SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE
Billy Roy Box

As New Testament Christians we are the ambassadors of the church to the world (2 Cor. 5:20), and as such we must never compromise the truth (2 Tim. 2:15). However, as the opportunities arise to study or discuss God’s Word with people of differing religious backgrounds, one needs to always remember to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). These individuals normally are sincere in their beliefs (Acts 23:1) and we must be careful not to close the door by insulting or belittling them. Just as we, as parents and teachers, spend many hours with our children time and time again repeating drills developed to ingrain sound biblical principles (Pro. 22:6), children in the denominational world have also been so drilled by sincere well-meaning parents and teachers. This training from childhood concerning basic doctrinal concepts has created preconceived thought patterns that filter all information that they receive concerning the Scriptures.

This is not an anomaly common only to the 20th century. Even the apostles, the closest associates of Christ, kept trying to interpret His teachings in light of what they had been taught since childhood. Even after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, these same apostles still expected restoration of the earthly kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). Although Peter preached in the first gospel sermon that “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21), he was still amazed that the gentiles were allowed salvation (Acts 10:34-35). If we take the time to consider that even people who walked and
talked with Jesus on a daily basis for three years still had a problem of ridding themselves of preconceived ideas that had been drilled into their mind since childhood, we can have more compassion on individuals with which we have the opportunity to share the gospel!

We need to understand that the usual arguing points, such as baptism for remission of sins, the use of instrumental music in worship, partaking of the Lord’s supper each Lord’s day, etc., between members of the Lord’s church and people of denominational backgrounds are only symptoms of the real problem which is a lack of training in the area of acceptance of God’s Word as the final authority in all religious matters (John 12:48). We must lovingly and patiently exhort them to accept God’s Word as that final authority pointing out that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

Our mission as Christians is to win souls, not arguments (Mat. 28:19-20, 1 Cor. 9:22). Let us follow the examples of compassion and mercy which Jesus showed in His own personal ministry. Let us also remember that we are not sinless (Rom. 3:23) and if it were not for the grace (Eph. 2:8), mercy (Heb. 4:16) and long-suffering (1 John 1:9) of God it would not be possible for us to maintain the hope and expectation of an eternal life in heaven.

Route I Box 13; Winfield, AL 35594

CHRISTIAN LOYALTY

David McCain

Jesus said, “whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). The simple truth is, Jesus, as commander and chief of the Lord’s army, expects absolute loyalty from His troops. The Lord demands first place in your life, or He wants no place at all. You can’t be a wishy-washy, on-again off-again, friend of Jesus. If you value any relationship, any possession, or any position more than you value the Christ, and your standing with Him, then you are unworthy to be His followers. And, so I ask you, are you really loyal to King Jesus?

Loyalty as the friend of Christ, means complete obedience to His commands. Jesus said, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). Loyalty to Christ, means complete allegiance to His cause. Christ and His church must come first, before school, work, hobbies, vacation, recreation, friends, relatives—before everything! Sometimes that requires sacrifice, but if we truly love the Lord, we’ll be willing to sacrifice for Him, even as we are for any person or anything that we truly care about.

If we love other people more than Christ, then we are unworthy of Him (Mat. 10:37). If we care more about our earthly relationships than we do about our heavenly relationship, then we are unworthy of the Lord’s love. If we give the temporal more value, time, and care than we do the eternal, then we cannot be His disciples. Jesus said, “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Mat. 16:24-25).

Brethren, are we willing to deny ourselves anything, in order to promote the cause of Christ? Or, have we saved our lives for our own selfish purposes, only to lose them eternally? We wonder why the cause of Christ does not prosper, when the answer glares before our eyes. The problem lies with the lack of loyalty to Christ. Across our brotherhood, attendance at worship and Bible study services, and at gospel meetings wanes. Why? The answer is obvious isn’t it? It’s because too few are truly loyal to Christ. As the old saying goes, “Most of the time in life, you can do what you really want to do,” and that’s as true in
religion as in any other realm.

Are you loyal to Christ? Can He count on you to put Him first, before all other people, things, or commitments? Are you loyal to Him in attitude, articulation, and action? Can He depend on you?

Via “The Broadway Bulletin”
Broadway & Taylor Streets; Gainesville, TX

A MORE INTERESTING BIBLE

A mother was trying to get her eight-year old daughter to study her Bible class lesson. She took her Bible down from the shelf, dusted it off and called her daughter to her side, “Now, I want you to read your Bible lesson before you go out to play.”

“All right, mother,” said the little girl, “but let’s study from grandmother’s Bible. It’s more interesting than yours.” “Why, what makes you say that? My Bible is exactly like grandmother’s.” “Oh, No, mother,” the observant little lady insisted. “I’m sure grandmother’s Bible must be more interesting than yours because she reads hers so much more often than you do yours.”

It is hard to teach what we ourselves refuse to learn! Actions speak louder than words. It will be hard for others to accept our counsel on the importance of Bible study if they do not see us doing it ourselves. May God help us to live the truth which we claim to believe.

TEENS AND RELIGION

Ninety-five percent of teenagers believe there is a God or universal spirit. Further, 93 percent believe that God loves them and that God will reward or punish their actions.

More than nine teens in ten—91 percent—think heaven exists, but only about three in four—76 percent—think there might also be a hell.

Among Christian teenagers, 86 percent believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Thirty-nine percent say religion is very important in their lives, and 25 percent feel religion is more important to them than it is to their parents.

Forty-one percent are getting religious instruction outside their homes, although most parents feel that home is the best place to learn about religion.

In a typical week, about half of the nation’s teens attend a religious service, slightly higher than the number of adults who do. And most say they go to church or belong to church-sponsored groups because they want to.

More than one in three teens—36 percent—report reading the Bible at least weekly. And about the same number—35 percent—reported listening to a religious broadcast on radio or watching one on television in the last month.

The findings are from telephone interview surveys with representative national samples of 500 or more teenagers. Surveys conducted by the Gallup Youth Survey. 1993 Princeton Religion Research Center.

SUPPORT NEEDED

Greg Lewis, a student at the Memphis School of Preaching, in Memphis, TN, is in need of additional monthly support. Unforeseen housing costs were not anticipated and additional support is requested. If you can assist Greg and his family, please contact him at 3608 Winchester Square West; Memphis, TN 38118; or call (901) 360-8481. You can also contact the Memphis School of Preaching; 4400 Knight Arnold Road; Memphis, TO 38118. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.
SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the Malone family in the passing away of brother Rubin Malone on January 3, 1996. Please help them anyway you can and remember them in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Louise Cline, and Inez Brantley, Joyce Simmons, Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father), and Helen Maxey (Harold Maxey’s sister-in-law). Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister) will have surgery on January 3, 1996.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets January 7, 1996
Group 2 meets January 14, 1996
Group 3 meets January 21, 1996

READING/INVITATION
January 10, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Louis Herrington
January 17, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
January 14, 1996–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
January 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Galatians 5-6 and Ephesians 1-2.
January 21, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

GENUINE CHURCH GROWTH
Dave Rogers

Christians want the church to grow; so much so that untold man-hours have been expended through the years in trying to find some simple, painless way for the borders of the kingdom of God to be enlarged. Denominational folk have sought this goal by disregarding biblical teaching on many difficult topics. Liberals within the church seek it by urging us to unite with man-made religions, ignoring the many differences and distinctions which separate us. Loud voices augur gloom and doom if we don’t “change with the times!”

Past years have been witness to all sorts of schemes and means to “win the world for Christ,” yet none have actually accomplished this august goal. Can it be that men simply haven’t hit upon the “right” plan yet? Is it simply a matter of better “PR” and a less-demanding doctrine? (If it is, why haven’t denominations conquered the world?) Many “Christian” religions have come and gone, and many congregations have waxed and waned in their numbers; the record of these makes us wonder, “Did they experience genuine church growth, or did they simply ‘swell up’ for a while?”

For the church to genuinely grow, we must begin with the right beginning! Jesus called His Words the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). Peter tells us that we should “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). Jesus only called “true disciples” those who “abide in my word” (John 8:31). We will only grow as healthy Christians if we are abiding in the Words of Jesus!

Next, the church will genuinely grow only
when her members freely acknowledge that those outside of Christ are lost. Paul described the Ephesians as “aliens” and “strangers” to God before their conversion (Eph. 2:12). Jesus said that none can bear fruit for God “except ye abide in” (John 15:4). There is simply no way for a sinner to be saved without coming into Christ, and no one who is in Christ is out of the church (Col. 1:13, 18, 24). No matter how “nice” someone is, if he is outside of Christ he is lost (Mat. 7:21), because God’s will is that all should be in Christ (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

Third, the church will experience genuine growth when we “take matters personally.” If the church needs to be more evangelistic, then you need to be more evangelistic. If the church needs to be more caring, then you need to be more caring. If the church needs to give more, then you need to give more, etc. The church is the people, not the building (Acts 2:47b)!

For the church to genuinely grow, we must be willing to accept the consequences of some hard and unpopular doctrines plainly taught in the Scriptures. Men insist that the roles of man and woman in the church must be identical, or the church is “sexist,” but the Bible still says “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim. 2:11-13). Men demand that Christ’s church recognize and accept divorce and remarriage for any cause or be considered “narrow and intolerant,” but Jesus said “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit” (Mat. 19:9). Men demand that the church Jesus built recognize and accept as God’s people those who abide by denominational, man-made teachings instead of God’s Word, but Paul chastised the Corinthians for even getting close to this (1 Cor. 1:10-13). For the church to experience genuine growth, we must be reconciled to the fact that some will oppose us because of our faith (1 John 4:1).

Finally, for the church to experience genuine growth, we must each one learn to love one another (1 John 4:7-8), even when we aren’t very likable. Jesus plainly said that His disciples are to be known by their love for each other (John 13:34-35), so we must cultivate this love, if we want to truly “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

Let us all strive for genuine growth in the church of Jesus Christ!

HELPS FOR LIVING
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Garry Stanton

We cannot emphasize enough the need to live the Christian life. One area where we might fail to instruct as much as we should is how to live the Christian life. It is surely the case that most Christians desire to live the Christian life. Many know what is expected of them in order to be faithful Christians, but a much smaller number know how to put into practice this knowledge. We will attempt to give some helps for living the Christian life.

First, aim at the ultimate goal, heaven. Some Christians are going in the wrong direction in life because they have set the wrong goal! Some wrong ultimate goals for Christians are prosperity (Mat. 16:24), popularity (Luke 6:26), preeminence (3 John 9-11), and prestige (Mat. 20:25-28). The Christians ultimate goal has already been set, heaven (Col. 1:5). Having the right goal will aid Christians immensely to go in the right direction.

Second, take proper aim at heaven. The Christian must take the correct path that leads to heaven, the strait and narrow way. Side trips are ill advised and dangerous. The best way to find the road that leads to heaven is line up on the perfect mark, Jesus Christ. We need to look unto
Jesus “the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). Jesus is the way, the only way that leads to our heavenly Father (John 14:6). If we try to reach our goal without Jesus we will fail miserably. Jesus is the only name for salvation (Acts 4:12), He is the only foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), and He is the only mediator (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Without Jesus there is no hope for salvation.

Third, Christians must keep their eyes on Jesus and the goals of heaven. Spiritual problems develop when Christians take their eyes off Jesus and their goal even for a little while. They get off course and end up missing the target altogether (Heb. 12:1-2). Here are some things that can cause us to take our eyes off Jesus and heaven. Being nearsighted, not able to see past the end of our noses, cannot see heaven for the world around us (2 Pet. 1:8-11), distractions keep us from being focused (Phi. 3:17-18), darkness prevents us seeing the way (1 John 1:5-7), and double vision distorts our aim (Mat. 6:24). In order to keep our eyes properly focused we need concentration (Phi. 4:8), consecration to God’s divine purpose (1 Cor. 6:18-20), and continuation in God’s will unto the end (Rev. 2:10).

Fourth, Christians need to know that when they become wayward they must get back on the right track as soon as possible. On moon missions a one degree variation at the beginning can lead to missing the moon by thousands of miles at the end! If Christians start out off target in the Christian life they will miss heaven by a long shot. The key to success is to get back in line quickly. There is danger of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-14) and going past feeling (Eph. 4:19). The longer away from the right target, the harder it is to find it and the more work it is to get back in line. More sins must be discarded and they are harder to give up.

We need to realize that when we are off target we are in a lost condition (Jam. 5:19-20). Remember to set the right ultimate goal, heaven. Then be sure to take proper aim at the ultimate goal of heaven. Keep your eyes on Jesus and on heaven. And if you stray from the heavenly path be quick to get back on the right track.

2707 Mt. Holly Road; Camden, AR 71701

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

Al Brown

Jesus went through the mockery of a trial; then, a beating by the Jewish leaders and their soldiers. He endured a terrible scourging, public scorn, ridicule, and finally the excruciating pain, humiliation, and shame of being crucified. We are at a loss for words to adequately describe that horror.

We all know He did it to pay the price divine justice demanded for our sins. He literally took our place. How often do we think of His gift? How often, and how much time do we spend thinking that we—you and me—should have been under that whip and nailed to the cross instead of Him?

Isaiah wrote: “By oppression and judgment he was taken away, and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for... was due?” (Isa. 53:8). Indeed, do we stop to consider that He was cut off (killed) for us to whom the stroke was due?

Paul said: “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). Paul asked the Corinthians how they would respond to Christ’s love (2 Cor. 8:7-9; 5:14-15). He said their response should be the offering of their lives (see also Rom. 12:1).

How will we respond? No one will force us to do anything, but we prove our love for Him by what we give (2 Cor. 8:8). Will you give your time, energy and money for the salvation of souls?

P.O. Box 39; Spring, TX 77383
SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Harold Maxey and his family in the death of his sister-in-law, Helen Maxey, on December 31, 1995. Please remember them in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Inez Brantley, Marilyn Hall, Louise Cline, Joyce Simmons, Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father), and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples’ sister). Hairston Brantley will have surgery on his shoulder on January 17.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets January 14, 1996
Group 3 meets January 21, 1996
Group 1 meets February 4, 1996

READING/INVITATION
January 17, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tony Liddell
January 24, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

MARK THESE DATES
January 14, 1996-Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
January 21, 1996-Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Galatians 5-6 and Ephesians 1-2.
January 21, 1996-Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
January 31, 1996-Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
February 10, 1996-New Members’ Banquet.
“ACQUAINT NOW THYSELF WITH HIM, AND BE AT PEACE”

Job 22:21

Tim Smith

Men have sought for centuries to define peace, and it can be a difficult task. Some define peace as the absence of war, but it is more properly described as the presence of the Lord with one, whether war is present or not. Peace is a much discussed subject in the Bible, and it would be good for us to pause for a few moments from our daily pursuits and notice some of the biblical references concerning it.

The Psalmist wrote, “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, L ORD, only makest me dwell in safety” (Psa. 4:8). For those who faithfully follow Him, peace is a constant companion, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psa. 119:165). This does not mean that those who faithfully follow Him will never see adversity, but that despite the adversity peace is within them, “Thou wilt keep him whose mind is stayed on thee” (Isa. 26:3). We determine, in large part, whether we walk in peace or not, as Paul wished for the Colossians, “let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (Col. 3:15).

The Christian age, in which we now live, was spoken of in prophecy as a time of peace, “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up
sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4). Again Isaiah wrote, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid” (Isa. 11:6). Paul said, “to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). Those who are Christians, who have been justified by Christ, were said to “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

Christ knew the importance of peace, and He said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The peace which comes from above is a preserving peace. It will take us through the difficult periods of life and preserve us safely into the arms of the Lord, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:7). As the gallant warrior of the Lord surveys the carnage and destruction round about him, as he sees all of the lost souls thrust into eternity without hope, as he sees his words fall on deaf ears, and as he sees his deeds of godliness go unappreciated, and as he sees his efforts “fail,” he nevertheless takes with him the knowledge that God is with him, and helping him, and is most pleased with him. This leads to the realization that in the last day, when the judge of all the earth shall give out the eternal sentences for all men, his efforts will not be forgotten (1 Cor. 15:58). As the grand announcement to the world declares, where Christ is, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). You can make this peace yours by obeying the Lord and walking faithfully in Him.

Are you a Christian? Have you heard and believed the Gospel (Heb. 11:6, Rom. 10:17); repented of sins (Acts 17:30-31, Luke 13:3); confessed Him before men (Mat. 10:32-33, Acts 8:37); and been immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)? Are you being faithful in all things (Rev. 2:10)?

NEW MEMBERS’ BANQUET
will be held on Saturday,
February 10, 1996, at 6:00 P.M.,
in the General Purpose Building.
There will be a pot-luck dinner.
All members of the Bellview congregation
are invited to be there to
welcome our new members.
If you have any questions,
please contact the office.

THE BIBLE
The Bible is the only book that meets the
needs of man under all conditions of life. To those who are stooped beneath heavy burdens, it is sweet Rest. To the one who sits in gloom, it is a glorious Light. To him who has lost his way, it is a safe Guide. To the discouraged, it whispers a message of Hope. To the weary pilgrim, it is a good, strong Staff. To those who are disturbed by the storms of life, it is an Anchor, sure and steadfast. To those who suffer in lonely solitude, it is as a cool, soft hand resting on a fevered brow. To those who have been hurt by sin, it is healing Balm. How great is our need to study it daily, believe it and live it!

The Bible is God’s message to mankind. It is the sword to our warfare, the lamp to our feet; the light to life’s pathway; the source of true wisdom and the test book of ethics. In it we find the best law, the Golden Rule; the best philosophy, a contented mind; the best statesmanship, self-government; the best war, that against one’s own weakness; the best medicine, cheerfulness and
temperance in all things; the best music, the laughter of an innocent soul; the best science, the extraction of sunshine from gloom; the best art, painting a smile on the face of childhood; the best telegraphy, the flashing of light into a gloomy heart; the best diplomacy, the effecting of a treaty of peace with our conscience; the best biography, the life that writes LOVE in the largest letters and holiest deeds; the best engineering, the building of a bridge of faith across the river of death. It teaches us how to multiply joys, subtract sorrows, divide suffering, add to the sum of happiness and cancel selfishness. Read it, believe it, love it, obey it and it will lead you into the Garden of God, where the wealth of the eternal ages will be your portion.

WHO STARTED THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Virgil L. Hale

Some have charged the church of Christ had its beginning with the Campbells who came to the United States in the early 1800s. Documentary research of Dr. Robinson, principle of Overdale College in Birmingham, England, shows the following: “In the Furness District of Lancashire, in North West England, there existed in 1669, during the reign of Charles II, a group of eight churches of Christ. Most of them are not now in existence. An old minute-book has been found on the year 1669 and it shows that they called themselves by the name of church of Christ, practiced baptism by immersion, celebrated the Lord’s Supper each Lord’s Day, and had elders and deacons. There was also a church of Christ in Dungannon, Ireland, in 1804 and in Allington, Dengigshire. In 1735, John Davis, a young preacher in the Fife District of Scotland was preaching New Testament Christianity, twenty-five years before Thomas Campbell (Alexander Campbell’s father) was born.”

The church of Christ was promised by Jesus Christ (Mat. 16:18), began on Pentecost (Acts 2) and has existed since that day (Dan. 2:44)!

In view of the above, how can anyone honestly accuse us of following a man, Alexander Campbell? There are some, who because of prejudice, refer to us members of the Lord’s church as “Campbellites.” Those who do so know better, but they are really just promoting what they have heard their ancestors say. There is not a doctrine or practice, engaged in by the Lord’s church that originated with Alexander Campbell or any other man.

Anywhere in this world that people follow the teaching of Christ, found in the New Testament, they are a congregation of the New Testament church. After all, He left us a book of instructions plain enough to be followed. If we follow it as we would any other blue-print, we will be what He wants us to be. We claim to be nothing more nor less than the New Testament church, and we challenge anyone to prove differently.

When I hear people use the term “Campbellite” I tell them that I have never met anyone who wears that name. In fact, I let it be known that I would like to meet such a person and find out what they believe and practice. However, I make it clear that if such people exist, they are wrong religiously, because they are following a man rather than following the Lord.

It should be clear to all sensible thinking people, that if we all follow the Bible, we will all be teaching and practicing the same thing. In fact, we will all be simply “Christians”—nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else. Is this not what our Lord prayed for in John chapter 17? Surely it is!!

Copied
SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Inez Brantley, Marilyn Hall, Louise Cline, Joyce Simmons, Harold Staples, and Neva Bryant (Lucille Staples' sister). Nancy Loy and Hairston Brantley will have surgery this week at West Florida Hospital. Thomas Muldoon is in Sacred Heart hospital.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets January 21, 1996
Group 1 meets February 4, 1996
Group 2 meets February 11, 1996

READING/INVITATION
January 24, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

January 31, 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Corey Bittner

MARK THESE DATES
January 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Galatians 5-6 and Ephesians 1-2.
January 31, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
February 10, 1996–New Members’ Banquet.

