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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

RECOMMENDED READING: *FATAL ERROR ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT*

Gary W. Summers

This 2016 lectureship book, edited by David Brown, contains the material presented at the *Contending for the Faith* lectureship, hosted by the Spring Church of Christ. It serves at least two valuable purposes: 1) It provides fundamental Bible teaching on such important matters as baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and the nature of and cessation of miracles; and 2) It updates brethren on the present-day thinking of some leaders of the current digression in the church.

The first chapter (appropriately) deals with, “What Constitutes Fatal Error?” This is the definition provided that is then elaborated on with examples to illustrate the point.

I am affirming that any doctrine causing one to omit or violate a God-authorized obligation pertaining to becoming a Christian, or that is necessary to living the Christian life, is a false doctrine that constitutes “fatal error” (3).

This definition should be examined closely. God is the only One Who may authorize what we do and what we teach (Col. 3:17). Therefore, Christians cannot do what God has not authorized with respect to becoming a Christian, offering acceptable worship, or living the Christian life, nor can they omit what He requires to be done. We know that it has been Satan’s goal from the very beginning to separate man from God, and he does that by encouraging us to ignore what God said—His authority.

The devil can have no greater delight than to pervert the

way in which one is saved in the Scriptures—so that people think they are Christians when they are not. Having failed in preventing believers from obeying the true gospel, Satan next delights in seeing that our worship becomes perverted, as with Cain not giving God what He required (Gen. 4:1-7), or as Nadab and Abihu did when they offered to God that which was not authorized (Lev. 10:1-2). The third area of emphasis that Satan then goes after is to keep Christians from living properly (for example, violating the principles clearly set forth in Galatians 5:19-23).

Errors regarding the Holy Spirit may affect all three of these areas. Calvinism teaches that a person can only respond to the gospel if the Holy Spirit allows him to; those sitting around waiting to feel drawn may be forever disappointed because they have never had a personal subjective “experience,” thus confirming they are one of the “chosen.” Second, errors pertaining to the Holy Spirit will cause some to think they ought to be speaking in tongues or prophesying, thus perverting today’s worship. The third area that affects Christian living is thinking that the Holy Spirit will somehow provide extra strength in resisting temptation, granting wisdom directly to the individual, or directly communicating with him in various situations.

The remainder of this essay delves into examples of what are matters of obligation and matters of option. Also enu-

(Continued on Page 6)

IN THIS ISSUE...

| | |
|---|---|
| RECOMMENDED READING: <i>FATAL ERROR ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT</i> — | |
| GARY W. SUMMERS..... | 1 |
| EDITORIAL—DAVID P. BROWN..... | 2 |
| 41ST ANNUAL BELLVIEW LECTURES, JUNE 10-14, 2016..... | 3 |
| WHY UNITY DOES NOT PREVAIL IN THE LORD’S CHURCH— | |
| GARY W. SUMMERS..... | 4 |

| | |
|--|----|
| AMERICA’S WANING CONFIDENCE—LEE MOSES..... | 7 |
| THE UNITY MOVEMENT AT BABEL—DANNY DOUGLAS..... | 8 |
| DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH—ROELF L. RUFFNER..... | 9 |
| CHRISTIANS—THE SAVED—ARE IN THE CHURCH—JERRY BREWER..... | 12 |
| COMPROMISE—MICHAEL HATCHER..... | 14 |
| LONE STAR BIBLE CAMP—JUNE 5-10, 2016..... | 15 |

Contending FOR THE Faith™

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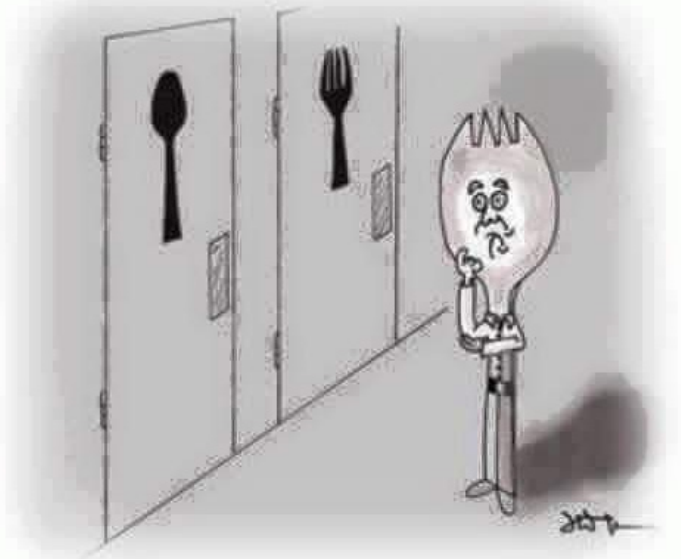
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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

Editorial...



The big and terrible problem with what this cartoon depicts is that there is a spoon/fork combination that is neither a fork nor a spoon. The *law of the excluded middle* is a law of Logic demanding, in the case of the cartoon, that a thing is either a spoon or not a spoon, a fork or not a fork. Thus, in the cartoon there should be another door for the singular entity known as a combination spoon/fork. In other words, it is either a spoon/fork or not.

In human beings there are ONLY males and females of the species. There is no human entity that is a combination male/female as there is a combination spoon/fork as depicted in the above cartoon, which combination spoon/fork is neither a spoon nor a fork, but its own entity.

Just because a human being *thinks* strongly and with regularity that he is George Washington, or that he is a goat, or a horse, does not make him what he thinks he is. The same is true when a male thinks he is a female or vice versa. We understand when someone *thinks* he is George Washington, or a goat, etc., that one's *thinking does not* actually make him what he thinks he is. We recognize that for one to truly *think* one is a goat, or whatever, or whoever, that such a mental state indicates one is mentally ill.

One's powers of *thought*, no matter how strong, will not change one's DNA. As Jesus said, "**Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature**" (Mat. 6:27)? If by *thinking*, one cannot "**add one cubit unto his stature,**" certainly one's *thinking* by no means is strong enough to change one person from one sex to the other, or into a sexless human. *I find it interesting that people never think themselves into being sexless humans.*

If a male who *thinks* he is a female, thus seeing himself as a female, must be permitted to use a woman's toilet that is peopled by a woman or women, then according to that logic, if one truly thinks he is a supreme court justice, that person must be permitted to be who he thinks he is. If not, why not?

We are witnessing the natural and unbridled lusts of the Sodomites and the promulgation of the agenda of so-called transgenders by the government, education, corporations, and others who love and make a lie. To the nation's great hurt, this kind of immoral and self-inflicted lunacy is exposing us more and more to the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is nonsense gone to a sinful seed.

