

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

FREE AT LAST, FREE AT LAST

No, we are not talking about civil rights, nor any rights at all. We are talking about the decision of the *CFTF* staff to migrate to an online *ezone*, i.e., a paper offered by email. This decision was motivated primarily, but not entirely, by two factors: the high cost of printing and mailing a paper edition, and the trend in the magazine and newspaper publishing industry toward electronic versions of print media. *Therefore, we offer you the option to receive the CFTF paper electronically absolutely free. To receive the free version, simply go to www.cftfpaper.com and sign up.* Once done, each electronic issue will be emailed to you as a pdf document that can be printed, and forwarded to friends. *For those that wish to continue to receive a print edition, the subscription fee will reflect the actual cost of printing and mailing.* We do not yet have that cost information, but we will advise you of the print edition subscription fee as soon as we do.

Editorial Comment—*The Lord willing, we intend to make the 2013 July/August edition of Contending for the Faith the issue that formally changes CFTF from a paper edition to an electronic PDF format, emailed free to all who desire it.*

We are fully aware that many of our readers do not have computers. And, some of you who do have them do not use the Internet. Thus you do not have email capabilities. But as you surely know, there are many hundreds of thousands who do and more people are coming online every day. Thus, by publishing CFTF electronically we can offer the paper free and at the same time get it into many more hands than we can do by mailing it through the U.S. Post Office.

Some of you (we hope most of you) will choose to receive it

free in its PDF format via email. But as previously indicated the paper edition will be printed, but it will cost you considerably more because the number printed will be much smaller. So please prepare for the subscription price of the paper edition to rise considerably, but the electronic edition will be free. In time we plan on ceasing all paper issues of CFTF. We certainly hope you understand why we are making this change.

We continue to covet your prayers and that those of you who use the Internet will visit www.cftfpaper.com to enter your email addresses and the addresses of brethren you desire to receive the free electronic edition. If you have any comments or questions please feel free to contact us .

—David P. Brown, Editor

IN THIS ISSUE...

FREE AT LAST, FREE AT LAST—CFTF STAFF.....	1
EDITORIAL—FACING TWO REALITIES – DPB.....	2
TRYING TO WALK ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE—CHARLES POGUE.....	4
(SERMON OUTLINE) DECLARATIONS OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST (GAL. 6:14)—DANNY DOUGLAS.....	12
URGENT NEED: MORE MEN LIKE NEHEMIAH—DANNY DOUGLAS.....	14

AN ALARMING PARRALEL—ROELF RUFFNER.....	15
WELCOME TO SCRIPTURECACHE.COM.....	16
SPRING CFTF 2013 LECTURESHIP ADVERTISEMENT.....	17
SADDENED BUT NOT SCHOCKED—CHARLES POGUE.....	18
WITHDRAWING FROM THE WITHDRAWN—DON TARBET.....	19
ARE YOU AN EXTREMIST?—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.....	20
WHO IS THE JUDGE?—BROCK HARTWIGSEN.....	21

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...

FACING TWO REALITIES

The late Ira Y. Rice, Jr. printed three volumes of *Axe On The Root*, the first volume bearing the copyright 1965. These books were written to expose liberal false teachers in the church of Christ. (By *liberal false teachers* is meant those who teach doctrines that loose men from what God in the Bible binds on them—obligatory matters, thus, matters pertaining to one's salvation.)

Because of liberalism's many and varied attacks on the church from within, and after the publication of *Axe On The Root III*, Rice decided a monthly paper was desperately needed in order to keep Christians abreast of the many inroads liberalism was/is making into the church. Thus, the first issue of *Contending for the Faith* appeared bearing the date "January/1970". As was the case with the three volumes of *Acts on the Root*, the paper was immediately praised by some brethren, condemned by liberals and their apologist/enablers, while shocking to the core those who loved the middle of the road—brethren who had friends, family, money, position, and influence on both sides of whatever the issue. These moral and spiritual hirelings highly desired to remain in fellowship with brethren on all sides of an issue. Their *great love for the Lord and his truth* (written with tongue in cheek) moved them to wait until they could figure out which way the majority of brethren were going to jump, then with full force they jumped on what they thought to be the prevailing side.

THE FIRST REALITY WE MUST FACE

The years have rapidly come and gone since brother Rice began his work of exposing liberal false teachers almost fifty years ago. Many congregations have fallen victim to various liberal doctrines. Some of them have gone completely into denominationalism, removing "church of Christ" from their marquees—would that all liberal churches would do the same. For the most part the schools of higher education operated by the brethren have given up the truth regarding New Testament Christianity in numerous areas of doctrine.

Some schools of preaching have departed from the New Testament's teaching concerning fellowship. Others have embraced false doctrines on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (MDR), and in the case of Sunset in Lubbock, TX, it also deviated from the New Testament's teaching regarding grace and MDR. These trainers of preachers are about where the brethren's colleges

were around fifty years ago. It should be understood that among the liberal congregations, universities, and preaching schools some of them have embraced more liberal doctrines than others. Some stand for the truth on some matters while embracing error in other areas.

BALANCED BRETHREN

There are those brethren who advertise themselves as *balanced brethren* (BB's). Recently B. J. Clarke, newly appointed director of the Memphis School of Preaching (MSOP), wrote the following of himself and his work, "*I am determined to be faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way*" (Yokefellow, Vol. 39, No. 9 December 2012, p. 3).

On numerous occasions, the late brother Thomas B. Warren said, "*After a preacher has finished his sermon, ask yourself this question, now what did he say?*" Bro. Warren was teaching the responsibility of the auditor to listen to a sermon in such a way as to know if the speaker made a point or concluded anything, if he did, what was it, what scriptures did he use, what did he think they meant, and what was his reasoning that brought him to his conclusion. Of course, the first thing a speaker or writer must do to avoid ambiguity is define his terms so the auditor or reader will know what he meant by them.

What does brother Clarke and others who declare themselves BB's mean when they say they are "*faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way.*" Is bro. Clarke telling us that his language as previously quoted is in harmony with the inspired apostle Peter's admonition "**If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God**" (1 Peter 4:11), or the apostle Paul's statement about his presentation of the truth of the Gospel—"**we use great plainness of speech**" (2 Cor. 3:12)? Does his statement mean he is as was Paul, "**set for the defense of the Gospel**" (Phi. 1:17)? Does his quoted affirmation mean he will "**contend for the faith**" as Jude 3 directs Christians to do? Does his statement mean he will "**in word and in deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**" (Col. 3:17)? Does bro. Clarke's affirmation mean that he will follow the example of Paul when he withstood the erring apostle Peter "**to the face, because he was to be blamed**" (Gal. 2:11)?

The truth of the matter about ambiguous words and terminology is this, neither bro. Clarke nor the rest of the BB's have attempted to define what they mean by *balanced*, or as bro. Clarke wrote, "*to be faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way.*" Will bro. Clarke, or any other BB, precisely and explicitly

explain to us how one can be "*faithful to the truth in an uncompromising way,*" but *unbalanced* in the doing of it? Regarding bro. Clarke's terminology, we say to him and to all BBs as the late bro. Guy N. Woods was known to say to those from whom he sought definition, specification, and clarification, "*Give us a for instance?*"

Unless bro. Clarke has changed his position on the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders (R&R of elders) error that has been discussed a multiplicity of times in recent years on the pages of *CFTF*, he does not believe said doctrine to be a false doctrine. To the contrary, he believes the R&R of elders is authorized by the New Testament in that it is an option for Christians to use whereby they can discharge an obligation the New Testament has placed upon them through direct statements, examples, and/or implications. *If that is the case, will bro. Clarke tell us plainly what the New Testament obligation is that the R&R of elders is discharging?* When bro. Clarke does that he will have produced the direct statement(s), or example(s), or implication(s) placing the obligation on the church that he says the R&R of elders is an option whereby said obligation (whatever he thinks it is) is discharged. Further, is it his position on the R&R of elders, or is it the position of others associated with the MSOP that is an example of what he means when he says he is "*faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way*"?

