathy with them!

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“Time is Filled with Swift Transition”—Garland Elkins

Saturday, November 8

9:00 AM

“The Fullness of Time”—Marion Fox.

10:00 AM

“The Last Time”—Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

11:00 AM

“Haste, Let us Hold up Christ the True Light”—Cliff Lyons

12:00 PM

Lunch provided at the building

1:30 PM

“Remember Now Thy Creator”—Ben Williams

2:30 PM

“A Time of War and a Time of Peace”—David Watson

3:30 PM

Questions & Answers Various Speakers

Sunday, November 9

9:30 AM

“Take Time to be Holy”—Wayne Price

10:30 AM

“Work, for the Night is Coming”—Curtis A. Cates

11:30 AM

Lunch on your own

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SAME NAMES CAN CONFUSE

Ken Young

How common is your name? I never much thought about someone else having my name when I was growing up. In my adult years, I have learned there are many others with my name, probably with different middle names. The Greater Atlanta phone book lists eighteen different people with my name, with at least one having the same middle initial.

My name is **Ken Young**. I was born in Houston, Texas, in 1952. During my childhood, my family lived in the Houston area for many years. My dad worked for Marathon Oil Company, and eventually, we moved to Bay City, Texas, in 1966. Upon another job transfer, my family moved to Midland, Texas, in February, 1968. My high school years were completed when I graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1970. During these years, my parents, my sister, and I were members of the Golf Course Road Church of Christ.

After earning a B. S. Degree in Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University in 1974, I worked for Union Carbide for several years in the New Orleans, Louisiana, area. In 1979, I publicly identified with the Hickory Knoll Church of Christ in Haraban. **Darrell Conley** was the preacher there at that time. With his encouragement, I went back to school, earning a B.Th. Degree in 1983 from the Southeastern Biblical Institute (now defunct) in Doraville, Georgia, and earned my M.A. degree in 1985 from the Alabama Christian School of Religion (now Southern Christian University) in Montgomery, Alabama. It was a great privilege to learn from such great Bible teachers as brother **Rex Turner, Sr.**

My first full-time preaching work was with the Lord's church in Winder, Georgia, where I labored from 1984 to 1998. Since January, 1999, I have preached for the Bogart Church of Christ, Bogart, Georgia, just west of Athens (in the northeast part of the state).

It has been my privilege to work with many faithful preachers in gospel meetings over the years. Some of them are **Randall Medlin, W. Gaddis Roy, Felton Spraggins, Malcolm Hill, James Rogers, Elliott Glasgow, Skip Andrews, Keith Mosher, Henry Huckeba, V.P. Black, Curtis Cates, and Bert Thompson** (seminars).

One day, I found my name listed as a "worship leader" directing the "Hallal Singers" at a noted gathering of apostates. It was surprising to learn about all of the recordings of religious music available by this singing group and my name. Someone asked me if I was associated with all of the songs listed under my name in Songs of Faith and Praise. I am not. Eventually, I found that Ken Young was this person, amazingly, at Golf Course Road Church of Christ

in Midland, Texas. The probability of such similarity? This is the Ken Young mentioned negatively in the May, 2003, issue of *Contending For The Faith*, along with possible earlier references. We are different persons with the same name. I have not met the other Ken Young.

There is no way of knowing how many brethren and friends, from years ago in Midland and other parts of Texas, have connected me with the present Ken Young at Golf Course Road. From what I have learned, we are as different as can be religiously. We do not have spiritual fellowship with one another (I John 1:7).

The Bible says there is something in a name (Acts 4:12). It says, "**A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth**" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). Even if another person today wears the name "Jesus Christ," our Father in heaven would know his only begotten Son from anyone else with the same name.

We will all be judged by Christ individually at the end of time (II Corinthians 5:10). Whether there are a hundred or a thousand Ken Youngs, he will know the difference between me and all of the others, including the Ken Young now at Golf Course Road.—260 Ryan Rd., Winder, GA 30680-3562

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One Woman's Perspective...

BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Annette B. Cates

A dear friend gave me a gift subscription to the magazine REMINISCE. The issues are filled with pictures and short essays written by the readership relating their memories of times gone by. I enjoy each issue because I can relate to the stories that tell of occurrences that were typical of the years when I was a child or a young adult (1940s-1960s). It is healthy to look back at good times past and relish the memories. It is also healthy to be able to leave unpleasantness in the past, and not harbor grudges and ill-will. Paul the apostle told us in Philippians 3:13 that one thing he did was **"...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."** In fact, we have a tendency to idealize our memories. Sometimes, this idealization of the past can bring spiritual disaster.

Idealizing the past was a problem for the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness. On nu-

merous occasions, they complained of their situation; they forgot the slave labor conditions under which they had lived in Egypt.

And the children of Israel said unto them [Moses and Aaron], 'Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger' (Exodus 16:3; cf Numbers 11:4-6).

In other words, "Things were better back in the good old days." Never mind that God was guiding them with a pillar of cloud by day and protecting them with a pillar of fire by night. Never mind that God was pro-



viding water to drink and manna and quail to eat. They had everything they needed, but had no recognition nor appreciation for their blessings. For us, idealizing the past and dwelling on "If only...", "I wish I had (or had not)...," or "Back when I was..." can lead us down a spiritually dangerous path. These are phrases that rob us of the joys of today and blind us to our blessings. There are two areas in which this kind of thinking can be especially destructive. These areas are the focus of this article.

"Things were better back in the good old days when I was single." There are those who would look back longingly at the freedom from responsibility they think they remember from their single days. Such a person is demonstrating a lack to commitment to the marriage vows. Does he/she forget that if the situation "back then" had been perfect, there would have been no desire to marry? Thoughts as this should be countered with looking at the reasons for having married. If the emphasis were placed back on making the marriage stronger instead on the "what ifs" one could imagine, both partners would be happier. Marriage is a permanent bond (Matthew 19:6) and must not be taken lightly before or after the ceremony.

"Things were better back in the good old days when I could do what I wanted and not have to worry about sinning." This, too, shows a lack of commitment to living the Christian life. We are told in Prov-

erbs 23:17, **"Let not thine heart envy sinners...."** One who longs for a life of sin forgets the sad fruit that results: diseases and unwanted pregnancy from illicit sex, physical illness and dangerous conduct from drinking, loss of possessions from gambling, and a heart and mind filled with filth from a life of impurity. Like the Israelites who could not recognize all that God did for them, one who desires a life of sin forgets that all spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Not only are our blessings spiritual, they are all-encompassing. **"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life"** (Proverbs 4:23). A righteous life brings peace that passes all understanding (Romans 5:1).

We are blessed when we have precious memories of the past and of loved ones who long ago went to their reward. Although we should remember those times with joy, we must live in and appreciate the present. We cannot go back and change the past. We have no promise of tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1). **"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"** (Matthew 6:34). "Count your many blessings; name them one by one."

—9194 Lakeside Drive
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The Last Word...

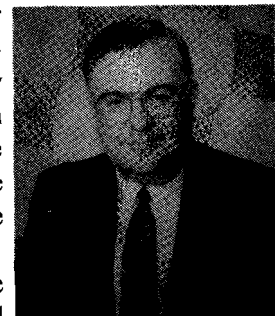
MIDWAY REVISITED

Kent Bailey

In the August issue of *Contending For The Faith* we dealt with the Midway Church of Christ in Hurricane, West Virginia and their employment of a Christian Church preacher to work with them during the month of May. After publication of this article both **David Brown** and I were notified both by letter and telephone that the Midway Church had terminated the employment of this Christian Church preacher several weeks after hiring him and that we had done the Midway Church a grave injustice by our reporting this event. The last line of the article really hit a raw nerve with those brethren when I reported that they were in apostasy by being in fellowship with Christian churches.

They deny that they have ever endorsed the use of mechanical instrumental music or any type of affiliation with Christian churches and desire us to set the record straight. In light of the present situation we note the following:

We appreciate that the Midway Church has terminated **Charles Brown** as its preacher. However, the fact remains that they did employ him and such action constitutes more than a "mistake." This type of a mistake



is within itself sinful in that fellowship was extended to a false teacher (II John 9-11). Although Brown did not attempt to force either the Missionary Society or mechanical instruments of music on the Midway Church, it was indeed his goal to “be a bridge between the acapella and instrumental churches.” Whether or not innovations in either the work and or worship were actually introduced is entirely beside the point. Brown was seeking unity in diversity—fellowship based on the agreement to disagree. This type of fellowship is unauthorized by the scriptures and is therefore sinful (Colossians 3:16-17; II John 9-11).

One does not have to very far into history to find that there have been various unity movements in attempting to unite churches of Christ and Christian churches simply on the basis that the issues that divide us should not create a barrier to our fellowship. This was the basic thrust of the Murch-Witty Unity Movement in the 1930s as well as the Cloyd-DeWalt Unity Movement in the 1980s and that has been carried over to the present. We note such on an annual basis being practiced at the Tulsa Workshop in Tulsa, Oklahoma where Christian Church preachers are used on a regular basis as speakers at this gathering.

I find it incredulous that any local church even

claiming any semblance at all to following the New Testament pattern would seek to employ any preacher without first inquiring as to his doctrinal stance. Going at this rate, I am surprised that the brethren at Midway did not end up hiring a Baptist preacher!

Brethren from Midway state that the congregation “is not now and never has” been in fellowship with Christian churches. However, it is obvious that those folks do not understand the essence of fellowship. Although I agree that the Midway Church is not presently in fellowship with Christian churches, in that they terminated Brown’s work with them, the fact remains that fellowship is *joint participation* and while they had him as their preacher they were in an unauthorized sinful fellowship with the Christian church (II John 9-11). Because of the nature of fellowship, you cannot make it separate and distinct from that of joint participation.

Although indeed it is commendable that the brethren at Midway have reformed their practice of being in fellowship with a false teacher, they have yet to admit that they have sinned and need to repent. When the Midway Church employed Brown, they ran an advertisement in the local newspaper with his picture. This along with the actual employment of a false teacher constitutes public sin. Therefore, both repentance and confession of such wrong-doing are necessary for this particular situation to be corrected.

It continues to amaze me that these brethren were surprised to learn that Brown considered the usage of mechanical instruments of music in worship unto God (and perhaps other crucial issues) as “a matter of opinion.” For one being openly committed to being “a bridge” between churches of Christ and Christian churches as is Charles Brown, who has openly taught this concept, one would think that the Midway brethren would have detected this even prior to their employing him.

I have had a great interest in the Midway Church for several years. The opportunities that have afforded me to preach the gospel there have truly brought the joy of serving Christ to my life. I do sincerely desire that those at Midway will not only see the importance of reformation of practice (which indeed is commendable), but also the need for repentance and confession. Please be assured that I stand ready to assist them in so doing.

—124 Executive Meadows
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[CFTF fully endorses Brother Bailey’s sentiments expressed in his article.—Editor]

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

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

-England-

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

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

-Florida-

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

-Georgia-

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

-Indiana-

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

-Louisiana-

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

-Massachusetts-

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

-Michigan-

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

-Missouri-

Farmington-Sunnyview Church of Christ, 2801 Hwy H, Farmington, MO 63640, Sunday: 10:00, 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (573) 756-5925.

-North Carolina-

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

-Oklahoma-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Wyoming-

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

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

QUAIL SPRINGS, BILLY GRAHAM, AND HENDERSON'S "MEIN KAMPF"

Jerry C. Brewer

Despite protestations to the contrary, the Quail Springs Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma was in full-blown fellowship with the Billy Graham Crusade conducted in that city in June, 2003.

For **Mark Henderson**, senior minister at Quail Springs Church of Christ, the mission's (Graham's 'Mission Oklahoma City' JCB) emphasis on imparting the Gospel to those who need to hear it played a big part in his church's decision to become a part of the effort. Henderson, a member of the mission's executive committee, said people are to be baptized as soon as they accept Christ into their hearts, according to Church of Christ doctrine based on the New Testament (**Carla Hinton**, Religion Editor, "Graham Mission Builds Upon Unity of City Churches," *Daily Oklahoman*, Tuesday, June 10, 2003, p. 4A).

I received the following message on April 4, 2003 rebuking me for pointing out the fellowship that Quail Springs had with Graham:

...the person on staff at Quail Springs said they had nothing to do with Billy Graham other than receiving contacts through his mission. Which they were then going to teach and baptize. Nothing, meaning they were not attending the meeting, etc. They were going to use the names to help teach people correctly. You made it sound as if they were fully attending, and supporting Billy Graham, which according to their staff they are not.

The article from the *Daily Oklahoman* is proof that Quail Springs not only had fellowship with Baptist Graham, but their "senior minister" Mark Henderson was on the committee directing Graham's appearance in Oklahoma City. If that is not "fully...supporting Billy Graham," then there is not a cow in Texas (or Oklahoma—Editor)!

The sad part of this is that readers of this Oklahoma paper will think Henderson speaks for all churches of Christ in his statement that, "Church of Christ doctrine based on the New Testament." The Methodists claim their Discipline is based on the New Testament and Baptists say their manual has the same basis. Henderson has shown his true colors as a full-blown denominationalist-false teacher in his participation in Graham's show and his reference to "Church of Christ doctrine."

The Quail Springs Church of Christ is an apostate congregation of the Lord's people, but do not expect other congregations in Oklahoma City to rise up in opposition to Quail Springs' heresies. Oklahoma Christian College has too much influence there for them to stand for the truth. The only exception is the sound Barnes church which has opposed Quail Springs' fellowship with Baptists in the past. In the same article, Henderson said, "Billy Graham has

(Continued on Page 17)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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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.

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

EDITORIAL...

TWO IN ONE

We have combined the 2003 November and December issues of *Contending for the Faith* into one issue. Thus, the answer as to why this issue of the paper is larger than usual. With the holidays and your editors travels in the United States and abroad, time constraints necessarily become a problem. In fact, this is one reason the late **Ira Rice** did not publish a December issue of *CFTF*. Combining the last two months of the year into one issue seems to be the best way to solve the problem and conclude the publication of *CFTF* for 2003.

WE WISH YOU THE BEST

All of us at *CFTF* wish you a wonderful holiday season and much happiness as you visit with your families and friends. We deeply appreciate your subscriptions to the paper and trust you will continue to help our readership grow.