—David P. Brown, Editor

Contending for the Faith—March/April/2016

41st Annual Bellview Lectures

June 10 – 14, 2016

Typology



Friday, June 10

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 7:00 pm | <i>Nature of a Type</i> | Terry Hightower |
| 8:00 pm | <i>Interpretation of Types</i> | David P. Brown |

Saturday, June 11

| | | |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| 9:00 am | <i>Prophet</i> | Michael Hatcher |
| 10:00 am | <i>Priest</i> | Doug Post |
| 11:00 am | <i>King</i> | Wayne Blake |

Lunch Break

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1:00 pm | <i>O. T. Sacrifices</i> | Terry Hightower |
| 2:00 pm | <i>Passover</i> | Harrell Davidson |
| 3:00 pm | <i>Open Forum</i> | |

Dinner Break

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 7:00 pm | <i>Abraham</i> | Jerry Brewer |
| 8:00 pm | <i>Typical Places</i> | Jess Whitlock |

Sunday, June 12

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 9:00 am | <i>Jonah</i> | Daniel Denham |
| 10:00 am | <i>Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac</i> | Paul Vaughn |

Lunch and Dinner Break

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1:00 pm | <i>Noah's Ark</i> | Wayne Blake |
| 2:00 pm | <i>Melchizedek</i> | Lee Moses |

Monday, June 13

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 9:00 am | <i>Wilderness Wanderings</i> | Paul Vaughn |
| 10:00 am | <i>Moses</i> | Geoff Litke |
| 11:00 am | <i>Hosea</i> | Doug Post |

Lunch Break

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1:00 pm | <i>David</i> | Gene Hill |
| 2:00 pm | <i>Adam</i> | John West |
| 3:00 pm | <i>Open Forum</i> | |

Dinner Break

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 7:00 pm | <i>Sabbath</i> | Daniel Denham |
| 8:00 pm | <i>Types of Baptism</i> | Harrell Davidson |

Tuesday, June 14

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 9:00 am | <i>The Serpent in the Wilderness</i> | Jerry Brewer |
| 10:00 am | <i>Joshua</i> | John West |
| 11:00 am | <i>Cities of Refuge</i> | David P. Brown |

Lunch Break

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1:00 pm | <i>Restoration</i> | Jess Whitlock |
| 2:00 pm | <i>The Court</i> | Gene Hill |
| 3:00 pm | <i>Open Forum</i> | |

Dinner Break

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 7:00 pm | <i>The Holy Place</i> | Geoff Litke |
| 8:00 pm | <i>The Holy of Holies</i> | Lee Moses |

Bellview Lectures Information

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The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd., Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—single bed and \$69.99—double beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations. If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Books

The lectureship book, *Typology*, will be available for purchase. The price has not yet been determined. The book will contain 27 chapters and will be a spiral-bound book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are

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over.

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The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2016) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.75. The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2015), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2015), and other material.

Meals

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a complimentary lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

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WHY UNITY DOES NOT PREVAIL IN THE LORD'S CHURCH

Gary W. Summers

Who has been a member of the Lord's church for very long and does not know of Jesus' plea for unity in John 17:20-21? Who does not know of Paul's rebuke to the Corinthians for being divided over personalities (1 Cor. 1:10-13)? How often have we recognized that Paul called those Corinthians carnal-minded (1 Cor. 3:1-4)? Virtually all brethren *know* these truths, yet unity does not exist. Furthermore, all *agree* with these principles, yet unity does not exist. Why not?

In February, the *Gospel Advocate* published some articles on the subject of unity. The first of these says that humility is the first essential ingredient, which is one of the key reasons behind division. If brethren would practice humility, almost any matter could be cleared up—because many of them involve past mistakes. Pride prevents brethren from saying, "I'm sorry" or "I made a mistake." No, rather than do that, a situation remains unresolved for days, months, and years. Of course, if a difficulty between two individuals were confined to them, at least, it would only involve two parties. But how often does that ever happen? Pretty soon others are dragged into the fray, thus establishing a barrier that will unlikely be torn down any time soon. Escalation usually results.

Other qualities frequently absent in conflicts are gentleness, patience, and love (pages 12-14). People become so outraged in a personal dispute that the civility we all know ought to exist immediately flies out the window, taking with it any chance of reconciliation. We would all be appalled if a brother became so angry that he struck a fellow Christian. Why are we not equally distressed when a brother (or sister) becomes so angry that a grudge develops that lasts for years? Neither one is right, yet we condemn the former and say nothing about the latter.

Another article correctly states that unity could be achieved if we all listened to Jesus. The fact is that we do not, nor will that unwillingness change. This precept is obviously for *other* people to keep. If I do not abide by it, I have justifiable reasons. Oh, sure, we all quickly criticize denominational folks who deny the authority of Christ, but if we do so, it's all right. What's that unflattering term for people who do that? Oh, that's right—hypocrites. Is that designation a bit strong? Hang on. There's no shortage of proof.

"Unity is possible when brethren devote themselves more to the teaching of the biblical text than they do to their opinions, traditions, or desires" (20). That is exactly correct, but again it is not followed. If our first priority was to God and His Word, and we committed ourselves to unity, a number of the divisions we currently have would have long since been resolved. Is this a harsh indictment of brethren? If we know the truth and the importance of unity, then, yes, it is—because we fail to take our responsibility seriously.

Barriers to Unity

Pride has done so much damage to the kingdom of heaven that only error surpasses it. In fact, pride prevents many doctrinal errors from being changed, also. For example, someone may have taught a particular thing that he had not quite thought through. When challenged somewhat, rather than admit he may have overstated the case, he digs in his heels and goes even further than he had originally. He ends up defending what he would have condemned only a short time previously. The more resistance he meets with, the more certain he becomes that his false doctrine (and now all of its applications as well) are correct.

The process occurs something like this. I cannot admit to having taught or practiced error because I am Brother Highly Regarded, and it will damage my reputation if I back away from anything I have ever taught. Rather than admit having misstated something or making a correction, which brethren would have welcomed, the choice is made to entrench oneself even further. Sadly, some never emerge from the quagmire they have created.

But even worse than situations involving error are those where none exists. Both sides are Christians who otherwise adhere to Biblical teaching. "Aunt Matilda said she would fix a blueberry pie to take to the potluck." "No, she never said that. She only said she would think about it." "But she was seen buying blueberries at the grocery store." "So what? It's a free country. Maybe she was going to use them later in the week for a family get-together." "Now, look. Everybody expected her to bring the pie to the church supper, and Cousin Murgatroid was greatly offended that he didn't get his usual piece—especially since he had given her \$5.00 to purchase the ingredients." "She never understood that the money was to be used for blueberries. Anyway, he didn't have to be so vocal about it at the dinner." "Well, I don't know. He gave her the money and expected just one piece. And it wasn't there!"

Pretty soon there are allegations that Aunt Matilda probably had used the money to buy something else and that she refused to make the pie to get even for a practical joke Cousin Murgatroid had played on her favorite niece. "He didn't know that the Jack-in-the-box would actually explode." "Well, what else did he think gunpowder would do when ignited by a spark?" On and on the silliness goes. So there have been two churches in the town of Harmony (population 300) for nearly 40 years now. Aunt Matilda and Cousin Murgatroid are long gone, but the feud continues. Would it have been so hard for the woman to have apologized for not making the pie and offer to fix one he could have all to himself? As sad as such a situation might be, it could be worse. Brethren from other congregations could have chosen sides, also.