NEW MEMBERS
Horace and Sheila Myrick and Sharon McCrory placed membership with the Bellview congregation on January 14, 1996. Horace and Sheila’s address is: 6803 Sunshine Hill Road; Molino, FL 32577; their phone number is 587-5381. Sharon’s address is: 425 Eden Lane; Cantonment, FL 32533; her phone number is 968-4896.
CHRISTIAN WOMEN
ARE “KEEPERS
AT HOME”

Gary Colley

Christian women are a special group and so needed in society today! Unlike the world, they believe the Bible is the standard for successful Christian living. They observe as important the scriptural pattern for life and the home. They know that without the guidance of the Scriptures they cannot have the proper relationship with their husband and children (Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4). They are cognizant of the fact that God made the first home, and that in order to gain for themselves all of the desired blessings from this divine institution they must be guided by the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17). They realize that to ignore God and His will in their lives means ruin for themselves and their home, and that rather “the house of the righteous shall stand” (Pro. 12:7).

AGED AND YOUNG WOMEN

When Paul penned the epistle to Titus in about A.D. 67, there were two things which he emphasized strongly for the preacher Titus to instruct Christians, the aged men and young men, women and young women, to practice in life: sound doctrine and good works. Inspiration does not in principle know limits in different ages. Hence the teaching here, though written many centuries ago, still applies equally today. He said, “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Tit. 2:3-5).

“KEEPERS AT HOME”

This reference simply means in the original, “workers at home.” Though most Christian ladies have humbly and clearly observed the commands to conduct their life in a sensible (sober) manner, have learned to love their husbands and children, to be discreet and pure in life so that no reflection by railing accusation might come upon the Word of God, some have found themselves overlooking and even disputing the teaching of being “keepers at home!”

HOMEMAKERS IRREPLACEABLE!

Some in our society have looked with disdain on “home-makers” and even suggested, in contradiction to the Bible, that those who are “keepers at home” are living a nonproductive and wasted life. Some young ladies, who otherwise are faithful, have fallen prey to this untoward teaching, been convinced this inspired command is not essential, and have traded off being “keepers at home” for a place in public work. We should note also, that many have paid a dear price because of their choice, in the loss of their husband’s affection and their children’s devotion. Some have learned all too late that the cost is enormous for disobeying the Bible. Sooner or later they have often observed firsthand that the “way of transgressors is hard” (Pro. 13:15). Often those who have accepted the theory that “you can have it all” (family and job) have learned that in addition to the cost of additional clothing, transportation, child care by disinterested agencies, etc., that they must pay in sorrow for the rest of their lives because of neglected husbands, and children who were not taught in their early years the instruction, discipline, and training of the Lord (Eph. 6:4-5; Pro. 22:6). Beside the Word being blasphemed, unforeseen misery and pain have entered their years on earth.

WOMEN CAN WORK IN PUBLIC

For many women there is a need, and perhaps even necessity for important financial reasons, for them to work in public jobs. That they are very able and productive, no one would question. However, though the Bible does not forbid women from public work (Pro. 31), they are not released from the command to be “keepers at home.” The home is not to be built around the job, but rather wise women will assure that the job is built around service to God and the needs of the home! The older women know the rich rewards and benefits of happy homes, loving husbands, and obedient, loved, and cared for children. They are commanded to teach the younger women for their continued good and happiness.

IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS

To be “keepers at home” is woman’s most important job! It suggests that she realize her unequalled and important role of being a keeper: of self, her husband, their children, their house, the family’s clothes, manners, control of the tongue and morals, the decorum in public and private, and of course Godliness for all. Of course, husbands can help in many of these areas and are commanded to do so! But, her work in these areas is to be first and most important! Like it or not, much of the breakdown today in morals, reverence, and respect, are traced to the absence of Godly mothers who are not “keepers at home!” They simply have not been taught, or have not taken the lesson of priority to heart, that they are commanded to be “keepers at home.”

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748
YOUR LIFE IS AN OPEN BOOK

John W. Moore

Many of our “modern” axioms are not modern. In fact, there are many clichés and “sayings” that originate from the Bible. The axiom, “Your life is an open book,” is nothing more than a rephrasing of Second Corinthians 3:2: “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” Truly no axiom could be as thought-provoking in aiding each of us in self-examination.

Upon contemplation of this metaphorical way to view self, one must consider what is read by others, by oneself, and especially by God about our lives. For example:

- Do others read of good things or evil?
- Do others understand the purpose of your “book”?
- Is your “book” a reflection of Christ?
- Is Christ the Author of your “book”?
- Would others view your “book” as fictitious, or real and genuine?
- Is your “book” filled with lies, distortion, and slander, or with truth, honesty, and love?
- What chapters of your “book” do you wish you could change or relive?
- What would be said in the final chapter of your “book”?
- Finally, is your story written in in the Book of all books—the Book of Life? (Rev. 20:15)

Indeed, our book is like an open book, and often we are the only spiritual book this careless world will ever read. Thus, may we endeavor to write in our books the story and life of Jesus.

WHICH?

There are two ways of beginning the day—with prayer, or without it. You began today in one of these two ways! Which?

There are two ways of spending the Lord’s Day—idly or devotionally. You spend the Lord’s Day in one of these two ways. Which?

There are two classes of people in the world—the saved and the unsaved. You belong to one of these two great classes. Which?

There are two great masters of men in the universe—God and Satan. You are serving under one of these two great masters. Which?

There are two roads which lead through time and eternity—the broad road and the narrow road. You are walking on one of these two roads. Which?

There are two deaths which people die—some “die in the Lord,” others “die in their sins.” You will die one of these two deaths. Which?

There are two places to which people go—heaven or hell. You will go to one of these two places. Which?

NEW MEMBERS’ BANQUET

The New Members’ Banquet will be held on Saturday, February 10, 1996, at 6:00 P.M., in the General Purpose Building. There will be a pot-luck dinner. All members of the Bellview congregation are invited to be there to welcome our new members. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Ellen Muldoon, Leon Waters, Inez Brantley, Marilyn Hall, Louise Cline, Joyce Simmons, Harold Staples, Nancy Loy, Hairston Brantley, Thomas Muldoon, and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nail’s sister).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets February 4, 1996
Group 2 meets February 11, 1996
Group 3 meets February 18, 1996

READING/INVITATION
January 31, 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Corey Bittner
February?, 1996
Reading: Mike Peters
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
January 31, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing
at 7:00 P.M.
February 10, 1996–New Members’ Banquet
at 6:00 P.M.
February 18, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at
Bay Minette. Study Ephesians 3-6.

PLEASE WRITE
Ray Peters will be Riga, Latvia for
another two months. You can write to Ray
at Dammes 17-19; Riga LV-1069; Latvia
Europe. He would appreciate your letters.
The Wilkes children would enjoy hearing
from the young people in the congregation,
or any others. You can write to Michael,
Tiffany, Joshua, and Ashley at Chimala
Mission and Hospital; P.O. Box 724;
Mbeya Tanzania; East Africa. Mail your
letters air mail.
MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY: 9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine,
Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy,
Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

WHEN HAVE WE LOST OUR “FIRST LOVE” FOR THE LORD?

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2:4)

When my delight in the Lord is no longer as great as my delight in someone else, I have lost my “first love.”

When my soul does not long for times of long fellowship in God’s Word or in prayer, I have lost my “first love.”

When my thoughts during leisure moments do not reflect upon the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”

When I claim to be “only human” and easily give into those things I know displease the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”

When I do not willingly and cheerfully give to God’s work or to the needs of others, I have lost my “first love.”

When I cease to treat every Christian brother as I would the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”

When I view the commands of Christ as restrictions to my happiness rather than expressions of His love, I have lost my “first love.”

When I inwardly strive for acclaim of this world rather than the approval of the Lord, I have lost my “FIRST LOVE.”

When I fail to make Christ or His Words known because I fear rejection, I have lost my “first love.”

When I refuse to give up an activity which I know is offending a weaker brother, I have lost my “first love.”

When I become complacent to sinful
conditions around me, I have lost my “first love.”

When I am unable to forgive another for offending me, I have lost my “first love.”

Copied

THE SAME BOOK BUT A DIFFERENT PAGE

Ken Butterworth

While speaking on television this past week, a preacher (a brother), said that we must be more tolerant with people in religion, worship and those with different lifestyles. He went on to say that we “don’t have to be on the same page, just in the same book.” That simply tells a lot about this preacher and the congregation he preaches for. Last month he said that he was not “heavy on doctrine.” Why does this not surprise us? Let us look at the problem involved with not being on the same page, but in the same book.

The Bible is our rule book (Phi. 3:16). We must speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). We live by every Word of God (Mat. 4:4). The Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35). The whole counsel of God must be preached (Acts 20:27). Jesus told one man he lacked “one” thing to be saved (Mark 10:21). Thus, it is important that we speak exactly what the Bible teaches (2 Tim. 4:2).

Imagine a child in elementary school and the teacher tells the students to turn to page 50. She says the lesson is on multiplication. One student turns to page 3, which is instructions for addition. The teacher tells the student to turn over to page 50, but the student says, “It really doesn’t matter what page we are one, just as long as we are in the same book.” Do I have to tell you the outcome of such? Just so, God demands we be on the same page; yea, even the same chapter, verse and word. How can one learn that offering a sacrifice in worship is no longer valid, if they are in the Old Testament and we are studying the book of Acts? Consider a study of baptism, the New Testament church or instrumental music. We must be on the same page, in the same chapter, in the same verse and studying the same Word!

It is little wonder there is so much disrespect for God’s Word in the Lord’s church! There is a growing trend for preachers to convert people to themselves rather than to truth. One should not preach to entertain or to receive praise of men. Preachers should be true to the book, speak so all can understand and challenge people to think.

This, “being in the same book but on a different page idea, and at the same time being tolerant” is nothing more than a compromise with those who no longer demand book, chapter, and verse preaching. There are too many in the church now who cannot take a steady dose of pure old gospel preaching.

This is the same preacher that said while many congregations were losing members, his was growing because they dare to do new and different things. My friend, the pattern is set (2 Tim. 1:13) and we dare not change the old Jerusalem gospel (Gal. 1:8-10).

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THE PERFECT PREACHER

Somewhere a preacher search committee is working hard to find the best possible preacher for their congregation. With tongue in cheek, we present this gentleman for their consideration:

After hundreds of years, a model preacher has been found to suit everyone. He preaches exactly twenty minutes and then sits down. He condemns sin, but never hurts anyone’s feelings.

He works from 8 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. in every type of work, from preaching to chauffeur service. He makes $60 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books regularly, has a nice family, drives a good car, and gives $30 a week to the
Bobby Duncan

It is not unusual to find members of the Lord’s church who see nothing wrong with gambling. Oh, I suppose most of them would oppose big-time gambling, but see no harm in betting a few dollars on the outcome of a ball-game, or buying a chance on a boat and motor or automobile. Sometimes Christians are asked, “Just what could be wrong with a little gambling?” The answer to that question is really quite simple: the same thing is wrong with a little gambling that would be wrong with gambling on what one might call a major scale. If a thing is wrong, it is wrong.

Gambling is wrong because it violates the principle contained in what we call the Golden Rule: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12). This is true whether one is gambling for large or small stakes.

Gambling is wrong because it violates the principle of work enjoined in Ephesians 4:28: “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” God never intended that we devise schemes whereby we might extract from others that which they have earned and which they need to support themselves and their families. He intends that we work. This is true with reference to any gambling, whether for small or large stakes.

Gambling is wrong because it dulls one’s Christian light. In Philippians 2:15 the apostle wrote: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” How could one shine as a light in the world if he is engaging in the same kinds of sins engaged in by the people of the world? Jesus put it this way in Matthew 5:14-16: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Honestly, now, what would you think if your preacher made it his practice to wager just a few dollars on certain sporting events? Would you recommend a man for the eldership who is a known gambler? Do you think Jesus would participate in the office pool if He worked in that office? Would the apostles be among the gamblers if they were living on earth today?

It needs to be remembered also that gambling is just as addictive as alcohol, and this is true whether one gambles for large or small stakes.

Simply put, Christian people do not gamble.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, Inez Brantley, Harold Staples, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Simmons, Nancy Loy, Hairston Brantley, Thomas Muldoon, Harold Cozad, Angela Fletcher, Kevin Bailey, and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nail’s sister).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets February 4, 1996
Group 2 meets February 11, 1996
Group 3 meets February 18, 1996

READING/INVITATION
February 7, 1996
   Reading: Mike Peters
   Invitation: Henry Born

February 14, 1996
   Reading: Ray Williams
   Invitation: Hairston Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
February 10, 1996–New Members’ Banquet
   at 6:00 P.M.

PLEASE WRITE
Ray Peters will be Riga, Latvia for another two months. You can write to Ray at Dammes 17-19; Riga LV-1069; Latvia Europe. He would appreciate your letters. The Wilkes children would enjoy hearing from the young people in the congregation, or any others. You can write to Michael, Tiffany, Joshua, and Ashley at Chimala Mission and Hospital; P.O. Box 724; Mbeya Tanzania; East Africa. Mail your letters air mail.
WHAT IS YOUR C.E.Q.?

How is your *church etiquette quotient*? Are you mannerly and polite, contributing to the quiet decorum so desirable in a worship service? Parents, how about your children? Are they seated where you can keep check on them? Write YES or NO in the blank by each of the following questions and thus check your C.E.Q.:

___ Do you turn around when people come into the assembly late?
___ Do you carry on conversation before the service is to begin, rather than sit quietly in prayer?
___ Are you habitually late?
___ After the service has begun, do you allow your children to leave their seats for any other cause than a real emergency?
___ If your baby continues to cry during the service, do you stay in the auditorium?
___ Do you sit as far back as possible, thus depriving late-comers and mothers with small children of the back seats?
___ Do you chew gum during services?
___ Do you fail to keep up with the song leader when singing or do you simply refuse to sing at all?
___ Do you watch the late show on television on Saturday night and then sleep in worship on the Lord’s day?
___ When you stay in the nursery, do you talk with any others who might be there just as though the service was not in progress?
___ Do you write notes or whisper or otherwise communicate with others during the service?
TEN WAYS TO KILL A CHURCH!
Chuck Northrop

Sometimes we must look at a negative in order to respond in a positive way. In reality, we are not wanting to kill the church. Rather we earnestly desire to see the church grow. The following list is for the purpose of self-examination. Any one of these items is enough to destroy a congregation.

1. DON’T DO ANYTHING! It is allowable to say you will do something, but be sure it never gets done. Procrastinate or better yet put it under the realm of patience. But whatever you do, be sure that you don’t do it.

2. ALLOW SIN TO BE IN THE CAMP! Whatever someone else does and no matter what they do, ignore it and pretend it isn’t happening. After all, it is really none of your business. And besides, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Oh, uh, be sure to justify the sin, if at all possible.

3. BE SURE YOU ALWAYS GET YOUR WAY! No matter what it takes, it is important that things be done your way. And if by some slight chance you don’t get your way, be sure to create a small stir so that next time you will.

4. PUT YOUR PRIORITIES IN THE WRONG PLACE! Get more “bent out of shape” about someone blundering the “King’s English” than about someone using the Lord’s name as a byword. And be sure to put money and jobs, family and friends before the Lord and His church. After all, the Lord is more forgiving than a boss or a family member.

5. GOSSIP! Just talk about everyone, no matter whether you know anything about it or not. Be sure to always talk about anything you have no business talking about. And don’t worry if people are talking about you, just talk about them all the more.

6. BE AN HABITUAL COMPLAINER! Never say anything positive about the church, its members and its work. Don’t ever be satisfied with what others are doing. Oh, remember point number one: “Don’t Do Anything!” After all, someone might complain about you.

7. ALWAYS CAUSE STRIFE! Now be sure to disguise strife under a different name such as “doctrinal purity.” Everyone will know it’s your opinion, but it will make it look better anyway. I mean after all, we don’t want anyone to think we might have the wrong motives or a bad attitude.

8. IGNORE OTHERS! This will sure get a rise out of someone. And just think, the attention will be turned away from you towards them. Everyone will think that they are just imagining something that really isn’t. Now remember that once you begin to ignore others, you need to start complaining about cliques in the church.

9. NEVER PRAY, STUDY OR MEDITATE ON GOD’S WORD! This kind of action is for all those religious fanatics anyway. You know the one: those who think the Bible is really inspired by God. It seems like they are always quoting that antiquated “mumble jumble” anyway.

10. DON’T DISCIPLINE YOURSELF, YOUR CHILDREN OR YOUR FRIENDS! Discipline is an undue harshness that is not needed anyway. Let’s let everyone do their own thing. After all, God gave them the talent. And as long
as it is not hurting anyone else, it really doesn’t matter.

Remember these are ten ways to KILL a church. Any one of these things will do the job, but if you want to be sure the job gets done quickly and effectively, then incorporate several into a plan that will pulverize and polarize the church.

Oh, uh, before I forget, this is not the Lord’s plan; it is the DEVIL’S LIST!!

610 Elmwood Drive; Cleveland, OK 74020

THE FORGOTTEN MINISTRY

Dalton Key

Inspiration mentions Epaphras as Paul’s “dear fellow servant,” and a “a faithful minister of Christ” unto the Colossian brethren (Col. 1:7). Epaphras is recognized of heaven for his “great zeal” for the church at Colosse, and for the neighboring congregations in Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col. 4:13). Moreover, “this servant of Christ” is described as “always laboring fervently” for the church’s growth and maturity (Col. 4:12).

But how did Epaphras direct his great zeal? In what way did he labor fervently? Read Colossians 4:12 closely: “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” He revealed his zeal for the church, and he worked for the church, by praying for the church.

It is true that, as health and opportunity permit, we must do more than merely pray for the Lord’s cause. We are admonished to “preach the word” (Acts 8:4), to exhort and edify one another (Heb. 3:13; Eph. 4:29), and to “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

And yet we often place too much emphasis upon our efforts and too little upon the tremendous power of prayer. The apostles encouraged the Jerusalem brethren to select “seven men to honest report” to “serve table”—thus allowing the apostles to give themselves “continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3-4). Jesus taught “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Paul frequently asked for the prayers of his brethren, and promised his readers that he was praying for them (Col. 4:3; 1:3).

It is humbling, but nonetheless true—more can be accomplished through an hour of ardent prayer, than by a week of self-reliant work, or a year of needless worry. “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,” wrote Tennyson. Or in the more worthy words of Holy Writ, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16).

The church desperately needs godly leaders, evangelists, servants, teachers and willing workers who will give themselves to a ministry of prayer. Our world is on a collision course with the second death. The saints of God shine as beacons of light in a darkened world, pointing lost humanity to the life-giving Savior. But we can’t possibly do it alone, of our own strength. We must rely heavily upon the power of prayer.

Brother or sister in Christ: you can be engaged in a mighty work for the Lord, regardless of age, infirmity, handicap, or hindering circumstances! You can harness a “great zeal” for the church and labor “fervently” for your Master despite any and all physical limitations! You can pray.

Could it be that we have not because we ask not?

Via Liberal, KS
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, Harold Staples, Angela Fletcher, Marilyn Hall.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets February 11, 1996
Group 3 meets February 18, 1996
Group 1 meets March 3, 1996

READING/INVITATION
February 14, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Hairston Brantley
February 21, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
February 10, 1996–New Members’ Banquet at 6:00 P.M.
February 18, 1996–Elders and Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS
The following list of books have been recently added to the library and can be checked out: The Birth Of Purgatory by Jacques Le Goff; The New Testament World In Pictures by William H. Stephens; Darwin On Trial by Phillip E. Johnson; You Have Heard it Said...But The Bible Says!, Florida School of Preaching Lectureship, Bob McAnally, Editor; God’s Amazing Grace, Spiritual Sword Lectureship, Jim Laws, Editor. Contact the librarian if you are interested in checking out any of these books, or any others.
BAPTISM FOR 
“A SCRIPTURAL REASON” 

Joe Galloway

Presently some are teaching that one may have been acceptably baptized, even if he was not baptized “for the remission of sins,” as long as he did it “for a scriptural reason.” Supposedly, therefore, many more than we formerly acknowledged are accepted by God as His children, for many people in denominations who believed themselves to have been already saved before baptism have been baptized “to obey God.” It is claimed that “to obey God” is “a scriptural reason” for being baptized, so is sufficient without further understanding of the point when salvation occurs.

What about such “reasoning”?

Such “reasoning” is fallacious because there is only one real reason for a sinner being baptized: to change from a lost to a saved relationship with God. True, this purpose may be stated in different ways in the New Testament, but it always equals this same reason. One is baptized “to be saved” (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), which suggests the purpose of changing from the lost to the saved relationship. It is “for [unto] the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), suggesting this identical idea. It is to “wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16), which means the same thing. It puts one “into Christ,” or “into the one body” (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13). Is this a separate purpose from the above? No! To enter into Christ is the same as to change from a lost to a saved relationship with God, for “There is...no condemnation to them
which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1), all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and one of these spiritual blessings in Christ is salvation (2 Tim. 2:10).