As each year draws to a close we are made keenly aware that we are that much closer to eternity. Therefore it is our prayer to our heavenly Father that he will prosper us spiritually and bring us safely on to the eternal shores of glory. To that end *CFTF* was begun, exists, and continues on. We intend to follow the mandates and examples set out on the pages of God's word for the spreading of the gospel of Christ and the defense of the same. And, we covet your prayers that we will be successful in this worthy endeavor. It is, therefore, appropriate that we close this year's publication of *Contending for the Faith* with the following biblical admonition.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

APOSTATE PAT BOONE IS HONORED BY DAVID LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY AND CONDUCTS CONCERT IN COLLINS AUDITORIUM

A recent event at David Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee demonstrates the continued premeditated and determined departure from the faith by those who make up the board, admin-

istration, faculty, and student body of the school. In the July 2003, Volume 26, Number 1 issue of the student paper, *The Lipscomb News*, page 5, the paper published an article entitled "Avalon Award recipients chosen for 2003". Apostate Pat Boone was one of four who received the Avalon Award for Creative Excellence on November 3.

Also, in the October 2003, Volume 26, Number 2, issue of the same paper on page 8 in an article entitled "Pat Boone to perform on Campus Nov. 4," it was reported that in conjunction with Boone's visit to DLU to receive his award that the singer/actor would hold a concert on November 4, 2003. The article reported that the Lipscomb University's Students for International Peace and Justice sponsored the concert. "Proceeds will be used to provide aid to landmine victims in Iraq," the article said. The student paper reports Boone saying, "The students have asked me to do a concert, including a lot of songs that were big hits before they were born."

Tickets to the Boone concert sold for \$20.00 per person. A "VIP ticket package" sold for \$100.00. The package included "two premium seating tickets and access to a post-concert reception with Boone."

After noting Boone's past accomplishment's in the entertainment business, the article reported Boone saying that as he looked back over his days at Lipscomb he had...

To admit that they were wonderful years, years in which I was influenced greatly by dedicated teachers, during which time I met my wife-to-be, Shirley Foley (daughter of the late famous country singer Red Foley—DPB), lettered in baseball, basketball and tennis, and was eventually student body president. What's not to like? I'm enthusiastically looking forward to this homecoming.

The article closed saying that "Boone's multimedia, multifaceted live show will feature an array of musical genres ranging from pop and country to gospel and patriotic favorites."

THEIR SILENCE IS NOT "GOLDEN"

The Lipscomb News is as silent as a tomb regarding the fact that over 30 years ago the fellowship of the church was withdrawn from Boone because of his unfaithful conduct. He has not repented of those sins. No mention of Boone's departure from the faith into Pentecostalism and denominationalism is found on the pages of the university paper. If all anyone knew of Boone were

In This Issue...

QUAIL SPRINGS, BILLY GRAHAM, AND HENDERSON'S "MEIN KAMPF" Jerry Brewer	1
<i>Editorial...</i> TWO IN ONE David Brown	2
<i>Assistant Editorial...</i> CAN A HOMOSEXUAL REMAIN A CHRISTIAN? Michael Light	5
DOES TRUTH MATTER ANYMORE? Wayne Price	7
<i>Restoration Reflections...</i> FIRST ANNUAL CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH LECTURES AT CANE RIDGE Paul Vaughn	8
HISTORY OF THE MELODEON	10
<i>Current Events that Concern Christians...</i> AN ALLEGED CONTRADICTION ANSWERED Jerry Murrell	15
A REVIEW OF THE THIRD ANNUAL PREACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD LECTURESHIP Darrell Broking	18
SING, SANG, SUNG, AND PRAYER? Jess Whitlock	20
"DOES OUR LAW JUDGE A MAN BEFORE IT FIRST HEARS HIM AND KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING?" (John 7:51) Noah Hackworth	25
FANNING THE FLAMES Geoff Litke	27
GOSPEL PREACHING VERSUS CROWD PLEASING Gary W. Summers	29
<i>One Woman's Perspective...</i> WHO'S LISTENING? Annette B. Cates	33
<i>The Last Word...</i> LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD Kent Bailey	34

what this “news” paper printed, no one would know what a spiritual scoundrel Boone really is. In reality David Lipscomb University has finally slid down the slippery slope of apostasy to Boone’s low level of spiritual degeneracy. So, why should they not praise one of their own? “Birds of a feather...” do what?

The Lipscomb News’ silence on the events pertaining to Boone’s digression gives a new twist to what the paper thinks is news worthy and what is not. However, news items from more than thirty years ago, then printed on the pages of *Contending for the Faith*, prove what a stir Boone caused when he embraced the Charismatic movement of the day—a movement in which he continues until this very hour. These news articles are reprinted in this issue of *CFTF* on pages 12-14.

“CLOWNDEMONIUM”

On page five of the September 2003 issue of the *Christian Chronicle* we are exposed to the antics of Salt Lake City, Utah’s Southside church. This 250-member congregation hosted in excess of 150 children in their July 14-16 Vacation Bible School the *Chronicle* reported. **Dave Wasson** director of the event called it “Under the Big Top.” **Courtney Cummings** referred to the “Bible School” (?) as the members’ “fleeting” “trip” into “clowndemonium”. He said it was a “memorable” occasion.

Nothing about studying the Bible was mentioned. Oh well, now days Bible study is passé anyway. And, besides that too many Bible classes may better be labeled three-ring circuses. Under these religious “Big Tops” they should introduce their elders with the announcement to, “Bring in the clowns!”

**FROM THE CIRCUS
TO THE THEATRE**

The same issue of the *Chronicle* that treated us to the circus activities of Salt Lake City’s Southside church also recorded the VBS activities of the East Brainerd Church of Christ, Chattanooga, Tennessee. On the final night of their VBS a dramatic presentation of “Were You There?”—“a play about Jesus’ death and the continuing impact of his sacrifice” was performed. The article

reported “the production of (sic) cast East Brainerd members in the roles of participants in Jesus’ betrayal and death.”

The article reported that **Glen Gray**, East Brainerd’s involvement minister who also participated in the play, connected the church’s staged show with the dramatic gestures used by biblical prophets to illustrate their divine messages. “Drama has been used all the way through the Scripture in presenting truth,” Gray said.

Over and over again all of us have read in the New Testament of our Lord’s authorization to go into the entire world and dramatize the gospel to every creature. Those passages are as commonplace in the New Testament as the scriptures authorizing three ring circuses and clowns. Of course I wrote the preceding words “tongue in cheek.” And, I also know that in the Old and New Testaments messages from God were portrayed to more fully impress on those who needed the messages the meaning and importance of them (for example Jeremiah 27:2ff; Ezekiel 4:1ff; Acts 10:9-17; 21:10-12). However, such portrayals never were carried out for entertainment as on “stage, screen and television.” In an effort to justify dramatic presentations, it may be said that all these “staged show(s)” are performed to act out the divine message and thus teach people the lessons God intended for the people to learn. But few to none of these modern dramatic presentations abide by the scriptural restriction prohibiting women from exercising dominion over the man (I Timothy 2:11-15). Yes, the New Testament forbids women from teaching over men. But if women (young or old) are teaching by portraying a part in a “staged show” with men in the audience they are in sin because of their violation of I Timothy 2:11-12. *I would like to see one of these way off “Broadway productions” dramatize the message of I Timothy 2:11, 12. That would be entertainment.*

Please consider: What kind of playacting would it take to teach the following important truths, but all too often neglected ones, that are the scriptural identifying marks of the New Testament church?

1. “The Bible only makes Christians only and the only Christians.”
2. The church of Christ is not a sectarian denomination.
3. There are no faithful children of God in the denominations.

4. The church of Christ (as that term is used and defined on the pages of the New Testament) contains all the saved of the earth.

5. Truth is objective, absolute, and humanly attainable.

6. The Lord's Supper is to be taken in the assembly of the saints only on the first day of every week.

7. It is a sin to use mechanical instruments of music in our worship to God.

8. Sprinkling and pouring water on someone is not scriptural baptism.

Of course I could lengthen this list of topics for dramatic productions, but I dare say that my suggestions are not what many of these religious producers and directors have in mind when they are looking for the next spiritual award winning Emmy production.

Methods of (Options for) discharging our obligations to God must always be scrutinized lest

they become an end within themselves. And, teaching methods need the closest of analysis for the same reason. *Are dramatic productions, as reviewed in this editorial, options that truly expedite (are advantageous) for teaching the gospel or do they become an end within themselves—dwelling primarily on acting and entertainment?* The preceding question and others of like nature need to be asked by the shepherds of the flock lest the church auditorium or the like be turned into a theater for the dramatic arts. Such care of the church is crucial at this time of great apostasy in the Lord's church. This is the case because so many members are not only more ignorant than ever of the biblical text, but most have little or no knowledge of the importance and necessity of Bible authority for all we believe and practice (Colossians 3:17). Thus, many know little or nothing about how the Bible authorizes. And, therein lies the problem.

—David P. Brown, Editor

Assistant Editorial...

"CAN A HOMOSEXUAL REMAIN A CHRISTIAN?"

While researching some material for an area lectureship, I ran across the above title in a series of articles dealing with "religious tolerance." As a whole the articles were helpful in getting a perspective as to how people attempt to justify their sexual practices while maintaining a religious affiliation. I am going to address their use (abuse) of scripture in "getting around" what the Bible says relative to the homosexual question. I will conclude by answering the above question from a biblical perspective.

The writer first makes the assertion that Jesus never dealt with the subject of homosexuality. In fact, he points out that Jesus dealt with all manner of behavior and thought but never touched on the subject of homosexuality. He avers further that the only time Christ commented on sexual morality

was when dealing with the woman caught in adultery. He then adds, "Jesus may have felt that homosexuality was not a matter worth commenting on." This statement is blatantly false. To attempt to affirm that Jesus was ambivalent about sexual matters is wrong-headed. I would simply refer our attention to **Matthew 19:3-6**:

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh, What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put

asunder.

It is obvious that in this passage Jesus does deal with the sexual arrangement as God designed it. One man and one woman (male and female), no other combination is approved. The man was to leave his **father and mother** (interesting—another male female relationship) and cleave to his wife (female). Every time Christ dealt with fornication (unauthorized sexual activity) his teaching included homosexuality. It is not true that Christ never dealt with this matter.

The writer next turns his attention to the Hebrew (Old Testament) scriptures. He charges that all the scriptures that have traditionally been used from the Old Testament have been misused. Notice:

Genesis 19: The writer states: “the text at this point is ambiguous.” The assertion is then made that inhospitality, pride, idol worship and a lack of care for the poor were the real reasons for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He adds, “if homosexuality was involved, it was obviously not consensual sexual activity; it was rape.” The sin for which they were destroyed is specified in the New Testament book of **Jude** as homosexuality. Notice verse 7,

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The only way to miss the reference to “strange flesh” (homosexual—non-authorized flesh) is to ignore it. By the way, this writer never mentions the book of Jude, I think I can guess why.

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: The writer says these verses, “*appear to condemn male homosexual behavior, but in fact only refers to temple prostitution.*” He then adds, “Even if it did refer to lesbian and gay relationships, it would not be applicable to Christians today, any more than are the other 613 laws which make up the Jewish Holiness Code.” He even accuses those who use these verses as being less than genuine. While it is true that homosexual prostitution is condemned in the Old Testament, it is not true that this is the intent of these verses. They say nothing of prostitution. Read them for yourselves: “**Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind, it is an abomination**” (Leviticus 18:22). There is nothing

in this passage about prostitution. The act condemned is doing with a man (sexual relations) what is normal when had with a woman. Again read Leviticus 20:13: “**If a man lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.**” The same is true here. The sin of homosexuality was punishable by death. As to the distinction between Old and New Testament law, there are several New Testament passages that also forbid homosexuality. However, the Old Testament passages do show God’s consistent disdain for this abominable practice.

Deuteronomy 23:17; I Kings 14:24; and 15:12: He dismisses all of these on the grounds that they are mistranslated and should be rendered “temple prostitution.” There is no reason for this assertion except this person does not care for the force of these passages. Each one deals with the wickedness of the Sodomites, as well as prohibitions against them.

Ruth 1:16 and 2:10-11: These verses are mentioned and then the writer states that they, “describe a deeply intimate relationship between Ruth and Naomi which may or may not have had a sexual component.” Of course, he wants to leave the impression that there was a sexual component. There is not one scintilla of sexuality in this passage. This is a blatant example of twisting the scriptures to push an agenda.

I Samuel 18:1-4 and 20:41-42 along with **II Samuel 1:25-26:** Again the accusation of a sexual component is put forth. David and Jonathan are shamelessly disgraced and their sexuality challenged to alleviate the guilty of our day. These men were closest of friends, but to charge them with what God clearly and repeatedly called an abominable sin, is a pitiful allegation.

He then concludes with this gem,

We conclude that the Hebrew scriptures condemn homosexual rape and temple prostitution, but do not disapprove of gay and lesbian relationships. One can be confident that centuries of fire and brimstone sermons on homosexuality based on verses from the Old Testament are misinterpretations of the Bible.

With a stroke of a pen, he absolves all homosexuals of any guilt. Well, his pen is not the one that counts. God’s word will judge this matter and all

others (John 12:48) and his wild assertions aside, the Old Testament does condemn this wicked practice.

Under the heading of “Understanding the Christian scriptures,” the writer again turns his attention to verses relevant to the discussion. He begins, “There are many places in the Christian scriptures (New Testament) that have been traditionally interpreted as condemning homosexuality.”

Romans 1:26, 27: He ultimately says, “the meaning is unclear.” He suggests that maybe Paul is criticizing doing anything sexually that is against a person’s nature. So he would allow anything you want to do, as long as you like it. Anyone who cannot read this passage and see that God is condemning homosexual relations, is either dishonest or steeped in a dream world.

I Corinthians 6:9: He assures us that the term translated “homosexual” is difficult to translate. He again states, “the true meaning is lost.” This is an interesting method of Bible interpretation. If we do not care for a passage we simply assert its meaning is lost. How novel. I will let the passage, stand on its own merit. Notice,

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind [men].

Truly, this passage is not difficult at all.

I Timothy 1:10: He says it is similar to I Corinthians. By which reference I guess he means to tell us that “the true meaning is lost.” Read it for yourself, **“For whoremongers [fornicators], for them that defile themselves with mankind, ...”**

Jude 7: He says the strange flesh could be sex with angels or homosexuality. So he is forced to conclude, “the exact meaning is lost.” Surprise, surprise.

His final thought,

We conclude that St. Paul in the Christian scriptures seems to have condemned some homosexual activity, but it is unclear which ones. There is no mention of loving, committed gay and lesbian relationships in the Christian scriptures.

Wow! How sad it is. The Bible is unclear and incomplete. He cannot seem to grasp that HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY IS SIN. Therefore, it matters not if you have 5,000 sexual partners or one

“loving relationship,” it is not permitted. This is why you do not have monogamous homosexual relationships commented on. All such situations are without God’s approval and therefore are sinful.

Now, to answer the question, “Can a homosexual remain a Christian?” The answer is an unequivocal no. One who has homosexual tendencies, yet abstains from the practice, can be saved. But to live a homosexual lifestyle is to lose one’s soul.