So, people are offended and refuse to be placated. Defensiveness sets in, and people begin assigning motives to others which were never even thought of. Humility, gentleness, patience, and love cannot be found in evidence. An “Us Versus Them” mentality forms, and unity falls by the wayside. What is more important—someone’s feelings, or the church of the Lord? Division loudly proclaims the wrong answer.

Lack of Communication (obviously) keeps brethren from resolving problems. William Shakespeare died 400 years ago—on April 23, 1616, which is the reason Google had his picture (along with scenes from some of his famous plays) on their Website that day. Othello, one of his famous tragedies, involves a trusted friend getting the title character to believe something that was not true. He contrived situations and information to make it look as though Othello’s innocent wife, Desdemona, was cheating on him with one of his military men, Cassio. So inflamed does he become with jealousy and rage that he kills her. Only too late does he discover that she had always been faithful to him and that he had been “played.”

Logically, the tragedy could have been avoided if he had taken the time to talk with her. She never had a chance to explain anything and did not even know that she had been accused of wrongdoing. Likewise, how many times do brethren fail to sit down with each other to discuss a problem in a non-hostile environment? One brother had a lot of animosity toward an eldership but was asked to sit down and talk with them. He clearly had some anger issues, but to his credit he controlled himself. The meeting got off to a bumpy start, but after some questions were asked and answered, it became clear that someone had been feeding him misinformation. Communication resolved the problem. Unfortunately, these circumstances are all too rare. Often, it is the case that someone or some group has done a hatchet job on a preacher, an eldership, or a congregation, and they may not even be aware of what has been alleged. Brethren can make no attempt to solve a problem when they do not know it exists.

When some brethren are asked why they have not tried to effect unity with others, they shrug their shoulders and say, “It will not do any good.” One wonders how they know that when they have not tried. Preconceived ideas, suspicions, and rumors (apparently accepted) will not suffice as reasons to make no effort to achieve unity with our brethren for whom Christ died.

If one church knows that a sister congregation has departed from the truth, then we are not dealing with the same thing. If they have announced publicly that they will have women serve as deaconesses or that they are adding instruments of music to the worship (any worship), then they have clearly rejected the authority of the Scriptures. But many things that occur are not nearly this drastic, and perhaps loving communication might help. We should not make the mistake of assuming that brethren delight in practicing error; oftentimes they lack knowledge.

Intentionally rejecting what the Scriptures teach leads to division. How incongruous is it for Christians to extol, “how

good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity!” (Psa. 133:1)—but then do nothing to make it happen! As already discussed, pride is a compelling factor in propagating division, as is the failure to communicate. This third barrier overlaps with the second, but it involves a direct violation of what Jesus said to do.

Jesus taught: **“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother”** (Mat. 18:15). How often does a wounded brother or sister tell almost everyone BUT that individual? By this time, the difficulty has already spread, and chances of resolution have diminished. Some may have already chosen “sides” based on partiality rather than on evidence. Or the offended soul may keep the problem to himself, saying nothing at the time, but allowing his feelings of anger to fester. Later they may express themselves in a way totally unrelated to this initial situation. Someone may ask him, “Why are you so vehement against this brother?” “Well, he has done other things before this,” comes the response, but since he never discussed it, he does not know if the original problem may have only been a misunderstanding. Jesus was wise to insist on communication because most things between brethren of good will can be mended.

An offended brother has an obligation to communicate. “Go” sounds a lot like a command. On the other hand, what if a person knows that a fellow Christian has something against him? Jesus covered that, too:

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Mat. 5:23-24).

Unity is so important that Jesus does not want anything to get in the way of it. Did someone indicate that he was offended by something a Christian said or did? He should then go to him—make the time to sort out what happened—find out what it is that is troubling another. Jesus wants problems resolved so that unity would exist in His church and so that nothing would hinder the work.

Yet brethren will not apply these principles. On a few occasions, concerned brethren have telephoned or written to protest something they deemed offensive only to be greeted with a huge yawn and an “I really don’t care” attitude. How is that fulfilling Matthew 18:15? Or Matthew 5:23-24? Some just refuse to communicate, period. On the other hand, conscientious brethren have never refused to meet with or discuss an issue with a brother. What some apparently fail to realize is that neglecting to do these two things is being disobedient to the Lord. Surely, the Lord, Who gave His life for the church, cannot be happy that some are not nearly so interested in unity as they profess.

—5410 Lake Howell Road
Winter Park, FL 32792

(Continued From Page 1)

merated are six errors regarding the Holy Spirit that would be fatal to the Christian if he believed them (12). The second chapter discusses the claim by some that we need the direct help of the Holy Spirit to keep us from sin. (If this is the case, then whose fault is it when we sin?) A special emphasis is given to the fact that such teachings (whether intended or not) attack the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures (26-30).

Some are now claiming that the promise of Holy Spirit baptism in Matthew 3:11 is something that all Christians receive, which is something that Mac Deaver has begun to teach in recent years. He has made this position known both in books and articles that he has written, as well as in public debates that he has held on Holy Spirit-related issues. Ironically it is his father, Roy Deaver, who is cited to refute Mac's teaching. In fact, two quotes by his father utterly refute Mac's interpretation of Matthew 3:11 and are well worth noting (38, 40).

The following words begin the next topic:

The doctrine that men today are "Spirit-filled" or "filled with the Holy Spirit" is one of those doctrines that was once peculiar to Pentecostals. But, like many other false Pentecostal doctrines, it has become trans-denominational and even churches of Christ—who ought to know better—now describe themselves as "Spirit-filled" (41).

Some might wonder what is wrong with being "Spirit-filled." After all, if we follow the teachings of the Holy Spirit as He inspired the New Testament, can we not be said to be "Spirit-filled"? Yes, but as the above quote indicated, that is not the way the phrase is being defined. Those "brethren" using this description refer to a direct, personal leading of the Spirit—separate from what the Word teaches. Cited are quotes from a congregation in Altus, Oklahoma, one in Highland Oaks in Dallas, one in Wichita, Kansas, and one called "The Branch" (formerly the church in Farmers Branch, Texas) (41-43).

It has become the mantra of those who introduce error to say, "Well, we studied the subject and prayed about it." Especially have such statements been used to allow women to preach or teach publicly and to introduce mechanical instrumental music. It is always the same line. Studying the subject is good, but praying about it is not going to elicit any more information from God than we already have. Yet when The Branch began using mechanical instrumental music, they stated how they arrived at such a decision: "This conclusion is the result of much prayer and considerable study of the Scriptures on this matter." Whose wisdom did they study—Max Lucado's? The Scriptures do not support their actions.