Although the New Testament never says in so many words that one is “to be baptized to obey God,” we would agree that one, indeed, does do such because God requires it. However, when God requires something of us for a stated reason we must not only do it, but we must do it for the reason that He said do it if our obedience is to be accepted by Him. When our understanding of a command is opposite of the Lord’s stated reason for it, how could such be considered obedience at all? For example: even if one ate the Lord’s supper because he knew God said do it, would anyone claim that such would be acceptable if he ate it with the misunderstanding that it was for the purpose of changing him from the lost state to the saved state? No, we know his wrong purpose would invalidate the eating! Is it not the same with one who is baptized, knowing God said do it, but thinking that he has already been saved before baptism?

Someone may yet ask, “What about Christ’s baptism? Was it not simply done to obey God, without being for the remission of His sins?” Christ was baptized “to fulfil all righteousness” (Mat. 3:15). He was not baptized to receive salvation, nor was He baptized because He had already been saved. As to its purpose, Jesus’ baptism of necessity was different from ours because Jesus was sinless (1 Pet. 2:22). We all sin (Rom. 3:23), so we do not obey God in baptism with the same need and for the same purpose as did He.

We encourage all people who are penitent believers to be baptized in order to be saved—to be accepted of God. Those who have been buried in baptism, knowing that God requires baptism but thinking themselves to have already been in a saved condition before their baptism, need to be immersed again—this time for the right purpose. The right action done for the wrong purpose does not constitute the obedience from the heart that is essential to being made free from sins and becoming God’s servant (Rom. 6:17-18).

Greenville, TN

“SEEK THE KINGDOM”

Dub McClish

Jesus forever settled where God’s church, the kingdom on earth, should come in one’s list of values: “seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33). But when and under what circumstances should we do this? Certainly, one is correct in saying, “all of the time and under all circumstances.” However, such an answer is too general to have much meaning for most of us. Let us ask, and answer, more specifically, “when should one seek first the kingdom?”

When We Marry. If one is interested in serving God and going to Heaven, it is only reasonable that he or she should choose a companion who will share this interest. It is one of the world’s great tragedies to see a fine, dedicated-to-Christ young person fall in love with someone who has no interest at all in spiritual things and never will. At best the faithful Christian must shoulder all the spiritual burden of the home and at worst many are drawn away by their companions and lose their soul.

When We Choose Our Work. If the kingdom is at the top of our lists in life, we will never consider any sort of business or employment that would weaken us spiritually.

When We Rear and Educate Our Children. What do we want most for our children? Do we care more about their social and physical needs
than their spiritual needs? Is our driving ambition that they must be popular at all costs or faithful Christians? If we are really seeking the kingdom first, we will want our children to have the education that will help preserve and strengthen their faith for many years of Christian service that will end in Heaven.

**When We Make Big Decisions.** What is the main factor governing our big decisions, such as changing jobs, moving, etc.? How much money it means, whether we will like the climate, what the living conditions are, etc., must all be considered. But, for the Christian, the important question is, “Will this enable me to serve the Lord more or will it hinder me?” In any big decision, we ought to pray, “Thy will be done.”

**When We Have Financial Success.** If we lay up treasures only on earth, we are fools. If we lavishly spend them on pleasures, we are fools twice over. If the kingdom is not first financially, it is not first, period.

**THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAISE**

*Al Brown*

One of the greatest privileges Christians have is to be able to approach the throne of the God of Hosts and praise His holy name. Worship under the law of Moses impressed the sanctity—the purity of Jehovah on Israel and made them realize sinful man must be cleansed of his sin before he can approach God. Yet, the blood of animals could not take away sin, so a remembrance was made of it every year (Heb. 10:3).

Now, Christ has offered His blood once, never to be repeated, to take away the sins of man (Heb. 9:24-26). Hence, if we submit to the will of God, our sins are remitted (Rom. 6:17-18), and we have the wonderful privilege of going before his August presence to offer thanksgiving and praise to His holy name. “Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:28).

**BIBLE WORD SEARCH**

Someone showed me this story and remarked that there are twenty books of the Bible hidden here. He challenged me to find them. Sure enough, they’re all here. Still, this thing’s a lulu, kept me looking so hard for the longest time. Some of you will get bogged down with facts; others are hit by them like they are some kind of revelation or something. You may get in a jam, especially since the names are not capitalized and often leap the spaces between the words. This makes a real job to find them but it’ll provide a most fascinating few minutes for you. Yes, there are some real easy ones to spot, but don’t get the big head, because truthfully, you’ll soon figure that it would take most federal judges and preachers numbers of hours to find them all. I will admit that it usually takes a minister to find one of them and that it is not uncommon to hear loud lamentations when it is pointed out. One lady says that when she is confronted with puzzles like this one, she brews a cup of tea to help her concentrate better. But this gal is a real pro. Verbs, nouns, and all that stuff are her thing. See how well you can compete. Relax. There really are twenty names of Bible books in this story. If you fail to find them, there’s a penalty. You’ll have to go fly a kite, sit on a banana, hum the Battle Hymn of the Republic or hose a dog (a mean one). Get to it.
SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mary Cunningham in the death of her mother, Annie Mae Hall, on February 10, 1996, at the age of 95. Please keep Mary and her family in your prayers.

BAPTIZED
Eddie McLoud was baptized on February 7, 1996. Keep Eddie in your prayers.

SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, Harold Staples, and Marilyn Hall. Joyce Simmons is scheduled for back surgery the first week in March.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets February 18, 1996
Group 1 meets March 3, 1996
Group 2 meets March 17, 1996

READING/INVITATION
February 21, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley
February 28, 1996
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THESE DATES
February 18, 1996–Elders and Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
Write for your free Bible Correspondence Course at 4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526.
CHOOSING A RELIGION

G. F. Raines

Many sincere people have been caused by false teaching to believe that a person should choose a religion on the basis of convenience and preference, like a housewife selects a loaf of bread, or a bar of soap. Many members of denominational churches admit that they selected a church only because of its size, its popularity, or its nearness to their residence.

Many people who would eagerly go a long distance to see some entertainment would not travel one mile to scripturally worship God, although Jesus says, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Jesus did not build a multiplicity of churches so that people could find a church corresponding with their own preference. This is what the Lord Himself said: “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18).

The apostle Paul says: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). “But now are they many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20).

I earnestly urge you to diligently study your Bible, especially Acts of Apostles and the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude, and then adamantly refuse to embrace any religion except the nondenominational Christianity which is plainly described therein; because, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable..."
for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The Book of God, by which all men will be judged in the last day (Rev. 20:11-15), clearly says: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12).

Let us never forget that our Lord Jesus Christ declared that “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13).

WE JUST NEED GOD
Shan Jackson

In the book of Joshua we read of the time that Moses died. God spoke to Joshua saying, “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them” (Jos. 1:2).

Brethren, I cannot begin to imagine what must have been going through Joshua’s mind at this time. Moses was dead. God’s greatest leader of the Old Testament was gone. ... people into the Promised Land. But God said, “ Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee” (Deu. 31:6).

Brethren, is there any reason for a Christian not to have that Joshua-like courage? Is there any reason at all? We are God’s children. We are His sons and His daughters. We are heirs to His divine promises. We have been washed in the cleansing blood of the lamb. We wear His name. We are His children. We are His. Therefore, we must be strong. We must be of good courage. We must not be afraid “for the Lord is still with us.” We need nothing else. We do not need wealth. We do not need affluence. We just need God.

Paul said, “for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). Brethren, God’s blessings will come to those who conform to God’s law.

PO Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

DISCIPLINE AND NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY
Cliff Lyons

Why don’t churches of Christ around the world teach and practice what the New Testament teaches regarding church discipline? How can we honestly claim to “speak as the oracles of God,” and “do Bible things in Bible ways” and refuse to teach and carry out biblical discipline? We sometimes distinguish between instructive and corrective discipline. In this article we are giving emphasis to corrective discipline. Are we really serious about preaching the “whole counsel of God” or shall we by-pass our Lord’s commands here (2 The. 3:6)?

Perhaps we need to raise another question just here—“What does it mean to restore New Testament Christianity?” Dear brethren, that is a question which would be in order for every gospel preacher to answer from the Bible as he stands in the pulpit next Lord’s day. We need to stand in the old paths and show that just as Josiah was able to restore God’s way of worship under the Law of Moses—just so, we can follow the teaching of the New Testament and restore New Testament Christianity today. Josiah and the Israelites could read God’s Word, understand it and do what it said. Although it had been about nine hundred years since God had given instructions to Moses regarding the Passover, Josiah was able to
understand those SAME instructions and restore the Passover. Josiah followed God’s blueprint to restore the Passover; we can follow God’s blueprint, the New Testament, to restore New Testament Christianity. Yes, it has been about nineteen hundred years since the New Testament Scriptures were completely revealed, but they have not changed. We can still read, understand and follow (do) God’s will and be the church of Christ as it is described in the New Testament (Lev. 23:5-6; 2 Kin. 22:8-13; 23:1-3; 2 Chr. 35:1-19; Mat. 16:18; Mark 9:1; Acts 2:1-47; Rom. 16:16).

However, we must take heed how and what we hear. WE must not allow our “New Hermeneutic” brethren or others to lead us away from God’s blueprint, the New Testament, as we work to establish New Testament Christianity throughout the world. Brethren, we can still answer from God’s Word that great question, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved” (Acts 16:30-34; Acts 2:38). The same principle is true regarding the organization of the church, its worship, etc. Also, the New Testament still teaches the same doctrine about marking and putting away sinful impenitent brethren (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:13; 2 The. 3:6).

Brethren, we need to realize that we will always have problems in the church. Satan will continue to see to that. However, God expects us to deal sincerely, honestly, scripturally, lovingly and courageously with such problems. We must not simply bury our heads in the sand and ignore problems, but deal with them according to God’s instructions. The church faces multitudes of problems today—at least to a great extent, because we have not taught and practiced God’s will regarding discipline. Let’s get out our New Testament, read (study) and understand (Eph. 5:17) such passages as Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15; 2 John 9-11; et. al.—then DO our Lord’s will by practicing discipline.

Dear brethren, we used to say something like, “Our brethren will DO better when they are TAUGHT better.” We need to make this statement a reality in regard to church discipline. Preaching brethren and elders, let us study the above mentioned passages and others in their context, understanding the meaning of the words, sentences, verses, chapters, etc., THEN “preach the word” and encourage churches far and wide to practice God’s will in regard to discipline. We are not encouraging sinful or wrong attitudes or actions by the church in any way. Rather, we are advocating that we love God and man to the degree that we will DO God’s will in all things, including discipline (John 14: 15; 2 Th. 3:6). Let us fully understand that we cannot improve upon God’s way. His way is always best (Isa. 55: 8-9). We need the faith and courage to obey God and leave the consequences here and hereafter to Him.

Remember, we will ALL be held accountable on that great judgment day for the life we have lived whether it be good or bad, obedient or disobedient (2 Cor. 5: 10; Rom. 14: 12; Ecc. 12:13-14). James says, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jam. 4:17). I recently read about a home Bible study where a man said to the teacher, “I will obey all of God’s commands except one. I really feel that I must use my talents in this way. God must forgive me if this is a sin.” How sad. Yet, brethren, are not many congregations of God’s people saying in regard to discipline—“We will obey all of God’s commands EXCEPT THIS ONE?” Preacher, elder, teacher and all you brethren, where do you stand? If judgment were today, would the gracious, loving, righteous God of heaven say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant?” Really, brethren, is Second Thessalonians 3:6 any more difficult to understand than Mark 16:16 (John 8:32; 7:17; Eph. 5:17)?
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, and Marilyn Hall. Joyce Simmons is scheduled for back surgery the first week in March.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets March 3, 1996
Group 2 meets March 10, 1996
Group 3 meets March 17, 1996

READING/INVITATION
February 28, 1996
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Scot Brazell
March 6, 1996
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THIS DATE
March 17, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at Bay Minette. Study the book of Philippians

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
Write for your free Bible Correspondence Course at 4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526.

PSALMS 128:1-2
“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.”
I DON’T HAVE TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Ken Chumbley

Many times we hear the above statement or similar ones, being made. Not only is this heard from non-Christians, but far too often, from members of the Lord’s church. Yet the Bible tells us that faith only comes as we hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Are YOU finding the time to spend a few minutes each day to partake of spiritual food by reading and studying God’s Word? Let us offer some suggestions that may help you in finding the necessary time:

1. Carry a Bible in your attache case, purse or coat pocket. There is no telling when you might have a few minutes when you could read if you had a Bible available.

2. Put a Bible under your pillow or by your bed. If you cannot sleep, turn on your light and read for a while.

3. Have a Bible with you when you are waiting for unpunctual people or you are waiting for a meeting to start. Every minute of our time is important.

4. Keep a Bible in the glove box of your car. You may get caught in a traffic jam and not able to move or you may have to wait for someone.

5. When ever you make a trip by plane, bus or train, take along a Bible. Reading is more valuable to you than just staring out of the window.

6. Take a Bible when you go to a doctor’s or dentist’s office. Why get stuck with just the old
magazines, usually not very mind challenging, that are in the office.

7. Never forget that reading is a command of God (Col. 4:16).

Time is precious. Don’t waste it when reading from God’s Word is so important. Did you know that if you just spent 30 minutes a day reading the Bible, at the end of the year you would have spent 22 eight-hour days in studying the Bible!

Don’t waste time. Find a way to read from the Word of God each day. We do have the time available if our desire to read the Bible is strong enough. Do YOU have the desire to read God’s Word? How are you going to be able to teach others about Jesus if you don’t know His Word?

PO Box 177; St. Albans, WV 25177

ENTER TO WORSHIP

When Moses stood before God at the burning bush, he was told, “put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exo. 3:5). That ground was not inherently sacred, but was made such by the presence of Jehovah. Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mat. 18:20). Should our appearance in the presence of Jesus be with any less reverence? Yet, sadly, such is not always the case.

We often use our worship period to pass notes, clip fingernails, shuffle papers, talk, etc. —things which certainly show irreverence to our Savior, disturb those sitting nearby, and hinder our own worship. At the risk of raising some dander, may I respectfully submit the following suggestions for worship for our readers’ consideration.

Make a special effort to be in place by the time worship begins. Everyone occasionally gets off schedule; but for the most part we can make it to school, the job and to social appointments on time. When we are habitually tardy, we manifest unconcern for the Lord, miss part of the worship, and distract other worshipers upon our entrance.

In Bible class, limit discussions to those subjects designed for all to hear. Side conversations can be very disturbing to a teacher. It leaves him wondering if there is disagreement, if he has pulled a boner, or if his hairpiece has slipped.

Leave an assembly only when it has been dismissed, unless it is absolutely necessary to do otherwise. If we must leave, we should exit as quietly and inconspicuously as possible.

Don’t talk during a worship period unless there is good cause (mothers certainly have to pass instructions and warnings to their children at times, or speak softly to a little one to console it). Visitation should be no part of the worshiping assembly.

Remember, children’s classes are conducted for children. We should not sit in these classes unless we are a part of the class, or unless we are needed. A good rule of thumb is: if we do not add to its spiritual content, we should not add our presence.

Nursery attendants should remember that they are still in a place of worship. Socializing should not be engaged in; rather they should exhibit an attitude of worship, thus setting a proper example for those little ones placed in their charge.

Don’t start preparing to leave the assembly until it has been dismissed. Shuffling books, papers, and dressing kids can be very distracting during an invitation song, communion service, or closing prayer. Paraphrasing what they say about games, “It’s not over ‘till its over.” Having been dismissed from worship, turn on the charm. Talk,
laugh, visit, get acquainted, enjoy Christian fellowship—don’t be in a hurry to leave (I held a meeting for a congregation recently where, thirty minutes after services, up to one-half the congregation were still present, just enjoying being Christians. That is a growing church. Wonder why?).

In Turkey, I entered a mosque. Before doing so I was told to remove my shoes. Ladies wearing sleeveless dresses were given a covering for their arms. These folk may have a heathen god, but they reverence him. Have we lost that?

“Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:28).

STAND THEREFORE

W. Terry Varner

In describing the Christian soldier (a description applying to ALL Christians), Paul sets forth the various pieces of armament to equip him to “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). The Christian must move forward without retreat and without compromise. In putting on the whole armor of God, we are to “Stand therefore” (Eph. 6:14). We stand in various ways.

1. Stand for something. The battle will always rage between the Christian and the devil. Nothing is more disappointing in general and harmful in particular, than for Christians to stand for nothing. We must stand “for the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3); i.e., that which is right and pleasing to God. If we do not, then our own righteousness will avail and we will not be pleasing to God. In whatever way the Lord needs me, I must STAND THEREFORE.

2. Stand on something. The Lord built His church on one rock or foundation (Mat. 16:18). This is the only foundation on which Christians can build and please God. Paul wrote: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). To stand on the foundation of Christ is to be wise (Mat. 7:24). We cannot stand on denominationalism nor apart from the Lord’s church and please God. STAND THEREFORE!

3. Stand in something. Peter writes: “this is the true grace of God. Stand ye fast therein.” (1 Pet. 5:12). We appropriate the grace of God by an obedient “faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6). This places the Christian “in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2). In God’s grace, we have freedom and liberty. We know that “For freedom did Christ set us” (Gal. 5:1). The freedom or liberty we have in Christ does not imply no boundaries, responsibilities nor conformity. We are to have the mind of Christ (Phi. 2:5) which empowers us to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Mat. 5:13-16). The freedom and liberty in Christ is deliverance from the powers of darkness and sin. We have been delivered “out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Col. 1:13). Jesus is “the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). We are to STAND THEREFORE!

4. Stand apart from sin and error. David describes the child of God as one “that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers” (Psa. 1:1). We are warned that “Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33) and that we are to have nothing to do with that which is “contrary to the sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:10). Let us STAND THEREFORE!

PO Box 104; Marietta, OH 45750
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, and Marilyn Hall. Joyce Simmons is scheduled for back surgery March 5.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets March 3, 1996
Group 2 meets March 10, 1996
Group 3 meets March 17, 1996

READING/INVITATION
March 6, 1996
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
March 13, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Harold Cozad

MARK THIS DATE

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

BAPTIZED
Dallas and Karen Diamond were baptized on February 24, 1996. Keep them in your prayers and help them to grow in Christ. Their address and phone is: 7455 Mobile Highway; Pensacola, FL 32506; 944-3005. Please update your directory.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Sandy and Michael Wilkes have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address and phone number is: 6235 North Blue Angel Parkway; Pensacola, FL 32526; 944-0990. Please update your directory.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

PIG TAIL RELIGION

Bobby Dockery

I read somewhere of a strange custom found among the natives in the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. They prepare a feast with pig as the main entree. They devour the entire pig, except for its tail. Then they offer the tail as a sacrifice to their god. Their god must be content with their leftovers.

It occurs to me that this is not really so different from what a lot of people in “Christian” America are doing as well. Like the islanders of New Hebrides they are content to give their God what they have no use for themselves! We can see this happen in a number of ways.

Some Give God What Is Left Of Their Loyalty. Jesus taught that God must come first in life (Mat. 6:33). But many people place God way down on their list of priorities. They are more loyal to their job, or family, or favorite ball team than they are to their Creator.

Some Give God What Is Left Over Of Their Time. Next to our soul, time is the most precious possession we have. Benjamin Franklin said that time is “the stuff life is made of.” We are commanded to redeem the time because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16). But so often, we are content to give God what little time we have left over from job, hobbies, TV, and other pursuits and pleasures. We give God an hour or two a week and squander the rest on ourselves.

Some Give God What Is Left Over Of Their Money. After taking out the car payment, house payment, utility payments, grocery money, entertainment allowance, etc., etc., they grudgingly give whatever is left (if anything) to God. Giving to God ought to come first! “let every one of you
lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,” Paul commanded (1 Cor. 16:2). Someone has observed:

Ten thousand for my brand new car
Five thousand for a piece of sod,
Sixty thousand to purchase a house—
Ten dollars I give to God.

Yet, there is one big question—
For the answer I still search,
With things so bad in this old world,
What’s holding back my church?

Some Give God What Is Left Of Their Lives. Some have concluded that religion is for old folks. While they are young they intend to “eat, drink and be merry...sow a few wild oats.” And then they plan to turn to God after they’ve had their fun—they’ll give him the empty worn out shell of a wasted life! The Wise Man counsels, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Ecc. 12:1).

God deserves better than pig tails and leftovers. He will never be satisfied with our crumbs. Only our first and finest and best will do for God!

Is He getting it from you?