—Michael Light, Assistant Editor

DOES TRUTH MATTER ANYMORE?

Wayne Price

People have become so accustomed to politicians “spinning” the truth to fit their own agenda, but the same practice has long been the policy in the religious world. It appears that many are no longer concerned with right and wrong anymore—their primary interest lies in whether or not they can convince the people of their position!

When they put their “spin” on the truth of God’s word, they make false doctrine more palatable, especially to those who are less discerning.

For example, when the “spin-meister” finishes his work on I Peter 3:21, he ends up with this spin: “Baptism does not save anybody,” even though the truth is that which is recorded in the Bible: “baptism does now save us”! Which will you believe?

What does the Bible say about such spin-meisters?

1. **“With feigned words they make merchandise of you”** (II Peter 2:3).

2. **“in craftiness.. handling the word of God deceitfully** (II Corinthians 4:2).

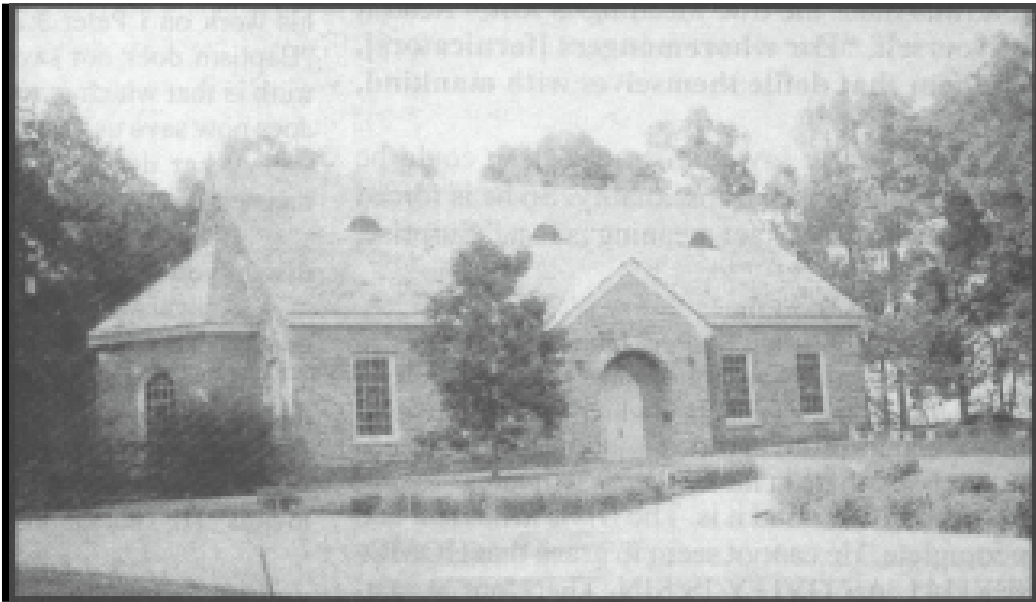
3. **“In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”** (Matthew 15:9).

OUR TASK? **“Let no man deceive you by any means”** (II Thessalonians 2:3, 12).

—P.O. Box 760
McCloud, Oklahoma 74851

FIRST ANNUAL CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH LECTURES AT CANE RIDGE

Paul Vaughn



CANE RIDGE MEETING HOUSE

One of the most important historical sights in the Restoration of New Testament Christianity in America is the Cane Ridge meeting house in Bourbon County, Kentucky. It is noted because of the efforts of **Barton W. Stone** in seeking to restore the worship and work of the church of Christ whose pattern is found only in the New Testament. Stone and many other restorers chose to turn their backs on the works and doctrines of men. They grew to distrust



BUILDING ENCLOSURE FOR MEETING HOUSE



PAUL VAUGHN OF LEWISPORT, KENTUCKY, A REGULAR WRITER FOR CFTF, WITH YOUR EDITOR IN THE PULPIT OF THE CANE RIDGE MEETING HOUSE

the influence of the denominational teachings that they received from parents and friends alike to put their trust only in the scriptures.

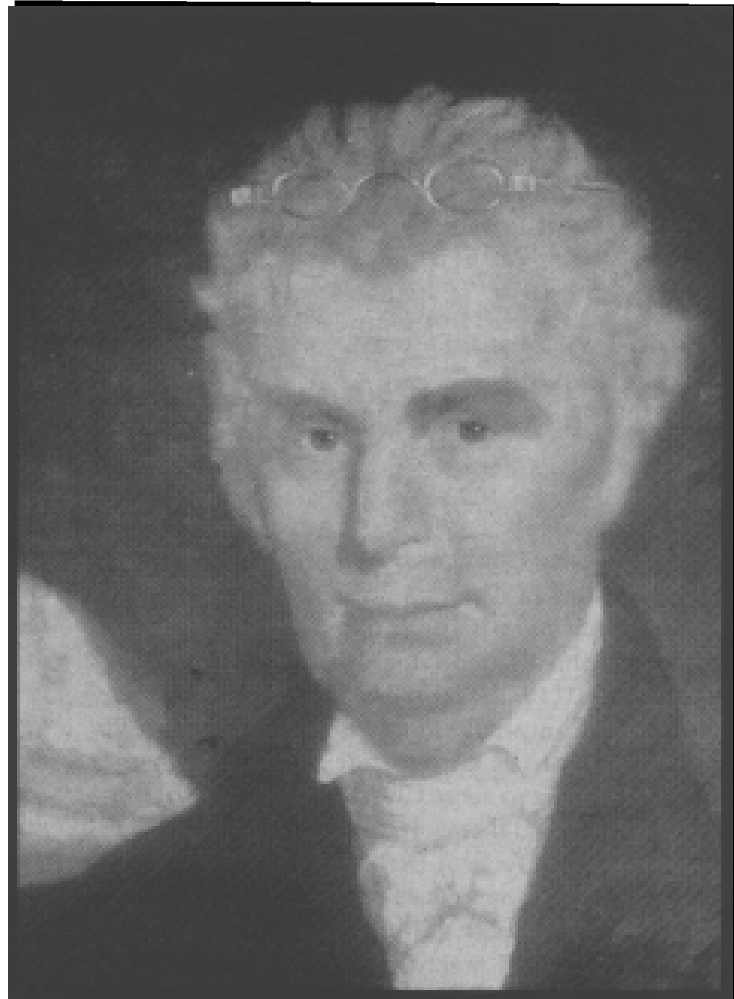
The Cane Ridge meeting house was built by **Robert Finley** and members of the Presbyterian Church in 1791. It is the largest log building in America. The old meeting house was abandoned shortly after 1917 and fell under disrepair. By then wild animals, weeds, and brush were its only tenants. In 1944 **Adron Doran** and **Taylor Lowery** led efforts to restore the Cane Ridge meeting house. It was at this time that the Disciples of Christ who held the deed took interest in the building. Today, it is surrounded by a stone superstructure.

The first weekend of October, 2003 the *Contending For The Faith* publication held its first annual lectureship at Cane Ridge. The theme for the lectureship was "The Early Restorers Contended For The Faith."

The old meeting house was filled with gospel singing and the unadulterated, undefiled, uncontaminated, sound of the gospel message was proclaimed from the old pulpit.

The lectures started on Friday evening, October 3rd, with **David Brown** giving the first lecture on "Is The Restoration Principle Scriptural." **Jerry Totty** from the Totty's Bend Church of Christ, Hickman County, Tennessee was the song leader throughout the lectureship. There were members of the church of Christ who attended the lectures from Texas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland and Indiana. Some of the lectures given were, "The Early Restorers Contended with Denominationalism", "Barton W. Stone Contended with

Error", "The Early Restorers Contended with Calvinism", "Attitudes Necessary For The Restoration of New Testament Christianity", "The Influence of the American Christian Missionary Society", "How Error Captured the College of the Bible", and "The Need For Christians to Stand Firm in the Faith". The other speakers were **B.J. Clark**, **Michael Light**,



**BARTON WARREN STONE
(1772-1844)**

Lynn Parker, Russell Kline, Paul Vaughn, Steve Johnson, Jerry Murrell, Danny Douglas, Everett Donaldson, and Bobby Liddell.

Everett Donaldson conducted a restoration history of Lexington on Monday, October 6th. We visited the former home of J.W. McGarvey in Fayette Park. The next stop was to go by the location where the old Hill Street Church was located, the College of the Bible, and the Lexington cemetery.

The first annual Contending for the Faith lectures at Cane Ridge was a wonderful experience. In 2004 the lecture is scheduled for May 14th and 15th. We will meet at the Cane Ridge meeting house on Friday the 14th for one lecture. After which we will tour historical sights in the area. At this time the tentative places to visit are in Mason and Montgomery Counties in Kentucky and Brown County,



BOBBY LIDDELL OF THE MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING SPOKE AT THE LECTURES

Ohio. The theme of the lectures will be the “The Early Restorers respected the Authority of the scriptures.” Plan now to attend this wonderful lectureship next spring.

—1415 Lincoln Road
Lewisport, Kentucky 42351

HISTORY OF THE MELODEON

David P. Brown

In the early 19th century sectarian denomination-ism prevailed in America. In an effort to restore the Lord’s church and with it the unity for which our Lord prayed in John 17 and which Paul commanded in I Corinthians 1:10. **Barton W. Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell** along with many others advocated the Bible to be the only rule of faith and practice for those seeking to serve Christ. While some of these men never studied themselves out of some of their error, they faithfully kept before those to whom they preached the guiding light of doing only what is authorized by a rightly divided Bible and omitting from their midst unauthorized practices as well as those things forbidden by the scriptures. Therefore, their worship of God was patterned after the teaching of the New Testament.

However, there were those preachers in the church who fell victim to the false view (or maybe they never removed it from their religious system when they united with the church) that the proper approach to Bible study should be based on the erroneous principle that had governed the denominations since the days of the Reformation in Europe. It was and is: “If something is not expressly forbidden in the Bible it may be practiced by Christians.” For whatever reason they did not understand that such a view would allow for the kissing of the Pope’s toe since this act of homage is not expressly forbidden in the New Testament. Or, for the same reason in the Lord’s Supper butter milk and corn bread could be substituted for the fruit of the vine and unleavened bread. Thus, these brethren at best did not have a clear understanding or at

worst no understanding of how the Bible authorizes and the necessity of doing only what Jesus authorizes in the New Testament, leaving undone what is not authorized and what is **f o r b i d d e n** (Colossians 3:17; II Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17). Therefore, they did not and do not know the difference in obligatory and optional matters. Also, they do not understand the



THE "GOLDEN CALF" OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

difference in specific and generic authorization. Hence, they do not see the difference in singing and playing mechanical instruments in worship, humming, clapping, or the like in the worship of God.

Thus, the stage was set around the mid-19th century for the beginning of a digression in the church. By 1900 the apostasy had developed into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. Later a division within the Christian Church over modernism turned into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Independent Christian Church.

The chief founder of Midway College, **Dr. Lewis Letig Pinkerton**, was also an early digressive preacher for the church in Midway, Kentucky. Thus, he did not believe that one must do only what is authorized by the scriptures. Therefore, Pinkerton believed that mechanical instrumental music could be used in the worship of God.

As far as anyone knows, the melodeon that appeared one Sunday in the Midway Church (c. 1859) was the first mechanical musical instrument used in service in any congregation of the Lord's people at that time. No doubt Pinkerton was involved with the melodeon's introduction into the church. He requested that **Thompson Parrish**, son of **James Ware Parrish**, co-founder of Midway College, play the melodeon during the worship of the church.

Gradually, (this is the usual manner by which error gets into the church) as some other congregations introduced pianos and organs into the worship, the mechanical instrument became a test of fellowship. Gen-

erally speaking, congregations that used mechanical instruments of music in their worship tended to call themselves a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—today the Independent Christian Church is also included—and congregations that did not, churches of Christ. Sometimes the term Church of Christ is used by Christian Churches.

The conflict surrounding the melodeon finally erupted in the 1860's

when **Adam Hibler**, an elder of the church, removed the melodeon during the night. His servant, **Reuben**, who passed the melodeon through the window to Hibler, assisted Hibler. However, in the long run this proper action did not stop the digression of the Midway church into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination.

The fate of the mechanical musical instrument was obscured until the early 1900's when it was discovered at the home of **Mary and Elizabeth Nugent**. The Nugent sisters of Versailles, Kentucky were the daughters of **James Nugent**, a friend of Hibler. The Nugent family maintained that the melodeon was purchased at sale for \$1.65. It is possible that Hibler gave the melodeon to Nugent, or that **Robert Alexander**, a mutual friend of the two men, acquired the instrument and gave it to Nugent at a later date.

Midway College officials at the time were satisfied that the musical instrument found in the Nugent's home was indeed the original melodeon first played at the church in Midway. A local entrepreneur and friend of the college, **James Ware Parrish II**, son of **Thompson Parrish**, was captivated by the melodeon and its historical significance. He donated the necessary funds for the purchase of the melodeon so that it might be housed at the college. The wooden melodeon is presently housed in the Marris Library on campus of Midway College, Midway, Kentucky. Midway College is operated by the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church).

Since its return to the Midway College campus, the melodeon has attracted thousands of visitors. These

interested individuals want to view the musical instrument that became a symbol of the division within the Lord's church.

The following is an interesting story told to me by the late **G. K. Wallace**. I am sure he related it to many others on various occasions. Brother Wallace went to Midway to see the melodeon. The guide who escorted brother Wallace's group into the presence of the melodeon was a member of the Christian Church. In the guides comments about the melodeon he remarked: "Now isn't this a little thing to divide the church over." To which brother Wallace aptly replied

for all to hear, "It's as big as the golden calf." Indeed, the attitude of those who demanded the inclusion of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God is the same as the attitude of those who demanded a golden calf to their own destruction. Moreover, the mindset of those involved in the present digression is exactly the same as their kinsman who worshipped the golden calf and thousands of years later those who brought the mechanical instrument of music into the worship of the Lord's church. Division resulted because certain people were not content to have a "thus saith the Lord for all they believe and practice".

—25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, Texas 77373

Some Here Perplexed by Pat Boones' Visit

By **PERRY FLIPPIN**
Avalanche Journal Staff

The question of how many Church of Christ members personally will endorse Mayor Jim Granberry's "Prayer Breakfast" Wednesday has sparked considerable discussion among churchmen here since it was announced that the event will be led by Pat Boone, who recently was censured by a Church of Christ he attended in California.

Boone, popular Hollywood actor, singer and writer, has been the focus of intense debate within Church of Christ circles for years, chiefly for his active participation in the activities of the group while maintaining a "Hollywood image" that some churchmen find objectionable.