One question that many brethren have considered is, "In the New Testament, who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?" One of the passages to consider is Acts 2. Although

most brethren have taught for decades that only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Mac Deaver has departed from that position and now claims that all 120 were. Several reasons are cited to explain why that is not the case (61-62). The design and purpose of Holy Spirit baptism is also delineated (62-64). Several writers point out the fact that by the time Paul wrote Ephesians 4:4-6, there was only one baptism and that was the one for the forgiveness of sins (64-66).

In the section on John 3:5, the following teaching by Mac Deaver is refuted:

But before a man can be given the indwelling of the Spirit, he must be regenerated by the Spirit so that his nature is changed. And this is clearly when a man is baptized in water. As a man's body is lowered in the water, when it is submerged in the water, the Holy Spirit submerges that man's human spirit within himself to change his nature. And at the very precise moment when God considers that man no longer sinner but now saint, at that precise instant, the regenerating submerging Spirit moves from the outside to the inside of that heart (Tit. 3:5; Gal. 4:6) (76).

The verses cited do not confirm the heretical view espoused above. No verse talks about immersing the human spirit into the Divine Spirit, as a careful Bible student would immediately recognize. Again, if it were the case, then whose fault is it when man sins? We know that Peter, for example, was actually baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). No one (in his right mind) would even think about denying that fact. So how do we explain that Peter later sinned and was to be blamed, thus necessitating that Paul rebuke him (Gal. 2:11-14)? Since his human spirit had unquestionably been immersed into the Holy Spirit, how was Peter able to sin?

The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism was not to change the nature of the human being. Jesus told the apostles that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. They were emboldened to preach the Word of God (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8). They were able to speak in tongues as a sign to unbelievers and to glorify God. Neither baptism in water nor the Holy Spirit changed anyone's nature. Baptism in water changed their state from one of condemnation to one of salvation. And this occurs—not by what the Holy Spirit does—but by what the blood of Christ does in washing away our sins (Rev. 1:5). By His blood we are washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11). The role of the Spirit was to reveal truth so that people could obey the truth. He also bore witness to the truth with miracles, signs, and wonders. He tells us how to become mature Christians (2 Pet. 1:5-11; Gal. 5:22-23). Deaver has assigned to the Spirit what He Himself does not claim.

Much more is presented on various aspects of this topic (see particularly pages 81-94). Another fatal error is the concept of "special illumination" by the Holy Spirit—the idea

that the Spirit not only inspired the Bible to be written, but He has to make clear to us what those words mean. In other words, the Spirit must “directly” enable the Christian to UNDERSTAND Scripture. One problem with this claim is that, among all who claim to be directly helped by the Spirit, they cannot agree on the meaning of various passages (95-118). More than a page full of endnotes is included.

An excellent analysis of the Jonathan Jones’ speech at Freed-Hardeman University in 2014 is given (119-39). Several quotations from that presentation at the lectures reveal the direction that many (including some at FHU?) are leaning toward at the current time, and the refutation of these errors is superb. Chapters such as these are worth the price of the book. More outstanding material, (including the distinction between Calvinism and Arminianism) immediately follows with a careful look at “John Wesley’s Second Work of Grace” (140-41). Wesley is the forerunner of much that some are claiming today.

Do people come to Christ because of the teaching in the Word, or must the Holy Spirit specifically draw them (152-62)? What does John 14-16 actually teach about the Holy Spirit (163-75)? One passage that has been especially butchered is Acts 2:38-39. What is set forth on this passage (and others) is crucial. One quote from John T. Lewis on Mark 16:16 is especially pertinent; he asked: “Did you ever hear a Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian preacher tell sinners to do what Christ said to tell them?” (181). Likewise, they will

not preach what Peter did on the Day of Pentecost, either. Mark 16:15-20 is also covered (186-91).

Many have heard of the “oneness” doctrine—that Jesus is the only person in the Godhead; this error is set forth and soundly refuted (192-205). Other chapters deal with “The Nature and Purpose of Miracles,” “The Laying on of Hands,” “Speaking in Tongues,” along with what the New Testament says about when such spiritual gifts would cease. Sections dealing with specific Scriptures include John 7:37-39, 1 Corinthians 12:13 and 13:8-13, and Joel 2:28-32. Other doctrinal sections include an analysis of Calvin’s teaching on “Irresistible Grace” and the idea that the Holy Spirit is not a Person. The book closes with two chapters on “The Single Woman” and “The Married Woman.”

Faithful brethren should not underestimate the impact that some “Christian” preachers are having with these errors. Many churches and elderships no longer know the Book as they once did. Neither have they kept themselves familiar with what is occurring in the church. Most of us want to believe the best of our brethren and have forgotten that Satan can present himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15). This book provides the opportunity for everyone to see what is happening NOW, as well as where it all originated. *At this time the book is available only on CD.* It may be ordered from *Contending for the Faith*, (281) 350-5516.

—5410 Lake Howell Road
Winter Park, FL 32792

AMERICA’S WANING CONFIDENCE

Lee Moses

According to a recent Gallup poll, Americans have lost confidence in most major American institutions. The poll shows a significant decline in Americans’ confidence in Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, banks, organized religion, news media, and the police.¹ Not only are Americans losing trust in American institutions, according to another poll, Americans are losing trust in each other.² One writer concluded, “All in all, it’s a picture of a nation discouraged about its present and worried about its future, and highly doubtful that its institutions can pull America out of its trough.”³

It is not the purpose of this article to determine whether or not America’s citizens and major institutions are worthy of the nation’s confidence. But it is worth asking whether or not America’s waning trust in God lies at the heart of America’s generally waning confidence. While federal currency still claims, “In God We Trust”, far fewer Americans are regularly attending religious services or regularly reading and studying their Bibles than in decades past. God’s

influence has been removed from the public sphere. How is it that waning American confidence in God can lead to waning American confidence in America itself?

First of all, those who trust in God are generally more worthy of trust. Those who seek to live by Biblical principles know that **“lying lips are an abomination to the LORD”** (Pro. 12:22). They know that **“all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”** (Rev. 21:8). As such they will speak the truth and keep their word even to their own personal detriment (Psa. 15:4). They will seek to be impartial (Lev. 19:5; Pro. 24:23; Jam. 2:1). An aspiring politician recently observed that people of faith make better leaders, because faith gives one empathy, humility, and optimism—all desirable leadership traits.

Another recent poll shows that “More than two thirds (69 percent) believe that American values have declined, and they point to political corruption, increased materialism, (Continued on Page 13)

The Unity Movement at Babel

(Genesis 11:1-9)

Danny Douglas

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth (Gen. 11:4-9).

On a plain in the land of Shinar (Gen. 11:2), the people started a “unity movement.” Instead of multiplying and spreading throughout the earth as God had commanded them (Gen. 9:7), they decided to do as they pleased. Adam Clarke aptly observes: “Being therefore strictly united in all things, coming to the fertile plains of Shinar they proposed to settle themselves there, instead of spreading themselves over all the countries of the earth, according to the design of God...”