Olathe, KS. Bulletin

A PRAYER THAT ALL SHOULD PRAY

Lord, keep me from the habit of thinking. I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody’s affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details—give me wings to get to the point. I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others’ pains. Help me to endure them with patience. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains—they are increasing and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all—but thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends in the end.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL OF FELLOWSHIP!!!

Jesse Whitlock

It is in such a time as this that I am forced to recall the words of the apostle Paul, “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16)! Sometimes preaching the gospel of Christ is not the popular thing to do. Yea, sometimes it is a most difficult thing to do.

It is necessary for me to give notice that we must now withdraw our fellowship from certain individuals in the church! There are some who have sinned and brought reproach upon the name of the church. When such a one is reproved and will not repent we must withdraw our fellowship. “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 Thes. 3:6).

Let me state that any qualified elder in the Lord’s church will endorse the action I am now taking. I have not been prying into anyone’s background. However, over a period of time I have taken note of certain things that need to be brought to your attention. I have secured sufficient information from which to speak and
make these charges. For the good of the church in
this place I am calling upon all those who are
faithful in Christ to withdraw fellowship from the
following:

Sister Lips A. Draggin’ 1 Tim. 5:13
Brother Always Complainin’ 1 Pet. 4:15
Sister Anything I. Neverdo Jam. 4:17
Brother Pre Eminent 3 John 9
Sister Ima Barely Cumin’ Heb. 10:25
Brother Luke Warm Rev. 3:15-16
Sister They Say Brother 2 Cor. 10:10
Hurry N. Leave Gal. 2:11-13

It is essential that every faithful child of God’s
determine to have nothing to do with the abovementioned. Let us remember the command of the
apostle Paul, “A man that is an heretick after the
first and second admonition reject” (Tit. 3:10).
Certainly others could be added to this list. We
must withdraw our fellowship immediately.
Whatever it takes, let us do it for the preservation
of God’s family in this place. It is God’s com-
mand (2 The. 3:6-14).

809 E. Perishing Drive; Ardmore, OK 73401

TEN REASONS FOR
REGULAR BIBLE
CLASS ATTENDANCE

1. The Bible, God’s Word, is taught by dedi-
cated Christians.
2. You learn more about Jesus, who died for
you.
3. It gives you an opportunity to learn how to
serve God.
4. It offers friendship and fellowship with real
Christians.
5. It will help you to develop Christian
character.
6. You will be setting the proper example for
your family.
7. Your regular attendance will be a living
testimony to your neighbors.
8. It helps you raise your children “in the
nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).
9. It has the endorsement of many faithful
Christians.
10. It will help you prepare for a life beyond
the grave.

Never does so small an investment pay such
great dividends as does regular Bible class and
worship attendance for the whole family!!

The Cullendale Harvester

NEW BIBLE
CLASSES BEGINNING

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth
and adults) began March 3, 1996, for the Sunday
morning classes and on March 6, 1996, for the
Wednesday evening classes.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
ADULTS I—My God And My Money, Michael
Hatcher, room 7.
ADULTS II—Christian Doctrine I, Jim Loy,
room 1.
ADULTS III—The Eternal Kingdom I, Paul
Brantley, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Studies In Christian
Doctrine And Practical Christian Living, Bill
Gallaher, room 17.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE
ADULTS I—The Doctrine Of Christ Versus The
Doctrines Of Men, Ray Foshee, room 7.
ADULTS II—The Noahic Flood, Michael
Hatcher, room 5.
ADULTS III—Ascertaining Bible Authority, Bill
Crowe, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Studies In Christian
Doctrine And Practical Christian Living, Bill
Gallaher, room 17.

Plan on attending the Bible classes and take
advantage of the excellent teaching from the
Word of God.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Clme, Marilyn Hall, and Joyce Simmons. Linda Worley will have surgery on her elbow on March 26.

BAPTIZED
Robert Fletcher was baptized on February 28, 1996. Please encourage him and keep him in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets March 10, 1996
Group 3 meets March 17, 1996
Group 1 meets April 14, 1996

READING/INVITATION
March 13, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Scot Brazell
March 20, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice

GOSPEL MEETING
A gospel meeting will be held at the Jay Church of Christ, Jay, FL, March 17-22, with Billy Bland, instructor at the Memphis School of Preaching, speaking. Services are: Sunday at 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M., and 7 P.M. Monday-Friday at 7:30 P.M. A door-knocking campaign will be held March 16. If you can help contact the Jay Church of Christ at 904-675-6443 and for further information.
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Al Macias

What do we understand when we read in Jude 3, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”? What did Jude want the brethren of those days, as well as us, to understand from what he wrote? First of all, we learn this passage of Scripture that it was not Jude’s original intentions to write regarding the need for contending for the faith, rather his original intentions were to write regarding the common salvation that all Christians share. Why did he change his mind? It was necessary to change the subject of his letter to deal with a problem that had come upon the brethren somewhat suddenly.

Anytime we are dealing with false teachers and/or false preachers, we are dealing with a very dangerous situation. Anything that can jeopardize the salvation of any person should be considered and dealt with immediately, not after it is too late. Let us analyze this passage of Scripture and see what lessons we can learn from it. First of all, we can learn that Christians are commanded to earnestly contend for the faith. This is not an alternative, this is a command. We are to be ready to be good soldiers of Christ and protect, guard, and defend the faith. And we are to do it earnestly.
No one can teach others what he himself does not know, and so it is with contending or defending the faith. How can a Christian be able to protect, guard, or defend that which he does not know? This commandment from Jude to all Christians implies that Christians should all be good students of the Scriptures and well acquainted with them, so that when the opportunity comes for one to contend for the faith, which is the gospel of salvation, one will be ready and able. In Second Timothy 2:15, we read: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We also read in First Peter 3:15, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” It is very important that all Christians know the faith that has made them free from sin, so that they may be able to communicate it to others. We all need to know this faith very well so that we can occupy ourselves in our salvation with fear and trembling, as we read in Philippians 2:12. Are you contending for the faith that was once delivered to the saints?

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

THE CHURCH’S PLACE IN THE WORLD

Eddie Whitten

The world lives at a fast pace. It used to be that people in rural areas (country folks) lived at a much slower pace than did city folks. There was much more for those in the city to do to keep up with their neighbors. Country folks were not nearly as busy as their city counterparts. Generally speaking, they had more time to devote to God and to His worship. They “took time to be Holy!” They also feared and revered the Father of all living. Worship had a special place in their hearts. Their worship was a time for “offering” rather than “getting.” Gratitude demanded respect and honor for the Father. Thanksgiving was a state of mind, not a time of the year.

Today, there is not much difference between the city folks and country people. The city has moved to the country, and the country has migrated to the city. The amalgamation of the two has affected the general attitude toward God and Christ and the church of our Lord. Everybody wants all the glitter of the world. The respect for God has diminished over the last two or three decades to the point that the majority of religious people now “go to church” rather than “assemble for worship.” They go to “get” rather than to “offer.” They dress as if they may be going to the country for a Saturday afternoon picnic rather than to bow before the Great I AM.

The result of the terrible impact the world has had upon the church is the loss of the greatest blessing man can have: the knowledge of and the deep appreciation for God’s wondrous love and power; of His grace that makes it possible for us to be saved and for the existence of the church for which Jesus died.

What is the place of the church in the world? It is still the same that it always was: It is still the body of our Lord (Eph. 1:22-23) which will be presented by Him to the Father in the day of reckoning (Eph. 5:27). It is still the church which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It is still the church which He purposed through Christ Jesus, our Lord (Eph. 3:10-11). It is still the church to which the Lord adds those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). It is still the church that has only one head, Jesus, our Lord, and that which is lead by the “light of the world” (John 8:12). It is still the church that Jesus promised to
build (Mat. 16:18), which He accomplished on the first Pentecost following His resurrection (Acts 2:1-4). It is still the church governed by His word (2 John 9-11), which will be victorious in the final day.

It is a hard thing to reconcile in our fast-paced life the impact of the world with the peace and tranquility the church represents. Usually the world wins the battle of the mind. Many choose the “broad way,” the world’s appeal, that leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13), but the church is still persisting toward the “mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 3:14). There is a “narrow way” that man must find in order to be saved. The narrow way is found only in the church of our Lord (Mat. 7:14). It (the church) doesn’t seem to have much of a place in today’s world, but it will be victorious in the final day (1 Cor. 15:54-5).

We need a lot more “countrified” people in our world!

NEVER GIVE UP!
J. Lynwood Mathis

The apostle Paul warned the churches of Galatia not to “be weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9). How easy it is to give up when you get tired and grow weary. This is no doubt one of the devil’s best devices. He will just simply “wear us down” if we allow it to happen. Our negative thinking can cause us to grow weary!

When one begins to think that attendance is really an optional matter, it becomes easy to miss the services. After it becomes easy to miss the desire to remain faithful has been weakened. Most people who quit, do not quit suddenly, but they decide attendance is not important and then they start missing occasionally and finally completely quit.

It is also dangerous to start thinking that my attendance and my efforts really won’t make any difference. Many people tend to underestimate their own worth to a cause. One person can make all the difference; one soul is worth more that all the world (Mark 8:36-37). The example of your presence is powerful and the influence of your absence is also felt. Jesus taught us in the parable of the lost sheep the importance of one (Luke 15:4-7). There was no rejoicing over the ninety-nine, but there was great rejoicing when the lost sheep was found.

It is easy to start thinking of the strait and narrow way as an impossible task. Satan would like for all of us to think the Christian life is too difficult. However, we should remember the help we have from our Father in heaven. We can be more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Several passages of Scripture should encourage us to keep trying. Study Philippians 4:13,19; Ephesians 3:20; 1 Corinthians 10:13 and Revelation 2:10. These and many others will encourage us to keep trying and to never give up. We must not faint or quit.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 8:9).

NEW ARRIVAL

Congratulations and best wishes are extended to Lanet and Paul McManaman, the proud parents of a baby girl. Samantha Raquel was born on March 8, 1996. She weighed in at 7 lbs. 15 ozs. and was 20½ inches long. All are doing fine, including her grandmother, Karen Hoffay.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, Marilyn Hall, and Joyce Simmons. Linda Worley will have surgery on her elbow on March 26.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets March 17, 1996
Group 1 meets April 14, 1996
Group 2 meets April 21, 1996

READING/INVITATION
March 20, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Bill Crowe
March 27, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice

GOSPEL MEETING
A gospel meeting will be held at the Jay Church of Christ, Jay, FL, March 17-22, with Billy Bland, instructor at the Memphis School of Preaching, speaking. Services are: Sunday at 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M., and 7 P.M. Monday-Friday at 7:30 P.M. A door-knocking campaign will be held March 16. If you can help contact the Jay Church of Christ at 904-675-6443 and for further information.
“BUT SPEAK THE WORD ONLY”
Gary Colley

Immediately following Matthew’s inspired record of the wonderful Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5-7), where Jesus gave the principles for the kingdom established on Pentecost (Acts 2), it is stated that Jesus healed several who were gravely ill (Mat. 8). In addition to healing the leper, the Centurion’s servant, and Peter’s wife’s mother, the Bible says He “healed all that were sick” (Mat 8:16).

THE PURPOSE OF SIGNS

Though Jesus’ heart was always touched by the sick and needy, the purpose of these signs was not just for the healing of the people broken by illness, but to prove His Heavenly Word was from God. There are no signs, miracles, or spiritual gifts today as in the first century. When the fullness of revelation was written, the signs were done away for all times (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Jam. 1:25). John reminds us of this fact with the words of Nicodemus, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:2). As a semi-conclusion to John’s record he said, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31).

THE CENTURION’S STATEMENT

Our title comes from the centurion’s words to the Lord just after Jesus offered to go home with him to heal his servant. “The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou should-est come under my roof: but speak the word only,
and my servant shall be healed” (Mat. 8:8). When Jesus heard the expressed confidence by this one in His power, it is said that Jesus marveled! This is one of only two times in the Text when it is said that Jesus marveled! The other time was at the disbelief of the Jews! This important commander of a hundred Roman soldiers, evidently a Gentile, comes to the Lord in humility and conviction seen in too few today! His implied affirmative was that Jesus’ spoken Word was Heaven-directed and powerful! So many today refuse to have such faith in the Lord’s Word! Many in schools and the pulpits of our fair land do not have enough faith in the completeness, authority, and power of the Word, to “just speak the Word only”!

GOD’S WORD IS POWERFUL!
Contrary to the thinking of some today, who think we must have something in addition to the Word to “enable” and enliven it, Paul rather confidently affirms, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discriminator of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Paul also believed, and taught Timothy, that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Paul thanked God without ceasing, that, when the Thessalonian brethren received his message, they accepted it “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th. 2:13). Paul’s bold statement that Christ’s Word is “the power of God unto salvation” should be taken seriously by all (Rom. 1:16).

THE INFLUENCE OF ONE
Though so many are now going into apostasy, surely there are at least “7,000” who are and will remain faithful to the Word today! It is our personal responsibility in the church to stand up for the Lord and His Word in this world (1 Tim. 3:14-15). It is amazing what one powerful voice like Elijah’s and Paul’s can accomplish for the Lord’s cause! Let us ever be reminded that the Judgment is still coming, and that men are sure to answer for their attitude toward Jesus’ Word (John 12:48). Let us today “remember the words of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:35) that: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

WARNING
Every man who adds to these words is promised one day that he shall suffer the plagues of God; and every man who takes away from these words, shall lose his part in the book of life and his place in the Holy City! (Rev. 22:18-19). We believe that this is too big a price to pay for tampering with God’s Book, the Bible! Let us determine to be happy to “JUST SPEAK THE WORD ONLY”!

WHEN WE FORSAKE THE WORD OF GOD
Bruce Ligon
Throughout history whenever a group of people have abandoned the will and way of God there has always been confusion and calamity. Indeed, the moral collapse of our nation can be traced to a lack of respect for the authority of the Word of God. The following words from Judges 17:6 and 21:25 accurately describe the overall state of our present society: “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

What is especially alarming in current times is when members of the Lord’s church have an indifferent attitude toward the Scriptures. As emphasized before, whenever a group of people forsake the Word of God the consequences are
always disastrous. Listed below are three suggestions that can help us in avoiding the tragedy of forsaking the Word of God.

Parents must teach the Word of God to their children. It is a shame for a child to be brought up and never have the privilege of being taught the Word of God by their parents. Certainly this is a part of Paul’s admonition concerning how children are to be brought up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). From Deuteronomy 6:6-9, the lesson is that parents are to use every available opportunity to teach the precepts of God to their children. With the increasing temptations that are confronting our young people, parents need to make sure they are training their children to live righteous and godly lives. While parents must teach their children many things, nothing is more important than teaching them the Word of God.

All Christians have the duty and responsibility to diligently study the Scriptures. What has happened to rich and meaningful Bible study among Christians? Unfortunately, it seems that the only times that some people go to the Scriptures is when someone asks them a question they are unable to answer, or if they are dealing with a problem or crisis. Truly, God’s intention is that each of us be diligent and persistent students of His Word. The apostle Peter commanded Christians, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). Peter also admonished Christians, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). The apostle Paul exhorted, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). In reality, when we fail to be regular and diligent students of God’s Word we are depriving ourselves of the wonderful blessings God has richly made available to us in His Word.

We must continue to emphasize that the Word of God is our only source of authority in matters of faith and practice. Without apology or hesitation, we must stand four square on the truth of God’s Word. Since Jesus Christ has all authority (Mat. 28:18), we have no right to deviate, even in the slightest way, from the pattern given to us in the sacred Scriptures. Colossians 3:17 admonishes us, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” The example of Nadab and Abihu’s disobedience (Lev. 10:1-2) should remind us of how crucial it is to abide within the Word of God as our only source of authority for matters of faith and practice.

P. O. Box 651, Plain Dealing, LA 71064

THE AVENUE OF PRAYER
Shan Jackson

The story is told of the ship’s captain of the long ago who became dangerously ill while at sea. He had a well supplied medicine chest but he had failed to bring along a doctor.

He set the ship’s telegraph to work until a doctor could be found. North, south, east, and west until finally a doctor was found. The doctor prescribed medicine and the captain’s life was saved.

Now, let us notice a striking difference between the operator of the wireless and the Christian who prays to God. The former sends a message “hoping” someone will hear. He knows not where his message is going. He knows not if it will be received. However, he who prays knows who will hear and “knows” his request will be considered by a loving Father.

My brethren and friends, let us take full confidence in the avenue of prayer which God has given. As the penman says, “the prayers of the righteous avail much” (Pro. 15:29).

P. O. Box 904, Palacios, TX 77465

THE AVENUE OF PRAYER
Shan Jackson
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Louise Cline, Marilyn Hall, Thomas Muldoon, and Joyce Simmons. Linda Worley will have surgery on her elbow on March 26.

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Group 3 meets April 28, 1996

READING/INVITATION
March 27, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Ray Dodd

April 3, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
April 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at Jay.
Study the book of Colossians.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice

NEW ADDRESS
Ida Williams’ new address is: Laurelwood Retirement Residence; 1851 West Ten Mile Road; Cantonment, FL 32533. Her phone number is 476-4408. Please stop by and see her.

THE DEVIL’S BEATITUDES
Blessed are they who are too tired and too busy to go to church on Sunday, for they are my best workers. Blessed are they who are bored with the preacher’s mannerisms and mistakes, for they get nothing out of the sermon. Blessed are they who gossip, for they cause strife and divisions that please me.

Copied
Hunger For The Word

Romans 10:17 teaches that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. True biblical faith cannot come from the doctrine of devils (1 Tim. 4:1), or from the doctrine, traditions, or philosophy of men (Mark 7:7; Col. 2:8). Through the Word of God, man has been given all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, (2 Pet. 1:3), and everything needful for the man of God to be complete or whole throughly furnished unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). The Word of God saves, directs, and gives encouragement to those who are willing to read, study, and obey. Men, women and children must develop an appetite for God’s Word.

As children of God, we must hunger for His Word. In Nehemiah 8:1, the people gathered themselves together and asked Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses. The people desired to hear the Word of God. Today, many people do not desire to hear the Word of God. They simply do not want to be told that their lifestyle is not in accordance with God’s Word. Thus, they choose to ignore God and His Word as if doing so will alleviate the problem. Some brethren today acknowledge God’s Word as the standard of judgment, but twist and pervert the Scriptures to fit their own selfish desires. Some members of the church of our Lord choose not to read nor study the Word of God on a regular basis. They feel that attending the worship on Sunday morning is all they need for spiritual matters. The Word of God contains all the necessary supplements for one to grow spiritually (1 Pet. 2:2). In order for Christians to grow in the truth and in the
knowledge of God’s Word, which will strengthen their faith, the study of His Word must be adopted.

**Honor The Word**

In Nehemiah 8:5-6, the Scriptures reveal that the people who hungered for the Word of God also honored the Word of God. The reaction of the people, when they saw the book being opened, was to stand. The people displayed honor and respect for the Word of God by standing from morning till midday. It is a shame that some members of the Lord’s church do not seem to honor or respect the Word of God. It is likewise shameful that the worship period held in some congregations is not revered or viewed as holy. This attitude is displayed by some members who decide that the rendering of prayers and the singing of songs is the perfect time to excuse themselves to wander about the building. This action shows little or no respect for God and the worship of Him. Not only does this activity show disrespect, but it is also disturbing to those who have come to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth. The worship period is to be conducted decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). When members are constantly on the move during the worship period, a decent and orderly worship period is not being practiced. Yes, let us honor the Word of God during the worship period as well as in our daily lives.

**Handle The Word**

In Nehemiah 8:7-8, the scribes caused the people to understand the law. The law was given to the people distinctly and the sense was given. In the Hebrew, *distinctly* means to make clear and *sense* means understanding. The law of God was given to the people, clearly and with understanding. Today, the law of Christ must be given in the same fashion. The Word of Christ must be given clearly and with understanding. The Lord desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). In order for this goal to be achieved, preachers and teachers of the gospel must deliver the Word clearly and with understanding. This cannot be accomplished by preaching what the people want to hear. The whole counsel of God must be preached (Acts 20:20,27).

**Heed The Word**

In verses 9-12 of Nehemiah chapter 8, the people heeded the Words of God. When the people received the Word of God distinctly and with the sense, they began to weep. They recognized that their lifestyles were not according to the commands of God. The Levites told the people to hold their peace and not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is their strength. The people were told what to do, and because they had the understanding, they heeded the word, and all the people were obedient. The reaction of Israel, when they heard the Word of God, should be the reaction of men today. We must give heed to the Word of God and obey. If one wishes to have heaven as their eternal home, obedience to God’s Word is essential (Heb. 5:9; 2 The. 1:7-9).

**HOW DID HE DIE?**

*Bobby Key*

It seems that there is a morbid part of man that causes him to be more interested in how people die than in how they lived. When we see a funeral procession, the first question usually asked is, “Whose funeral is it?” Then the second question follows, “How did he die?”