Nevertheless, his songs and writings have claimed wide-spread acceptance among virtually all age groups and he has been extremely active in church work over the years.

* * *

Couple Censured

The latest dispute arose, however, between Boone and the elders of his home congregation in Inglewood, Calif., last year over matters of religious doctrine, rather than personal conduct. Then, after months of unresolved disagreement, they formally split in early February with the elders issuing a statement censuring Boone and wife, Shirley.

Darrell Rickard, a minister of Inglewood Church of Christ, is a former associate minister at Lubbock's Broadway Church of

Christ. He says his group's decision to break fellowship with the Boones was made because the singer has been a doctrine "not Biblical."

Rickard adds that members of the congregation were urged to avoid religious discussion with the Boones.

The dilemma facing Lubbock churchmen hinges on whether they will heed the Inglewood action, or obey the impulse of friendship, and even admiration for Boone from the years of association with him.

IF LUBBOCK members of Church of Christ congregations hold to attitudes frequently voiced, it appears likely that Boone will receive from some a cool reception.

Rickard explained that the church has not "withdrawn fellowship" from the Boones—the most severe punishment that the Church of Christ can take against its members.

"The doors of the church are still open to them," he said, adding that if the Boones want to come to church, they can receive communion there. But the break between the congregation and Boones is in effect and Rickard urged members to observe it.

Each Church of Christ congregation is autonomous.

* * *

Perplexing Problem

BOONE has been a frequent visitor to Lubbock and Abilene where he has participated in reli-

gious programs sponsored by the Church of Christ-related colleges. He also has held leading roles in Lubbock churches.

As to his probable reception in Lubbock, one local minister stated flatly, "I am prohibited from associating with him (Boone)."

Some members of Lubbock Churches have been urging local elders for years to take action against Boone because of what they claim are "unChristian" acts on the screen, which included kissing an actress and carrying a cocktail.

Dr. Joe R. Barnett, minister of the Broadway Church of Christ concedes that local churchmen are "highly perplexed" over the upcoming visit of Boone to participate in a religious activity organized by Mayor Grandberry.

For some, like himself, Boone is a cherished friend.

As an indication of the perplexity and indeed, the highly charged emotional level evoked by the Boone visit, Barnett said that he will refrain from addressing the subject in Broadway's pulpit, one the largest in the state.

Barnett said he intends to advise no one as to conduct toward Boone, indicating that the matter will have to be resolved, within the consciences of individual church members.

Pat Boones Penalized By Church of Christ

By W. A. REED

TENNESSEAN Religion News editor

Pat Boone, Nashville television and movie star, and his wife, Shirley, have lost fellowship privileges in the Inglewood, Calif., Church of Christ for endorsement of "speaking in tongues."

The church's minister, Darrell Richard, said the Boones were tendered a "withdrawal of fellowship" letter for "talking publicly about glossalalia" (speaking in tongues) and "causing dissension and discord." They may still attend the church and partake of communion.

BOONE. A graduate of David Lipscomb College, is appearing in a movie, "The Cross and the Switchblade" He was in Nashville in May 1969, at a Madison Church of Christ program.

"This action of the Inglewood church came after a year of study," Richard said yesterday in a telephone interview. "Pat was given a chance to speak in his defense, but our position is that we believe the 'Word of God' is complete and if you speak or like 'miraculous tongues' you are challenging that completeness."

Glossalalia is mentioned in the Bible in an account of the Pentecost and also in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians in the New Testament.

Rickard said the church did not excommunicate the Boones and they are welcome to attend the church and partake of communion, but they cannot participate publicly, serve communion, pray, teach a class or take up an offering.

"WE DID not object to the report that Pat was baptizing persons," the Church of Christ minister said "for any man, a member the Church of Christ has a rite to perform the rite of Baptism."

Richard said the statement of Withdrawal of Fellowship was read the first Sunday in February.

Boone could not be contacted by phone yesterday and an aide at his Los Angeles residence said the Boones could not be reached because they were on tour.

However, in a report by Time Magazine and the Religious News Service, Boone said last week in Las Vegas that the reason for dismissal of him and his wife was that they had added the belief of miraculous healing to their personal faith.

BOONE HAS recently identified with the "Jesus Movement" of young fundamentalist Christians who have the outward appearance of hippies. Boone said according to the Religious News Service: "The movement is so free-form, so anti-institutional that it is really shaking up the ordained priesthood because it has no apparent structure."

He also has said, according to Time Magazine. "Since, the word got out that we had been 'disfellowshipped' we've been asked by Methodists and Assemblies of God too."

Mormon church members have also been emissaries to the Boone family seeking to enlist their membership their church.

A BOOK by James Bales of Searcy, Ark., titled "Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues" says in essence, that the doctrine of glossalalia comes when a person is saved and prays for the "Indwelling of the Holy Spirit" and the ability to perform

miracles.

The book says 'the Bible is the evidence of the word of God and we do not have any other evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.'

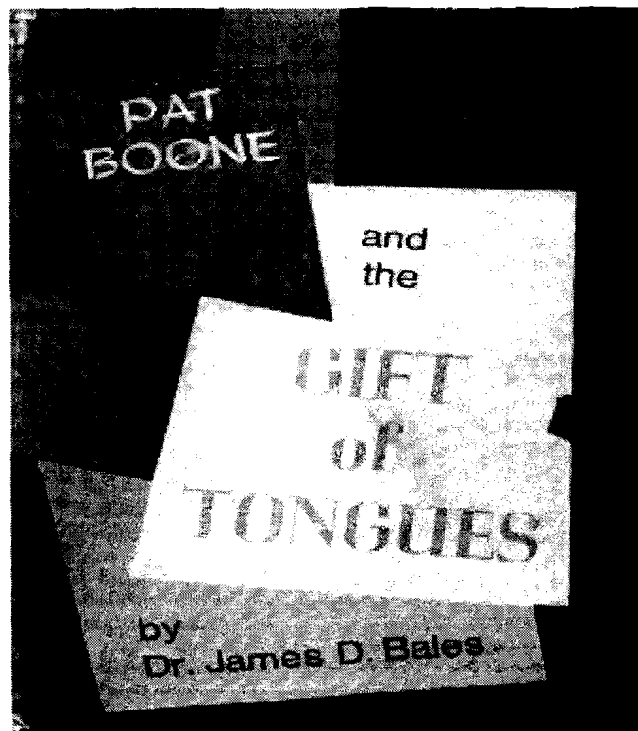
Boone's Book "A New Song," describes a spiritual revival in his life, a repaired relationship with his wife and daughters and a boost to his public life through a change outlook.

In Toronto, Boone spoke of a \$2 million "financial miracle" as a problem solved by prayer. "I have an idea," Boone said. "That material things and God things are connected."

HE SAID "I just believe everything in the Old and New Testaments, We (his family) have experienced miracles and they are just as real today as they were in the first century."

Boone is credited with baptizing more than 50 persons in his heated swimming pool in Beverly Hills.

One of the singing star's latest album releases is "Never Going Back to Nashville." Boone has been involved in several holdings including "Pat Boone's Favorite Foods of America," a restaurant franchising chain; "Wendell-West", a Seattle based real estate firm; "Telequick" a national television repair franchise; "Boone-Hanson" a film production company in Dallas; "Sue-West," a record studio in Los Angeles; and the Oakland Oaks basketball team.



Boone Labeled 'Sin Carrier'

By W. A. REED

Tennessean Religion News Editor

A Church of Christ evangelist has criticized former Nashville singer Pat Boone in a church journal as "a carrier of the dread disease" resulting from his "liberal, emotional turn" in religion.

Evangelist L. O. Sanderson, writing in the June 3 edition of *Gospel Advocate*, a Nashville-based, conservative Church of Christ journal, said the church is "deeply concerned" for Boone, once an active fund-raiser for denominational charities.

IN ADDITION to his own criticism of Boone, Sanderson quoted from a Baptist publication which has been critical of the entertainer's statements on religion.

After Boone endorsed the religious practice of speaking in tongues in 1971, he was put out of the Inglewood, Calif., Church of Christ, and he drew additional fire from other conservative churchmen.

"But so it goes," Sanderson writes, "he who compromises one truth will soon be condoning, then embracing, any and all sin."

"IT IS NO secret that those, once of the faith, who rise to worldly fame, especially in show business, will, sooner or later, let popularity, wealth, lusts, pride, and bigotry turn their heads and sear their hearts, wrecking the last vestige of faith and hope for them—and the saddest part is that they take so many with them on the trail of ruin."

Boone, whose parents reside in Nashville, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

In his article Sanderson, of Memphis, quotes from an

editorial in the *Sword of the Lord*, a Baptist weekly published at Murfreesboro. That quotation reads, in part:

"PAT BOONE is one of the current crop of Hollywoodites who like to work both sides of the street. One day he may be performing in a vulgar Nevada nightclub, and the next day he may be preaching in a religious service. . . . Mr. Boone advocates talking in tongues, which he claims to have experienced—although he has never made it quite clear how this spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit comes upon one who earns his living hustling booze, gambling, and nudity."

The same editorial, according to Sanderson, takes offense at a statement by Boone relating to Jesus Christ and the possibility that He "traveled with wealthy women who paid the bills, as Matthew's Gospel relates.

"Mr. Boone," the editorial declared, "has a different Gospel of Matthew than we have. And we think it is gutter language for this religious heretic to intimate that our Lord traveled with wealthy women who paid the bills. Mr. Boone owes Christ an apology."

AFTER QUOTING from the Baptist publication, Sanderson provided his own analysis:

"True, it may be prudent to attack the sin rather than the sinful person, but when the person is a carrier of the dread disease, it will do little good just to condemn the sickness. We must expose and warn against both."

When he was in the good graces of the Church of Christ, Boone was an active and respected churchman. In 1959 proceeds from his motion picture, "Journey to the Center of the Earth," went to the Boxwell Boy Scout Reservation Development on Old Hickory Lake.

In 1960 Boone put on two Atlanta performances to benefit the David Lipscomb College Foundation.

AND IN 1961 he received the Christian Family Book Club's Century Award here for "the most significant contribution to Christian literature" following publication of his two books—"Twixt Twelve and Twenty" and "Between You Me and the Gatepost."

The entertainer said last year he and his wife Shirley have "experienced miracles, and they are just as real today as they were in the 1st century. He told a gathering here recently that "a baptism of the Holy Spirit" altered his life and the lives of his family (compilation of articles from pages 1 and 8).

Pat Boone Kicked Out Of Church

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Singer Pat Boone is causing a stir in certain religious circles. He was "disfellowshipped" or ostracized last month from the Churches of Christ after more than a years review.

BOONES boy-next-door image had not tarnished. The reason for the disciplinary action in the strict Protestant fellowship was that he and his wife, Shirley, had added belief in miraculous healings and speaking in tongues to their personal faith.

Meanwhile, Mormon missionaries have tried to interest the Boones in joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, visiting their Beverly Hills home at least 10 times to date.

The entertainer identifies with the current "Jesus movement" of young fundamentalist Christians who have the outward appearance of hippies.

The movement is so free-form, so anti-institutional that it is really shaking up the ordained priesthood because it has no apparent structure,"

Boone said.

The 40 foot swimming pool in back of the Boone home has been the scene of about 100 baptisms in the last year. Boone himself baptized a group of 25 by reading scripture as persons were immersed in the shallow end of the pool.

Boone confirmed in an interview that his family "has been actively courted, sought or approached by many members of the LDS church.

"Since the word sort of got out that we had been disfellowshipped," he added, "we've been asked by Methodists and Assemblies of God, too.

"One Assembly of God bishop handed me ordination application and said, if you fill out these papers, you'll be ordained."

"I explained that I don't want any credentials other than the name of Christian." But that doesn't mean we won't

settle down in some church"

(Reprinted from *The Oklahoma Journal*, Monday March 29, 1971, copyright 1971 by Los Angeles Time Washington Post News Service.)

This story ran in the local Oklahoma city paper March 29. We have called the Inglewood Church in Los Angeles, and have not received any statement from them.

It is regrettable that such distorted news has hit the front page of some of our papers. What would have been more regrettable would have been the Inglewood church NOT taking scriptural action when faced with this problem. We salute them in their courage; we know it must have been and still is an agonizing and heartbreaking experience. We must pray for Pat and his family; we must also pray for the Inglewood Church, and for the entire church of this century as it faces error and false doctrines of this world.

Roy H. Lanier, Jr.

AN ALLEGED CONTRADICTION ANSWERED

Jerry Murrell

Have you ever had anyone question your faith by asking you how you could possibly believe the Bible when it is “full of contradictions”? In discussion with those who have said this, I always make them give at least one example of a contradiction. Surely if the Bible is “full of contradictions” it should be easy to cite at least one. Most of the time the conversation ends with me continuing to ask for the person to give me at least one and the other party finally admitting that he/she cannot think of one “right now” or he/she dismisses him/herself the conversation.

However, recently I have had this conversation with two people, one of whom is a history professor at a state University, who actually attempted to give me an example. Another is a Methodist who left the Lord’s church years ago because “you guys have an obsession with the Bible.” The college professor actually offered me a second example after I explained why his first attempt was not a contradiction. The unusual thing was that both parties, who I will refer to as the professor and the Methodist, used one of the same alleged contradictions to make their case.

First, the professor used what he saw as a contradiction between Paul’s view of salvation by faith alone and the view of James that salvation is by works. He did not cite any passages but it was easy to fill in the blanks and see from where he was coming. I demonstrated to him that the contradiction was not between James and Paul but between James and the Southern Baptist “fire and brimstone preaching” (his characterization) that he had grown up hearing. Although he was very confused to hear my explanation, he admitted that he could not prove that Paul taught faith only, but he thought, “Everybody knew that.”

The alleged contradictions that were cited by both the professor and the Methodist were based on their understanding of God’s command to Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to him (Genesis 22ff). It was strange to me that these two people from dissimilar backgrounds both cited this same alleged contradiction. Since my mind is more easily convinced of conspiracy than coincidence, I thought that this was an argument that needed to be answered in the pages of

Contending for the Faith. It is likely that others will run into this same alleged contradiction as they try to talk with others about Christ and his church.

Their basic case concerned whether or not God tempts man. James 1:13 clearly 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.**” But when one reads Genesis 22:1, it is obvious that He did tempt Abraham for it reads, “**And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham.**” How does one explain the problem that is apparent to anyone who makes a cursory reading of these verses?

The most important fact to understand is the meaning of the word translated “tempt” in Genesis 22:1. The word translated “tempt” (*nasah*) is translated in the *KJV* “prove” 20 times, “tempt” 12 times, “assay” twice, “adventure” once, and “try” once. If one just counted, it would be easy to see that the most likely translation in Genesis 22:1 would be “prove” instead of “tempt.” The *ASV* actually uses the more common translation of “prove” in this passage.