The “unity movement” at Babel has its modern day counterparts in the community church movement and others who are caught up in “unity-in-diversity” efforts, seeking to unify while ignoring the doctrine of Christ (cf. 2 John 9). They were “unified” in their efforts to do their own thing in defiance of the will of the living God! Unity without God is no good. Atheists and humanists may unify in their efforts to denounce faith in God. Muslim terrorists unify in their efforts to destroy innocent human lives. The *Watch Tower Society* goes out in unison to spread their false doctrines. Those at Babel were unified, but they were also displeasing to God. It was not Divine unity! God destroyed their efforts, just as one day He will root up every thing that He has not authorized (cf. Mat. 15:13; 7:21-23).

The people at Babel had the numbers. Yet, this did not make them right! In the heart of Houston, Texas, Joel Osteen proclaims his enticing message to thousands every week in the enormous facility which houses “Lakewood Church.” Yet, they are all lost! God is no more pleased with Osteen’s false doctrines and his multitudes than He was with the wicked world of Noah’s day (Gen. 6:1-13). Many wayward congregations, which are now located where faithful churches of Christ once met, are growing in number. They are no longer the Lord’s church. This is the age of the “mega church,” when large community churches number into the

thousands. Many people reason, “We have a large crowd. We must be doing something right!” They have forgotten the words of Jesus:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

The people at Babel wanted to make a name for themselves. They wanted to do things their way instead of God’s way. Many preachers and congregations want to be renowned. They want a big name. They want to do things their way instead of the Lord’s way. They want mechanical instrumental music and special singing groups in the worship, but this is not God’s way (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They want entertainment in the worship, rather than worshipping God in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4:22-24). They want women in leadership roles in the church, but again, this is not God’s way (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8-14). They want to have joint services with denominations, or pulpit exchanges with sectarian preachers, but this is not the Lord’s way (cf. 2 John 9-11). They want to have an environment where a religiously mixed married couple can both feel accepted and not be offended. They want a place where unscripturally “married” couples can find comfort. All of this is wrong. It is sinful to seek to comfort those in sin by compromising the faith! Their hearts need to be pricked so that they might repent, obey the Lord, and be saved! (cf. Acts 2:36-38; 2 Cor. 7:10; Heb. 5:8-9).

The people at Babel wanted to build a tower “**whose top may reach unto heaven.**” Yet, they were not going to reach heaven. Those in the “unity movement” are seeking a path to God that is not based on the doctrine of Christ. We cannot have fellowship with God apart from abiding in the doctrine of Christ, as John declared: “**Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son**” (2 John 9). Their attitude is not like that of Jesus, who prayed to the Father, “**not my will, but thine be done**” (Luke 22:42). Their attitude is self-willed and despises “**dominion**” (i.e., authority). Jude describes them: “**Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities**” (Jude 8). Theirs is a way of confusion and the sure path to eternal destruction in (Rev. 21:8).

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DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner

A MARVELOUS WORK AND A BLUNDER

“Therefore, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among the people, yea, a marvelous work and a wonder...” (2 Nephi 27:26—*Book of Mormon*).

For many years I have observed the shenanigans of that theological cult, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or the Mormons. Their founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., claimed that an angel named Moroni gave him a book of golden plates which Smith translated into the Book of Mormon. I have read this work of religious fiction from cover to cover—a boring task! The following is a partial list of its many blunders, which shows it to be a work of fiction and not inspired by God. I compare its blunders with accuracy of the Holy Bible.

1. The Book of Mormon claims that Native Americans are descendents of ancient Jews (Book of Jacob, Chapter 1). There is no scientific or historical evidence for this assumption. The Bible does not mention them by name, but it does carefully delineate between nations and peoples mentioned in its pages.

2. Only two cities of the many mentioned in the Book of Mormon have been located—Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Mormon archeologists have tried in vain for over a hundred years to find any others. Within the pages of the Bible are found the names of hundreds of cities and villages, most of which have been documented, some of which still exist.

3. In the pages of the Book of Mormon (BOM) whole phrases and words seem to have been copied directly from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. Here are just a few examples:

KJV: “...shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat. 8:12).

BOM: “...shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Alma 40:13).

KJV: “...by this time He stinketh” (Martha - John 11:39).

BOM: “...others say that he is dead and that he stinketh” (A queen - Alma 19:5).

One of the phrases repeated in almost every chapter of the *Book of Mormon*, often several times in a chapter, is “And it came to pass...” It is obvious that the author was trying to duplicate the style of the translators of the *King James Version*. This would be ridiculous except for the fact that millions of people accept the *Book of Mormon* as the literal word of God; “Another testament of Jesus Christ.”

4. The *Book of Mormon* seems confused about the birth place of Jesus. Alma 7:10 has Jesus being born in Jerusalem. Yet 1 Nephi 11:13-20 has him born in Nazareth. The Bible records Jesus being born in Bethlehem (Mat. 2:1; Luke 2) as was prophesied of the Christ in the Old Testament (Mic. 5:2).

5. The *Book of Mormon* uses the word *Bible* (2 Nephi 29) and dates that reference at 559-545 B.C.; at least 1,000 years before the term was used to describe the compilation of the Old and New Testaments into one volume.

6. In the *Book of Mormon* God commands a Jew named Jared to build an airtight barge “tight like unto a dish” (Ether 2:17). Later He has him put a hole in the top and the bottom of the barge for ventilation (Ether 2:17-20). If Noah of the Bible had built this, the ark would have flooded and sunk!

These are all just a few of the many blunders found in the *Book of Mormon*. In comparison the Holy Bible is a book of accuracy. It is the inerrant word of the living God.

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed (Luke 1:3-4).

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City: Utah, 1982.



LETTER TO ACU'S BROWN LIBRARY

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26).

Abilene Christian University
Brown Library

To Whom It May Concern:

I read in the Winter-Spring issue of *ACU TODAY* that ACU will be adding the papers of Max Lucado to an honored place in the Milliken Special Collections and Archives of the Brown Library. As a Christian, a preacher of the Gospel, a student of Restoration history and an ACU alumnus ('76) I wish to express my profound disappointment in the University's decision.

It is an undeniable fact that Max is a very popular religious writer who has sold millions of books and influenced millions. I have no qualms with a writer being successful, but at what a price? For example, the other day a Lutheran

O BRAVE NEW (ROBOT) WORLD!

friend of mine told me that his “pastor” has started using one of Max’s books in his Bible class. With sadness and disgust I told him that Max was no longer affiliated with the churches of Christ and even the church he serves in San Antonio (Oak Hills) has removed “of Christ” from their sign. Max Lucado is a false teacher, no longer a brother-in-Christ, and has been marked by faithful members of Christ’s body for a long time (cf. Rom. 16:17,18). He no longer writes, teaches, or preaches the truth of the Gospel (John 8:31,32) as did those who took part in the Restoration or even the founders of ACU.