I recently mentioned to a friend on a given occasion that I had a funeral to preach within a few minutes. He asked, “Whose funeral is it?” I told him. Then he asked a very unusual question: “How did he live?”

All the way through the funeral that question kept coming to my mind. It is far more important how people live than how people die. There are a thousand and one different ways to die. As we
stand before God on Judgment Day, the supreme question will not be, “How did you die?” Rather, it will be “How did you live?” “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Psa. 116:15).

WATCH DOGS

Garry Stanton

In this day of high crime the use of a watch dog to protect life and property is fairly common. But not all watch dogs are good watch dogs, in fact, some are very poor watch dogs. Take for example a dog which never barks to alert the presence of an intruder, such an animal may be a good pet but is not worth the food it eats as a watch dog. Another poor example of a watch dog is the dog who barks at any and everything, its bark becomes so common place that no alarm is felt by its owner when it barks. Like the boy who called wolf this dog is no good for warning of danger.

Another poor watch dog is the dog that only barks at other watch dogs. If the neighbors dog begins to bark then this dog barks, otherwise it is silent. There is not much value in a dog that only warns that other watch dogs are giving warning! Equally unreliable is the watch dog who warns of danger but not all danger. It would only take one failure to give warning to cause the dog’s owner to distrust his watch dog. The only good watch dog is the one that warns at every intruder and every danger and never barks at anything else.

The Bible teaches that God’s people need someone to warn of danger. Paul said to the Ephesian elders, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29-31). Like the watch dogs there are some who are good at warning and some that are not good at it. There are some who never warn of any danger to God’s people, their basic philosophy is “you’re alright and I’m alright.” They see no danger in false teaching about marriage, divorce, and remarriage, they do not see the false doctrine of denominationalism as a problem, they view church discipline as a mistake, etc. They never warn anyone about anything.

Then there are those who warn of everything. They see danger everywhere, even when there is no danger. The problem is their credibility is questioned and their influence for good is lost.

Then there are some brethren who only warn of those who are warning of real dangers. To them the dangerous thing is not the danger itself but those who are trying to follow the divine mandate to warn other Christians! They criticize those who they say are critical, they say it is a sin to call something a sin, they say it is a sin to warn anyone about anything. Those who are against something, they cast the first stone on those who cast the first stone. Their inconsistencies are obvious.

Some warn of certain dangers and ignore others. They do not warn against all dangers, they do not proclaim “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). As a watch dog that only warns of some danger and not all is unreliable, so is the Christian unreliable who only warns of some of the spiritual dangers. They have either never learned to warn of dangers or have forgotten their duty to the Lord and fellow Christians.

Watch dogs are not bad and evil, they are life savers.

2707 Mt. Holly Road; Camden, AR 71701

Day Light Savings Time changes on Sunday, April 7, at 2:00 A.M. Set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday evening before going to sleep.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Thomas Muldoon, Harold Staples, Joyce Simmons, and Linda Worley.

BAPTIZED
Margaret Michaels was baptized on March 25, 1996. Keep her in your prayers and help her if you can. Margaret’s address is 7201 Burner, Apt. 8D; Pensacola, FL 32526. Her phone number is 455-0639. Please update your directory.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets April 14, 1996
Group 2 meets April 21, 1996
Group 3 meets April 28, 1996

READING/INVITATION
April 3, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee
April 10, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

MARK THESE DATES
April 5, 1996–Baby Shower for Lanet McManaman at 7:00 P.M., in the Zone Room.
April 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at Jay.
Study the book of Colossians.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice

JOHN 4:24
“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

Lester Kamp

The Lord’s people have always been attacked and challenged by those in the world. The undenominational church of the New Testament today continues to be criticized by the denominations of the world. On each occasion when the church is attacked from without, we must be willing and able to defend the “bride of Christ” by using the “sword of the Spirit.” As Jude wrote, we must be willing to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). The soldiers of Christ must be steadfast and unmovable. The attacks from without will do nothing but make the Lord’s people stronger as long as the truth is cherished and defended against these attacks. The greatest danger to the Lord’s church today is the spirit of compromise which seems to be growing in popularity among the ranks of the Lord’s people. Our attempts to persevere in the restoration of the New Testament church are not unlike Nehemiah’s efforts to restore the walls of Jerusalem. Several made efforts to stop the rebuilding of the walls. They began by using force; their efforts failed. They then desired Nehemiah to leave the work to meet for discussion. This also failed because Nehemiah saw this invitation as an invitation to compromise. His reply was, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.” It is interesting to notice in this regard some words of brother F. G. Allen written in about 1886, which are profoundly important even today. He wrote, “While
we remain true to the principles on which we
started out, there is no earthly power that can
impede our progress. But, the day we leave these
walls and go out to take counsel with the world
will mark the day of our decline. We have noth-
ing to fear from without. Our only danger is from
within. This danger lies in the direction of indif-
ference and compromise. While we are true to
God in the maintenance of these principles, the
divine blessing will rest upon our work. But,
should they ever be surrendered, ruin will as cer-
tainly follow as that the Bible is true” (Old Path
Pulpit, p. 33).

Certainly it will not benefit the Lord’s church
to invite denominational speakers into our class-
rooms and pulpits. It will bring only catastrophe
to the Lord’s church to encourage meetings with
these who have set aside the principles of New
Testament Christianity in a spirit of compromisefor the sake of “friendship.”

We must, as Nehemiah, live by the principle,
“We made our prayer unto our God, and set a
watch against them day and night” (Neh. 4:9).

4935 Meadowood Circle; Baytown, TX 77521

"THE RIGHT WAY"

Howell Bigham

The apostle Peter penned the following in
reference to false teachers “Which have forsaken
the right way, and are gone astray, following the
way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the
wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for
his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s
voice forbade the madness of the prophet” (2 Pet
2:15-16). Observe that Peter mentioned the right
way. The Bible repeatedly affirms that there is a
right way to follow and a wrong way to avoid
(Mat. 7:13-14; 1 John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:1-2). In
this article, may we focus on several points in
regard to traveling the right way.

There is the right way in regard to our wor-
ship. Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that
worship him must worship him in spirit and in
truth” (John 4:24). To be right, we must worship
the right object—God, in the right attitude—in
spirit, and according to the right standard—the
truth or the Word of God. When we come to-
together, we are to pray to God (Acts 2:42); preach
the Word (Acts 20:7); sing without the accom-
paniment of any mechanical instrument of music
(Eph. 5:19); give as we have been prospered
(1 Cor. 16:1-2); and partake of the Lord’s supper
in memory of His death (1 Cor. 11:23ff). To fail
in any of these areas will render our worship
unacceptable and vain in the eyes of God. This is
the right way to worship our God!

There is the right way in being saved. The
religious world offers many ways for man to be
saved. However, God offers but one way—and it
is the right way! Christ being the eternal cause of
salvation (Rom. 10:17); believe in Him (John
8:24); repent of one’s sins (Luke 13:3); confess
Christ before man as the Son of God (Mat. 10:32-
33); and be baptized for the remission of one’s
sins (Acts 2:38). Further, to keep saved one must
remain faithful to death (Rev. 2:10). When a
Christian errs, he is to repent and ask for God’s
giveness (Acts 8:22-24). This is the only right
way to be saved. To obey another plan is to say
that the Lord’s way is wrong and that man is
wiser than the Lord.

There is the right way in Christian living.
Listen to the following passages concerning
Christian living. James wrote, “Pure religion and
undefiled before God and the Father is this, To
visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,
and to keep himself unspotted from the world”
Paul said, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2). John penned that we are not to love the world, defining the world as the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. He further stated that “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17). In all three references, there is a right way and a wrong way for the Christian to live. Far too many have forsaken the right way and have chosen the course that leads to condemnation in Hell. May Christians always strive to be the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mat. 5:13-16) in living for the Lord.

**There is the right way in dying.** The only way to die is in the Lord (Rev. 14:13). Every day, souls are dying unprepared to meet God. We read in Luke 16:19-31 of the rich man who was carried away into the tormenting compartment of the Hadean realm. Why? The answer comes back—he was unprepared to meet God. Hebrews 9:27 reads “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Can you say like Paul “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Tim. 4:6)? Prepare your soul for heaven now, and when you die, you will have the same assurance and hope that Paul cherished—the hope of living eternally in that home of the soul called heaven!

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### BELLVIEW LECTURES

The Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures, *Preaching God Demands*, will be held **June 8-12, 1996**.


If you are planning on attending the Bellview Lectures be sure to make your motel reservations now. The Hospitality Inn (904-453-3333 or 800-321-0052) is available nearby. Pensacola is a great place to take your summer vacation and at the same time attend the Bellview Lectures. Further information will be printed in future issues of the Beacon and the Defender, or it can be obtained by contacting the office by telephone or mail.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Thomas Muldoon, Harold Staples, Joyce Simmons, Linda Worley, Angela Fletcher, and Dan Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law). Bea Waters (Leon’s mother) is in need of blood platelet transfusions. If you can donate, contact Fran Waters.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets April 14, 1996
Group 2 meets April 21, 1996
Group 3 meets April 28, 1996

READING/INVITATION
April 10, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Gallaher
April 17, 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
April 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at Jay.
Study the book of Colossians.
June 8-12, 1996–Bellview Lectures.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Fruit

GOLDEN AGERS’ BANQUET
The Golden Agers’ Banquet is a time when those members who are “of age” are honored by a dinner where they can get together for fellowship. Michael Hatcher, preacher of the Bellview Church of Christ, will be the guest speaker. The meal is prepared by several ladies of the congregation and the young people serve the meal.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

“IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE”

Jerry W. Joseph

Can we understand the Bible alike? Some say, “It is impossible.” Others reply, “It really doesn’t make any difference.” Some think that one person can understand it one way and another a different way and God is pleased with both. Nothing can be farther from the Truth. In seeking to understand a verse in the Bible, one cannot say that he understands it one way and someone else understands a different way. When that occurs it is evident someone misunderstands what God has said. Can we understand the Bible alike?

In Second Timothy 3:16-17, we learn that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The Bible is from God. In His Word we learn that He desires we be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). Not only does He desire our salvation, He has demanded that we obey in order to have salvation (Mat. 7:21). But we cannot obey unless we understand what He demands (Mat. 13:15). If this is true, and it is, then surely His Word has been given to us in an understandable way.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:17, “understanding what the will of the Lord is,” and in Ephesians 3:4, “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand.” We are commanded to “speak the same thing...be perfectly joined together in the same mind.” How can we do this without understanding the Bible?

We are going to be judged by His Word at the
Judgment (John 12:48). We had better make sure that we understand not misunderstand His Word. Only by understanding and obeying His Word can we stand justified in that day. If we misunderstand His Word and practice and proclaim that misunderstanding, then we will be practicing and proclaiming that which is not God’s Word.

What God demands of one person today in becoming a Christian and living a faithful dedicated life, He demands of all and that must be understood (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Mat. 10:32-33; Mark 16:16; John 4:24; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

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“WHERE IT OUGHT TO BE”

Solomon said long ago, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pro. 22:6).

There are many things that go into the building up of the character of the children that come into our homes for such a short period of time. However, the Lord will hold us accountable for the way in which we instill the right principles of life. One area in which so many parents overlook, is in the realm of good manners. Yes, this too, is a part of being a child of God. When Paul described love in First Corinthians 13, one of the principles of love is, that love “doth not behave itself unseemly” or as J. B. Phillips translates it, “love has good manners.”

Good manners are something more than just superficial frosting on the cake. The one who is taught to say, “please and thank you,” “excuse me, and I beg your pardon,” is not the one who is rude or thoughtless in his relationship with society.

Consideration for others goes hand in hand with the speaking of courteous words.

While we do not discount the value of the “diamond in the rough,” we still realize it is the stone which has been carefully cut and polished that brings the greatest market value.

The youth who has been carefully disciplined and trained in the surface amenities has a firm base from which it is easy to make the transition from childhood to the adult world. Knowing what to say and when to say it is as important to man as oil is to machinery.

Altogether too much is expected today of church, school, and community. None of these outside influences can counteract the impact of what a child learns at home. It just might make a big difference in the church and the world in which we live if we were more thoughtful of this responsibility.

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

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For further information please contact the office by phone or mail. We hope to see you in June.
**Preaching God Demands**

**Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures**

**June 8 -12, 1996**

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<td>Micaiah As A Preacher</td>
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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Thomas Muldoon, Harold Staples, Joyce Simmons, Linda Worley, Angela Fletcher, Ida Williams, Nancy Loy’s father has cancer, Lillian Hiburn (Marge Williams’ stepmother) has cancer, Clifton Richards (Linda Parker’s father) has congestive heart failure, Dan Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law), and Pam Lewis’ father has liver cancer. Lucille Staples is scheduled for surgery on April 11. Tia McLeod is in Sacred Heart Hospital. Bea Waters (Leon’s mother) is in need of blood platelet transfusions. If you can donate, contact Fran Waters.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets April 14, 1996
Group 3 meets April 21, 1996
Group 1 meets May 5, 1996

READING/INVITATION
April 24, 1996
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Tim Lamb
May 1, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
April 14, 1996–Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
April 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Jay. Study the book of Colossians.
April 21, 1996–Elders/Deacons Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
June 8-12, 1996–Bellview Lectures.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Fruit
THE CRISIS WE FACE

Rod Rutherford

The Lord’s church faces a crisis today! Anyone who is even casually informed about what is happening in our brotherhood will agree that this is the case. Across our land and in foreign fields churches are troubled and some have already divided over a wide range of problems and issues. Current problems facing the church include false teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage; cultic practices found in the “Crossroads movement”; the unity movement which would compromise on instrumental music and other doctrines in order to fellowship the Independent Christian Church; questions concerning the purpose of baptism; emphasis on social-recreational activities to the detriment and sometimes exclusion of evangelism and benevolence; false teaching on law and grace; theistic evolution; theological modernism; etc.

In addition to these problems, there seems to be a growing worldliness in the church. Social drinking is practiced and defended by an increasing number of brethren. Fewer and fewer see anything wrong with dancing. The wearing of immodest clothing and the practice of mixed swimming are no longer issues with most Christians. It is increasingly difficult to see any difference between the lifestyles of many Christians and that of people in the world.

What is responsible for the growing doctrinal crisis? To what cause or causes may we attribute the increasing worldliness in the church? It is my judgment that it all boils down to one simple cause—lack of respect for God’s Word! When people cease to respect God’s Word, they cease to study it. When people cease studying God’s
Word, they gradually move farther and farther away from the New Testament pattern for the work, worship, and organization of the church. Their lives also betray their ignorance of the Word for they become lax in their standards of morality and modesty since they no longer recognize an authoritative guide.

Members of the Lord’s church were once known as people of the Book. We were a “Bible totin’, Bible quotin’” people. We generally knew what we believed and why and could cite the Scripture passages to substantiate it. No longer is this the case. Sermons of our preachers just a few years ago were notable because of the numerous Scriptures quoted or read. All too many sermons today are notable for their lack of Scripture references. The Bible used to be studied verse by verse in our Bible schools. Now, lesson books emphasize “how to feel good about ourselves,” “how to overcome stress,” “the power of positive thinking,” etc. I heard a highly respected veteran preacher say a few years ago that “never have we had finer classroom facilities, better trained teachers, more attractive Sunday School literature, and more Bible ignorance than at present.”

The answer to the crisis is simple. We must get back to the Bible! We must “study to show ourselves approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2:15). We must “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein” (Jer. 6:16). We must challenge our denominational neighbors and our digressive brethren to go to “the law and to the testimony” and speak according to it (Isa. 8:20). We must always approach a new problem, idea, or teaching with the question, “What is written?” (Luke 10:26). Practices must be ascertained to be lawful according to God’s Word.

We will not have the unity for which our Savior prayed (John 17) or see the growth in the church that we all desire until we get back to the Bible, learn it, love it, respect it, live it, and teach it as our brethren did in former days. May God help us to do it!

WE MUST GET BACK TO THE BIBLE!

MEMORY RULES

Forget each kindness that you do, as soon as you have done it.
Forget the praise that falls to you, as soon as you have won it.
Forget the slanders that you hear, before you can repeat it.
Forget each spite, each sleight, each sneer where e’er you may meet it.
Remember every kindness done to you, what e’er its measure.
Remember praise by others won and pass it on with pleasure.
Remember every promise made and keep it to the letter.
Remember those who lend you aid and be a grateful debtor.
Remember all the happiness that comes your way in living.
Forget each worry and disaster, be hopeful and forgiving.

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Canned Fruit

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
There is just one way to bring up a child in the way he should go and that is to travel that way yourself.  
Lincoln
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9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

THE NEED TO BLUSH

Jimmy Clark

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD” (Jer. 6:15).

One of the indicators that a conscience is sensitive to sin is blushing. A good conscience takes no pride in sin. When sinful things do not produce a sorrowful reaction in the life of a person, especially a Christian, then something is seriously wrong. Jeremiah spoke to people who had no remorse over the abominable things taking place in and among them. Without a sense of guilt and shame, men do not see the need for help and correction. Think about some things today that demand the need to blush.

DRESS

The first recorded reaction of man when sin entered the world was shame. “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). The consciences of Adam and Eve were very sensitive. Though their apparel was inadequate, they did not see the need to be covered. Consider this in light of Paul’s words to Timothy. “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” (1 Tim. 2:9). Underscore the word, shame-
facedness. Shamefacedness is the attitude that Adam and Eve had. When this attitude declines, modesty also declines. There is no doubt that the promiscuousness of today has had a vast influence on modest dress. The prevalence of immodesty does not show God’s approval of such. Modesty is a moral issue and morals have not changed from the beginning of time. When a person wears little more than his undergarments and does not blush, then he or she is in the same state as those in Jeremiah’s day.

DIALOGUE

There was a day in which vulgarity and profanity were offensive and disgusting to people. Today, one can hardly go through a day without hearing something that is base and immoral. There is a danger that Christians might be calloused toward bad language and lack of taking the proper stand because such is commonplace in society. The light of some has greatly dimmed or even been extinguished because of participation in worldly conversation. James said, “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jam. 8:10). Paul wrote, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29). The words of one’s mouth declare the purity of one’s heart. A Christian finds nothing amusing in language that promotes wickedness.

DEMEANOR

The activities of today must be viewed with discretion. One needs only to read Judges 17:6 to see what happens when people do that which is right in their own eyes. Dancing, drinking, mixed swimming and the like are not activities which Christians desire to participate in. It is no wonder that Paul told Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). There is a great need that people in the church be examples to each other. One can never expect to make an impact on the immorality of the world when members of the church do not blush over ungodly activities. The Christian life is one of decency and honor. May all seek to develop a conscience that is always ashamed of sin.

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Preaching God Demands  
Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures  
June 8 -12,1996

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Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Thomas Muldoon, Harold Staples, Joyce Simmons, Linda Worley, Ida Williams, Tia Mcleod, Clayton Richards (Linda Parker’s father), Dan Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law), and Virgil Roush (Susan Hollowell’s father). Bea Waters (Leon’s mother) is in need of blood platelet transfusions. If you can donate, contact Fran Waters.

RESTORED
Champ Hollowell was restored on April 14, 1996 and Susan Hollowell was restored on April 21, 1996. Please keep them in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets May 5, 1996
Group 1 meets May 12, 1996
Group 2 meets May 19, 1996
Please note the change in dates.

READING/INVITATION
May 1, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Tony Liddell
May 8, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

MARK THESE DATES
May 5, 1996–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing will be held after the morning worship service.
June 8-12, 1996–Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures, Preaching God Demands.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Fruit
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

SIN AND THE SOLUTION

Mark Hanstein

The New Testament warns of “the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13). Its “deceitfulness” is one thing that makes sin so dangerous.

While there is a certain measure of pleasure in sin (Heb. 11:25), it is actually unprofitable (Pro. 22:8). And, “the way of transgressors is hard” (Pro. 13:15).

Sin is progressive. For King David, a moment’s lust led to adultery, lies, and murder. No wonder he wrote, “For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me” (Psa. 38:4); and, “my sin is ever before me” (Psa. 51:3). Even though he gained God’s forgiveness, David’s sin brought to him a lifetime of sorrow.

Sin destroys the soul. “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

The good news is that there is a Savior who will “redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14). For the Christian, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). And the child of God should always remember, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleareth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). To continue to overcome
sin in our lives we must “Abhor that which is evil” (Rom. 12:9), and “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th. 5:22). The apostle Paul further advises that Christians “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11-17).

WHAT WILL THE SEED PRODUCE?

Al Brown

In the parable of the Sower, Jesus said the seed which was sown was the Word of God (Luke 8:11). He talked about the kinds of soil (hearts) in which the seed could not function. Then he said the “good and honest heart” was where the Word of God would germinate and bear fruit (Luke 8:15).

The point has been made countless times that if the Word of God, without any trace of humanly-devised doctrine, is planted in good and honest hearts, it will produce the same thing that germinated and grew in the first century—Christians. In contrast, if any other kind of seed is sown (the doctrines of men), the resulting “plant” will be the offspring of worldly wisdom. Jesus said the Father will root up every such plant (Mat. 15:13).