The English word “tempt” has a connotation of “to entice one to do evil.” The word *nasah* never is used in this sense in the Bible. Let me be clear, I am not talking about how the word “tempt” is used in two senses in the *KJV*, for such is the case. But, I am staking my case on the fact that the Hebrew word used in Genesis 22:1 (*nasah*) never means “to entice one to sin.” Let us do a quick word study of the various passages that employ the word translated tempt in Genesis 22:1 in the Old Testament.

In Exodus 16:4, God says through Moses, “**Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove (*nasah*) them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.**” God is teaching Israel that he can be trusted. The children of Israel were to gather manna enough for only one’s day food sup-



ply. The next morning when they got up they would find that God had been faithful to his word and had manna to take care of their needs for the next day. This would continue until the fifth day when they were allowed to gather twice as much to keep from having to gather manna (work) on the Sabbath. God is not enticing Israel to sin, but he is doing just the opposite in this passage (cf. Deuteronomy 8:3). Instead of avoiding testing (*nasah*), like man is to avoid temptation, faithful men actually prayed to be tested by God. David wrote, **“Examine me, O LORD, and prove (*nasah*) me; try my reins and my heart”** (Psalm 26:2).

Later this word is used of David training for combat with Goliath wearing armor. The text says **“And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved (*nasah*) it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved (*nasah*) them. And David put them off him”** (I Samuel 7:39). Obviously, David does not refuse to use Saul’s armor because he had thus far failed to try to entice Saul’s armor into sin. The word is clearly used in the sense of “test” when the Queen of Sheba, who had heard of the wisdom of Solomon, came to see if what she had heard was true. The Bible says, **“And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove (*nasah*) him with hard questions”** (I Kings 10:1). Whether she intended to entice Solomon to sin or not, that is not the purpose of the passage. The point is she is going to give Solomon a series of tests to determine if he is as wise as she has heard that he is.

In Daniel 1, the word *nasah* is used in a way that clearly shows that the idea of enticing to sin is foreign to its use. Daniel was part of the royal seed of the Jews who were to be trained in a way that was most advantageous to the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. As they were being sent to school the man in charge of the eunuchs was given the responsibility to see that he and his three faithful friends were eating right. The Babylonians ate food that was not kosher so Daniel requested of the prince of the eunuchs that they not be forced to eat from the king’s menu (Daniel 1:9-10). Daniel’s friend feared that if they did not eat the “balanced diet” that was provided to them by the king, that it would soon be apparent to others that they were not healthy and the king might cut-off his head (Daniel 1:10). Daniel proposed to use the scientific method to determine whether or not he could thrive on the diet that he wanted to eat.

Prove (*nasah*) thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse? to eat, and water to drink? Then let our countenances be looked upon

before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved (*nasah*) them ten days (Daniel 1:12-14).

Daniel is not requesting that his friend Melzar entice him to sin, he is making the opposite request.

That is not to say that sin is never associated with the word *nasah*. Man is not to put God to the test. To put God to the test is to sin. This is what Israel was guilty of in their time of wandering in the wilderness (Psalm 95:9 cf. 78:18, 41). When Jesus responds to Satan’s temptation to cast himself off of the pinnacle of the temple and see if God will catch him like the Psalmist said that he would (Matthew 4:5-6), he says, **“It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God”** (Matthew 4:7). This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16, which looks back on the years of wandering in the wilderness and reads, **“Ye shall not tempt (*nasah*) the LORD your God, as ye tempted (*nasah*) him in Massah.”**

God did call on the Jews to try his ways and see if they work. When God calls on the Jews to give to him and see what result they receive he uses the word *bachan* (Malachi 3:10, this is also the word in Malachi 3:15) instead of the word *nasah*. If God proposes the test, man is not testing God, he is simply trusting God enough to follow God’s commands. This is how Ahaz misunderstand God’s call to ask a sign of him (Isaiah 7:11). Ahaz, in a false display of piety says, **“I will not ask, neither will I tempt (*nasah*) the LORD”** (Isaiah 7:12). For Ahaz to ask for a sign when God has instructed him to do so, it not tempting (*nasah*) God, it would simply be trusting (*bachan*) God.

The best commentary on the testing of Abraham in Genesis 22:1 is Hebrews 11:17. There the writer of Hebrews says, **“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.”** Abraham offered his son to God without actually sacrificing him. It is in this instance that in many ways, Abraham was offering himself wholly to God. God put Abraham to the test and he proved to be faithful. Like all good tests, the one taking the test learns more than the one giving the test. At the end of the test Abraham sees a ram caught in the thicket that would take the place of Isaac, so that the son of promise would live. When that ram was sacrificed, Abraham learned the lesson that God had been trying to get him to see from the beginning, the Lord will provide (Genesis 22:13-14).

—4340 Lylewood Dr.
Indian Mounds, Tennessee 37079

QUAIL SPRINGS, BILLY GRAHAM...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

preached the gospel to more people than anyone else in the Christian world. He's had a very public ministry for over 50 years. I'm honored to participate in something with him."

Henderson is either ignorant, or a blatant false teacher if he believes what Graham has preached for over 50 years is the gospel. Graham wrote in the Daily Oklahoman (Sept. 26, 1978, p. 8) "Baptism does not save us." That is not the gospel according to 1 Peter 3:21. Graham said, "Cain and Abel were infected with the death-dealing disease of sin, which they inherited from their parents and which has been passed on to every generation since. We are all sinners by inheritance ("Peace With God," pp. 42-43). That is not the gospel according to Ezekiel 18:20). Graham wrote, "...Those who surrender their lives to him and receive him into their hearts. It is this act that makes you a Christian" ("My Answer," September 14, 1956). That is not the gospel, according to Matthew 7:21. Obviously, Mark Henderson is a heretic who is in full agreement with Billy Graham. Henderson and his coterie of followers in Oklahoma City should take down the sign from their building that says "Church of Christ" and put up one that says "Baptist."

When **Adolph Hitler** was imprisoned in the 1920s for his "Putsch" in a Munich beer hall, he spent his time in prison writing a book entitled, "Mein Kampf" ("My Struggle"). In that book, he explicitly stated what he intended to do if he ever came to power, including the eradication of Jews. Few people took him seriously until he became Germany's Chancellor in the 1930s.

Mark Henderson has his own "Mein Kampf" which clearly states his objectives regarding fellowship with denominations. That document is a lecture he gave at Abilene Christian University February 19, 1996, entitled, "People Need The Unity-Committed Church." Here's a portion of that speech:

Brothers and sisters, we do not have to live in estrangement and isolation from those who honestly differ with us inside or outside our fellowship. We do not have to agree with them at every point, nor do we have to convince them to agree with us on every issue. All we have to do is look to our left, to those who have felt the sting of our rejection, and everywhere we see one who has surrendered his or her life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we may rejoice that we have discovered a brother or sister, and we may extend to that child of God the same inviting hand of grace and acceptance that we our-

selves have received from the Lord Jesus.

Then ignoring Paul's formula for unity expressed in First Corinthians 1:10, Henderson boldly asserted the following:

Our model for unity which allows for diversity is found in Romans chapters 14-15 where the context has to do with differing opinions over what were serious doctrinal matters to Paul's readers. We won't take time tonight to read it, but Paul's advice is pretty simple. He says, 'Accept the one whose faith is weak without passing judgement on disputable matters. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? Each one should be convinced in his own mind, but whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Accept one another, just as Christ has accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.' There's the key. Accept one another, just as Christ has accepted you, with all your weakness and failings and even your error. I believe we will more readily allow for diversity of practice and opinion if each of us will simply acknowledge that our own doctrinal positions and opinions are, necessarily and inevitably, a mixture of truth and error.

Henderson's agnostic postmodernism shows in the above statement that "our own doctrinal positions and opinions are...a mixture of truth and error." With that sort of position, it then becomes easy to embrace Billy Graham, for the postmodernist/agnostic recognizes no soul-damning error, and Jesus did not really mean what he said in John 8:31, 32.

—308 South Oklahoma
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PREACHER NEEDED:

The Woodbridge church of Christ in Woodbridge, VA is seeking a full time minister. The congregation of 65/75 is scripturally sound and conservative. The Bible is our only guide. Salary plus a 5 bedroom house will be provided. Woodbridge is located just south of our nations capitol and serves as a bedroom community for that city. The congregation has elders and deacons. This position is available immediately. Duties include the complete range of the usual activities of a sound preacher of the gospel. If interested, please a resume, a tape of a recent sermon, a family picture and references to Dale E. Kowa, 12197 Seaford Ct., Lake Ridge, VA 22192. Tele # 703-491-1012.

A REVIEW OF THE THIRD ANNUAL PREACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD LECTURESHIP

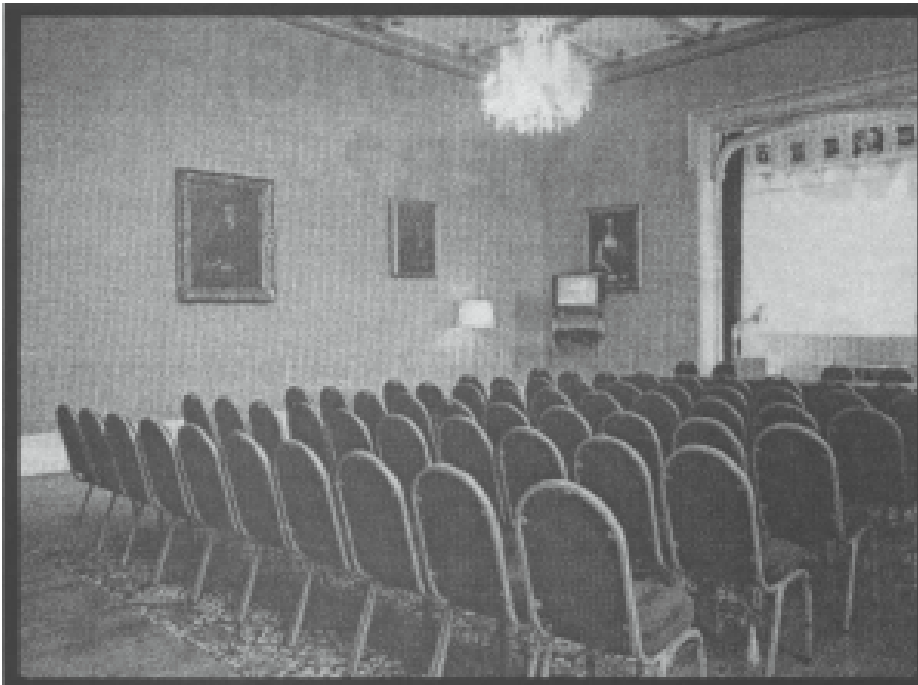
Darrell Broking



HINCHINGBROOKE HOUSE

In a letter to **Sir W. Spring** written in September of 1643, **Oliver Cromwell** wrote, "A few honest men are better than numbers." On October 11, 2003 a few honest Christians, about 40 in all, gathered in what was once Oliver Cromwell's ancestral home, Hinchingbrooke House, to hear the gospel preached in its simplicity and purity. The few who gathered together were hungering for the pure word of God, thus they were far more valuable in God's sight than a host of people demanding a watered down and polluted gospel. The former class of people is well known in England. There are about 58 churches of Christ in England, many of which are either liberal or so weak that they do not understand what liberalism is and what it is doing to the church. The *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God Lectures* are directed by **Gray Grizzell** and **Keith Sisman**, and are designed to strengthen the faithful in England, encourage brethren who are in congregations that are doctrinally weak, and seek to save lost souls. Brethren Grizzell and Sisman are to be commended for their foresight and ability to work together as they do for the cause of Christ in the United Kingdom.

The 2003 *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God Lectures* provided strength to the faithful in England. Brethren from several congregations attended the lectureship and were appreciative of the fine gospel preaching. Keith Sisman of Ramsey, England preached a good sermon dealing with responsibilities in the home. Keith demonstrated the fact that a godly home is a home wherein Christ is head and respected. Gary Grizzell of Cookeville, Tennessee preached about a Christian family's influence in the church. Gary clearly presented the home as the training ground for the church. A congregation cannot be stronger than the homes from which it is made up. **David P. Brown** of Spring, Texas preached an excellent sermon dealing with proverbs for parents, wherein he explained what Proverbs 22:6 does and does not teach. **Gary Young** of Melbourne, Australia discussed the home's effect on young people living for God. Brother Young presented the case for the home as being indispensable in rearing young people in the Lord. **Leon Schrei** of Tomball, Texas preached about God's purpose for marriage. Be assured that Leon understands Matthew



THE MEETING ROOM IN HINCHINGBROOKE HOUSE WHERE THE LECTURES WERE HELD



SPEAKERS FOR THE ANNUAL ENGLISH LECTURES ON THE STAIRCASE OF HINCHINGBROOKE HOUSE

19:9 and he preached it in a clear and loving manner. **Darrell Broking** preached about the influences of destructive criticism on youth and how the home can help. Gary Grizzell edited a lectureship book, which was distributed free to all who attended the lectureship. The book may be ordered from Gary Grizzell. For ordering information email Gary at tracts@charter.net or call him at (931) 423-6984.

Not only were the faithful strengthened, but also all who attended the lectureship were encouraged. It is evident that the church in the United Kingdom is suffering through a difficult hour. Faithful brethren are few and far between.

Hinchingbrooke House is centrally located and is easily accessible to all who want to attend in the United Kingdom. Brethren from many places came together and enjoyed fine fellowship, good gospel preaching, singing, and food. The acoustics in the Hinchingbrooke House are near perfect, thus the singing of forty sounded like a great host of singers longing for the day that we will sing before the very throne of God!

Additionally, the lost were given an opportunity to hear the truth and obey the gospel of God's only begotten Son. The brethren of the Ramsey, England Church of Christ are to be commended for all of the hard work that they put into the lectureship. Every detail was handled in a professional manner. The U. K. is overflowing with the teaching of atheism, secularism, pluralism, and humanism. It is rare for advertisements to gospel events in England to gain the attention of non-believers. The advertising that went into the lectureship was first class, and it did receive attention from some lost souls in England. As the annual *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God Lectures* continue, others will have the opportunity to hear and obey Christ's gospel. Keep this work in your prayers and support it if you can.

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SING, SANG, SUNG, AND PRAYER?

Jess Whitlock

In just the past few years almost a dozen congregations in Oklahoma and Texas have experienced sharp contention, and even division concerning whether a song is a prayer, or a prayer is a song. All are in agreement that the Bible specifies we are to sing in our worship to God: Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; and James 5:13. There is Biblical authority for New Testament Christians to worship Deity in song. We have Biblical authorization for prayer to God in the name of Jesus Christ: Acts 2:42; 16:13; John 14:13-14; Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 4:16; James 4:3-6; 5:16; I Thessalonians 5:17-18. Let us put forth every effort not to confuse God's teaching on the subjects of prayer and singing.