Unless they too have changed their minds, former directors of the MSOP, Curtis Cates and Bobby Liddell, along with other MSOP faculty members, do not believe the R&R of elders is authorized by the New Testament. However, *they decided* that the R&R of elders error was and is too small of a matter over which to trouble or divide the church. Also, *they concluded* that Dave Miller, director of Apologetics Press, one of this false doctrine's chief advocates, should remain in fellowship with them and the church. Yes, these brethren advocate and practice ignoring a false doctrine and fellowshiping an advocate of the same simply on the basis that *they decided* to do so. Is this what bro. Clarke means by one being "*faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way*"? We will not hold our breath until the BBs define their terms.

MORE FROM FOREST HILL AND HER PREACHER, BARRY GRIDER

On page 4 of the November 27, 2012 issue of *The Forest Hill News*, the weekly bulletin of the Forest Hills Church of Christ, Memphis, TN, the home of MSOP, Barry Grider expressed sympathy to Ken Joines, for-

mer longtime preacher for the Goodman Oaks congregation, on the loss of his wife. One can understand Barry's expressing sympathy to anyone in the loss of a companion, but he goes much further, noting that Ken Joines is a "longtime Memphis evangelist" (not bothering to mention what kind, with all of the Goodman Oaks congregation's liberal shenanigans). Then he praises Joines as a great personal encourager. In the same page 4 article, Grider also praises B. J. Clarke as a "close friend, confidante, and encourager."

We cannot help but wonder how bro. Grider's praise of brother Joines strikes brother Clarke. Furthermore, we wonder how the Southaven Church of Christ, Southaven, MS, took bro. Grider's declaration about the fellowship he had/has with bro. Joines. After all, while brother Clarke preached for the Southaven congregation, he, the Southaven elders, and church were (is?) constantly at odds with the liberal doings of the Goodman Oaks congregation. If they did not know it before it appeared in the Forest Hill bulletin, they now know that bro. Joines is Barry's "close friend, confidante, and encourager." Is Barry's relationship with the liberal brother Joines what B. J. means by: "*I am determined to be faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way*"? Indeed, the preceding information helps us better understand what bro. Clarke means by his aforementioned statement. Furthermore, it also helps us better understand what bro. Grider means when he talks about enlarging his fellowship circle. But we also see brethren Clarke, Liddell, Cates, Mosher, Elkins, et al., *circling* right along with bro. Grider as together they chant the BB anthem, ...*faithful to the truth in a balanced and uncompromising way "unity in diversity" in matters of obligation is here to stay.*

I do not know about bro. Grider, but there was a time in the not too distant past when brethren Clarke, Liddell, Cates, Mosher, Elkins, et al., opposed such conduct. And, they above all people know that such is the case with them and they also know that we know that about them. But the fruits they are presently bearing prove they have changed their mind about opposing any and all error. Moreover, the position of influence that bro. Grider has with the Forest Hill elders, who back him 100%, becomes more evident as each day passes.

We would all do well to "be faithful to the truth" no matter the sacrifices we must make in order to be able to do so. That being always the case with us we do not need to add modifiers to the sentence—"We are

determined to be faithful to the Truth." For one cannot be faithful to the truth in all things and be guilty of compromising any constituent element of it regarding anything.

The following article is written by a graduate of MSOP, bro. Charles Pogue. We are including it in the midst of our editorial because it fits that about which we are writing. What bro. Pogue mentions about the Forest Hill congregation comes from the same bulletin in which are found the previous quotations from bro. Grider regarding brethren Clarke and Joines. The realities coming from that specific Forest Hill bulletin provide for us greater understanding concerning the direction the Forest Hill congregation is going.

TRYING TO WALK ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE

Charles Pogue

There are many works that are either closely or loosely related to churches of Christ. Some of these works are, and some are not, in harmony with the scriptures. Whether any particular work is or is not authorized, we are increasingly witnessing the attempts of brethren to walk on both sides of the fence regarding truth and error while considering themselves faithful in so doing. Some are mindful of the man who owned two pastures with a fence in between. On one side of the fence was a herd of goats, and on the other side of the fence a flock of sheep. Because both animals impacted the man's personal economic well-being, he attempted to satisfy the desires of both the sheep and the goats.

The reality in the church is that some who are involved in various works are attempting, for reasons including their financial support, to walk on both sides of the fence. On the one hand, they claim to hold on to doctrinal truth to satisfy the sheep, but on the other hand they are reaching out with a cordial attitude toward the goats, either because they have started down the road to apostasy themselves, or because they do not want to lose the money contributed to them by the goats. Anyone who denies the reality of this situation is either headed down the same road of apostasy, or they have their eyes willfully closed to the reality of the situation. Either way, they are not only as guilty as, but are in the number with, the fence straddlers.

It is both dangerous and futile to try to walk on both sides of the fence at the same time. Even though that is so, the last few years have seen an increase in the num-

ber of brethren who have apparently embraced the idea that they can please everyone, sweep important differences under the proverbial carpet, or just plain overlook the unfaithfulness of some with whom they desire to fellowship. Jesus said, **“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad”** (Mat.12:30). Anyone who attempts to identify himself with the sheep while pacifying the goats is scattering, not gathering! He places his own soul in jeopardy, while also reinforcing the impending destruction that will come upon the goats.

Trying to walk on both sides of the fence at the same time not only have consequences in this life but eternal consequences in the world to come. In this life such a person is appropriately recognized as, and if unwilling to repent of his actions, fully belonging in the same situation as any impenitent member who has had the fellowship of the Lord’s scripturally withdrawn from him. In the world to come of course, his compromise will cost him his soul.

The November 27, 2012, bulletin of the Forest Hill Church of Christ in Memphis (home of MSOP) on page one announced an upcoming seminar, “Dynamic Deacons.” The seminar will be conducted by Aubrey Johnson from Sharpsburg, Georgia, and minister for the nearby liberal Peach Tree City Church of Christ. While this congregation does not use mechanical instrumental music in their worship, they use it in at least some of the videos they make. At this writing one particular video, about an evangelistic program they plan to begin early in 2013, features a young man talking about the program as someone is singing in the background accompanied by guitar music. Another video on the media page of their web site where audios of the sermon can be heard, has mechanical instrumental music in it. This does not help the non-Christian to understand the New Testament’s teaching regarding the same. Furthermore, if one reads through the frequently asked questions page on their website, they claim to do only what the scriptures authorize. That being the case, why do they produce and publicly air such videos as previously noted? Sadly, the answer most often given by some brethren to various questions of why they do or do not do what they practice is: “We choose” to do or not do it.

Aubrey Johnson, among other things, is a prolific writer and his books are available from the Gospel Advocate Co. However, *The Gospel Advocate* paper quite some time ago ceased to be up front and on the firing line in dealing with any and all false doctrine. Johnson’s writing is religious in nature and well received by those

in the denominational world. For instance, one of his books, *The Barnabas Factor*, was distributed to over 500 employees at a Chick-Fil-A corporate staff summit. Another of his books, *The Seed Principle*, has been praised even by a Catholic.

Faithful brethren would ask, Why would Forest Hill have this man conduct a seminar? Some will not like the answer, but the truth is that this once faithful congregation has once again demonstrated their willingness to attempt to walk on both sides of the fence.

—P. O. Box 592
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WITH THE PASSING OF TIME

Many brethren who stood for the truth and opposed error fifty years ago have left this world, a few are too aged and infirm to actively battle the forces of evil as they once did, some who were in their youth when the first volume of *Axe on the Root* appeared have entered their senior years, but they continue to fight for the right as they are able to do it. Sadly, over those same years, some who at one time “contended for the faith,” have surrendered to the enemy, having succumbed to the siren call of some liberal doctrine(s), choosing to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season rather than suffer affliction with the faithful servants of the cross. They have chosen to enter through the wide gate into the broad way—the course of least resistance—slipping and sliding with the masses of rebellious church members toward the gaping mouth of a devil’s hell and into the eternal torment of the lake that burns with fire and brimstone from which none shall escape.

LIBERAL ANTAGONISTS

The liberals are relentless in their continual attack on Bible truth and those who continue to believe, preach, and defend it. I do not know of a Biblical obligation but that liberals have attacked and attempted to repudiate it, teaching brethren that it is unnecessary for them to be bound by what the Bible has bound on them. Some of these are:

1. ***The nature of truth***—They believe it is subjective, relative, and not humanly attainable, when actually it is absolute, objective, and humanly attainable.
2. ***The inspiration of the Bible***—Many reject the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible and thus do not believe every Word of the Bible is from God.