Plants reproduce after their kind. Hence, it is impossible to sow worldly wisdom and reap a child of God—or to sow the pure Word of God and produce a denomination whose very foundation rests on the wisdom of men. To deny, pervert, twist, or ridicule what Jesus taught can only be described as unbelief (infidelity) of the rankest sort. Such a person is cursed by God—devoted to destruction (Gal. 1:6-9).

Jesus was not lying in this parable. God’s Word (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). We are born again into the Lord’s kingdom by that seed (1 Pet. 1:22-25; Col. 1:13-14). Anyone who denies this is a false teacher. Who will we believe—Christ or ignorant men?

PO Box 39 Spring, TX 77383

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## Preaching God Demands

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  Bob Berard
- **8:00 P.M.**  Preaching On The Worship Of The Church  
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Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith
May 15, 1996
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Corey Bittner

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PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Fruit
THE SIN OF PETTING

Gil Yoder

In our fast paced society the sin of petting seems like such a little thing. We see sex promoted on television, movies, magazines and books, and hear it on radio and music CDs. You can even get your fill of sexually explicit material on the Internet. We have problems with homosexuality, and premarital and extramarital sex. Politicians and movie stars proclaim that there is nothing wrong with any of this, and the “people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jer. 5:31).

So what is so wrong with petting? With all of these problems so prevalent, it seems that to focus on such a relatively minor problem is just a little too much. Nevertheless it is a problem that needs to be discussed.

Petting as we are using the term in this context refers to the use of touch to arouse passionate sexual desires. It includes the acts of amorous hugging and kissing, and feeling or fondling someone for sexual pleasure, either dressed or undressed. Given the freedom that many have usurped in the area of sexual behavior, petting is seen as innocent fun for the young, but it will surely condemn the one who engages in this kind of behavior.

The place for the satisfaction of sexual desires is in and only in the bonds of matrimony. Paul wrote to the unmarried Corinthians that it would be best for them at that time if they would not marry; “But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Cor. 7:9). “To burn” in this context refers to...
the passionate desires that can naturally arise. But rather than allow a little “innocent fun” to satisfy those desires, Paul prescribed marriage, even at a time when it was inconvenient.

Besides this, petting is obviously a prelude to other sins of a more serious nature. (Not that petting itself is not serious enough!) It leads to indecent exposure of the body, and other sexual acts. If the young man or young lady will stop the petting before it starts, it is unlikely if not unimaginable that these other sins will be a problem. If the petting is allowed, it will most assuredly lead to these more serious indecencies.

All Christians have an obligation expressed in Paul’s command to a young minister, Timothy: “keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). The word translated “pure” means “pure from carnality, chaste, modest, pure from every fault, immaculate, clean.” Petting violates this command and brings harm upon all those so engaged. A true Christian’s first desire is to please the Lord (Gal. 1:10). This means we will behave ourselves wherever we are, and keep our hands to ourselves.

Via 4400 West Tulare Ave; Visalia, CA 93277

THE KINGDOM AND ITS FINANCES

Bill Jackson

The work of the kingdom goes on, and financing that work is a permanent challenge before us. The individual is involved because the duty of giving is addressed to each and every one of us (1 Cor. 16:2). Among those matters of Christian duty involving great testing, our giving stands at the top of the list: Will my performance be of such quality that God can see that I am not materialistic and covetous?

Several things to bear in mind as I examine myself: (1) Do I give each and every first day of the week as God has prospered me? (2) Have I examined myself to insure that I am giving proportionately—as prospered? (3) Do I give after study and prayer, to thus “purpose in the heart?” (2 Cor. 9:7). (4) Am I cheerful in my disposition toward this matter? (5) Am I alert to special needs and opportunities presented before us, that I can provide an increase? and (6) When I am away, do I still provide that weekly support for the work of God which must go on whether I am there or not?

Copied

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Group 2 meets May 19, 1996
Group 3 meets June 23, 1996

**READING/INVITATION**
May 15, 1996  
Reading: Allen Brazell  
Invitation: Corey Bittner
May 22, 1996  
Reading: Jerry Caine  
Invitation: Henry Born

**MARK THESE DATES**
May 12, 1996–Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
May 19, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
May 29, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
June 8-12, 1996–Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures, “Preaching God Demands.”

**PANTRY FOOD NEEDED**
Canned Vegetables
MODEST DRESS

Roddy Covington

Modest or decent attire is an issue that arises each year about this time. Most agree that immodest dress is inappropriate; however, not very many agree as to what constitutes immodesty. As always the Bible has something to say about this and many are not going to like it!

What about modern day swim suits? From the onset of time God has deemed nakedness as inappropriate. Adam and Eve sinned causing them to recognize each others nudity. They “sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). The word translated “aprons” is elsewhere used to describe a girdle that covers the loins (1 Kin. 2:5; Isa. 32:11). God considered this “apron” (similar to modern day swimsuits) inadequate dress and made for them clothes out of animal skins (Gen. 3:21).

Unquestionably, modern swimsuits would also be considered inappropriate by God and public swimming or sunbathing in mixed company is not for God’s people.

What about short shorts? The prophet Isaiah used this example that will help us understand God’s regulation on “nakedness.” In Isaiah 47:2-3 we read, “Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen.” Exposing the thigh (above the knee) constitutes “nakedness.” We should be mindful of this principle when we buy and wear summer clothes.

What about short skirts? In the Old Testament times the priest wore robes similar to dresses or
skirts. A specific command was issued by the law of Moses forbidding them from going up steps to the altar while wearing this skirt, thus allowing the possibility for someone to see underneath the robe; “Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon” (Exo. 20:26). Anyone wearing a skirt so short that (whether sitting, standing, or using stairs) would expose themselves is not being very mindful of God’s provisions under the Old Testament forbidding such.

When provocative clothing is displayed it is likely that someone will be provoked to look and lust. Jesus said if a man “looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat. 5:28). Some worldly minded men and women will look and lust even when not provoked; but woe unto those who, by their dress, provoke lust. Jesus said, “Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Mat. 18:7). Don’t, by your dress, promote sin in an already darkened world. Be a light to those in darkness, set yourself apart from the world especially with your attire.

2707 Mt. Holly Road; Camden, AR 71701

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PREACHER’S POINT

John T. Lewis commented, “I would rather have thousands to say to me at the judgment, ‘We heard you preach and you hurt our feelings,’ than to have just one lost soul to say, ‘I heard you preach, but you did not tell me the truth.’”

Squoted by Gary Colley in “The Expository Review”

SYMPATHY

The Bellview congregation extends its sympathy to Mildred McDonald and her family in the death of her husband Raymond, who passed from this life on May 6, 1996. Raymond and Mildred were former members of the Bellview Church of Christ.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Day</th>
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VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets May 19, 1996
Group 3 meets June 23, 1996
Group 1 meets June 2, 1996

READING/INVITATION
May 22, 1996
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Henry Born
May 29, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
May 18, 1996–Work Party at 8:00 A.M., here at the building.
May 19, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Bellview. Study the book of First Thessalonians.
May 19, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
May 29, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
June 8-12, 1996–Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures, “Preaching God Demands.”

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Vegetables

NEW ADDRESS
Greg and Pam Lewis’ new address is 5022 Cottonwood; Memphis, TN 38118. Their phone number is the same. Please update your directory.
THE SIN OF NOT ASSEMBLING

Michael Gifford

The laxity of some Christians toward assembling with the saints in worship could be due to their misunderstanding of the seriousness of forsaking these times of assembling. When we speak of absence from the worship services, we rightly refer to such as sin. Hebrews 10:24-25 exhorts, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Beyond this clear command to assemble with the saints, there are several other New Testament commands and principles which are violated when one chooses another activity over fellowship with the saints at appointed times of worship.

The Christian who absents himself from the Sunday worship hours not only transgresses Hebrews 10:24-25, but also First Corinthians 11:23-24 and Acts 20:7, the verses which teach us that we are to gather to partake of the Lord’s Supper each first day of the week. The Christian who skips worship services violates First Corinthians 16:1-2, for he does not give of his means on the first day of the week. He stands in opposition to Ephesians 5:19, for he is not in the assembly to speak to other brethren through the divinely authorized means of singing and making melody in his heart.

But the violations of Scripture go on. The absentee Christian disobeys Matthew 6:33, for he is most certainly NOT seeking the kingdom of heaven first. The Christian who claims to be a follower of God and yet refuses to submit to such a simple command as assembling with the saints...
is guilty of the sin of hypocrisy, which is so plainly condemned in the Word (Rom. 12:9; 1 Pet. 2:1). Then, we must consider the fact that one who will not meet with the saints apparently does not love the saints. Consequently, there is another principle which he violates—loving the brethren. First Peter 2:17 says, “Love the brotherhood.” Romans 12:10 instructs, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” John 13:35 reads, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Do you see what happens when you “just miss church” for whatever unjust reason? It’s bad enough for one’s absence to place him in violation of one command (i.e., Heb. 10:24-25), but the list of commands he disobeys via his absence is considerably more lengthy than just that one passage. One puts his soul in a dreadfully dangerous dilemma when he makes a habit of missing worship services. As one man said, “Christians are like cars. They start missing before they quit.”

Your absence says a great deal about your faith (or lack of it). It is an indication that you do not really want to go to heaven. Chronic absentees from worship are on the path to destruction and should be withdrawn from, for they are walking disorderly (2 Th. 3:6). We have counted absenteeism as a trifling matter long enough. Let it be frankly stated: Forsaking the assembling of the saints constitutes many sins, any one of which is sufficient to condemn a soul to hell if persisted in.

SUNDAY MORNING WITH THE SEVEN DWARFS

Sleepy—“Oh, I’m so tired! That party last night lasted too long. I didn’t get much rest. What if I nod off in Bible class? I think I’ll stay home.”

Dopey—“I don’t know whether I’ll go or not. I want to go, but I just don’t know.”

Sneezy—“I don’t feel too good, and besides, I may give my hay fever to someone; worse still, I may catch something from someone, I’ll stay in today.”

Bashful—“I might not know everybody in class. I hate to meet so many people. It’s just too much to expect of anyone.”

Grumpy—“I don’t like the teacher, and besides, we’re studying an uninteresting subject, and some of those people in class, well....”

Doc—“What a gorgeous day! It’s a shame to waste such a great day for golf! I could miss just this one Sunday.”

Happy—“Smile, brethren, and be happy and thankful for the opportunity to go to Bible class to learn more about God and His will for us. Smile, and make someone else happier as you go to Bible class with a smile on your face.”

BELLVIEW LECTURES

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The lecturership book, “Preaching God Demands” will be available during the Bellview Lectures. It will contain twenty-eight chapters and approximately 375 pages. Audio and video tapes will also be available.

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday.

For further information, please contact the office by phone or mail.
# Preaching God Demands

## Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures

### June 8 - 12, 1996

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VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets June 2, 1996
Group 2 meets June 16, 1996
Group 3 meets June 23, 1996

READING/INVITATION
May 29, 1996
   Reading: Bill Cline
   Invitation: Paul Brantley
June 5, 1996
   Reading: Mike Dobbs
   Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THESE DATES
May 29, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
June 8-12, 1996–Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures, “Preaching God Demands.”
June 16, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Second Thessalonians and First Timothy chapters 1-3.
June 23-28, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp (Teen Week).
July 7-12, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
   Canned Vegetables

   JAMES 4:17
   “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
AND WHEN YE PRAY...

Bill Jackson

Some time back, one who had recently entered Christ expressed difficulty in obtaining “satisfactory prayer” due to it not having been a part of his life earlier, and to him it seemed “artificial.” First, it may be NEW to this babe in Christ, but it should not seem artificial—no, never! It should not seem artificial because the need for prayer, and the value in prayer, are rooted in the faith that one has in God. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). That very rule, the Word of God, teaches us what prayer is, what constitutes acceptable prayer, and speaks of the benefits of prayer.

Naturally, to one just coming to Christ, every part of worship and service to God will be new. One has lived his life to the flesh, and now he lived to God, and the change is total. Having, now, faith and a new love, and a determination to do the Lord’s will in all things (Col. 1:10), there must be a real effort to learn to delight in what is spiritual. As pertains to prayer, we would make these suggestions:

1. Pray daily without fail—yea, more than once per day, including the offering of thanks at meals. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5:17). Development of prayer “habits” is vital, and one of those habits is daily prayer.

2. Pray, letting the prayer touch those areas in the “model” prayer (Mat. 6:9-13). The areas are: Praise of God, the church, God’s will, thankfulness for His care, asking for forgiveness, our dependence on following Him, and offered through the Christ.

3. Pray for others—Elders, preachers, teachers, missionaries, etc., and others involved...
in the work of the church. Pray for those who are sick and bereaved. It is very good, in your praying, to mention these by name.

4. Pray when studying. One, in true study, sees points of duty, and he also sees failures. He can examine himself as he examines the Word. When studying, one finds a good time to speak to the Lord in prayer, acknowledging failings, and expressing purposes to the better.

Prayer should never be artificial. It will become, for the babe in Christ, all the more important, all the more vital, upon exercising oneself in prayer. If slack in this, now is the time to begin doing better.

YOU CAN’T TAKE IT BACK

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Pro. 25:11).

Most of us at one time or another have “put our foot in our mouth” by saying something we wish we hadn’t. One thing is sure—you can’t take it back. Once something is said—it is said. You can’t take it back. You may apologize as an aftermath of inconsideration and bad taste, but what you said won’t be forgotten. You may forget it, but the other person won’t.

THE CHURCH CUSTODIAN

Consider the custodians, for they are few. Who give them the honor and praise that is due.

They seldom are mentioned by sinner or saint; Excepting when somebody makes a complaint. A temperature was never found or maintained At a degree of which nobody ever complained. Some folks are too warm while other folks freeze, Some feel there’s a draft that will cause them to ail,

While some say the air is too stuffy and stale.

The pews and the floors must be dusted and swept. All the articles placed where they ought to be kept.

It seems that some people will never put back The Bible or song book they take from the rack. The preacher is praised for the message he brings; The church acclaimed for the music it sings: But scanty and rare is the praise we bestow On the ones who attend to our needs here below.

So when we give people the praise that is due, We should all remember our custodians, too!

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<td>Garry Barnes</td>
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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Harold Staples, and Tia Mcleod. Bea Waters (Leon’s mother) is in need of blood platelet transfusions. If you can donate, contact Fran Waters.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets June 2, 1996
Group 2 meets June 16, 1996
Group 3 meets June 23, 1996

READING/INVITATION
June 5, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
June 19, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Harold Cozad

MARK THESE DATES
June 8-12, 1996–Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures, “Preaching God Demands.”
June 16, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Second Thessalonians and First Timothy chapters 1-3.
June 23-28, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp (Teen Week).
July 7-12, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Vegetables

NEW GREAT-AUNTS
Debra and Denise Mowery have become great-aunts to Colten Andruwelch, born on May 17, 1996, to their niece and nephew-in-law, Tamara and Eric Welch. Congratulations!
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS:  Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER:  Michael Hatcher
DEACONS:  Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine,
          Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy,
          Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY:  Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

DO YOU HABITUALLY ARRIVE LATE AT THE SERVICES?

Worshipping God ought to be the most important part of our lives. The worship services should be the high point of our week. However, a lack of regard is often shown for periods of Bible study and worship. How? By consistently being late for the services [or Bible class]? What does habitual tardiness say about us?

It shows carelessness and a lack of planning. Employers expect promptness from their workers. Occasionally one may be late for work, but if it becomes a habit you soon will be visiting the Employment Commission to find a new job. How can people be on time for their jobs, and consistently be late for their appointment with the Lord? Let us be more careful, and plan ahead so that we will be on time.

It disturbs and distracts. Each of us has an effect on how edifying periods of worship will be. Some families consistently walk through the door in the middle of the opening prayer. Others show up after the class, lesson, or singing has already begun. This has a disturbing effect on those who are trying to concentrate on the activities of the hour. How frustrating it is for the teacher to lose the attention of the class because of the distraction of late comers. Let’s not be the source of such disturbance!

It gives visitors bad impressions. Visitors not only observe the preacher and song leader, but the members as well. They notice tardiness! They see that the members don’t
care enough about the proceedings to put forth the effort to be on time. An impression of laxness is given. Let’s seek to give the proper example.

How can we solve the problem? Get to bed at a decent hour on Saturday night, and set the alarm 15 minutes earlier on Sunday morning. Don’t be late on Wednesday night because of watching T.V. reruns which you have seen countless times already! View periods of worship and Bible study as being important. Instead of being bored with worship, have the attitude of David: “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1).

NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGIN

New Bible Classes for all age groups (youth and adults) began June 2, 1996, for the Sunday morning classes and on June 5, 1996, for the Wednesday evening classes.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

ADULTS I—The Eternal Kingdom II, Paul Brantley, room 7.
ADULTS II—My God And My Money, Michael Hatcher, room 1.
NEW CONVERTS—Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

ADULTS I—The Noahic Flood, Michael Hatcher, room 7.
ADULTS II—Ascertaining Bible Authority, Bill Crowe, room 1.
NEW CONVERTS—Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

NOTICE—A SIGN

A Sign, found on the front door of a church building, read:

If you are on time, come right in!
If you are unavoidably late, accept our sympathy, you need make no apology. Welcome!
If you are late through neglect, unconcern and laziness, come in humbly and pray God that He may forgive you!
An individual may be unavoidably late occasionally, but not all the time. We actually SPEAK by our ACTIONS. When we are consistently late, we are saying that we have not placed worship, and our participation in it, at a position of priority. When we are on time, we are saying that it is important to us, enough so that we plan ahead, arrive early, prepare our minds, etc. Think on these things.

Via “East Hill News”; Pulaski, TN

A SONG BOOK’S TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt not bend my backs together.
2. Thou shalt not mark on me.
3. Thou shalt not fold nor tear my pages.
4. Thou shalt not use me to hit the babies.
5. Thou shalt not let the children play with me.
6. Thou shalt not throw me on the seat at the end of the song service.
7. Thou shalt not borrow me without returning me to my owner.
8. Thou shalt not use me as a fan.
9. Thou shall extend my life with proper care.
10. Thou shall use me often and understand with thy heart my words.
# Preaching God Demands

## Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures

**June 8 -12, 1996**

### Saturday, June 8
- **7:00 P.M.** God Demands Logical Preaching  
  Bob Berard
- **8:00 P.M.** Preaching On The Worship Of The Church  
  Stanley Ryan

### Sunday, June 9
- **9:00 A.M.** We Must Be Willing To Be Hated By The World And The Brethren  
  Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
- **10:00 A.M.** Preaching The Plan Of Salvation  
  Michael Hatcher
- **11:00 A.M.** Lunch Break
- **2:00 P.M.** Micaiah As A Preacher  
  Clifford Newell
- **3:00 P.M.** Preaching On The Christian Life  
  Shan Jackson
- **4:00 P.M.** Preaching On Heaven And Hell  
  Mel Futrell
- **5:00 P.M.** Dinner Break
- **7:00 P.M.** Preaching On The Church Of Christ  
  Ronnie Hayes
- **8:00 P.M.** Preaching That Turned The World Upside Down  
  Garry Barnes

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  Eddie Whitten
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  Wayne Coats
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SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Susan Hollowell and her family in the death of her father Robert Roush who passed from this life on May 27, 1996.

VISITATION GROUPS
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Group 3 meets June 23, 1996
Group 1 meets July 7, 1996

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Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Harold Cozad
June 26, 1996
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Invitation: Bill Crowe

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PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
THE CHRISTIAN AND

MODESTY

Dennis Gulledge

The dog days of summer are upon us once again. The weather is hotter, the days are longer and there are more opportunities for fun and recreation. This time of year has a strange effect upon the minds of some of God’s children. It seems that the sun causes them to forget one important aspect of Christianity—modesty.

The word modesty means moderate, humble, orderly, well-arranged and decent. Modesty has to do with one’s moral convictions and the observing of proprieties of both dress and behavior. It implies an unwillingness to put ourselves out in a showy way. In this sense Paul addressed Christian women to say, “in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing” (1 Tim. 2:9, NKJV).

Therefore, we understand that this divine injunction has to do with women wearing clothing befitting the moral chastity, purity and sense of decency that Christians must have.

The words in First Timothy 2:9-10 are striking and powerful. “Adorn” means to set in order, prepare. “Modest” means orderly, discreet, decent “Apparel” refers to female dress. “Propriety” means of sound mind, moderate, self-controlled. “Moderation” means bashfulness and a reverence toward God. It applies to those women “professing godliness” or making a claim of being a worshipper of God. The tendency of some women in Paul’s day was to overdress (1 Pet. 3:3-4). There is still that likelihood today (to call
undue attention to oneself), but the main tendency is to underdress possibly to be noticed, admired, or even desired by men. There seems to be some need of vanity in showing off the body to the best advantage.