PRAISE OR PRAYER?

It appears that some brethren have confused songs of praise to Jesus with a prayer to Jesus. One preacher has stated: "We have no authority to pray nor sing to Jesus." One elder has commented: "If you sing to Jesus in first person, you are praying to Jesus." One brother stated: "Singing to Jesus is talking to Jesus and if talking, you are praying to Jesus." Brethren, let me state that I would be most hesitant to sign a proposition for public debate based upon any one of those statements.

Is there a distinction between praise and prayer? The term praise is defined: "an expression of approval or commendation." Prayer is defined: "making request or petition to a deity." Certainly we can see that prayer and praise are not always synonymous terms. It is important that all Christians realize the difference between praise and prayer. We do not have the right to pray to Jesus, but we have Biblical authority to praise Him!

It is hard to realize that congregations have actually been divided over this matter. Let me hasten to say that one can indeed sing error as well as teach error. Recently I have accessed three lists of songs that are deemed unworthy of singing. One list contains about 60 songs, another list contains approximately 90 songs, and the third list has over 100 songs. The overwhelming majority of the songs listed are deemed unscriptural on the basis they are songs that are said to be prayers to Jesus. I admit there are numerous songs

where the content of the song specifically states it is a prayer to Jesus: "I Must Tell Jesus," "Jesus, Meek And Gentle," "My Faith Looks Up To Thee," "One Blessed Hour," "More Love To Thee," "Hand In hand With Jesus," "Jesus Hold My Hand," "Jesus Knows And Cares," "Just A Little Talk With Jesus," and "Victory In Jesus." These song titles were gleaned from three songbooks. I suspect there are surely several more songs that do the same. I know there are songs that teach outright error. In the song, "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go," one verse states: "but if, by a still small voice, He calls ..." We must understand the Lord calls today through his word. Another song I will not sing is: "Jesus Is Coming Soon." Not only does this song advocate that we can know the time of the Lord's return, which we cannot (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32-35; I Thessalonians 4:16; 5:2-3), the second stanza of this song teaches premillennialism. It also misapplies the signs of Matthew 24 to the second coming of Christ where the subject matter should be applied only to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. We can sing error as well as teach error. Every song must be considered on its individual merit. Songwriters must be given the advantage of poetic license and figurative language. We allow such usage in the word of God, so why not allow it in our songs of praise to him?

CAN WE PRAISE OR WORSHIP OR GLORIFY JESUS?

Most are aware of the fact that singing, as part of our worship, involves praise to the Godhead. The Godhead is composed of three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Since the controversy centers around Jesus Christ, let us consider what the scripture teaches concerning praise and worship and glorification of his name.

Is it right to praise Jesus? What saith the scripture? Romans 15:11, "... **praise the Lord...**" Ephesians 1:12, 14; "**That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. ...unto the praise of His glory.**" Hebrews 2:12, "**Saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.**" I Peter 2:9: "...that ye should show forth the praises of Him who

hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Is it acceptable to worship Jesus? We know that when Christ walked on the earth that He did receive worship. Matthew 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17; Mark 5:6, 22; Luke 24:52; John 5:23; 9:38. In none of these instances did Jesus refuse worship offered to him.

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood... (Revelation 5:9). Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing (Revelation 5:12). ...heard I saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever (Revelation 5:13-14).

Is it scriptural to glorify Jesus?

And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all (Luke 4:15). ...but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him ... the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified (John 12:16, 23). Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him (John 13:31). And all mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them (John 17:10). And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord... (Acts 21:20). That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:12). Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art Holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee... (Revelation 15:4).

Note the latter reference mentions both glorification and worship directed to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we have learned from the teaching of the pages of Holy Writ that it is acceptable to praise Jesus, to worship Jesus, and to glorify Jesus. There is scriptural authority for these. Do we have scriptural examples of men talking to Jesus, and not in direct prayer to Him?

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit and he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep (Acts 7:59-60).

Then, in Acts 9:6, speaking of Saul the sinner, before he became Paul the preacher:

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

There is nothing in the context to indicate that either Stephen or Saul sinned by speaking to Jesus!

“WORTHY ART THOU”

It is hard to figure out why some brethren have attacked the lovely hymn “Worthy Art Thou.” Consider these words from the erudite pen of my good friend and brother **Wayne Price**:

Was brother **Tillit Teddlie** in error when he wrote the beautiful hymn, “Worthy Art Thou”? We think not, even though the chorus repeatedly uses the phrase “Worthy Art Thou” referring to Jesus Christ. This song is based upon Revelation 5:12, and declares that the Lamb, Christ, is worthy to receive honor, glory, etc. Notice also that in Revelation 5:9 they “sung a new song”, declaring in the second person singular “Thou art worthy...” Are we ready to proclaim that this part of the Bible is teaching false doctrine, and should be omitted, since they addressed their song to Jesus? One doctrine leads to another, and eventually we seek to bind our opinions on others, but an alarm should go off within us when such a doctrine causes us to see a need to rewrite the Bible (as would be the case with the Revelation 5:9-12 reference, if singing to Jesus were wrong). Such a doctrine would demand that Revelation 5:9 teaches false doctrine.

We dare not divide the body of Christ over things NOT clearly taught as matters of faith, but rather are in the realm of private opinion. The Bible teaches we are to pray to God—through Christ. The argument goes: “Singing directly to Jesus is talking directly to Jesus, which is nothing more than praying directly to Jesus.” We know the latter is not scriptural, hence, according to their argument singing to Him is also unscriptural. But if we are to worship Christ, yet not do so in song or in prayer, then by what means may one worship Him?

“I NEED THEE EVERY HOUR”

This lovely hymn made all three “hit lists” in my possession. It is contended that this song is actually a prayer to Jesus Christ. I wholeheartedly disagree. I realize my love of this song goes back to memories of hearing my mother singing it in worship, in going about her chores at home, and toward the end of her life, singing this song along with others late at night before retiring. Let us examine the words and the teaching of the pages of Holy Writ to see if this song should be eliminated from our singing.

Yes, I am aware that this particular hymn was penned by a Baptist, **Annie Hawks**, who wrote in the fourth stanza: “I need Thee every hour, most Holy One; O make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son!” The chorus states: “I need Thee, O I need Thee; every hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Savior: I come to Thee!” Let us take a moment to follow the admonition of Isaiah 1:18; **“Come now, and let us reason to-**

gether, saith the Lord...”

We cannot be referred to as a son or children of Jesus Christ, since we are children of God! Please consider: Matthew 5:9; John 11:52; Romans 8:16, 21; 9:8, 26; Galatians 3:26; 1 John 3:10; 5:2. Please note further that God the father is often described as being our Savior: 11 Samuel 22:3; Psalm 106:21; Isaiah 43:3; 45:15-21; Hosea 13:4; Luke 1:47; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jude 25. Furthermore, God the Father is referred to as the Holy One: Psalm 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Isaiah 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11-15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14-20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14; Jeremiah 50:29; 51:5. Hence, a careful study of the scripture and the words of this song convey that I can sing with the spirit and with the understanding also, the words of the hymn, “I Need Thee Every Hour.”

“AMAZING GRACE”

Another beautiful hymn has been axed from all three lists in my possession. The reason seems to be based upon the latter phrase of the second verse which states: “How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!” Some have simply changed the wording to say, “the hour I first obeyed.” I have no objections to either way. Consider the wisdom of the writing of my good friend and brother **B. J. Clarke**:

“How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!”

There is some controversy regarding this phrase of the song. Does the phrase suggest that we receive the grace of God by belief or faith only? Not necessarily. Now, because Newton was a member of a denomination it is virtually certain that his understanding of the phrase was misguided. This, no doubt, is what led to some songbooks rewriting the second stanza to read, ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears allayed; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first obeyed.’ While there is nothing objectionable about this revision, it is not necessary, provided that one has a Biblical understanding of what is meant by the phrase ‘The hour I first believed.’

For instance, in Acts 16, Paul and Silas taught the gospel to the Philippian jailer and his household. Because he did not know to do so, they instructed him to “**believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**” in order to be saved (Acts 16:31). But that is not where they stopped. They proceeded to speak to him, and his household, “**the word of the Lord**” (Acts 16:32). What did their message consist of? They spoke unto them “**the word of the Lord.**” Isaiah foretold that “**the word of the Lord**” would go forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3). This would occur at the same time that the Lord’s House was established in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2). This occurred on the Day of Pentecost when the Lord’s House, the church (1 Timothy 3:15), was established (Acts 2:41,47).

Now, what was “**the word of the Lord**” as preached in Jerusalem on the day the church was established? It consisted of the command to believe in the deity of Christ, to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38). Isaiah said that this word would go forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3). Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord unto the jailer’s household. They taught the jailer to believe, repent, and be baptized.

Upon hearing the word of the Lord, the jailer took Paul and Silas the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, thus evidencing his faith and repentance. Then, he was baptized immediately thereafter (Acts 16:33). Now, consider the next verse: “**And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God**” (Acts 16:34, ASV, emp. mine, BJC). Note carefully that the Scripture does not describe him as having believed in God until after he had obeyed the word of the Lord by repentance and baptism.

Properly understood, “belief” is sometimes used as a package word in the New Testament, i.e., a word to encompass all that one must do in order to be saved. It often includes more than mere belief in the Deity of Jesus Christ. For example, on the Day of Pentecost, “**they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls**” (Acts 2:41). Then, we read in verse 44, “**And all that believed were together, and had all things common**” (emp. mine, BJC). Those described in verse 44 (all that believed) included those described in verse 41 (those who were baptized).”

One other observation I would like to make concerning the hymn, “Amazing Grace.” I have no difficulty in singing with the spirit and with the understanding, the song, “Amazing Grace.” We learn in Ephesians 2:8 that we are saved by grace. Romans 1:16 states that we are saved by the gospel of Christ. In Acts 20:24 we are told that Paul preached the gospel of the grace of God. So, what is unscriptural?

Remember that I am in possession of three lists of songs that have been deemed as unworthy or unscriptural for singing in our worship services. Sometimes the LIST is the result of the preacher’s conviction, sometimes the LIST is the result of the thinking of the elders, sometimes the LIST comes from a “committee,” and sometimes the LIST may be a combination of these. Do you see the problem? “Amazing Grace” is found on only one of my “hit lists.” If a song is indeed unscriptural, why would it not be on all the lists? In the various lists in my possession there is a difference of more than 30 or more hymns in all the songbooks used, where one group says a song is okay, another group says it is not okay. Could that be due to personal opinions and conviction?

“My Jesus I Love Thee” is another song that made only one of the lists. I have to wonder why some lists

deem a song unworthy of praise, and another list suggests it's okay? In a private conversation with brother Wayne Price, he observed that it is ironic these brethren can sing the song, "Oh How I Love Jesus," but cannot sing, "My Jesus I Love Thee." The first song is okay because it is about Him, the latter song is not appropriate because it is addressed to Him. However, the message of the two songs is essentially the same. I fear that some of my brethren have forgotten that Christ, according to the scripture is our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

"Love Divine" is another song that is frequently given the axe. The reason for the elimination of this song is due to the expression: "Jesus, Thou art all compassion ..." The word of God expresses the truth that Christ was/is compassionate. We observe that Christ was compassionate to the lost, (Matthew 9:36-38). He showed compassion to the sinful, (Luke 7:36-50; John 8:1-11). Jesus demonstrated compassion to those who were suffering, (Matthew 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 6:34). Christ was compassionate to those who were bereaved, (Luke 7:13; John 11:35). Therefore, this expression simply reflects the teaching of the Bible. What is there in the song, "Love Divine" that causes some to think it is a prayer to Jesus? It is a song addressed to Christ. We have already shown that it is proper to praise and/or worship Jesus through songs of adoration.

Obviously, we cannot deal with 50 to 150 songs in this meticulous fashion. Since we have authority to sing to fellow Christians (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), New Testament Christians can surely sing songs of adoration and appreciation toward our elder brother, Jesus Christ. If not, why not?

PRAYER SONGS (?) ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES

Probably 80 to 90% of the songs that are eliminated in these various lists, are claimed to be prayers to Christ, not songs of praise directed to Him. However, other songs are being eliminated. In several instances I would agree. The song, "Why Do You Wait?" suggests the direct leading of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word of God. Also, we cannot refer to a person as our brother who has never obeyed the gospel. The song, "Everytime I Feel the Spirit" advocates the Holy Spirit moving in our hearts. This is false doctrine. As stated earlier, we can sing error as well as teach error.

It was interesting to me that the song, "Mercy, Lord" was eliminated primarily on the basis that it requested humming. I would agree that we have no authority to hum, whistle, clap, or bebop in singing songs

of praise to God. However, the song, "His Grace Reaches Me" was not eliminated in this particular list. Why not? This song requests that certain ones Ahh throughout the song. I find as much authority for humming as for ahing! This seems to be inconsistent. Another inconsistency in this list was found by eliminating the song, "Whispering Hope." The reason for not singing this song was due to the fact that during a portion of the song only ladies voices were used. Again I noted numerous songs where for a portion of the singing only the voices of ladies can be heard, but those songs were not eliminated. Who was it that said, "Ah, consistency thou art a jewel?"

I CORINTHIANS 14:40

I realize that elderships have the responsibility of spiritual oversight, (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5). Elders are given the charge to feed the church, (Acts 20:28). They are to guard and tend the flock, (Acts 20:29-31; 1 Peter 5:2). Also, they must give time and thought to this great work, (1 Timothy 5:17-18). The churches that have implemented these lists have experienced turmoil, questions, criticism, and in some congregations members have started attending elsewhere. There should be a way for a congregation to eliminate "questionable" songs and do so decently and in order. There are certain songs that do teach outright error. All would agree that these songs should not be sung as they are written. What are the options available in dealing with an unscriptural song?