3. ***The authority of the Bible in general and the New Testament in particular***—Saying that the New Testament is not a divine pattern, but only a “love letter” from God to man,

4. ***How the Bible authorizes***—They deny that the direct statements, implications, and examples found in all languages and thus in the languages of the Bible, especially the New Testament, are not authoritative and binding on people today, that such an approach to Bible study is nothing but a human invention.

5. ***The authority of faithful elders***—They teach the eldership over a congregation does not have the final authority in determining what option(s) are used to discharge biblical obligations. Moreover, some of them believe that elders may be voted in and out of the eldership by a majority of the members voting (the re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders false doctrine). Others have erroneously taught that an eldership rules only by their exemplary lives.

6. ***Steps in the plan of salvation:***

a) *Belief*—Some teach that faith is not formed in one by the reception of and correct reasoning with the adequate evidence and testimony of credible witnesses recorded in the Bible, but it (belief) constitutes only high probability that the Bible is true. Not based on evidence, it is “a leap of faith”. They also teach that empirical knowledge is the only kind of knowledge.

b) *Repentance*—They affirm it does not require a breaking down of one’s stubborn will, the seat of all sin and rebellion against God, evidenced by one’s reformed life, a life conformed to fit the the New Testament pattern. Thus, some teach that repentance is only being sorry for one’s sins.

c) *Baptism*—Some have taught that God does not require a person to know why one is baptized in order for God to save him. Also, it is taught that the “pious unimmersed” in the denominations are acceptable to God.

7. ***The church of Christ, her work, organization, worship, and the life of her members***—Some teach:

- a) The church of Christ is a denomination;
- b) The Lord’s Supper may be taken on any day

and for any occasion,

c) God accepts music other than singing in the worship of the church.

d) The benevolent organization, the *Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Organization*, is its own organization, not the work of any one church. Thus, it is not overseen by any church’s eldership. It was set up to actually do the benevolent work God has obligated the church to do. It is completely without biblical authority to exist.

e) The errors that developed in The International Churches of Christ (ICOC) have their origins in the 1970s within the Lord’s church as a so-called “discipling” movement through Chuck Lucas’s work with college students. Lucas, at the time was the evangelist for the 14th Street Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida (later renamed the Crossroads Church of Christ), began a work patterned after the denominational organizations, *Campus Crusade* and the *Shepherding Movement*. Lucas’ program was known as *Campus Advance*. It sought to reach students through an intimate religious environment called *soul talks* and *prayer partners*. *Soul talks* took place in the student’s residences where they were under the control of a leader who delegated authority to group members. In their meetings they engaged in prayer and received direction from their leaders.

Prayer partners pertained to their practice of pairing a new disciple with one who supposedly was more spiritually mature. This was done for the purpose of giving direction to the less mature partner about living the new life of a “disciple”. The *soul talks* and *prayer partners* permitted intimate daily control of the new disciple. The novices were to do as they were told by their senior prayer partners, the novice confessing weaknesses and sins to the senior prayer partner.

From the top to the bottom of this sinful church, the whole system was about the control of the disciples. This “work” of the Crossroads Church of Christ through aggressive evangelism quickly spread to a number of churches. With its spread came its pyramid organization with Chuck Lucas at the top of the pyramid.

They also taught what they called, “Lordship baptism”. It was not enough for one to believe fully that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as one of the steps in the plan of salvation. They also taught that in order for one’s baptism to be scriptural one must believe that Jesus is the Lord of one’s complete life according to the previously noted structure of *soul talks* and *prayer partners*.

In time, due to his own actions, Lucas lost control of the *Crossroads Movement* to one of his converts, Kip McKean. McKean had moved to the Boston, MA area in 1979 and began working with so-called “disciples” in the Lexington Church of Christ. He introduced the use of discipling partners to the movement.

After rapid growth they changed their name to the Boston Church of Christ. In the early 1980s, the national leadership of the movement shifted to McKean and the Boston Church of Christ where it became known as the “Boston movement”.

It began an international program of work and having become its own religious institution, in 1993 formally declared that it was no longer connected to the Lord’s church.

In 1990 McKean moved to Los Angeles, CA. Along with him came the central leadership of the church.

Without going into detail, suffice it to say that during the intervening years many changes came to the church. McKean and his family were charged with sin and resigned from their leadership position. For some time Andy Fleming headed the administration of the ICOC. Under Fleming’s direction the focus was on the development of local congregations.

In time channels were opened for discussions with the more liberal churches represented by those who are a part of Abilene Christian University. Other such efforts have been held but what began as the Crossroads Movement remains its own distinctive religious group.

8. **Unity**—It is taught that unity is not dependent on all Christians being in agreement on all matters of obligation—what one must do to be saved and remain saved—although Paul ordained the very op-

posite in 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Jesus prayed for oneness even as He and His Father are one (John 17:20-23). Also see God’s platform for unity in Ephesians 4:1-6, noticing each divine plank in the sacred platform. In contrast, liberals advocate “unity in diversity” (brethren agreeing to disagree) in obligatory matters.

9. **Fellowship**—Contrary to 2 John 9-11 some teach that Christians are authorized by the New Testament to extend fellowship to a brother who does not believe a false doctrine, but who extends fellowship to a brother who does believe and teach a false doctrine This is a prevalent practice today that continues to grow in influence.

a) Others have no problem extending Christian fellowship to denominational churches.

b) Also, there are those brethren who believe that Christians are not to withdraw their Christian fellowship from their fleshly family who are unrepentant.

10. **Corrective church discipline**—Some brethren do not intend to consistently and with regularity engage in this duty to God, an obligation that is necessary to save certain brethren from sin and to keep the church pure. To rebel against this obligation is as much of a sin as it is to teach that the believer in Christ does not have to be baptized in order to be saved from sin.

11. **Marriage, divorce, and remarriage**—Some teach that:

a) No matter the reason one has been divorced or how many times one has been married contrary to Matthew 19:6, 9, that person is to remain with the spouse to which one is “married” at the time of one’s baptism.

b) The alien sinner is not under the authority of the New Testament and, thus, may remain in a “marriage” that was formed before one became a Christian, which marriages are not in harmony with Matthew 19:6, 9.

c) The having been put away fornicator of Matthew 19:9 is authorized by the New Testament to contract a Matthew 19:6 God-joined undefiled-bed marriage (Heb. 13:4).

d) The ruling of the divorce court makes null and void God’s authority as set out in Matthew 19:6, 9 concerning *when* a man and woman are married and *when* a husband and wife in a Mat-

thew 19:6 God-joined, undefiled-bed marriage (Heb. 13:4) are divorced.

e) There are more people who can engage in a scriptural marriage than the following classes.

- 1) Those who have never been married.
- 2) Those who are widows or widowers.
- 3) Those who are the innocent of fornication spouses who put away (divorce) their guilty of fornication spouses.

12. **The role of men and women**—Some teach that women may exercise authority over men by preaching to adults in gender mixed audiences and serving in other leadership capacities that allow them to exercise their authority over men in the church.

13. **The Holy Spirit and His work**—False brethren have taught that the Spirit is not a divine person but only divine power, they also teach that:

- a. Holy Spirit baptism is for every Christian today;
- b. Miracles like Jesus, His apostles, and members of the First Century church worked are continuing in the church today;
- c. The Holy Spirit works directly on the inward man of the Christian to supply divine strength, and wisdom to the Christian He indwells.

CONCLUSION

The previous specific references to error are by no means a thorough and complete list of the false doctrines that have arisen in the Lord's church over the past fifty years. Certainly, by no means have we sought to enumerate all the liberal doctrines or thoroughly discuss those we have listed. Furthermore, we have not mentioned other errors that have troubled the church over the past fifty years and continue to enslave many brethren, errors that are not of the loosing kind, but, nevertheless, they had to be opposed and refuted during this time (*Anti-ism*—doctrines that bind on men what God in the Bible does not bind on them—making optional matters obligatory). However, those errors herein listed serve to testify how Satan, through unfaithful church members, have brought all sorts and sizes of evil doctrines into the church over the past fifty years.

Added to these doctrinal errors are the church members who engage in drinking beverage alcohol, modern dancing, immodest dress, mixed gender swimming and other water recreation in the immodest dress of the age, gambling, foul language, cursing, lying, and no telling what else. Furthermore, it is clear to anyone who can

see through a ladder that the church is in greater distress today than it has been for many years.