Christian ladies must be sensitive to the need of modesty for several reasons. First, for the sake of your own influence (Mat. 5:13-14; Phi. 2:15). Second, for the sake of your own physical protection. Although the way one dresses is no guarantee of protection from assault it must at the same time be admitted that we live in a sex saturated society and sex crimes are ever increasing. It would be naive to suppose that bikinis, short-shirts, mini-skirts, etc., do not invite advances from unscrupulous males. Third, for the sake of the difference between the boys and the girls. Jesus addressed the sin of lust to men (Mat. 5:28). Paul addressed the matter of modest dress to women (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Do we need to wonder why in this day and time.

Mablevale, AR

WHAT CAN I DO AS A YOUNG PERSON?

Allen Webster

Many young people are lured into the world as they grow up simply because they never found their place in the Lord’s church. It is frustrating to want to be involved and not know how or what to do. While in one sense the adage, “Youth of today, church of tomorrow,” is true, in another sense it is a dangerous statement. Young people need to plan to be active as preachers, elders, deacons, song leaders, Bible class teachers, personal workers, etc., when they get older. But, if a young person is a baptized believer he has the obligation and privilege to be involved NOW! There is a place for all Christians in the body of Christ, and the work of the church is not complete unless all are active.

Notice these verses: “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:4-5). “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him” (1 Cor. 12:12-18).

Many God-fearing and dedicated young people are ready to be involved and only wait to be pointed in the right direction. Their question: WHAT CAN I DO AS A YOUNG PERSON?

“REMEMBER THY CREATOR.”

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Ecc. 12:1).

It is easier to become a Christian while we are young and our hearts are tender. Far too many have waited for a “convenient season” (Acts 24:25) which never came and will be lost from the presence of God forever because they failed to obey God’s plan of salvation while young. Yet, there are other ways to “remember God” in youth:

1. Remember He created this universe and that evolution is a lie. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).
2. Remember He expects our morality to be above reproach. “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18). “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:22). “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

3. Remember He loves the obedient servant. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9).

4. Remember He wants us to be faithful to death. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

“REMEMBER THE WORDS OF JESUS.” “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

While the specific teaching here is that “it is more blessed to give than receive” this principle of “remembering the works of Jesus” is true with all topics. The only weapon we have against Satan is God’s Word and therefore we must be ready to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” with the “shield of faith” (Eph. 6:16). We should study: “to be quiet” (1 The. 4:11), to “be ready always to give an answer to every man” (1 Pet. 3:15), “to shew thyself approved” (2 Tim. 2:15), to find eternal life (John 5:39), to enjoy spiritual food (1 Pet. 2:2), to keep from sinning (Psa. 119:11) and to save our souls (Jam. 1:21). If you are not studying daily, won’t you start today? Young people need to be ready with a Scripture when Satan comes knocking with a temptation!

“REMEMBER THE POOR.” “Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do” (Gal. 2:10). Young people are under obligation to help support the work of benevolence as are adults. All should give “as they have been prospered.” While giving money is one way to help the needy, it is not the only way. Youth can serve by giving time and energy to help the unfortunate. What greater need is there in a person’s life than the gospel? Young people, take the blessed gospel to your friends! Don’t wait until you get older because the relationships you have now will be gone and opportunities will be lost! (See Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 19:10.)

WHAT CAN I DO AS A YOUNG PERSON?? P-L-E-N-T-Y!

P.O. Box 51; Jacksonville, AL 36265

FERVENT IN SPIRIT

Bill Jackson

Paul writes the epistle to the Romans on the theme of “the justification of all men, Jew or Gentiles, by obedient faith in the Christ.” The first eleven chapters tells of God’s planning and working to bring this to fulfillment; as chapter twelve begins, Paul explains how the justified man lives. Many, many worthwhile points here, but we note Romans 12:11, “fervent in spirit.”

“Spirit” has to do with disposition, attitude, with which one faces and goes about in service to God. “Fervency” is descriptive of that attitude, and its root is “hot, to boil—as water is boiled,” and is thus akin to zealousness.

Now, what does that say about indifference, carelessness, lukewarmness, and lack-of-concern? In our service, we are to be “zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14)—“fervent in spirit.” That true quality is come from one’s conversion and conviction, and real dedication to God, and all the hype, gimmickry, entertainment and whoop-de-la won’t create it!

Copied
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ruth Martin (William Weekley’s daughter), Elaine Pauly (Kathy Brammer’s sister), and Bea Waters (Leon’s mother). Geuenieve Stevens (Fran Waters’ mother) is in Horizon Nursing Home. Jeremy, the son of Terry Claunch, is scheduled for major surgery on June 21.

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Jay and Carmen Worley and their family in the loss of the baby that Carmen was carrying.

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PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat
EIGHT CONCLUSIVE FACTS WHICH PROVE SAUL WAS NOT SAVED ON THE DAMASCUS ROAD

1. WE HAVE NO AUTHORITY FOR CONCLUDING HE WAS SAVED THEN. Christ did not appear on the road to save him: “But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16). No passage states that he was saved then and there. Up to that point (so far as his conversion was concerned) he had done only partially what the others had done to be saved in the other clear examples of conversion recorded in Acts.

2. FIVE FACTS PROVE SAUL WAS NOT SAVED THEN. Were Saul saved on the road to Damascus, he knew nothing about it, for he cried, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Had he been saved, he would have known it (1 John 2:3-4). Were Saul saved on the road to Damascus, the Lord knew nothing of it, for He said to Saul, “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). Were Saul saved on the road to Damascus, the Lord knew nothing of it, for He said to Saul, “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). Were Saul saved on the road to Damascus, Ananias knew nothing of it, for he told Saul exactly what the Lord instructed him to tell, ”And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Were Saul saved on the road to Damascus, he was the
most miserable Christian for three days of which we have record. Such is not in accord with the Ethiopian eunuch, the jailer, etc., who rejoiced immediately after their baptism (Acts 8,16).

Were Saul saved on the road to Damascus, the Bible would be contradictory, because when a man is saved, his sins are washed away. But, the Lord through Ananias instructed Saul, “And now why tempest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16). It is clear that they had not yet been washed away, even three days after his Damascus journey.

ACCURACY IN UNDERSTANDING

William Woodson

A high commendation was given to the Bereans: “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Of particular interest is the statement “whether those things were so.” It was not enough that they were hearing what Paul and others were saying; they examined the Scriptures, daily, being resolved to learn if what was being heard was so; so, that is, according to the truth in Scripture. Here was and is a noble example.

An interesting comment concerning the need of such accuracy was offered by a contemporary writer, Robert Thomas: “Precision...is a compelling desire to master the truth of God in more definitive terms, to facilitate a more accurate presentation of that truth to others and to safeguard against doctrinal slippage that leads to error and false doctrine...Rough estimates as to what this or that passage means will not do. We need qualified expositors who will take the time and make the necessary sacrifices to do their homework well and bring clarity to the minds of God’s people as they read and study God’s holy word.”

Well said!

There are no short cuts or bargain basements in gaining a full and accurate understanding of God’s Word. Daily work with the text, noting the writer, the readers addressed, the topic being presented in the context, attention to the type of material studied—historical, doctrinal, poetic, etc., and most important, the genuine resolve of heart to learn and do the will of God as revealed in the words of the text. These are general procedures, and more detailed procedures will be necessary in some studies, but the Word of God is open to the hearts of sincere and regular students. We must handle aright in every way the word of truth that we may be unashamed of our workmanship as we stand before God.

TRASH OR TREASURES?

Oran Rhodes

Most of us have a tendency to collect various items and store them, even though we realize we may never use them. After all, there is junk and then there is good junk. Some things just seem too good to discard even though we do not know what they are even used for; thusly, we collect and hoard brick-a-brac, knick-knacks, and junk. When all is said and done and the years have passed and we pass from this life, someone else comes in, cleans out and awards most of this life-long collection to the garbage dump. Only the items which have lasting values whether for memories or money are retained. So it is in each of our spiritual lives. What are we collecting and storing—trash we like or treasures which are eternal? “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”
The kinds of things—trash or treasure—will determine where they are stored. Do not waste a life collecting the trash of this world which ultimately will be consumed but rather spend your time here gathering together spiritual treasures to be reserved for you in heaven.

ASTROLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN

Garry Stanton

Many people place a lot of trust in their horoscope each day, they will not do anything without its guidance. They will not love, buy, sell, interact, nor conduct business without the approval of their horoscope.

Astrology is a compound word—astrors meaning stars and logos meaning word—thus the word of the stars. Webster says astrology is “the supposed influences of the stars and planets on human affairs...by their positions and aspects.” Astrology is not respected by legitimate scientists as a science. Astrology attempts to foretell the future by observation and study of the positions of the stars, moon, the sun, and the planets. Astronomy, on the other hand, is “the law of the stars.” Astronomy is a legitimate science, it is the study of the stars and planets and their effect upon the earth (tides, seasons, etc.) And a study of their positions and existence in the solar systems.

There are a lot of people who pay attention to astrology. According to surveys, there are from 10 to 40 million devotees. Daily astrological tables appear in almost 2,000 daily newspapers. Astrology is popular because superstitions guide the lives of many people and astrology is just another form of superstition. Astrology has influence because fear and anxiety causes people to seek guidance. A troubled world seeks guidance from something they believe to be greater than themselves. Astrology is accepted and the Bible, the true standard, is rejected because it tells people what they need to hear and not what they want to hear! All of these things, either alone or in combination with each other, have contributed to the craze of astrology.

Why is astrology wrong and not to be practiced by the Christian? Astrology was forbidden in the Old Testament (Lev. 19:26,32; “observe times” is “one who interprets various omens as being either favorable or unfavorable times to undertake certain actions”). Astrology is idolatrous (2 Kin. 23:4-5; Jer. 10:1-5). The astrologer’s gods are the stars and planets. Astrology emphasizes the creation rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). The heavens declare the glory of God and not the destiny of man (Psa. 19:1-6).

Astrology is contrary to the free moral agency of man. Rather than the “devil made me do it” some say “the stars made me do it.” Astrology removes the natural bounds of conscience and common sense “frees” man to do what the stars say regardless of right or wrong! Horoscope says, “today you will find love with a stranger,” and sure enough one goes looking for love and ends up involved in an immoral situation.

Astrology also implies that the Bible does not supply every spiritual need (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). There is no void for astrology to fill, God’s Word tells us how to live and it tells about all the future events that we need to know about. Astrology is not of God but it is after the commandments of men (Jam. 3:15). Christians need to view this as the age of awareness and not the age of Aquarius!

Astrology is anti-Bible, it is anti-faith, and it is anti-God! What matters is not what sign you are born under but how you have lived since you were born. Man would be much better off to spend time looking at and studying the will of God each morning than looking to see what his horoscope says! If you want to succeed in eternal life, be a follower of Jesus Christ and not a follower of astrology!

3039 Cherokee Camden, AR 71701
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ruth Martin (William Weekley’s daughter), Ross Gallaher (Bill and Iris Gallaher’s son), Bea Waters (Leon’s mother), Geuenieve Stevens (Fran Waters’ mother), and Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father). Tim Lamb will have surgery this week. Jeremy, the son of Terry C launch, is scheduled for major surgery on June 21.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets June 23, 1996
Group 1 meets July 7, 1996
Group 2 meets July 14, 1996

READING/INVITATION
June 26, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe
July 3, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
June 23, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
June 23-28, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp (Teen Week).
July 7-12, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp.
July 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study 1 Timothy 3-2 Timothy 1.
July 22-26, 1996–Family Bible School.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

NEW ARRIVAL
Congratulations to William Weekley in the birth of his granddaughter, Courtney Danielle, born June 14, to Ruth and Rick Martin (William’s daughter). Congratulations are also extended to Courtney’s aunt, Nancy Travis.
IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TOO TRADITIONAL?

Kenneth L. Jones

In recent years the affirmation has been made that churches of Christ have become too traditional in their worship. This charge is made by those who would introduce innovations into the worship and re-structure it along the lines of a more uncontrolled or “Pentecostal” fashion. Is the criticism just? Is the church of Christ too traditional in its worship?

The Greek word, paradosis, translated “tradition,” means literally “a handing down or on” (W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). It refers to any teaching or ordinance which is handed down or on to succeeding generations. The New Testament speaks of two kinds of traditions: the traditions of men which when taught as doctrines render one’s worship vain (Mat. 15:9); and the traditions of God which are to be held, and in which one is to stand fast (2 Thes. 2:15; 1 Cor. 11:2).

If the charge has reference to the traditions of men, the answer is no! In fact, of the many churches in existence the church of Christ is the only one that is not teaching... The introduction of ordinances of human origin must be faithfully opposed, for they would render the worship vain.

If the charge has reference to the traditions handed down by the apostles, the answer again is no! How could the church possibly be too faithful in observing the ordinances which God has commanded? The Bible warns that those who fail...
to abide in the doctrine of Christ (i.e., Christ’s doctrine) are without God (2 John 9).

It is true that many in the church go through a mere outward form and fail to worship God truly from the heart. The problem, however, is in the heart, not in the Divinely appointed avenue of worship! The acts of worship which God has authorized are perfect for the expression of every ounce of love, devotion and gratitude the human heart can possess. To be acceptable to God, the worship must be both in spirit and in Truth (John 4:24).

The conclusion, therefore, is that the church of Christ is not too traditional. The traditions of God must be held fast; the traditions of men must be opposed. One tradition of men would be too many; one tradition of God omitted would cause our worship and service to be in vain. The human spirit must overflow with adoration for God, but this adoration must be expressed decently and in order through the avenues which God has authorized.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAINTS AS THOSE WHO BELONG TO GOD

Joseph D. Meador

According to the teaching of Paul to the church of Christ at Ephesus (Eph. 4:12), we learn that the saints were perfected (literally, matured) through the church’s ministry (cf., Eph. 1:23; 1 Cor. 12:6-7). As such, each convert to Christ was to immediately manifest certain characteristics which would identify him as a child of God and which would be noticeable to a world whose eyes were dim with sin. In an effort to impart this truth, the writers of the New Testament compared the saints to various figures which men and women of all ages and societies would readily understand. These include, but certainly are not limited to, the following:

The saint as a soldier: In Second Timothy 2:3-4, the apostle Paul compared the Christian evangelist to a soldier in the army of Christ (the church). He pointed out that the saint must be honorable in conduct, devout in service, and prove loyal to his Commander (Christ) and nation (spiritual Israel, i.e., the church). Also, the saint must be well-trained in using the only offensive weapon given by God; the Sword of the Spirit (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:17).

The saint as attentive to Christ’s voice: Jesus, as He instructed His disciples, pointed out that the sheep (followers of Christ) know the voice of the Shepherd (Jesus). We hear the voice of Jesus speak just as plainly and forcefully to us today through the medium of the Word—revelation of God (e.g., the New Testament). Thus, we need to be sure that we are listening to Christ and not the dogmas of men (Mark 7:7-9). Some among us, claiming to speak as Christ, offer a false concept of Christian love prompted by a false hope, resulting in an empty and false message. It is because of this vain pattern that the “Loving Liberalism” which we hear all around us today competes to be the true voice of Christ. In fact, it ignores openly the teaching of Christ on such substantive doctrine as MARRIAGE/DIVORCE/AND REMARRIAGE, WHAT CONSTITUTES GENUINE FELLOWSHIP, THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH, THE MEANING OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM, etc. Let the Christian be ever attentive to the voice of Christ as we listen closer to His Word.

The saint as zealous of good works: When Paul wrote to Titus on the Isle of Crete, he explained that the faithful saint would be fervent in doing the work of the Lord (cf., Tit. 3:8,14). Here we note that being involved in the spiritual welfare of the church is enjoined upon every believer, as Paul urges that this attitude of spiritual ways should become a consistent part of the Christian lifestyle. The end result would be a
life freely given to Christ through obedience to
the gospel, manifesting genuine consecrated
virtue of regular spiritual labor. May we, as
individual members of the church, strive to work
while time remains to demonstrate our love and
faith toward God.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

PASTORIZING
Mel Futrell

While occupied in my study at the building of
the Green Forest Church of Christ in Poplar
Bluff, MO, I received a telephone call from an
insurance salesperson that went like this: “Am I
speaking with the pastor?”—“No ma’am, this is
the preacher.”—“I thought pastor and preacher
was the same thing.”—“No ma’am, they’re not.”

It has always been an annoyance to me that so
many, even some Christians, fail to understand
that preacher and pastor are not interchangeable
terms. Yet, this abuse of terms is cast at me
almost daily, so let me make myself clear here at
the beginning of this article. I’m a preacher, but
not a pastor. My dad used to be a pastor, but I
never was a pastor. My grandfather used to be a
pastor but I’m still not a pastor. My father-in-law
is now a pastor, but I’m not a pastor. I know
some pastors that have been put out to pasture,
but I’m no pastor. I think that should do it.

But seriously brethren, something is dead
wrong when many of our own people fail to make
that proper distinction between pastor and
preacher. Of course, the situation isn’t helped any
when our own “Mr. Webster” offers as his pri-
mary definition of pastor: “A minister or priest in
charge of a church” (Webster’s Unabridged Dic-
tionary, 1992, p. 1055). Neither is it helped when
some preachers behave like denominational
“pastors.” Please consider the following remarks
concerning the word pastor.

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul lists five “offices”
present in the first century church—apostles,
prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Some, if not all, of these functional areas of
service were filled by men who were supernatu-
really endowed, as the context would seem to
indicate. The church today still has its evan-
gelists, pastors and teachers although these men
are not in any way in possession of spiritual gifts.
Commenting on this verse Ralph Earle said:

“Pastor is the Latin term for shepherd. The Greek
word ‘poimen’ also means shepherd. Here it is
used of Christian pastors. Homer in his Iliad
refers to pastors of the people (apoinmena laori)”
(Word Meanings in the New Testament, Grand
Commentary says of this verse: “Pastors
(poimenas, literally shepherd; cf., Acts 20:17,28)
describes the leaders of local congregations...The
term most likely refers to the same function of
‘elder’ (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17) or ‘bishop’ (Phi-
1:1)” (ACU Press, 1984, p. 162). Brethren, there
is not “most likely” to it, the term pastor does
refer to the same function as elder and bishop.
Yet, while it is true that a pastor, an elder, may
serve as a preacher (1 Tim. 5:17-18), the terms
preacher and pastor are not interchangeable. In
Ephesians 4:11, the terms prophet and evangelist
would come closer to being interchangeable with
the word preacher, with the former word, prophet,
being an inspired preacher.

In the New Testament the words elder, bishop,
and pastor are positively interchangeable (see
Acts 20:17,28; Tit. 1:5,7). So, as a preacher my
job is to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2), “Do the
work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5) etc. Where-
as, the pastor is to oversee, shepherd, be an ex-
ample, teach, and watch.

I am a minister (Mat. 20:26), and a priest
(1 Pet. 2:5,9), just as all New Testament
Christians are, but I’m not “in charge” of the
church of our Lord, regardless of Webster’s
definition. That charge of leadership has been
given to those designation in Scripture as elders,
bishops, and pastors. Brethren, using the Word of
Truth as our guide, we need to curb this
denominational error which makes the pastor the
preacher.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ruth Martin (William Weekley’s daughter), Ross Gallaher (Bill and Iris Gallaher’s son), and Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father). Tim Lamb had surgery this week.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets July 7, 1996
Group 2 meets July 14, 1996
Group 3 meets July 21, 1996

READING/INVITATION
July 3 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd
July 10 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
July 7-12, 1996–Indian Creek Youth Camp.
July 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study 1 Timothy 3-2 Timothy 1.
July 22-26, 1996–Family Bible School at 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. Classes for all ages.
July 31, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Neva Bryant placed membership on June 23, 1996. Her address is 5251 Barrineau Park School Road, Molino, FL 32577. Her phone number is 587-5402. Please update your directory.
THE SIN OF PRIDE
Dub McClish

“The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogancy...do I hate” (Pro. 8:13). There are few subjects more explicitly dealt with in the Bible than the sin of pride. Scripture upon Scripture is multiplied to show God’s contempt for haughtiness and arrogance. Likewise, it is a constant scriptural theme that God wills that men adorn themselves with meekness and humility. Pride is detestable when observed in others, but hard even to detect in ourselves. It is born of naked selfishness and is ever lurking in every heart, ready to spring forth unless kept under the tightest security of Truth and righteousness.