I have noticed that Max strives to offend no one, in tune with the religious pluralism of our age. You might call his message “cotton candy religion”—all fluffy sweetness yet nothing in the middle. Sin is rarely condemned in his books. I remember seeing him on the Larry King Show a few years ago. He would not condemn the sin of homosexual behavior as the Holy Bible does, in spite of Larry’s many attempts to get him to do so. The gospel Max teaches is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:9).

Max also downgrades or does not mention the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins for salvation (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6) in his writings. When he does mention it in his books he seems to agree with Baptist false doctrine that a sinner is saved before he is baptized. I attempted to correspond with Max a couple of years ago about this (cf. Mat. 18:15), but all I got was a terse four word reply and a referral to one of his aides. Would any of the Restoration preachers have agreed with Max about baptism? History says no!

Max also has problems with Christian fellowship: he fellowships those not in fellowship with Jesus and His church (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). He has fellowshipped Roman Catholic priests which none of the Restorers or the founders ACU would have done. Would Max debate Baptist preachers, Presbyterian preachers, and Roman Catholic Church officials as Alexander Campbell and others did? Would he confront anyone about their religious error? Why then does his “collection” deserve to be in the same room as their works?

I imagine my letter will be tossed into your round file after reading. But I would hate to stand before the Lord on the Judgment Day with Max Lucado’s record of apostasy (Mat. 7:21-23). As an alumnus I request you remove his collection from the Milliken Special Collections and Archives. Please show some respect for those brave men who risked all for the Cause of Christ and the restoration of New Testament Christianity. Please recall the history of Abilene Christian University and how the founders of ACU in 1906 clave to the Lord and His word rather than the Digressives and their man-made additions to the worship of God. Max Lucado does not deserve to be mentioned in their company.

Sincerely,
Roelf L. Ruffner
evangelist

Robots are among us. They may not be the clanking machines of old science fiction movies, but they are the ATM, the welder in the auto assembly line, and the bomb disposal unit. They are coming soon to fast food restaurants and may be helping determine treatment for patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the local hospital. In the last scenario, they will be called upon to make ethical and moral decisions.

In an internet article I read (“Can we trust robots to make moral decisions?”—Quartz) the author asks the question, “How do we build an ethical machine?” They conclude (1) You must first decide on “a special ethic’s law, write a code from such a law, and create a robot that strictly follows that code” and, (2) You must “create a machine—learning robot and teach it how to respond to various situations so as to arrive at an ethical outcome.”

As I read this article it dawned upon me that in their dilemma these scientists had stumbled upon a pretty good proof of the creation of man as recorded in the Holy Bible. (1) God created a sentient being “**in his own image**” (Gen. 1:27). This creature has the ability to make moral and ethical decisions. No other creature, ant or ape, can do this. (2) From the beginning God has given man laws to use in making these decisions. When man discards God’s laws he descends into the anarchy of the jungle or “dog eat dog.” But we have the Bible, complete with a moral code (Law of Moses, the Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, etc.) including examples of people wisely using its code and examples of those breaking it and suffering the consequences (Pro. 14:12; Rom. 6:23).

At least one robot-moral-code-developer in this article revealed their philosophical leanings, “Humans are a product of natural selection so we have built into us ideas that are self-interested or at least in the interest of our group over others. These are a result of being able to survive as a species.” Apparently they want to depend upon the false premise of the atheistic theory of evolution in their quest to design morals for robots. In the last century multiplied millions died in Communist gulags and Nazi concentration camps because their oppressors’ morality and ethics were based on this Godless theory. Humanity was seen as animals. **“There is a generation whose teeth are likes words, and whose fangs are like knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, And the needy from among men”** (Pro. 30:14).

Nowhere in this article did I find God and His word even alluded to. The author continually turned to philosophers and ethicists but God was noticeable absent. The real question should not be can we trust robots to make moral decisions but can we trust the morally confused to program robots to make moral decisions? These folks cannot even agree on what is right from wrong!

When there is no acknowledgement of God and His word, sin or the breaking of God’s law reigns. **“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that**

which was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 21:25). When we (or these ethicists) fail to acknowledge the moral code of the Holy Bible we have a real dilemma.

This article ends with no answer to that dilemma, except humanism.

“It might simply be impossible to reduce human ethical decision making into numerical values for robots to understand, says Lin— how to codify compassion or mercy, for example. But he says that robot ethics can be seen as a problem of human ethics. ‘Thinking about how robots ought to behave is a soul searching exercise in how humans ought to behave,’ he says, ‘It’s a way for us to know ourselves.’”

Yes, humanity is the problem. Robots will only be as ethical and moral as their programmer.

The tragedy is that these programmers fail to look to the Creator of man as the source of moral codes. They don’t even acknowledge His existence. He knows us better that we know ourselves.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings (Jer.17:9,10).

He decided long ago what is ethical and what is moral.

(<http://qz.com/653575/can-we-trust-robots-to-make-moral-decisions> as of April 4, 2016.)



“WE DON’T HAVE THE PROMISE OF A MINUTE!”

It all happened in a flash! One minute I was traveling down the highway early on a Sunday morning for my appointment with the Lord and His brethren. The next minute, I was parking my car on the side of the road after an accident. I am thankful I swerved missing the rear end of the truck in front of me and struck his door instead. At that moment it dawned upon me that no one was hurt and no one was dead—only a busted headlight casing on my car. At the rate of speed (about 55 mph) I was traveling I could have been dead. As my grandmother Langley used to say, “We don’t have the promise of a minute!”

On Tuesday of the next week I took part in the funeral of one of our members who had died Saturday night. As I sat there I thought, “This funeral could have been for me.” The following are some thoughts concerning life and death.

Human life is a fragile thing

The Holy Bible is replete with warnings of the fragility of humanity. **“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away”** (1 Pet. 1:24). Americans living today have an average lifespan of 78 years but that is no guarantee of longevity. We must teach each other about the slender thread of existence we hang by and the need to ever change in accordance with God’s word. As I heard one

preacher proclaim at the end of his sermon, “Some of you in this audience may never hear the Gospel invitation extended again.”

God chooses the time to take us

God has given us freedom of choice in this life (Jos. 24:15). We may think we are prolonging our lives by avoiding bad habits and dangerous situations. (Both are good decisions.) However, God does not work according to our timetable. Of the rich fool our Lord said, **“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”** (Luke 12:20). King Herod Agrippa I died suddenly because of his blasphemy, **“And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost”** (Acts 12:23). Looking at his own mortality Job said, **“For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living”** (Job 30:23).

The end is permanent

Too many, young and old, live their lives as if they were immortal. They see death as something that can be bargained away or endlessly delayed. At funerals (Now referred to as “Celebrations of Life.”) we all come face to face with our own mortality. I should realize that that casket is where I will be someday, if the Lord tarries. I might think, “No! I still have things to do and things to see.” At death all my possessions that possessed me, my unattained goals, my good intentions, my human relationships, and my momentary pleasures will be no more, forever.