Because of what we know, we are bold to say that very few congregations, for any length of time, are free of adulterous and fornicating members.

With the advance of computers and the Internet, pornography is an ever growing problem among the members of the church. Already there are some churches that identify themselves as churches of Christ who fellowship practicing homosexuals. More and more, the church of today resembles a combination of the Lord's church at Corinth with most of the churches of Asia addressed in the book of Revelation.

One of the saddest sins of omission found in the Lord's church is the failure to meet error directly and head on with the desire to uproot it, expose the false teachers propagating it, and with a strong determination to rid the church of the unrepentant members who pull the church down to the level of the world. The attitude of "What difference do any of the errors we have mentioned in this editorial, or other errors not herein mentioned, really make?" To the church member who does not care about truth, they mean little to nothing, but to those who know they must abide in the truth of the gospel, that they must have Bible authority for all they believe and practice if they are going to be well pleasing to God, these and all errors mean very much. The fact that people do not care about what they once did further reveals why the church is in the sad shape it is today.

The mind-set of "let me alone" and "do not upset the church with so much negativism" only serves to condition the church to stand for nothing and accept anything—and that is exactly the mental disposition Satan intends to create with every church member. And, he has been very successful in his efforts to accomplish the same with many church members.

THE SECOND REALITY WE MUST FACE

As 2012 fades into the past, 2013 stands before us. If God does not bring time and all things material to an end, among other things, 2013 will continue to force Americans to face a certain "reality" that has grown to reach gigantic proportions in the United States. That "reality" must also be seen for what it is by the faithful in the Lord's church.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Religious freedom was one of the chief concerns of those who formed the American colonies and the same is true concerning the founding fathers of this Republic.

lic. Until recent times, for the most part, Americans accepted the Bible as *THE* God-given, infallible, objective, absolute, complete, and final standard for moral and spiritual conduct. In general it has been a long time since the Bible had that kind of influence over much of the European population. In reality, the Bible never had the degree of influence in European governments, whether monarchies or parliamentary democracies, as it did in the formation of the American colonies and later the Constitution of United States.

Although many secular revisionists historians (?) have done and are doing all they can to re-write history on the basis of what they wished it had been, the facts extant regarding American history rebuke and refute the deceitful efforts of these pseudo historians in their efforts to play down and in many cases erase the place of religious freedom in the formation of the American colonies and the United States government.

It is an incontrovertible fact that many of the colonists came to America to find the religious freedom they could not find in Europe. And, it was only after many years of persecution in Europe that they became resigned to the fact that they could not have the religious freedom they sought in Europe. Thus, they decided to seek it in the New World. In time it would be the United States of America that would set the standard and blaze the trail for freedom of religion and the other freedoms that are guaranteed to people in the United States by the U. S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

GOD'S LOVE AND THE FREEWILL OF MAN

God is Love. God's love caused him to create man with freewill. He wanted man to freely chose to serve Him on the basis of adequate evidence and credible witnesses because he is God and for no other reason.

However, one of the first things Eve and Adam did with their freewill was to violate God's law. Then their oldest son, Cain, exercised his freewill to murder another of their sons, his younger brother Able.

Now, if God "reasoned" the way liberal democrats and other misled liberal souls do, following the sins committed by Adam, Eve, and Cain, He (God) would have realized he made a mistake in creating mankind with freewill and remedied the matter by taking man's freewill away from him. Of course people would then be nothing more than robots. They could not choose to do evil, but neither could they choose to do good. What need then would man have with the attribute of love, for he could not choose to love one thing over another. Thus, his service to God would not be out of

love. In reality man's actions, though perfectly in harmony with God's will, would not be because he loved God and wanted God to know he loved Him by keeping His commandments. Indeed, why would a human need to be intelligent and rational? How would man benefit from such natural abilities without his freewill? Indeed, these things were written for our learning, but do we learn all that we should and could from them (Rom. 15:4)?

Freedom will always allow for people to make bad choices. But, it also means that people are responsible for their actions and subject to being punished when they chose to engage in wrong actions. Thus, freedom under the law also permits the freedom of people to break those laws. And, the freedom of good men to punish the evil doer.

It is interesting that when God inspired Moses by His Holy Spirit to record Cain's murder of Able that there is no mention of the weapon employed by Cain to kill his brother. You see it made no difference what instrument Cain used to murder Able, it was Cain's sinful choice to kill Able that is recorded. And, did anyone notice that as we previously said, God did not remove Cain's freewill, he did not even go so far as to ban the weapon of Cain's choice (whatever it was)? However, God did a novel thing to Cain, being perfectly just He punished the guilty Cain for his wicked choice to do the evil deed and He did it without taking every human's freewill away or banning the instrument Cain used to murder Able, but of course God had not been educated at Harvard, Yale, or like institutions of higher learning.

But when the highly intellectual liberals (smarter than God) decide to remedy a problem, their approach is to remove all the freedom to act in a given matter from everybody. And, it is that kind of government that caused the writing and signing of a document called, The Declaration of Independence.

For the Christian who is deeply concerned about the teaching of the New Testament in such places as Romans chapter 13, we must realize that our very form of government is designed to be changed by the consent of the governed. Thus, in this republic every citizen has a part in governing this country. And we must realize that our form of government authorizes the possible overthrow of the Chief Executive of the Federal government every four years in every national election. Moreover, every Senator and Representative can be put out of office at the ballot box and new ones put into office.

The following "reality" is difficult for many Americans to even realize much less face and deal with it.

The constituent elements of that hard “reality” are: 1) *Throughout the land humanists and other secularists boldly affirm there are no spiritual values. This, they declare is the case because man is wholly material and secular. Thus, only things pertaining to material and secular matters are important.* 2) *Civil government is responsible for supplying what in times past was thought of and taught to be the individual’s personal responsibility to provide the same for himself and his family.* 3) *Higher education institutions and the public schools have been captured by humanists and secularists.* 4) *The Entertainment business has long been under the complete control of materialists.* 5) *For the most part, for many years, the national news media has been under the control of humanists,* 6) *And, this reality may be the worst of all—about half the population of the United States believes in and welcomes the terrible “realities” of points one through five.*

Add to the three previously noted component parts of this “reality” the myriad of immigrants in the U. S. who remain unassimilated into the American culture; people from cultures, societies, traditions, and religions alien to the Bible and Western Civilization, and America is no longer a “melting pot”, but a “patch-work quilt” composed of different cultures, races, languages, and national origins. Many of these immigrants have no desire to become Americans, but they desire to remain whatever they were when they came to America. They simply want to benefit from what America offers that their native countries do not or cannot offer.

A “patchwork quilt” nation is nothing more or less than a nation of factions, each faction seeking to keep its own countries’ tradition, culture, religion, and language. Division is the result and “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” Thus, we are witnessing the birth of a new America, unlike anything envisioned by the founding fathers of these United States. This is the “reality” that all Americans must face (including the Lord’s church in America) and with which we must come to grips. It is not going away.

Thus, the America of today is not the America into which I was born and grew up any more than the overall attitude of the members of the church in general is the same as the church at the time I obeyed the gospel on May 27, 1959. I know that is the case because of the many errors being taught and lived by members of the Lord’s church, which errors were unheard of at the time of my obedience to the gospel. America is not even the America of my young adult years and the same may be truthfully said regarding the belief and conduct of

members of the church when I first started preaching. That America is gone and it is not coming back—at least as it was. Or, if it does, it will not return any time in the near future. It remains to be seen if the church can be brought back to its New Testament moorings, or whether it will continue to drift into oblivion with the advancing liberalism of American culture.

THE NOVEMBER 2012 ELECTION

The people that elected President Obama are either secularists/materialists and/or they think it is their right to nurse the “free” milk ever flowing from the udder of the socialist federal government milk-cow that makes the rich poorer, the poorer even more so, and ultimately destroys individual personal initiative and responsibility. Along with other fundamental biblical principles that at one time in the United States were considered foundational to learning proper conduct of American citizens, the following divine principle has been rejected by many in America, **“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat”** (2 The 3:10). Any law of the land that violates the previous principle is not in agreement with the divine mind on the topic of who should eat and who should not.