Let us be open-minded enough to understand there may be more than one way of dealing with a troublesome passage. For example, in the song "I Know Whom I Have Believed," one verse states "I know not how the Spirit moves, convincing men of sin." However, the next line reads "revealing Jesus through the Word, creating faith in Him." I have always sung this song with the understanding that with my finite mind I cannot fully comprehend the power and working of the Holy Spirit. I do not fully comprehend the abilities of my computer either. Wayne Price prefers to change the word "not" in that first phrase to the word "just." That makes more sense to him. Also, the last stanza states concerning the second coming of Christ, "nor if I'll walk the vale with Him, or meet Him in the air." It is interesting the songwriter places the words "meet him in the air" in quotation marks. This indicates the songwriter was familiar with the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Since we know we will not walk the vale with Him, we could simply sing, "nor will I walk the vale with Him, but meet Him in the air." Therefore, one way of handling a song that may teach false doctrine is to have the song leader instruct the congre-

gation to substitute a word or words, so that all may sing in good conscience. If the verse cannot be corrected by the substitution of a few words, then the song leader could instruct the congregation to omit that verse. There are going to be a few songs in every songbook that due to the chorus, or the title, or the overall tenor of the song, we simply should not sing. The songs, "Jesus Is Coming Soon" and "Just a Little Talk With Jesus" are examples of such. Perhaps the leadership could have a meeting with the song leader(s) and those few could discuss any questions or concerns about any song or hymn that might be used in the worship services. Those songs should never be sung.

Rather than the congregation being in turmoil and tension over the list, the majority would probably never notice the omission of those particular songs. If some member should take note and bring it to the attention of the song leader, he could simply explain from a scriptural basis why that song had been omitted. Or the elders might wish to discuss the matter privately with that member. This would certainly be handling what has proven to be a volatile situation, in a decent and orderly fashion. By the way, visitors to our services would never know that a problem existed.

Before a congregation selects new songbooks the eldership and/or song leader(s) might be wise to look at the listing of hymns before making the purchase. Usually much time and thought is given to the selection of Bible class material that will be used in the classroom. Should not as much time and consideration be given to the selection of the songbooks that will be used in worship? Why buy a songbook if you know in advance that you will be marking out 50 or 100 or 150 of the songs? I wish we had time and space to examine the time and thought that goes into the selection of the Bible translation that many churches have placed in the classrooms and the songbook racks.

It is our hope that brothers and sisters in Christ will "think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Let us

always seek to "... sing with the spirit, and... with the understanding also" (1 Corinthians 14:15). Let us examine the words of the songs that we sing. Consider in closing the words of John 5:23, "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him."

ENDNOTES

All Scripture references are taken from the *Authorized King James Version*, 1611.

B. J. Clarke, "Amazing Grace" (4), *The Searcher*, Southaven Church of Christ. (lost date).

Wayne Price, (private letter).

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"DOES OUR LAW JUDGE A MAN BEFORE IT FIRST HEARS HIM AND KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING?" (John 7:51)

Noah Hackworth

These words of our title were recorded by the inspired apostle John but spoken by Nicodemus. It was on the last day, the great day of the feast, that Jesus created quite a stir among the people. He spoke of "**living water**", a newly coined phrase, and the influence of the Holy Spirit upon believers. Some wanted to lay hands on Him, but no one dared (verse 44). The desire to judge simply "gets the best" of some folks; they are seemingly unable to resist censorship. Why? Well, in some cases, those who want to judge want to make sure that the people who are being judged get what is coming to them. These "judges" are self-appointed of course, and they forget that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19). Paul, late in his life, remembered what Alexander the coppersmith had done to him, but "**the Lord reward him according to his works**" was the apostle's reaction (II Timothy 4:14). The desire to "judge", "sentence", and "execute", before the facts are known, is not uncommon these days, but of course, such is quite unbiblical and less than Christian, but this matters not to the ignorant and unlearned (cf. II Peter 3:16).

It has been said that "[N]one should come under the sentence of the law, till they have first undergone the scrutiny of it." It is imperative that people be judged, not by what is said of them, but by what they do. In reality, the scales of justice must be used before the sword of justice. This fact, unfortunately, is reversed time after time. Our problem is that we are inclined to "convict" before we are "convinced". For example, boxer **Reuben "Hurricane" Carter** spent a number of years in prison for a crime he did not commit. Those years are lost to him and can never be reclaimed.

There is a certain kind of judgment that is forbidden by the Lord (cf. Matthew 7:1). He who makes this kind of judgment violates the word of the Lord, stands condemned, and finds himself in danger of the eternal fire (cf. Luke 17:1-2). **Cook** records:

As regards the nature of the sin condemned in this precept, **Barrow** observes: 'It is private, affected, needless, groundless, rash and harsh censuring the per-

sons or actions of our brethren, such as doth resemble, not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon on good grounds or in undue manner, which is here interdicted.' (Sermon xxii)

Dr. Samuel T. Bloomfield correctly observed that "[E]very man is not qualified, nor authorized to be a reprover, so every offender is not the proper subject of reproof". Those familiar with the scriptures know that the word "judge" is used in more than one sense in the Bible. The Lord does not condemn (1) judgments made by civil courts upon evil doers, (2) judgment of the church, through its appointed leaders, upon those who walk disorderly (cf. Matthew 18:15-17; II Thessalonians 3:6), or (3) private judgments that we are compelled to make of wrong-doers, because the Lord himself compels us to do this (cf. Matthew 7:16-20). What is forbidden is rash, uncharitable judgments, a faultfinding spirit, and disposition to condemn without explanation of charges. The Lord surely frowns upon those who, completely void of wisdom yet filled with anger and resentment, attempt to take law into their own hands and meet out some kind of justice. Those who engage in such things are not a whit behind the "Ku Klux Klan", a "Kangaroo Court", or a "Vigilante Committee".

It is indeed proper for everyone to be called to account for their behavior. As **Robert Milligan** wrote, "It is high time that these wandering stars should be arrested in their erratic course". Such should be done in a lawful assembly (Acts 19:39), but such judgments as are prescribed by angry, vengeful people are totally without the Lord's approval, and those who do such things are on the brink of disaster.

—4525 W. Caldwell
Visalia, California 93277

"FANNING THE FLAMES"

Geoff Litke

About one hundred years ago **John William McGarvey** preached at the Broadway Church in Lexington, Kentucky. His tenure there was during a time of great digression among the saints. Churches by the droves were forsaking the ancient pattern for the church in order to entertain themselves with piano and organ music each Sunday in the worship assembly.

Not all churches ran down this path immediately, but in the shadow of such change many elderships became scared that their flock would run off for "more lively worship". One instance of this was in the church where McGarvey himself preached. J. W. McGarvey vigorously opposed the instrument in his writing. He did so stating that it was unauthorized by the New Testament. After over two decades as an elder and preacher for the Broadway church, Lexington, Kentucky the issue of the organ arose. It was not a sudden intrusion that the mechanical instrument made there, but one which brewed for some time.

Some years before it became an issue, it was discussed and a compromise was agreed to: a leader of the music was employed, who organized and trained a chorus. The improved music, however, did not satisfy. It but fed the desire for an organ (Brother McGarvey, W.C. Morro, PhD, p. 149).

There are in the church today many elders who are convinced that the only way to save the next generation from denominational practices is to be more like those denominational bodies in practice. I do not doubt that there are some elders out there who sincerely believe that they must introduce choirs, praise teams, music ministers, microphoned auditoriums, and imitate instruments with human voices in order to "enhance" worship. Many of these same elders are at the same time uncomfortable with the practices they have sought after. Many consider these things essential if a church is going to remain "relevant" to society. However, the only thing a church needs to remain relevant in any age is the hope of salvation which they can extend to the world through the gospel (Romans 1:16). This hope is sustained the same way it was two thousand years ago, by continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42).

For over thirty years there have been prominent and influential preachers and teachers in the church urging congregations to take measures to "progress"

the church. These measures are so often motivated by a desire to be like the denominations. This is reminiscent of ancient Israel who desired a king to be like the other nations (II Samuel 8:5). Their king did not solve their spiritual condition, and this did not satisfy their desire. They were so captivated by what the other nations were doing that they completely forsook God. This was to the point that they were instructing the pagans in wickedness (Jeremiah 2:33). Like Israel of old, capitulating to the cry of the multitudes of unspiritual people who demand entertainment instead of spirituality will only fan the flames of infidelity.

This is shown from the apostasy of Israel, and the apostasy of last century. Those of McGarvey's day who settled for nothing less than the instrument did not stop with improved music, but marched onward away from the doctrine of Christ (II John 9-11). Churches who rejected Bible authority embraced mechanical instruments of music in worship, missionary societies, and plunged headlong into error. Now many members of the Disciples of Christ Independent Christian Churches denominations (the denominations which arose out of that apostasy) openly deny the deity of Christ with the blessings of their earthly headquarters.

Where will it stop? The answer is it will not. When unspiritual members of the church of Christ clamor to be like the denominations, no compromise will appease them, but rather will fan the flames of their desires. Can any good be done with people who openly reject the "old paths" and defiantly cry, "we WILL not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16, emphasis G.L.)? The answer was no for Israel, and it was no better in McGarvey's day.

J.W. McGarvey believed he could labor among those who opted for the mechanical instruments and be a leavening influence for good. In so doing he horribly compromised his influence and his values. It is reported by **Jesse P. Sewell** that McGarvey lamented his work among the digressives in his later years. Sewell revealed this matter in his lecture at Harding College in 1950. He said,

In January, 1902 or 1903, I was preaching for the Pearl and Bryan Streets Church in Dallas. Brother McGarvey, an old man at the time, was invited to speak at the Central Christian church in Dallas. We had three men in the Pearl and Bryan Streets church who gradu-

ated from the College of the Bible in Lexington under Brother McGarvey, and they were great admirers of him. They suggested that we invite Brother McGarvey to preach at Pearl and Bryan that night. We did so. I was just a boy of 24 or 25 then. I was sitting by the side of this great old man on the front seat, waiting for the service to begin. As we sat there talking, Brother McGarvey said to me: 'Brother Sewell, I want to say something to you, if you'll accept it in the spirit in which I mean it.' I told him I'd appreciate anything he had to say to me. He said about these words, 'You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that it was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that use it and churches that didn't. I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years, I have taught the truth as the New Testa-

ment teaches it to every young preacher who has passed Through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of those men who are preaching the truth today.' He said, 'It won't work.'

A man so "mighty in the scriptures" as J.W. McGarvey was in the end forced to admit that it is a futile effort to bow down to the unauthorized whims of change agents for unity sake. Even the seemingly noble cause of trying to make a "difference" among those who reject the authority of the scriptures is a fruitless effort.

So many exalt the "Restoration Fathers" as a source of authority, but they are not. However, McGarvey's experience should shock those trying to do the same thing. Instead Christ is the authority (Matthew 28:18). Sewell, McGarvey, or anyone else could have simply gone to his word to discover that efforts to compromise are barren. Men must learn what Paul declared in the first century "**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.**" (Ephesians 5:11) This is our plea in the midst of yet another great apostasy!

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FEBRUARY 22-25, 2004

DAVID P. BROWN, Lectureship Director

Sunday, February 22

9:30 A.M.	"Who is a Jew?"	Jerry Murrell
10:30 A.M.	"Do We Hate The Jews & Desire their Destruction?"	David P. Brown
4:00 P.M.	"Jewish Sacrifices"	Jim Nash
5:00 P.M.	"The Design & Purpose of the Law of Moses"	Michael Hatcher
6:00 P.M.	"Jewish Plan of Salvation"	David B. Smith

Monday, February 23

9:00 A.M.	"Jewish Eschatology"	Eddie Whitten
10:00 A.M.	"Jewish Holidays, Feasts, & Traditions"	Billy Bland
11:00 A.M.	"Jewish Prayer & Worship"	David Baker
1:30 P.M.	"Sabbath Observance Then & Now"	Jason Rollo
2:30 P.M.	"Jewish Proselytes, Strangers & Sojourners"	Gary Grizzell
3:30 P.M.	"Conservative Judaism"	H. D. Simmons
DINNER BREAK		
6:30 P.M.	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 P.M.	"What is Anti-Semitism?"	Don Walker
8:00 P.M.	"The Jewish Trial of Jesus"	Lynn Parker

Tuesday, February 24

9:00 A.M.	"Judaizing Teachers—Troublers of the First Century Church"	Mike McDaniel
10:00 A.M.	"Reformed Judaism"	Lester Kamp
**10:00 A.M.	"Women Who Hinder God's Plan"	Irene Taylor
11:00 A.M.	"First Century Jewish Sects"	Tom Moore
1:30 P.M.	"Messianic Expectations of First Century Jews"	Kent Bailey
2:30 P.M.	"Orthodox Judaism"	Bryan Braswell
**2:30 P.M.	"Women Dedicated to Serving God"	Irene Taylor
3:30 P.M.	"The Jewish Dispersion"	Steve Yeatts
DINNER BREAK		
6:30 P.M.	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 P.M.	"Zionism & the Arab-Israeli Conflict"	Keith Mosher, Sr.
8:00 P.M.	"The Jewish Use & Abuse of the Old Testament"	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Wednesday, February 25

9:00 A.M.	"The Impact of the Destruction of Jerusalem on Judaism"	Marvin Weir
10:00 A.M.	"Jewish Synagogues"	Darrell Conley
11:00 A.M.	"Christ is the End of the Law"	Michael Light
1:30 P.M.	"Jewish Messianic Pretenders"	Geoff Litke
2:30 P.M.	"Definition & Overview of the Talmud & its Role in Jewish Life"	Gary Summers
3:30 P.M.	"Jewish Mysticism"	Paul Vaughn
DINNER BREAK		
6:30 P.M.	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 P.M.	"The Relationship of the Modern State of Israel to Israel to Judaism"	Curtis Cates
8:00 P.M.	"The Jews' Objections to Jesus"	B. J. Clarke
**Ladies Only		

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GOSPEL PREACHING VERSUS CROWD PLEASING

Gary W. Summers

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God... (1 Peter 4:11). ...but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:23). For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

These few verses declare the scriptural approach to preaching the gospel. But many today take an entirely different approach. First, they do not know the oracles of God, let alone speak them. Second, their “message” is designed to please people, not offend them. Third, they have no intention of presenting the whole counsel of God because they would immediately lose their popularity. They are like those Peter described in II Peter 2:15: **“They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”**

One such individual is **Rick Atchley**, pulpit minister for the Richland Hills “Church of Christ” in Fort Worth, Texas. In a transcript of the speech he made at Restoration Forum XX, sponsored by the Quaker Avenue Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, in October, 2002, Atchley elicited laughter from his audience more than fifteen times, sometimes with clapping accompanying it.

At the conclusion of the speech, there was protracted applause. Can anyone visualize Jesus approaching spiritual teaching in this manner? Did Peter seek to appease the crowd on Pentecost? Did Paul receive enthusiastic applause on Mars Hill? No, we are not saying that humor, irony, or sarcasm should not be used, but Atchley’s use of it is gratuitous and excessive.

He spoke immediately after a faculty member from Ozark Christian College (representing the “Christian Church”). After introducing himself and where he is from, Atchley continued with these initial remarks.