We must be ready

The Holy Bible warns us that the end of our sojourn on this earth is closer than we think. And the next event after our death will be our judgment before the Creator. **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27). Everyone should be prepared for our death or the Lord’s return, whichever comes first. **“...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (2 Cor. 6:2b).

The question of life.

The real question of life is not “Was my life meaningful?” or “Will I leave behind a heritage—will others remember me?” The question I should ask about my short existence on this planet must be, “Am I ready to the meet the Judge?”

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men... (2 Cor. 5:10-11a).

Are you and I ready?

—2330 Moore Court
Columbia, TN 38401

CHRISTIANS—THE SAVED—ARE IN THE CHURCH

Jerry C. Brewer

Members of the church that Jesus built do not denominate themselves into parties by their names. There were no hyphenated Christians in the first century, such as “Baptist Christians,” “Methodist Christians,” “Presbyterian Christians,” or “Anglican Christians.” Then, and now, the saved were and are simply “Christians” (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16) and all Christians are in the church of Christ. The church that Jesus built (Mat. 16:18) did not have a name. None was needed because He built only one (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). The term “the church of Christ” is not a name, but a designation of ownership. Local congregations are designated as “**churches of Christ**” (Rom. 16:16) and every saved person on earth is in Christ’s church. Not a single person is saved in a denomination.

Paul said that “**all spiritual blessings**” are in Christ (Eph. 1:3) and that includes salvation. It is also manifest that those in Christ are in His church, for the church “**is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all**” (Eph. 1:22 -23). To be in Christ is to be in His church and to be in His church is to be in Christ.

Those blessings in Christ are enumerated by Paul in Ephesians, chapter one. Those in Christ are the “**chosen**” of God (v. 4), God’s adopted children (v. 5), made acceptable to God (v. 6), redeemed and forgiven through Christ’s blood (v. 7), and heirs of heaven (v. 11). No one is in Christ who has not repented and been baptized into Him (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27).

When the gospel was first preached on Pentecost (Acts 2), 3,000 believers obeyed the gospel message by repenting and being baptized, and the scripture says they were added

to the church (Acts 2:38-41, 47). Now, this question arises: “To which denomination were they added?” The answer is “none.” Were the apostles, and others in the first century, members of a denomination? Absolutely not! No such thing as a denomination among professing Christians then existed. Those 3,000 souls were added to the church of which you should be a member—the church which Christ, its Founder, Jesus Christ, will save (Eph. 5:23). Not a single person in Acts two was added to any denomination. The church is the saved body of Christ and rejects denominationalism.

God has only one family and all of His children are in that family. Paul told Timothy,

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

This passage identifies God’s *house* as the church. As used in this context, the word *house* means “family.” The church is God’s family and it is so designated in Ephesians 3:15 as well. God has only one family and to insist that God has children in all denominations is to accuse God of adultery. He has no children outside of His family. Denominations are not the family of God and are no part of that family. They are man-made “families” that are unknown in the Word of God. The church of which you should be a member—the one you read about in the New Testament—rejects denominationalism because it blasphemes the name of God in its pretense that God has children in many different “families.”

— 616 N Locust Ave.
Elk City, OK 73644

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(Continued from Page 7)

declining family values, and a celebrity-obsessed culture as the culprits.”⁴ Should one be surprised values have declined when the lone reliable basis for values—the infallible word of God—has been disregarded and brushed aside? **“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sot-tish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowl-edge”** (Jer. 4:22).

Perhaps a significant part of the problem lies in Amer-ica’s absence of alternatives in which to place their confi-dence. America has failed to trust in God, and has become, in some respects, forbidden to trust in God. So where else can America turn? Failure to trust in God forces one to place undue dependence upon man. But eventually, the most bril-liant minds err, the mightiest armies fall, and the most trust-worthy leaders disappoint in some fashion. Those whose trust lies solely in man and human institutions have been let down time and again. Should it be any wonder that their confidence has faded into cynicism?

However, those who trust in God are not compelled to lean upon human individuals and institutions to the same de-gree. As Hezekiah boldly declared,

With [the king of Assyria] is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah (2 Chr. 32:8).

Furthermore,

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God (Psa. 20:7).

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! (Isa. 31:1).

Our confidence in man and human institutions must always be tempered with the realism that God is the only one truly worthy of all confidence. But when one has no one and noth-ing in which to place his confidence, what does he have left?

End Notes

¹ Jeffrey M. Jones, “Confidence in U.S. Institutions Still Below Historical Norms,” June 15 2015 Gallup. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/183593/confidence-institutionsbelow-historical-norms.aspx>.

² Connie Cass, “In God We Trust, Maybe, But Not Each Other,” Associated Press, Nov. 30, 2013. <http://apnews.myway.com/article/20131130/DAACV0QO2.html>.

³ Ken Walsh, “Americans Have Lost Confidence . . . In Every-thing,” June 17 2015 *U.S. News & World Report*. <http://www.us-news.com/news/blogs/ken-walshswashington/2015/06/17/americans-have-lost-confidence-in-everything>.

⁴ Mark Penn, “Americans Are Losing Confidence in the Nation but Still Believe in Themselves,” June 27 2012 *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/06/americans-are-losing-confidence-in-the-nation-but-still-believe-in-them-selves/259039/>.

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Over the past half-century-plus I have had the opportunity to write hundreds of articles and manuscripts. My late beloved wife, Lavonne, and our son, Andy, have written a considerable body of material as well. These documents treating various Bible and Bible-related subjects total several thousand pages.



Dub McClish



Lavonne McClish



Andy McClish

At the urging of others we are making these materials more widely available than possible by printed media. Through our Website, these are accessible at no charge to Bible students everywhere. If the things we have writ-ten help even one person to a better understanding of the Sacred Text and to a closer relationship with its Divine Author, we will feel amply rewarded. Please visit thescripturecache soon. —Dub McClish

Compromise

Michael Hatcher

Years ago I remember my dad illustrating the way in which error and apostasy creep into the church. He would draw a horizontal line on the chalkboard, which he said represented Truth. He would then go back to the beginning of the line and begin tracing the first line. Then he would ever so slowly begin creeping away from the original line. It was almost imperceptible at first, but it would slowly move away until the two lines were far apart. The second line represented how apostasy creeps into the church. He would then emphasize that apostasy never comes in directly in opposition to Truth.

This reminds me of what the Hebrews writer states: **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip”** (Heb. 2:1). This shows the ease of slowly drifting away from the Truth. Generally, people (or the congregation they attend) are not going to go to sleep one night sound in the faith and wake up the next morning having totally apostatized. It is a slow process that begins by compromising on “small” things. However, once you compromise in one area, there is no stopping point. Notice a couple of examples of this principle:

Paul warned the Ephesian elders: **“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”** (Acts 20:30). As one observes the history of the church, he sees that the papacy resulted from a very slow drifting away. It did not come in overnight. It was not until A.D. 606 that Boniface III proclaimed him-

self “universal bishop”—the full-blown papacy had arrived. It took over 500 years for the apostasy to become total (the fullness of Catholic papacy), yet the principles for the papacy began very early in the church. It began with a very little bit of compromise concerning the eldership.