More people are rejecting the truth about truth—*that truth is objective, absolute, and humanly attainable.* More a people choose the false view of truth—*that it is subjective, relative, and not humanly attainable.* Thus, there is no absolute right or wrong. Everything is a matter of opinion. Hence, moral matters are placed into the realm of tradition, or opinion, or one’s preference, etc. This means that what is morally right or wrong is determined by the majority of the voters at the ballot box. Therefore, elected civil government officials and judges, many of them adamantly opposed to any kind of religion are left to determine what is right and what is wrong. And, since it is the will of the majority of the body politic that determines what the laws of the land will be, it is the same body that determines whether abortion, or homosexuality, or organic evolution, etc., is true or false, right or wrong. *And, we can see the place to which that has led the nation and the church.*

THE SLAVE MENTALITY

There is a growing class of people that are educated and trained to have a slave mentality not unlike the rebellious Israelites of the wilderness wanderings. When the Israelites were called upon to individually and personally develop and exercise their faith in God as He led and guided them through the words of Moses, these unfaithful children of Israel wanted to return to slavery

in Egypt rather than rejoice in the freedom God had given them to personally shoulder their individual responsibility and discharge their obligations to Him in their journey to “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

Many of the modern day “slaves” (and their numbers grow more every day) view the “good life” as nothing short of complete government social welfare. Who are they? Although there are individual exceptions, most of the people (whether white, black, red, brown, tan, chartreuse, pink, green, purple, spotted, stripped, or albino) who elected President Obama are those who are fully persuaded that civil government exists to provide them their livelihood—no matter from where the money comes to do it. Add to the foregoing the rest of the subjective relativists, those who are anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-religion, pro-abortion, pro-homosexuality, pro-dope, pro-evolution, and all those who believe they should be free to practice all manner of immorality and we have our new America.

CONCLUSION

The American society and culture of yesteryear was more conducive to converting people to Christ and more encouraging to Christian living than it is today. Today there are many people who are openly militant and aggressive (including civil government) toward those who believe that:

1. God exists,
2. The Bible is the Word of God,
3. That sin is real and the only thing that can separate accountable mankind from God,
4. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and the only Savior of the world,
5. There is a final eternal place of torment (hell) after this life is over for those not saved by Jesus Christ from their sins through their faithful obedience to His gospel, following their conversion, live faithful to Christ in His church unto death or Jesus comes back to judge the world in righteousness.
6. What the Bible teaches on marriage and the home is stupid and backwards, etc.

Generally speaking, the church is not scripturally militant and aggressive towards a sinful secular world as well as the false religions found therein. Many members of the church have convinced themselves that if they love sinners they cannot cause them to see their lost condition, or that the sinner must believe and obey the gospel in order to obtain God’s forgiveness, or if the sinner chooses not to believe in and obey God, He

(God) will punish him eternally in hell. With many church members, to do the aforementioned in teaching sinners the way of forgiveness has become harsh, hateful, and unloving.

Moreover, they hate the idea that there is but one church and all of those Christ saves are in it, and that it can be found by knowing its New Testament identifying marks. Because of such attitudes and beliefs, the church walks hand in hand with the world more each day. The church must face this reality about false teachers and erring impenitent church members, resolve to rid itself of such rebellious members, and continue on regardless of how few people remain faithful to the cause of Christ. As the late Franklin Camp used to say, “I had rather be in fellowship with a blind woman and a crippled man who love the Lord and are obedient to His Word, than to be in fellowship with thousands who have little to no respect for the Lord and His authoritative Word.”

Although the gospel has not changed, the people we are attempting to convert to Christ have changed. Many of them have no denominational background. Indeed, they have little to no religious foundation of any kind. Even the denominationalists do not know why they are members of whatever denomination in which they find themselves. We should not be surprised at this among the denominations when we consider the profound ignorance of the Bible existing among members of the Lord’s church and the church’s growing lack of respect for Bible authority and its love for worldliness.

For the relatively few of us who continue to preach and defend the old Jerusalem gospel without subtraction, addition, or any alteration we must recognize that many more people will need to hear the truth about about truth, the existence of God, the Deity of Christ, the nature of man, the inspiration of the Bible, how to ascertain Bible authority, the evils about denomination- alism, the specifics about Godly living, marriage and the home, and like topics. This is the case because those to whom we preach today have very little to no background in the most fundamental spiritual matters herein noted.

Moreover, we must prepare ourselves to expose and refute Islam, the Hindus, Bhuddists, Roman Catholicism, etc. We must face the reality that the world has come to the church in the United States and we should take advantage of the opportunity to preach the gospel to them as we defend the faith against their false doctrines.

In preaching the truth on any topic we must take

the people where we find them in their ignorance of spiritual things and from that point forward instruct them in the way of righteousness more perfectly. We must “un-teach” them (take their “blindness” off), that is we must refute whatever error holds them captive, so they can see the way of pure, primitive, New Testament Christianity. We must preach with great conviction, be far more bold, plain, frank, and candid in the proclamation and defense of the gospel than we ever have been. We must know that to preach the truth in love, not only means loving the people who need the truth, but it also means loving the truth we preach (John 8:31, 32). And, we must expect active opposition and persecution in ways, means, places, and from people whom we never expected to receive it in yesteryear. Every member of the church must resolve to live Godly lives before a crooked and perverse world. We must live what we preach. There will need to be an equal amount of long-suffering toward those who obey the gospel as these babes in Christ labor to bring their lives into subjection to Christ in all things. Further, we dare not turn a blind eye to the sins of the brethren. We must keep the church pure. Thus, corrective church discipline must be rou-

tinely practiced.

Furthermore, we must challenge every false teacher in every moral and religious discipline to prove his case. The milquetoast characters who fill the liberal churches do not love God, the gospel, those lost in sin, or the church. They are simply seeking to “feather their own nests” and with good words and fair speeches beguile the hearts of the innocent as they make merchandise of them.

Let us continually remember no matter how much people change, the truth regarding man’s salvation has not and will not change. The Bible reads today just as it did when it was fully revealed and written. It will read the same on the day we are judged by it (John 12:48).

Let us never compromise on anything that pertains to our salvation. May God in His providential care strengthen us to be obedient to Christ in all things regardless of the persecutions we must undergo in order to live a Godly life before a lost and wicked world.

—David P. Brown, Editor



THE OLD PATHS PULPIT

Sermon Outline

by

Danny Douglas

Declarations of the Cross of Christ—Gal. 6:14

Introduction:

1. Sermon on 7 statements from the cross, but today: *Statements by the Cross of Christ.*
2. We sing and talk about it, but let us have a greater understanding of the Cross of Christ.

I. The Cross of Christ Declares the Necessity of Gospel Preaching.

- A. Hence, the cross of Jesus Christ exposes the foolishness of the world (1 Cor. 1:18-20; 3:19).
- B. The old Jerusalem gospel, is rejected by man, but loved by the saved (1 Cor. 1:21-25; 2:1-2).
- C. This is Christ’s desire & man’s great need! Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16; 10:13-17; Acts 2:21; 22:16.
- D. Man is not saved by eloquent speeches but by preach-

ing Christ (1 Cor. 2:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:5).

II. The Cross of Christ Declares the Love of God & His Desire for Man to be Close to Him.

- A. In His great love, God desires for man to be close to Him (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:13; 1 John 4:9-10).
- B. Through Christ & His Cross, man can reach the Father in heaven (John 14:6).
- C. At the heart of God’s scheme of redemption is God’s love for man (Eph. 1:7; John 3:16).

D. By the cross we are induced to love God & one another (1 John. 4:19-21; John. 13:34-35; Eph. 5:1-2).

III. The Cross of Christ Declares the Supreme Value of the Church.

- A. Without the Cross, the price of the church could not have been paid (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

B. Yet, many place a low value on the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18), in like manner, many demean the Lord's church & Her importance (Eph. 3:21; Mat. 16:18)!

IV. The Cross of Christ Declares the Necessity of Sacrifice & Obedience—John 8:29; Gal. 2:20.

A. Jesus Christ gave Himself on the cross in obedience to the Father (Phi. 2:8; Mat. 26:39; John. 8:29).

B. As the Son of God was obedient, those who would be saved must obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).

C. Christ was willing to suffer shame and reproach and so must we (Luke 9:23; Heb. 12:2).

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone?” (Gal. 5:11).