I am real honored to be here. The things we are talking about are very, very dear to my heart. I have gone public about these things and will continue to do so. I want to see, in my lifetime, our fellowship reunited, and I intend to do all that I can to see that that happens.

I had a very interesting conversation that really helped me start down this course a number of years ago, over ten years ago. I was raised in a small a cappella church

of Christ in south Dallas, a very legalistic church. I heard a lot of sermons on why instrumental music was sinful; and—I was brought to my faith by my grandmother. She was the only Christian in our family. I would not be standing here if it wasn’t for a godly grandmother with stubborn Abrahamic faith. And I was at her bedside when she was dying with cancer in Waco, Texas, oh, about fifteen years ago now. And I had never known much about her spiritual roots; so I began to ask her some things. And, lo, and behold, found out that my grandmother came to faith and was baptized in the Christian Church in Pendleton, Texas. Now, the only grandmother I had ever known had always gone to an a cappella church of Christ. And so I said, Well, Grandma, tell me. Why, then, did you shift from a Christian, Independent Church, to an a cappella church of Christ?”

She said, Well, simple. The preacher moved” (much laughter).

This was the early 1900s, and the preacher moved, and the next preacher was from the a cappella Restoration movement—and that’s what happened. And it wasn’t a big deal. And I thought, you mean I’ve listened to all those lousy sermons all these years (much laughter) because a preacher moved. And if that preacher hadn’t moved, I’d probably have grown up in a totally different place.

Undoubtedly, the reader easily understands by now what is meant by “playing to the crowd.” Referring to lessons on mechanical instrumental music as “lousy sermons” easily exploits a built-in bias of many in his audience. He received the response he planned to obtain. Apparently, Atchley does not care if the Lord is laughing with him or not; he is only interested in the crowd’s agreement and sympathies. Did Jesus calculate his teaching to be certain of a favorable response? No, but then he went to teach truth; Atchley seeks to feed his ego.

What is the flaw in this opening sally? First, he uses a personal anecdote to establish his thesis that mechanical instrumental music is optional and not a matter of fellowship. This could be called a “hasty generalization,” since he implies a general rule from a limited sample of one. The idea he is erroneously suggesting is, “Since my grandmother became a member of an a cappella church virtually by accident, that must be the way that nearly all people became such.” An-

other way he puts this point is: "If the preacher hadn't moved, and the congregation had therefore continued with the use of the instrument, then I might have been using the instrument today." This personal anecdote does not provide adequate evidence for unity between the two groups.

Second, Rick admitted that he and his grandmother were able to develop faith while attending a legalistic church. Hmm.

Third, he claims to have heard "a lot of sermons on why mechanical instrumental music" is sinful. Why did these not figure in the discussion, besides being used as fodder for laughs? Did none of those sermons make a scriptural case, or were they just all anecdotal in nature, like his? Did they not mention needing Divine authority (Colossians 3:17) for all that we teach and practice? Rick fails to discuss any scriptures or any arguments for one position or the other. In fact, he implies that one is either a cappella or not on the basis of who the preacher is at the time or what the local custom is.

His kind of thinking not only reeks of faulty logic, but it also presumes that none are capable of thinking and evaluating arguments. If the sermons he heard against mechanical instrumental music were "lousy," what was the reason? Did they not apply scriptural principles? He gives the audience no Biblical basis for rejecting the a cappella position, but it matters little. His audience is as shallow as he is; they came for the show—not for edification.

CHRIST'S EXPECTATIONS OF HIS BRIDE

After mentioning several "church" signs with unintended humorous sayings on them, which drew more laughter, and mentioning that **Max Lucado** was his college roommate (which explains a lot), he laments that Christians cannot get along.

I want you to imagine, because a lot of you have had the privilege that I have had, of uniting people in marriage. I want you to imagine that you are standing up here, the church is beautiful, the candles are lit, and everyone is decked out, and everyone has walked in, and we're all waiting for the moment when the bride comes in—the best part of the wedding. And she walks down the aisle, and her gown is ripped, and her hair is messed up, and her lip is bleeding, and she's got a black eye! And somebody says, "Bride's been fightin' again." I wonder how Jesus looks at his church. The bride's been fightin' again.

It is interesting that Atchley injected scriptural terminology into his speech, but he overlooked a few facts. First, if the bride is not expected to fight, why is she issued armor? Has he never heard of the waist being girded about with truth, the breastplate of righteous-

ness, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:10-17)? "Well, yes," someone replies, "but all of that is to fight against Satan."

Right! And cannot the devil transform himself into an angel of light and his ministers into ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:13-15)? Did not Paul encourage Timothy to "**wage the good warfare**"? And did not Paul deliver some brethren to Satan "**that they may learn not to blaspheme**" (I Timothy 2:18-20)? Has the bride been fightin' again? Was Paul opposed to challenging those who were overthrowing the faith of some (II Timothy 2:16-18)? Did he not command Titus to reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition (Titus 3:10)?

"Are you saying that the bride should *always* be fighting?" No, it is possible for unity to exist if we all continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), and if we are perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10). Jesus knows those who are causing problems in his body. Just as he knew about Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9), so he knows about every enemy of his bride today. Just as he knew about Diotrephes (III John 9-10), so does he know about everyone else who wants his own following (Acts 20:30).

Jesus loves the bride; he nourishes and cherishes her. He knows all those who claim to be his but do not follow his principles and teachings. Before the marriage supper of the Lamb, all that which has caused offense in the body of Christ shall be removed. At that time, the bride will be glorious (Revelation 21:9-27).

WHY DOES DIVISION EXIST?

Ultimately, problems in the church are caused by Satan, who is not willing that any should be saved. Some problems are caused by men like Diotrephes who are going to have their say and their way, no matter what. Some friction may occur from a lack of maturity. Still other difficulties might arise from a lack of love one for another. Some, however, spring from the teaching of false doctrine, a phrase that is significantly absent from Rick Atchley's vocabulary. He makes just about everything a matter of opinion and therefore *not* a fellowship issue; he is unable to discern between opinion and doctrine.

Jesus warned against false doctrines that were already in existence (Matthew 7:15-20; 16:12). Once Christianity began, Satan had a new target; he immediately found some who would pervert the gospel of Christ by trying to bring ideas from the Law of Moses over into the Christian system. This error not only prompted the leaders of the church in Jerusalem to meet

(Acts 15) but also sparked much refutation in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. Dare we call it an *issue*? Atchley implies that he does not care for issue-oriented sermons or articles. Right! He just pokes fun at everyone who disagrees with him and hopes they won't notice while they are laughing that he has an *issue* he is promulgating. The difference between faithful brethren and Atchley is that we look at his incorrect statements and expose his errors with the scriptures, while he just uses ridicule and illustrations to combat us.

Paul charged Timothy: **"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you"** (1 Timothy 4:16). The content of the message preached is crucial. Jesus said to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16), and the new Christians on the day of Pentecost continued steadfastly in the apostles' doc-

trine (Acts 2:42). What if Timothy became sloppy about his doctrine? What if he allowed a few errors in? According to some, he and his listeners would be saved anyway. In other words, the doctrine he taught would be irrelevant. But if a preacher and his hearers can be saved by either truth or error, what is the meaning of *take heed*? We are only warned about matters of consequence; otherwise, those things are optional and therefore not doctrinal.

Obviously, a man's teaching is crucial. When a preacher does not "take heed," he puts his soul in jeopardy along with all who listen to him. Paul makes preaching sound like a serious matter, but then he was not "playing to the crowd." The purpose of preaching is not to provoke laughter; it is to prick the hearts of men, as Peter did on Pentecost (Acts 2:36). May God grant us more men proficient in his word!

—5410 Lake Howell
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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

CONCERNING THE **18th Annual Shenandoah Lectures**

Due to a fire set on June 14, and delays in starting the rebuilding of our facilities, we have been forced to cancel our lectureship which was scheduled February 13-16, 2004. We are rescheduling the Lectureship to February 11-14, 2005. Our theme for the 2005 Lectures will remain the same as was planned for the 2004 Lectures. That theme is

Lives In Scripture: A Study In Comparisons and Contrasts

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New Date For Shenandoah Lectures
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WHO'S LISTENING?

Annette B. Cates

Recently, I used the cell phone to call our son, Dan. They were not home, so I left a message on their answering machine. Later, Dan told me that I had not turned off our telephone when I completed my message. They had at least ten more minutes of conversation between my husband and me. As soon as they realized what had happened, they erased the tape. Dan joked that at least we had not been talking bad about anybody! But, what if...?

But, what if we had been speaking critically of someone? Would our voices have sounded harsh or our words unjust? **"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger"** (Proverbs 15:1). Our words could have caused a rift that would never have healed. Would our listeners have heard attitudes that are in contradiction to the way we treat others in person, showing us to be hypocrites? **"He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool"** (Proverbs 10:18). James spoke of those who go through the outward motions of religion, but have deceived themselves by not bridling the tongue, thus making their religion in vain (James 1:26). **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers"** (Ephesians 4:29). Fortunately, our conversation left no fences to be mended.

But, what if we had been in an environment of sin and not in our car on our way to a speaking appointment? What kind of message would the background sounds have sent, especially to our grandchildren? What if our language had included expletives that we would not have used in person? Some think that because they are in a private situation behind closed doors, their conduct does not matter. As recorded in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of II Samuel, David thought his sin with Bathsheba was done in secret and that he could keep it hidden, but the consequences were tragic. This attitude is the crux of situation ethics, the reasoning being "if no one knows and no one is hurt, then no wrong has occurred." After Nathan forced David to face the reality of his sin, David concluded, **"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight"** (Psalm 51:4). Ultimately, re-

gardless of who knows or who is harmed by our actions, God is the one to whom we must answer.

But, what if we had been involved in an argument that had exploded into a fight? Would our listeners have heard consideration for one another or selfish accusations? What kind of language would they have heard? No marriage is free from disagreement; if it were it would be stagnant and emotionless. Two individuals do not discard their uniqueness when they step up to the altar of marriage. Rather, they learn to blend themselves into a cohesive oneness. They learn to treat one another with respect. Oneness and respect are not miraculously bestowed upon those individuals when they exchange rings. Rather, it is a growing, learning process. Further, what would our listeners have learned about how to treat one another? Would our conduct have been something to emulate, or would we have set a bad example before them, leaving them to believe that it is okay to be verbally abusive toward one another? Solomon set a good example before all of us as to how to treat one another in marriage, **"...his banner over me was love"** (Song of Solomon 2:4).

This incident brought about no harm (except for a sky-high cell phone bill for a lengthy prime time call), but the potential was there, for we had no idea the telephone was on, and that our conversation was being picked up by an answering machine. It serves as a reminder that we never know who is listening to what we say or watching what we do. On the other hand, God knows our actions at all times, and we are accountable to Him. **"The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men"** (Psalm 33:13; cf. Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24). Someone wisely stated, "Character is what you are in the dark." Who is listening when we think we are alone?



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LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD

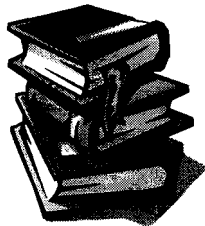
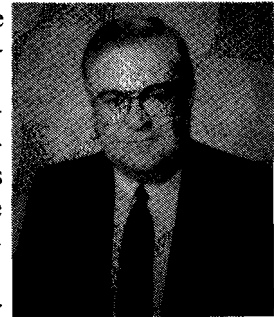
Kent Bailey

We are admonished in I Peter 2:17 to “love the brotherhood.” **J. H. Thayer** defines brotherhood as, “the abstract for the concrete, a band of brothers i.e. of Christians, *Christian brethren*.” The term *brotherhood*, as it relates to New Testament Christianity speaks with reference to the brotherhood of Christ. Thus, when we speak about *the brotherhood* we are speaking about the universal body of those individuals who have obeyed the gospel of Christ. This is the New Testament church in its universal extension. It has no human oversight, no meeting place, no time of assembly, and no collective work. It is relationship that is *in Christ*.

Regarding I Peter 2:12, **Guy N. Woods** noted: The “brotherhood” is the church of the Lord in its aggregate sense; the affection we are admonished to feel, for it is the love which obtain between those of the same family with common parentage, common interests and common aims. Though not as universal as the command of the Lord in Matthew 5:44, “**love your enemies**,” the special love which Christians are

to feel for each other by no means excludes the love there enjoined for our enemies.

A genuine and active interest in the physical and spiritual well being for Christians in local churches of which one is not a member is certainly implied within our text. While I am to have a genuine love for those within the congregation of which I am a member, I am also to have a genuine interest in brethren that are not part of the local church where I labor. If I have a responsibility to exercise proper concern for individual Christians universally, then by the same logic I must also have a proper concern for local collectives of brethren of which I am not a member. To adopt such a concern of both the physical and spiritual well being of brethren is not a violation of local church autonomy. The New Testament gives us examples of first century



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Christians demonstrating proper concern for *the brotherhood* in matters of the work God has assigned to the local church.

As we study the New Testament we clearly take note of proper concern and active interests of Christians in other congregations. Passages such as Acts 11:27-30, Galatians 6:10, and James 1:27 set forth this important principle as does I Corinthians 16:1-3.

By the same line of reasoning one will properly conclude that a proper concern for the spiritual well being of individual Christians and other New Testament congregations is not a violation of local church autonomy. John certainly did not need to ask permission of the congregation of which Gaius was identified before a warning was given regarding Diotrephes. Without a doubt, Diotrephes would have prevented Gaius from receiving this inspired warning to maintain unauthorized control of that particular local church (III John 9-10). Our Lord did not give John instruction to offer a private rebuke to the unfaithful congregations in Asia minor (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). Neither did Paul violate local autonomy in dealing with the problems at Galatia and Colosse.

A great many of those crying, *violation of local autonomy*, do not understand what Biblical local au-

tonomy really is. When we discuss the autonomy and the independence of the local church we are discussing the principles of *self rule*. We are not discussing what constitutes sound doctrine. Members of local churches may decide the most expedient way to follow the New Testament pattern, however, they are not authorized to decide what constitutes the components of the New Testament pattern.

When local churches engage in practices that are not authorized by the New Testament—Christians (either as individuals, or local churches) are not violating local church autonomy by warning these unfaithful brethren of their sin. When liberal congregations decide to practice, teach, or endorse error they cannot expect, with scriptural warrant, faithful brethren (either collectively or distributively) to sit in dignified silence and allow their doctrines and/or practices to go unchallenged. The divine arrangement of local church autonomy was never designed to protect false teachers and apostate congregations.

Those within the body of Christ who have a genuine love of God, Christ, and truth will also *love the brotherhood*. The proper exercise of such love may not always be popular and some times even be painful. Yet faithful Christians will recognize such needs and stand ready to give proper assistance to brethren in the interest of our eternal destiny.

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