Moving the instrument into the worship was not simply an overnight occurrence. It took several decades to get some accustomed to the instrument. They began compromising just a little at first, until they gave up any opposition to the mechanical instrument in worship. However, as is the case with all compromise, once they compromised in one area, there was no stopping point. This compromise continued until the Christian Church denomination resulted. However, they could not stop the compromise, and they ended up splitting their denomination because some were willing to compromise on any and every point of doctrine while some wanted to hold the compromise to just a few areas. However, the “limited compromise” people had no defense, for once you compromise in one thing, there is no basis for holding to God’s Word in any area

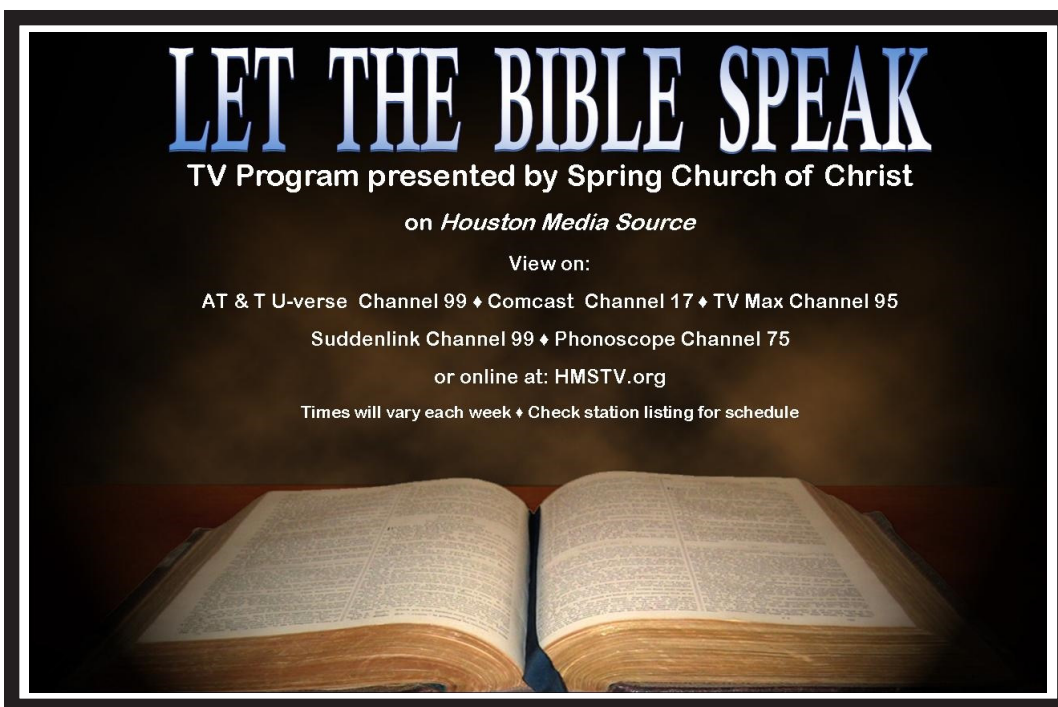
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Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>



“Be able to accept life as you find it; but don’t be satisfied to leave it that way.”



LET THE BIBLE SPEAK
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LONE STAR BIBLE CAMP

June 5-10, 2016



About Lone Star Bible Camp

The Lone Star Bible Camp is located 4 miles north of Bellville, Texas and 12 miles south of Brenham, Texas on Hwy 36 N. The Lone Star Bible Camp uses the facilities of Woodmen of the World. This is a beautiful 66 acre campground with a 10 acre lake located in the rolling Texas hills. We emphasize Bible study, fellowship, edification, and spiritual development. Bible classes and devotionals will be conducted everyday and the week will culminate in a group review of the material studied. The Lone Star Bible Camp is staffed by the Fish Hatchery Road Church of Christ, Huntsville, TX and the Spring Church of Christ, Spring, TX.

Various Activities Provided

The Lone Star Bible Camp offers opportunities for Bible classes, physical recreation and guidance from a faithful and experienced camp staff. There is a dining hall and an up-to-date kitchen with an experienced kitchen staff. There are two large air-conditioned dormitories and a covered pavilion housing a full court basketball and volleyball area. Also available are 3 fishing docks, paddleboats, and canoes. This shaded campground offers many nature trails for hiking. In keeping with biblical modesty, all involved in the camp have a dress code by which they must abide.

A Message From The Director

Our study theme for the 2016 camp session is: *Studies In Galatians*. All involved with The Lone Star Bible Camp invite and urge you to send your children, grandchildren, or other children to join us for a week of Bible study, fellowship, and fun. I have the privilege and responsibility of serving as the camp director and I extend my personal invitation to you to be a part of this Christian endeavor. It is The Lone Star Bible Camp staff's desire and prayer to assist parents, grandparents and other child care providers in spiritually molding our children now and for the future.

Camp Director: *Bruce Stulting*

Applications are available by contacting: springcoc@gmail.com

DIRECTORY OF CHURCHES

-Colorado-

Denver—Piedmont Church of Christ, 1602 S. Parker Rd. Ste. 109, Denver, CO 80231, Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. www.piedmontcoc.net, Lester Kamp, evangelist. (720) 989-8155.

-England-

Cambridgeshire—Cambridge City Church of Christ, meeting at The Manor Community College, Arbury Rd., Cambridge, CB4 2JF. Sun., Bible Study--10:30 a.m., Worship-- 11:30 a.m.; Tue. Bible Study--7:30 p.m. www.CambridgeCityCoC.org.uk. Keith Sisman, Gospel Preacher. Contacts: Keith Sisman [By phone inside USA (281) 475-8247; Inside the U.K.: Cambridge (England): 01223-911243]; Alternative Cambridge contacts: Joan Moulton - 01223-210101; Postal/ mailing Address - PO BOX 1, Ramsey Huntingdon, PE26 2YZ United Kingdom

-Florida-

Ocoee—Ocoee Church of Christ, 2 East Magnolia Street, Ocoee, FL 34761. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:00 p.m. David Hartbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauffley 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.

-Montana-

Helena—Mountain View Church of Christ, 1400 Joslyn Street, Helena, Mt. 59601, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Matt Bidmead (406) 461-9199.

-Oklahoma-

Elk City—Northeast Church of Christ, 616 N. Locust Ave., Mailing address P.O. Box 267, Elk City, OK 73648-0267, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m. Wed., 7:00 p.m. Jerry and Nathan Brewer, evangelists. The church building is one block east of North Van Buren, on East Avenue C in Elk City, Oklahoma. FaceBook : www.facebook.com/nechurchofchristecok. Phone: (580) 225-4395

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: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (8-3) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m.,

Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 387-1429; dubmcclish@gmail.com.

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., 1:30 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring *Contending for the Faith* Lectures, and the internet school, Truth Bible Institute. www.churchesofchrist.com.

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