V. The Cross of Christ Declares the Seriousness of Sin. [The Justice & Mercy of God meet at Calvary.]

A. Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:21).

B. Due to our sins, His precious blood had to be shed (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7).

C. God's justice demanded that all sin had to be punished, but His mercy gave man a means to escape wrath & punishment (Col. 1:14; Rom. 5:9).

D. Sin is not a light matter! Pro. 14:9.

VI. The Cross of Christ Declares the Distinction Between the Old Law & the Gospel—Tit. 2:11-12.

A. The grace of God was manifested through Christ & the gospel (Rom. 6:14; 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21).

B. The Old Law was taken out of the way by Christ on the cross (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14).

C. The Cross of Christ made the New Testament possible (Mat. 26:28; Heb. 10:19-20; 13:20-21).

VII. The Cross of Christ Declares the Perfect Purity of Christ & His Deity.

A. Only the Divine & Sinless Son of God could save man from sin (Mat. 1:21-23; 1 Tim. 3:16).

B. Only Jesus Christ could be the proper Sacrifice to take sins away (1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22; John 1:29).

C. He calls us to live a life of purity, holiness & godliness (1 Pet. 1:16; Mat. 5:8; Tit. 2:12).

Conclusion:

1. Do you glory in the cross of Christ, or in yourself or in the world? (Gal. 6:14).

2. The Cross of Christ is made of none effect unto many people (Jn. 5:40; Heb. 10:38).

3. Some will not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ (Gal. 6:12).

4. The cross of Christ has many enemies. Satan makes sure of this (Phil. 3:18).

5. Are you a friend of Christ? Only a few stood by Jesus & the cross, when He died there (John 19:25-27: 15:14).

a. Will you be one of the faithful few?

b. Few are they who are faithful to Him (Mat. 7:13-14).

6. In order to enjoy the benefits provided by Jesus Christ & Him crucified, one must:

a. Hear & Believe the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:8; Rom. 1:16; 10:17);

b. Repent (Acts 2:38; 26:20);

c. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:37);

d. Be Baptized in His name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

7. For any member who needs to be restored to your first love, & to deny yourself, take your cross daily & follow Christ, you have that opportunity (Luke 9:23; Rev. 2:4-5; Acts 8:22; Jas. 5:16; 1 John. 1:9).

—704 Azalia Dr.
Mt. Pleasant, TX



Urgent Need: More Men Like Nehemiah!

Danny Douglas

In the church of the Lord today there is a dire need. What is it? More elders, preachers, yea, more members like Nehemiah. The spirit of compromise has prevailed to the point that the battle for truth has been lost in many congregations and convictions have been sacrificed on the “altar of political correctness and brotherhood acceptability.” Nehemiah was a real man, determined to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to get the Lord's work done at great risk and peril. He reminds us of what Paul, in the name of Christ, commanded the Cor-

inthians: “**Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong**” (1 Cor. 16:13). Truly, he was strong, brave and manly. He knew that true strength lay in God.

Men of Watchfulness and Prayer

Jesus taught us to: “**Watch and pray**” (Mat. 26:41). When faced with the derision and reproach of God's enemies, Nehemiah did not falter, but committed his troubles and cares to God: “**Hear, O our God; for we are despised:**

and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:" (Neh. 4:4). In striving to make it to heaven, we need to watch and pray, like Nehemiah and the Jews: **"Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them"** (Neh. 4:9).

Men of Wisdom

Moreover, as the leader of the Jews in this great work, he saw to it that everyone had a task and a purpose.

And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon (Neh. 4:16-17).

Thus, he also saw the need for defense against attack as well as rebuilding the wall. Good leaders see the worth of order, purpose, building and defense. Everyone in the body of Christ needs a noble task to do, even if it seems small in man's eyes. If it is the Lord's work it is great!

Men Who Communicate

Nehemiah realized the need for communication because the work was **"great and large"** and they were **"separated upon the wall, one far from another"** (Neh. 4:19). He said: **"In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us"** (Neh. 4:20). Good leadership insures good communication. When brethren fail to communicate it leads to misunderstandings and missed opportunities!

Men of Great Faith

Nehemiah had confidence in God. He knew that **"our God shall fight for us"** (Neh. 4:20). When we are on the Lord's side and doing the right, we can have such strong confidence today. **"...If God be for us, who can be against us?"** (Rom. 8:31).

Men Who Refuse to Compromise

When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Gesham, heard that the Nehemiah had built the wall of Jerusalem, they sought to get Nehemiah to down off the wall. They said: **"Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono"** (Neh. 6:2). Yet, Nehemiah refused, saying: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:3). He refused, as if to say: "Oh No! I cannot leave the Lord's work and come down to you." Nehemiah refused to come down to the plain of compromise with the Lord's enemies. Anytime we are doing a great work for the Lord, Satan will seek to put a stop to it. In fact, these same men sent four times to get him to come down, but they were unable to weaken Nehemiah's resolve. Let us be diligent and determined like Nehemiah!

Furthermore, Sanballat sought to get Nehemiah down

off the wall by false accusation. (The devil often employs this tactic.) When this did not work, they sought to make Nehemiah afraid, but he kept on working and he prayed: **"O God, strengthen my hands"** (Neh. 6:9). They tried other tactics, but none of them succeeded in stopping the work of rebuilding the walls. Finally, the work was done. Under the leadership and example of Nehemiah, the Jews trusted in God and "had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6). **"So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days"** (Neh. 6:15).

"I Cannot Come Down"

Nehemiah is well-known for his statement: "I cannot come down." Elders, leaders, preachers, and all members of the church of Christ should heed this example!

"I cannot come down" and be involved in unity meetings, fellowship with denominations and apostate congregations. **"And no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Eph. 5:11).

"I cannot come down" and support schools and preachers who have ceased to stand up for sound doctrine and have begun to compromise with error, whether by financial support, presence, or encouragement. Let us not fall in with those who have given up "the good fight of faith."

"I cannot come down" and give approval to preachers, congregations, elderships, and brethren, who to fail to heed God's command:

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 (Rom. 16:17-18).

They refuse to reject heretics who divide the church: **"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself"** (Tit. 3:10-11). They refuse to discipline the disorderly, which we are commanded to do: **"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us"** (2 The. 3:6).

"I cannot come down" and fellowship brethren who transgress the doctrine of Christ by bidding God speed to false teachers, or to those who are in fellowship with them:

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 (2 John 9-11).

"I cannot come down"!

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“MOVEMENT IN TRANSITION”

Dub McClish

Several years ago a church bulletin announced that it would conduct a special series of Wednesday night lectures on the theme, “Movement in Transition: A Vision for the Future.” Accompanying comments on the series stated:

According to many, our Restoration Movement is very much in the midst of a period of transition. Many of our churches are struggling with their identity, their mission, and their purpose. Scripture as well as church history teaches us that we're only one generation away from apostasy.

We offer a few observations on these statements.

- The writer refers to “our Restoration Movement” in a sectarian sense. These same brethren revel in such similar terms as the “Stone/Campbell Movement,” the “Stone/Campbell Heritage,” and the “American Restoration Movement” (ARM). With some, the so-called “restoration movement” has almost become the end itself. Some are so dedicated to the “movement” (as a historical phenomenon) that they are hardly, if at all, concerned with faithfully preaching the Gospel and thus maintaining the restored church. We admire and profit much from the work of faithful Gospel preachers who blazed many significant trails for the Truth in the 19th century. However, our interest is not so much in a “movement” begun by men, but in the primitive church of Christ that began on the Pentecost following our Lord’s ascension to His Heavenly throne.

- The scribe we quoted at the beginning spoke of “our Restoration Movement’s” being in the midst of transition, having churches struggling with identity, mission, and purpose. No wonder. This statement was in the bulletin of a congregation that has a long history of policies and practices that will create an identity crisis for any body of people claiming to be the church of Christ. There is little more to identify this group as a “Church of Christ” than the sign out

front, and it deceives every passerby who reads it. A further irony is that among the five speakers they invited to speak on this “identity crisis,” at least three of them had made considerable contributions to just such a crisis for brethren far and wide by their soft and indistinct doctrinal posture. The other two had hardly distinguished themselves as champions of Scriptural Truth. To invite such men to deal with “transitions” and “identity crises” in the church is comparable to inviting the wolves into the chicken house to help nurse the sick chickens back to health.

- The quotation is exactly right when it says that we are only one generation away from apostasy. The younger generation in the church from whose bulletin we quoted does not have a chance to escape apostasy; their forbears have long been apathetic toward it and unconcerned about it, if not actually committed to it. Lamentably, it is thus in many congregations.

For my part, over the years I’ve grown increasingly weary of the term, Restoration Movement. When I obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation preached on Pentecost, the Lord did not add me to the Stone/Campbell Heritage, “the “Stone/Campbell Movement,” the “American Restoration Movement” (ARM), or any other “movement” or “heritage.” Faithful saints are not members of a “movement.” The Lord added me to His church because He saved me from my sins in my obedient faith (Acts 2:41, 47). He has continued adding others by this same means—and not any other—since He began doing it on Pentecost, and He will continue doing so, **“even unto the end of the world”** (Mat. 28:20).

—908 Imperial Dr.
Denton, TX 76209



An Alarming Parallel?

Roelf Ruffner

The Bible is filled with examples of men following men rather than God. Here are a few cases:

1. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11).
2. The children of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exo. 32).
3. The children of Israel’s failure to go into the promised land the first time (Num. 14).
4. The rebellion of Korah (Num. 16).
5. The period of the Judges.
6. Jereboam, king of the N. Kingdom of Israel (1 Kin. 12:25-33).
7. The arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Christ.
8. Peter’s snubbing of the Gentile brethren (Gal. 2:11-14).

9. The 1st Century Jews’ rejection of the Gospel (Acts 13:44-52).
10. Those brethren with “itching ears” (2 Tim. 4:3).

Are we no different than those people of long ago? Many of our own brethren would rather hear an eloquent, charismatic false teacher than a Biblical call to repentance. They depart from the teachings of the Saviour to follow denominational doctrines because “it feels so good!”

A preacher comes along who is clearly trying to subvert the churches of Christ and they call him spiritual because he titillates emotions. In a spiritual sense, is this any different from what happened at Mount Carmel? The end of apostasy is no less tragic. **“But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”** (Mat. 15:13).

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SADDENED BUT NOT SHOCKED

Charles Pogue

Since the November 6th election I have received a number of emails and read numerous articles expressing the understandable disappointment of many over the outcome of the presidential election and other ballot initiatives in several states. I too, am saddened about the way things turned out. However, unlike the surprise expressed by some, I was not shocked by the results. In fact, as hard as it is for lovers of this nation and moral people to imagine why a man whose actions, and at other times his failure to act, a man who has come out in support of homosexual marriage, and one who, for political gain, covered up the murder of his own Ambassador would win re-election, his election was really predictable. How can that be? Because it is also no surprise that Washington, Maryland, and Maine voters cast their ballots in support of “homosexual marriage,” and that Colorado and Washington voters approved the recreational use of marijuana.

The basic problem in America is a morally and spiritually corrupt electorate. It is from that same electorate that those who run for office come, so why should anyone be surprised at the depravity of our leaders or the results of our elections? It may seem to us that only a slight majority of the voters are anti-capitalist and anti-morality, but it is my suspicion that many of those who voted Romney and Ryan would have voted with Washington, Maryland, Maine, and Colorado had the same moral issues been on the ballots in their particular states.

We owe the abandonment of capitalism and Biblical morals to the run amuck education system which has sided with, and pushed for, the acceptance of the ideas of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and the like. Darwinism explains, at least in part, the immorality of more and more people in our country, and Marxism explains the “I want Santa Claus for my president” mentality. Our schools have pushed both, and when those who have accepted one, the other, or both philosophies are considered, we, no doubt, have an extremely large percentage of the American people who have completely abandoned both God and America’s founding principles.

After I cast my ballot, I came home, sat down at my desk, and offered one final prayer that the American voters would do the right thing. When things turned out as they did, I thought about the truth that God rules in the affairs of men, and wondered if America has now become so corrupt that we are witnessing the withdrawal of God’s blessings, and His providentially bringing about the fall of this nation? It seems to me that anyone who completely rejects that possibility would do well to rethink it. America has fallen as a people, and it is just possible that the Creator has seen fit in

midst of a rampant secularism, lust, and evil concupiscence to bring it down as an independent country.

When we hear the masses cry, “Give me my sex out of wedlock (with either gender), my alcohol, my marijuana (cocaine will probably be next), my entertainment, and my government handout (including my “Obama phone”) we cannot help but understand just how far we have descended into the pits of contemptibleness. Is there hope for the nation? If there were time, perhaps there would be. It is my reluctant opinion that the time is not there, and that deficiency of time is not due to a lack of willingness on the part of the few patriotic and moral people left, but a depletion of patience on the part of God. Of course, these things we are not given to know.

Since the election we have heard cry after cry for compromise. “Reach across the aisle,” they tell us, in an attempt to avoid the fiscal cliff said to be coming January 1, 2013. For many of us that fiscal cliff includes the fact that we can afford neither to purchase health insurance nor the additional tax (fine) for not having it. A call to compromise is heralded as the cure for our ills. No, it is compromise that delivered us to the mangled mess we are in, and a moderate is only a person who lacks the backbone to admit he is a liberal. He can compromise principles because he has none. It is conservative principles wherein the left demands compromise. If, then, compromise is reached, it will further damage us as a nation.

Of course, you know these thoughts about compromise in our nation’s politics would not stop with that application alone. The spirit of compromise that will further our country’s demise, if not hasten it, is also the very problem running rampant in the Lord’s church. Many of our brethren are, and for a long time have been, “reaching across the aisle” to compromise with false teachers, or with those who fellowship false teachers. These brethren well illustrate what is wrong with our nation and the church of Christ. The spirit of compromise has devoured the church! A house or city divided against itself will not stand!

In days gone, my brethren declared once and again that we should keep our collective mouths shut regarding politics. In so much as the first progressive president was Theo-

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dore Roosevelt, and he served from 1901-1909, that claim never had the ring of truth with this writer. We avoided the subject too long until we were hoisted with our own petard. It has been true, at least in recent years, the same admonition of avoiding taking a stand in politics has been called for respecting the doctrine and the bride of Christ—and it has come from the “itching ear” of the members themselves. Thus, the condition in which we find the country is also present in the church. Where were the political leaders when it came to reminding us that T. R. did much to put us on the wrong course as a nation? One supposes they were in the same spot neglectful elders in the church were and are; wrapped up in the self-commendation of their own inclusiveness.

What do we do now? We do our best to serve God to the saving of our own souls, and we continue to boldly preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the “sinful and the sad” in an attempt to win them for the Master. We live as vessels of righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We place our candles on the highest candlestick available, and never hide them under a bushel. We expand

beyond “preaching to the choir” and attack the infidelism as the army of the Savior of man should and ought to do. Do not expect those activities to be sufficient or in time to save our nation, but it will be in time to save souls for eternity, and for the day when the judge of all earth proclaims time is no more, coming then in His omnipotence and all His glory to render vengeance on those who neither love Him nor who obey the Gospel.

The America in which I grew up is long gone, and it was long before November 6, 2012. The church that I grew up in is found in a very few localities. The name may still be there, but the identity is not discernible. Truth, and its objective nature is abandoned, and discipline has been discarded to the refuse pile of neglected duties.

May God bless those who stand for His truth, and may we each find the determination and commitment to press forward in a nation that once guaranteed us religious liberty, but is now bent on taking it from us.

—P. O. Box 592
Grandby, MO 64844

Withdrawing from the Withdrawn

Don Tarbet

Strange as it may seem, some actually deny the right of the church to withdraw their fellowship from those who refuse to walk in the light. Others agree that such must be done, but that it cannot be done if some have already “withdrawn from the church.” This is strange language indeed, or we read nothing in the Scriptures about the right of people to “withdraw from the church.” However, we do read about the responsibility of the church to withdraw from certain ones who become wayward. The Scripture says, **“mark them which cause divisions...and avoid them”** (Rom. 16:17); **“when ye are gathered together...To deliver such an one unto Satan.... Purge out...the old leaven...not to keep company...not to eat.... Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”** (1 Cor. 5:4-13); **“from such withdraw thyself”** (1 Tim. 6:5); **“Now we command you...withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly...note that man, and have no company with him”** (2 Thes. 3:6-14).

These passages show that the church has an active responsibility in the matter of discipline, and must take a stand for truth and fellowship. Our responsibility is not merely passive. Apostates from the faith seldom become such for

no reason at all, but are actively engaged in the ways of the world. **“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world”** (2 Tim. 4:10). Those who forsake the Lord in worship have usually already forsaken Him in living. Does this mean the church can do nothing to discipline wayward members if they have already ceased to worship with the saints? Just where do people get the idea that fellowship is limited to the worship “service”? They must think so, if they think they are to withdraw only from those who attend worship. Actually, we do not forbid anyone to attend worship when they are disciplined, but we encourage them to attend so as to be exhorted to Christian living.

A withdrawal of fellowship simply means that Christians are to do nothing with those withdrawn from that would indicate any approval of their wayward conduct, and this would primarily be outside of the worship service. Any effort to reject God’s Will in discipline is an effort to follow the way of least resistance. We need to forget our fears and human reasoning and start obeying God.

—215 W. Sears St.
Denison, TX75020

ARE YOU AN EXTREMIST?

[The article to follow is profitable for at least two reasons, 1) because of what is taught therein, and 2) it is a good example of the importance of defining terms. Upon hearing the apostle Paul teach the gospel and testify to the veracity of it, Festus falsely accused him of being “beside [him] self” and “mad” because of his “much learning.” That is one way of calling a person an extremist. But when one considers Festus, we are not surprised that he would consider the Gospel extreme. Down through the years an enumerable host (some of them professing Christianity) have considered Paul and every other faithful child of God extremists because of their religious views. But in many cases those who called the Gospel extreme seemingly never thought to ask, “Is it the truth?” I urge everyone to realize that the truth on many subjects is viewed as extreme—especially to those who have loved and cherished the error(s) they have practiced and that the truth has exposed and refuted.—Editor]

No one doubts that a man can be an extremist, but there are definitely some things that are not to be considered as marks of an extremist. If they are, the Bible is full of extremists (including God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, the prophets, etc.). Let us observe that:

◆One is not an extremist because he insists on divine authority from Christ for teaching and practice. The Holy Spirit requires this. (Col. 3:17; Heb. 8:5).

◆One is not an extremist because he rejects human traditionalism in religion—even though it may be “common practice of the brethren.” Jesus denounced such. (Mat. 15:6-9).

◆One is not an extremist because he refuses to encourage false teaching and teachers in any way. (2 John 9-11). Fellowship with God is at stake here.

◆One is not an extremist because he publicly challenges men to give authority for their practices. Jesus did. (Mat. 21:24-27).

◆One is not an extremist because he is willing to meet another in public encounter (that is, before an audience) and challenge a brother for his departure from the truth. Paul did so. (Gal. 2:11-14; Acts 15:1, 2).

◆One is not an extremist because he calls the names of men who teach the churches error and cause digression. Paul sets the example for this. (2 Tim. 1:15; 2:15-18).

◆One is not an extremist because he presses the truth with vigorous contention for the faith. The apostles did and we are instructed to do so. (Jude 3; 1 Thes 2:1,2).

◆One is not an extremist because he refuses to back away from the thick of a fight for truth. Paul says God has not given us “the spirit of fear” (cowardice) (2 Tim. 1:7, 8).

A gospel preacher should be ashamed to be a coward.

◆One is not an extremist because he teaches faithful Christians to mark and avoid brethren who teach contrary to apostolic doctrine. This is a commandment. (Rom 16:17,18).

◆One is not an extremist simply because his teaching causes division. Jesus’ sword—the Word of God—does some disturbing and dividing. (Mat. 10:34-36). Certainly not all division is laudable. Some of it is deplorable and sinful. It is always sinful to divide people by the preaching of error. On the other hand, division brought about by the proclamation of TRUTH—division that results when some men take their stand upon a “thus-saith-the-Lord” and others rally to their human traditions—is to be expected. It was so in New Testament days. It is true today. Men are OBLIGATED to teach the truth. And men are OBLIGATED to separate themselves from error. (Rom. 16:17, 18; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

The real concern of every Christian should be to determine truth. If one searches the Scriptures (Acts 17:11) and learns that a thing is taught of God, this truth is extremely right, and he must believe it, regardless of what others may say or do. To refuse to believe it simply because others may consider it to be extreme is to dishonor the Author of truth. When problems arise and when questions are raised about any matter, our interest must lie in the Word of God as an infallible, all-sufficient standard of correct faith and practice. As was stated before: *It is better to be extremely right by following the truth than to be extremely wrong by rejecting it.*

—Author Unknown

“I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such: because I think a General Government necessary for us, and there is no Form of Government but what may be a Blessing to the People if well-administered; and I believe farther that this is likely to be well administered for a Course of Years and can only end in Despotism as other Forms have done before it, when the People shall become so corrupted as to need Despotic Government, being incapable of any other.”

—Ben Franklin

“The most dangerous man to any government is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane, and intolerable...”

—H.L. Mencken

(<http://www.washingtonsblog.com/2012/10/dysfunctional-dishonest-insane-intolerable.html>)

WHO IS TO JUDGE?

Brock Hartwigen

There was a newspaper article a number of years ago that was titled, “Family Values—Who Is To Judge.” The article defended homosexuality as a viable lifestyle and basically asserted that no one has the right to judge homosexuality as evil or wrong.

The answer to the question, “Who is to judge” the morality of the homosexual lifestyle or for that matter any moral question is simple to answer. 1) God is to judge. 2) Jesus is to judge. 3) faithful Christians are to judge. And, at least according to the author of the article, 4) anyone who questions Jesus’ Words are to judge, since they are already judging.

GOD IS TO JUDGE

In Hebrews 12:23 God is called “**God the Judge of all.**” Someone might ask, “By what right does God have the authority to judge all?” The answer to this question is found in Romans 9:20-21. There we are reminded that God created us and just as “**the potter [has] power over the clay,**” so God, who formed us, has power over us in all things.

JESUS IS TO JUDGE

God has delegated His authority to judge to Jesus. Paul wrote that the day is coming when “**God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ**” (Rom. 2:16). Jesus said, “**the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.**” Jesus said that He will judge us by His Words (John 12:48). His Words are: “**... 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**” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Jesus’ Words contain, in no uncertain terms, a judgment that the homosexual lifestyle is unnatural, against nature, unseemly and wrong.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. (Rom. 1:26-27).

Jesus’ Words contain, in no uncertain terms, a judgment that those who engage in the homosexual lifestyle are “**worthy of death**” (Rom. 1:32), the second death, eternal damnation with the devil.

FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS ARE TO JUDGE

Many of those who engage in the homosexual lifestyle often claim that they were born this way and that they cannot help themselves. They argue that to forbid them to live the homosexual lifestyle is asking too much, it is not fair and it can-

not be done. Faithful Christians will judge the rest of the world and even the angels by proving by their lives that the Words of Jesus can be obeyed. “**Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?**” (1 Cor. 6:2-3).

ANYONE WHO QUESTIONS JESUS IS ALREADY JUDGING

Anyone who questions Jesus’ word has already made themselves a judge. In James 4:11 we are told that anyone who speaks evil of Jesus’ law, such as those who reject Jesus’ teaching about homosexuality, “**judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.**” James goes on in verse 12 and reminds us that “**there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy,**” that lawgiver being Jesus. Anyone who professes the right to judge the words of Jesus have already judged themselves not to be worthy of salvation through Him.

CONCLUSION

The author’s main point in his article, “Family Values—Who Is Judge” is this—*No one has the right to make a judgment on the morality or immorality of the homosexual lifestyle.* However, in the same article he made himself the judge, thus denying his own premise and actually judged contrary to what God says in the Bible. His rejection of Jesus as the judge will not only condemn him, if he does not repent, but also any and all who agree with him.

—189 Brookside Dr.
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John West: *What are the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches?*

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John Rose: *What is the Unitarian/Universalist Church?*

Danny Douglas: *What is the Community Church?*

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Holly Pond—Church of Christ, 10221 Hwy 278, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 507-1776, (256) 507-1778.

-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) 535-5807.

-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 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.

-North Carolina-

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

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (803) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803) 279-8663.

-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: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-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.

Evant—Evant Church of Christ, 310 West Brooks Drive, Evant, TX 76525. Office: (254) 471-5705; Jess Whitlock, evangelist (254) 471-5717.

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.

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 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.