Pride was a great part of the problem in the Corinthian Church in their use of spiritual gifts. Some were lauding themselves as super spiritual because they could speak in tongues. The great “love” chapter emphasizes all of the traits that those arrogant disciples were displaying by showing that genuine, spiritual love does not allow one to vaunt oneself or be “puffed up” (1 Cor. 13:4). “Vaunt” means to brag or boast. “Puffed up” means literally to become inflated or blown up, but the figurative meaning here is to be blown up with pride and self-praise. A person who is constantly “blowing his own horn,” talking about all of his accomplishments, downgrading the abilities of others (especially, often criticizing “the church”), has a serious pride problem. He is either an unmitigated egotist or he has such a low view of himself that he must be constantly pumping himself up. The meek and lowly, in whom God
delights, do not push their own abilities or accomplishments. In my better than thirty years of experience in preaching I have learned the “hard way” to be a bit wary when someone moves in and begins almost immediately to beg for a class to teach and to boast of all of his accomplishments of the past. The same is true of those who practically “campaign” among the church members to be appointed as an elder or deacon. Only an exceptional level of pride would cause a person to keep pushing for a teaching or leadership position when he has not been asked or permitted to fill such a role by the elders.

These words are no discouragement of a humble willingness to serve when called upon. They are an exposure of pride-filled arrogance that seeks to force itself where it is neither qualified nor desired to go. Paul described such pride well: “desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm” (1 Tim. 1:7). If one is leadership material, the role will seek him; he will not have seek the role.

I'D RATHER BE A DOORKEEPER

Joe E. Galloway

The Psalmist wrote, “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Psa. 84:10). What a wonderful attitude! What needed lessons for present-day Christians!

We do not think of “doorkeeping” as very prestigious work. Certainly the priest who offered the various sacrifices received more attention and applause; yet such a simple task as doorkeeper was needed, and this writer was happy to do the lowliest of work for God’s service. People are needed today in the jobs that receive public notice: gospel preachers, elders, deacons, song leaders and Bible class teachers. But just as honorable are those who do maintenance and janitorial work, those who visit and help the sick and shut-ins, who invite (and perhaps bring) a friend to services, who knock on doors to invite non-members to a gospel meeting, and those who encourage the discouraged. No task in God’s service should be considered beneath our dignity (see Mat. 10:42).

Many would rather “dwell in the tents of wickedness” than do lowly acts of service to God, especially when such humble service will go unnoticed by their peers. Sinful pursuits win out over going to visit someone who needs attention, over attending a special service for planning or instruction for growth, or maybe over attending the regular services of the church. (How many miss an evening service because of a movie or ball game they’d rather watch on TV?) Maybe the alternative we choose to the lowly acts of service is not itself wicked, but it becomes wrong due to our pursuing it in lieu of fulfilling our responsibilities as Christians. Let’s think on these things seriously!

YOU ARE YOUR BROTHER’S KEEPER!

Samuel J. Dilbeck

Many in the church today seem to be content with doing nothing for their brethren. If they are offended by a brother, they never go to him. They choose to sulk and whine to everyone else, except the one that offended them. Then, when they offend someone, they are too proud to try and reconcile the problem. Such an attitude of independence from one another is erecting walls of
hatred and causing division in congregations everywhere. This attitude must be done away with if the church is to grow spiritually and physically.

About six thousand years ago, Cain had the same problem. He actually rose up and murdered his own brother, Abel. God questioned him as to the whereabouts of Abel. In defiance, Cain asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9)? Though God did not explicitly answer the question, the implied answer is, “Yes!” Cain was evil in deed and in heart. He truly was his brother’s keeper.

Under the Old Law, God made it clear that the Jews were to be their brother’s keepers. Farmers were not allowed to harvest an entire field, but were commanded to leave the corners for the poor brethren (Lev. 19:9-10). One could not refuse to loan money to a brother in need, and he was forbidden to charge interest on that loan (Exo. 22:25-27). When a poor man gave his cloak as collateral for a loan, it was to be returned before nightfall so he would have something to sleep with (Deu. 15:7-11). All of these grow out of the commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself (Lev. 19:18; Luke 10:26-27). God meant for the Jews to be their brother’s keepers!

When the Nation of Israel fell from God, they became guilty of neglecting their brethren. Jeremiah warned, “Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders” (Jer. 9:4)! The nation was going to be overthrown because of this neglect. The prophet Amos pointed out the sins of Israel as oppressing the poor and crushing the needy (Amos 4:1). The nation had become their brother’s destroyer. Therefore, God destroyed them!

Jesus demands no less of us today. John admonishes us not to be like Cain, but to love our brethren (1 John 3:11-12). Jesus extended the prohibition of physically killing a brother to hating a brother (Mat. 5:21-22). Jesus made it clear that unjustified anger toward a brother is damnable before God. Hebrews 10:25 commands us to exhort our brethren. The obligations to love, exhort, teach and admonish one another are not to be taken lightly. God expects us to be our brother’s keepers.

Jesus demonstrates the urgency of showing our love by reconciling with our brethren in Matthew 5:23-24. The Christ teaches that our worship is worthless if we know our brother has something against us and we do nothing about it. In fact, He said to put off worshiping until we have been reconciled with that brother. When we offend one of our brethren, we have the duty to go to him and clear the air. This is how we become our brother’s keeper.

Paul sheds even more light on the subject in Galatians 6:1, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” This is from the other view point. Paul says that when we see our brother sin, we are to go to him. This shows God and our brethren that we truly love that one. Christ tells the brother in sin to go to the brother he offended and reconcile the situation. Paul tells the offended brother to go to the brother that sinned and reconcile the situation. When done, both should run into each other on their way to see the other!

The church suffers when brethren are too proud or spineless to be their brother’s keeper. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that our lack of action is out of love. When we refuse to try to reconcile, we refuse to love our brethren, and deny our responsibility to be our brother’s keeper!

P.O. Box 233 Granite, OK 73547
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Tim Lamb, Sherry Bailey, Ruth Martin (William Weekley’s daughter), Ross Gallaher (Bill and Iris Gallaher’s son), and Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father). Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s mother) had surgery last week.

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mike Dobbs in the death of his sister Kathy Andersen on June 13, 1996.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets July 7, 1996
Group 2 meets July 14, 1996
Group 3 meets July 21, 1996

READING/INVITATION
July 10 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Ray Foshee
July 17 1996
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

MARK THESE DATES
July 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study 1 Timothy 3-2 Timothy 1.
July 22-26, 1996–Family Bible School at 7:00 P.M. Classes for all ages. Mel Futrell from Eastern Shore Church of Christ, Daphne, AL, will teach the adults class.
July 31, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

“LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH”
Robert Dodson

The apostles on one occasion were dissatisfied with their faith and asked, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). The request of a father who brought his epileptic child to Jesus was, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:17-24). They recognized their lack of faith and the need for a stronger faith. From the Bible we learn that:

1. Worry demonstrates a lack of faith. (Mat. 6:25-34). Little faith caused the people to worry about food, drink and clothing at the expense of God’s kingdom and His righteousness. “Are we not more important than the birds? Than the lilies?” Jesus argues, “Can worry change any-thing?” and reminds them that God is not like the god of the Gentiles. He is consistent, He keeps His promises, and He will provide for our needs (Phi. 4:4-19).

2. Fear demonstrates a lack of faith. (Mat. 8:23-27). In the storm the disciples’ lack of faith caused fear. Losing our jobs, nuclear war, inflation, illness, etc. are some of the storms we face. True, we do not know what the future holds, but we do know the One who holds the future (cf., 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:6-8).

3. Doubt demonstrates a lack of faith. (Mat. 14:24-33). On the sea, Peter’s “little faith” had caused doubt. We too are often tossed to and fro by the waves of error and deceit because we do not take God at His Word and trust in His com-mandments. “I hope in thy word” wrote David (Psa. 119:114).

4. Failure demonstrates a lack of faith. (Mat. 17:14-21). The disciples were unable to
accomplish God’s will because of their “little faith.” We fail to preach the gospel to the whole world because we have little faith in the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16) and in God’s help (Mat. 28:20). Commands of our Lord require faith to obey. It takes a lot of faith to forgive some folks (Mat. 6:15; Luke 17:3-4); To give cheerfully and liberally (Rom 12:8; 2 Cor. 8-9); To not forsake the assembling of the saints (Heb. 10:24-26); To seek the kingdom first (Mat. 6:33); To be a loving servant to others (Mat. 20:25-28; John 13). Faith without obedience is not “little faith.” It is dead (James 2:14-26).

Worry, fear, doubt and failure can all be traced back to “little faith.” We must do three things: 1) Desire more faith; 2) Go to the source of faith, God’s Word (Rom. 10:17); 3) Apply the teachings of the Bible to our hearts and lives. “Lord, Increase Our Faith.”

LIVING WITHOUT GOD

Don Deffenbaugh

One of the shameful characteristics of our age is the rejection of God and His work. Some folks make no bones about it—they do not believe in God and they reject the Bible as being the Word of God. Others are much more subtle in their rejection of God—they do not deny His existence they deny Him by exalting self.

The modern speaks in terms of “felt needs” with the attention all focused on self and seldom if ever thinks in the biblical terms of “God, here am I send me.” This person is found sitting more and more on OUR church pews (pews of churches of Christ) and is often the young professional who has been misled by the humanistic teachers of our day who have exalted “self above God. This person does not even think in the same terms as did his fathers—they were brought up on the Bible and were God-centered and not self-centered. They could sacrifice of their time, talents and money because they were servants of God. The modern must be served by his church. God must serve him, he does not serve God! He must feel good about himself so the church must feed that big fat ego that came into existence they very day he became self-centered. If such a person cannot find a church of Christ that will meet those “felt needs” then he will find another religious organization that will because there is nothing more important in this world than self. If another religious organization will not fit the bill then surely a social or health club will. And all the time this sincere but misguided person is in reality living without God, worshiping and serving self.

The problem with all of this is that several congregations are now going out of their way to accommodate such people, for after all, numbers are most important. The pressure is being put on elders, to meet those “felt needs” and in turn the man in the pulpit is told to begin to meet those needs or we will lose such folks to another congregation or even another religious organization. What elders in the Lord’s church must do is inform the congregation they oversee that the church of our Lord was designed to save souls from sin by preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. That message is all-sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and if it is not meeting needs, then folks have begun to leave God out of their lives. Preachers of the gospel must not succumb to such pressure but remember their commission (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Brethren, it is not what I want for myself, but it is what God wants for me; so let’s get self out of the way and get back to God before it is altogether too late.

Neosho, MO
IN APPRECIATION
OF ELDERS
Franklin Camp

No men carry a heavier load than elders. Even the President of the United States does not have responsibilities as serious as those of elders. The President’s responsibilities are concerned primarily with the social and economic welfare of the people. Elders are responsible for the eternal welfare of those under their oversight.

Elders have the responsibility to see that the generation now living has the opportunity to hear the gospel. Their territory is not limited to the United States. It is worldwide.

I appreciate elders because of the preparation they have to make in order to qualify to serve. The man who is qualified to serve as an elder has to begin early in life to develop the character and manner of life which enables him to be respected so he can lead. A young man may go to school and then preach, but this is not so of an elder. The elder’s work suggests age, experience, and maturity. One must work with this in mind to qualify as an elder.

I appreciate elders because of the leadership they have shown in their families. This is especially true today with the break down of the home. The man who has led his family in spiritual things is to be commended. One cannot serve as an elder without the right kind of family. The man whose family is an influence for good should be appreciated and commended.

I appreciate elders because of their Bible knowledge. Elders must be men of the book. It is their responsibility to see that the whole counsel of God is proclaimed. They keep preachers in check. They determine the direction of the church.

I appreciate elders because they receive less encouragement than any group of men I know. The preacher is encouraged, his lessons are commended, but who commends the elders? If elders were easily discouraged, most of them would quit.

I appreciate elders because they work while others sleep. Most elders have a secular job at which they work in order to supply the material needs of their families. When their day’s work is over, they are not finished. The work of the church continues. Godly elders spend countless hours in planning, praying and solving problems after their day’s work is complete.

I appreciate elders because they plan for the spiritual growth of the church. Churches do not grow spiritually by accident. One cannot conceive of a more difficult task today. The very atmosphere of our time is destructive to spiritual growth. I appreciate men who guard me from the contaminating influence of the world and lead me in the paths of righteousness. My hat is off to godly, efficient elders.

Copied

DELAY IN MAILING
THE BEACON

Effective July 1, 1996, the U.S. Postal Service enacted Classification Reform, which does away with outdated requirements and standardizes eligibility requirements and preparation rules for similar forms of mail preparation. Classification Reform affects the procedures followed in mailing the Beacon and the Defender. Due to these changes the July 1 issue of the Beacon has been delayed in mailing. Supplies needed for mail preparation have been ordered, but because of the need of these materials nationwide, orders are on backorder. As soon as the material is received the Beacon will be mailed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ross Gallaher (Bill and Iris Gallaher’s son), Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father), and Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s mother)

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Preston Silcox in the death of his grandfather, Bill Bradley, on July 2, 1996.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets July 14, 1996
Group 3 meets July 21, 1996
Group 1 meets August 4, 1996

READING/INVITATION
July 17 1996
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Gallaher
July 31 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
July 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study 1 Timothy 3-2 Timothy 1.
July 21, 1996–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
July 22-26, 1996–Family Bible School at 7:00 P.M. Classes for all ages. Mel Futrell from Eastern Shore Church of Christ, Daphne, AL, will teach the adults’ class.
July 28, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
July 31, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable or Chicken Soups
THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS TEACHERS OF CHILDREN

Joseph D. Meador

Woman was made by God in His own image (Gen. 1:27); for man (1 Cor. 11:9); from one of Adam’s ribs (Gen. 2:21-22); to be the glory of man (1 Cor. 11:7); to be man’s helper and aide (Gen. 2:18,20); to bear children in the Christian family (1 Tim. 2:15); and to teach her children (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-17). It has been correctly stated that “Women are generally, by inborn nature, capable of relating to the needs and moods of small children better than man.” God indeed has a great role for women to be teachers of children, both in the home, and at the Bible study period of the local church.

Christian mothers have a great responsibility to set the tone for the spiritual well being of their children. Although the man has been delegated the divine role of being the head of the household, he cannot compare, in regard to the matter of personal influence, which the mother has on her children. This is especially true when the children are young and mentally formative. One of the great examples of Scripture is to be found in the home of young Timothy. His father was a Greek Gentile, but his mother was Jewess of great faith and love for God. As such, it was she and her mother who instilled in Timothy, at an early age, the desire for things spiritual. The result of their teaching was later manifested by the wonderful and deep contributions which the older, and spiritually mature, Timothy made to the church of Christ. He was noted as being a sincere,
sound and devoted gospel preacher.

There can be no doubt that the early training which produced the ultimate results in Timothy’s life began in the home, and such demeanor was brought from the synagogue to the Christian meeting house. Mothers can do a great service for their children, and the church, if they provide them with instructions concerning proper behavior while in worship to God. During the Christian worship assembly, children should be taught how to hold a Bible, how to use a songbook, as well as to sing and pray. Children can either be a blessing to the worship period or a cause of rude disruption. Such negative behavior on the part of children, and even teenagers, during worship lowers their own influence for good and brings a sense of dishonor to the family, especially when the mother and father avoid or refuse to discipline the child involved.

Too, parents can curb the unwarranted dissatisfaction which some young people have for church. In this regard, mother should look on the home as being the primary place where respect for the evangelistic mission of the local church is taught; where respect for its elders and preacher is lovingly fostered; and where devotion to the Word of God is encouraged. In so fulfilling her God-given role, with such wisdom, the mother will be a true teacher of righteousness, and her children will grow to be great examples for truth.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin TX 78748

CODE OF CONDUCT

In August 1989, the United States Government released their updated Code of Conduct which is demanded of all soldiers. The Christian has a conduct that is expected of him/her. Paul referred to it as “reasonable service” in Romans 12.

Soldier Of The United States Government

I—I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.

II—I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command, I will never surrender the members of my command while they still have the means to resist.

III—If I am captured, I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole or special favors from the enemy.

IV—If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.

V—When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am required to give name, rank, service number, and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.

VI—I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.

Soldier In The Army Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

I—I am a Christian, a soldier of Jesus Christ, my commander-in-chief. I am fighting to take the gospel of Christ to set free the lost and dying world. I will give my life for this cause.

II—I will never surrender. I will be steadfast, unmoveable, abounding in the work of my Savior. If necessary, I will reprove, rebuke, and admonish with the doctrine of Christ.

III—When tempted, I will resist the devil (and his servants) with every effort. I will go to God’s Word for my escape and strength. I will not
compromise or submit to “favors,” “pleasures” of sin for a season.

IV—If overtaken by sin, I will not give up. I will seek help from God and my fellow-Christians. I will confess, forsake, and repent of my sins. I will be an “example of the believers.” I will obey my Master in every way! I will obey/follow the rules of one over me. I will support my leaders in every way.

V—I will eagerly answer any who ask of the “hope” within me. I will speak of WHY I am a Christian, and WHY others should follow Jesus Christ, my Lord and Chief. I will avoid foolish, evil, or profane questions. I will not speak or act in any way that will shame my Lord or the church of Christ, my Lord. I will strive to be an aid, encouragement, and help, and never a hindrance to Christ.

VI—I will never forget that Christ died for me, and I belong to Him! I will never forget I am a soldier in God’s army, fighting the “good fight of faith” unto the end, when the victory is finally won! I will remember I am responsible for my actions. I will trust in God who is able to deliver me.

Via East Hill Bulletin, Pulaski, TN

Family Bible School
July 22-26
7:00 - 8:30 P.M.

Classes For Children
“Great Bible Wonders”
Monday “Jericho’s Mighty Walls Fall Down”
Tuesday “Naaman Is Healed”
Wednesday “Jonah And The Great Fish”
Thursday “Christ Is Risen!”

Classes For Adults
“The Church”
Monday “Perspectives On The Church”
Tuesday “Things That Cripple The Church”
Wednesday “Why We Love The Church”
Thursday “What Will Build A Strong Church”
Friday “The Church—People Of Compassion”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, and Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father). Bill and Iris Gallaher’s son Ross was scheduled for surgery Monday and Lucille Staples is scheduled for heart surgery this week.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets July 21, 1996
Group 1 meets August 4, 1996
Group 2 meets August 18, 1996

READING/INVITATION
July 31, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Louis Herrington
August 7, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
July 21, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study 1 Timothy 3-2 Timothy 1.
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July 31, 1996–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable or Chicken Soups

PETERS’ FAMILY
Ray and Judy Peters have placed membership with the Scenic Hills Church of Christ. Ray has also left for mission work in Riga, Latvia. Please keep them in your prayers.
“RESTORING THE JOY”

Gary W. Summers

Are you unhappy with the church? Are you disappointed in the worship? Have you gotten to the point where you just attend once in a while? When you try to motivate yourself to come, does the whole process feel like sheer drudgery? And when you are here, do the lessons seem kind of boring? Has the Lord’s Supper lost some of its flavor? Do brethren appear to ignore you? And have you started wondering how many things you could buy with the money you put in the contribution?

Cheer up! You’re not the only one who has ever felt this way. One of the most spiritual men of all time, “man after his [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14), also once lost the enthusiasm that he had formerly possessed in his love and service of God. In Psalm 51:12, he prayed to God, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”

David did that? Yes, David, conqueror of giants and author of the most devotional literature in the Old Testament, reached a point in his life where he could no longer feel close to the God he loved. What could have happened to such a devout man, to have caused him to depart from his Creator?

The same thing that hindered him is working on you, if you fall into this category—sin! David wrote Psalm 51 after Nathan rebuked him for his sin with Bathsheba. “Now wait just a minute,” you say, “I certainly haven’t done anything like David did. I may have my faults—but nothing
that serious."

Good. But it’s not the specific sin of adultery—or the follow-up sin of murder—that is under discussion. The point is that when a person can not be happy or content in his relationship to God (or the church over which Jesus is head), then something is wrong, and that something involves sin. Salvation in Christ is the greatest source for elation that exists in this world. Misery cannot accompany a person walking in the light (1 John 1:7), nor can it dominate the Christian who maintains his faith in God. Even persecution cannot make us sorrowful. Those in Thessalonica “received the word in much affliction”—yet “with joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thes. 1:6).

Only sin in some form can rob of us of the joy that is ours. David was keenly conscious of the effects that sin had upon him. “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51:3). He had chosen to sin, knowing that what he was doing was wrong. Any time we choose to sin, we know it is going to affect our relationship with God.

Suppose I have an opportunity in the work place to make a few extra bucks via appropriation. In other words, I have the opportunity to steal twenty or thirty dollars a week, which helps pad my income (I deserve it anyway). The knowledge that I have taken that which does not belong to me just might get in the way of my spiritual life. After all, how can I pray to God when He knows I am a thief? How can I praise Him when I know how He feels about sin? How can I make requests or ask that my sins be forgiven?

The same holds true with a number of other sins. Suppose I have gotten hold of a few Pamela Anderson videos, produced by Playboy, or one of several other pornographic materials that I bought in a neighboring town where nobody knows me (and which I watch when no one is around). I know that fleshly lusts “war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11), but I just cannot seem to help myself. Can I have problems like these and expect God to bless me?

“BUT SIN IS NOT MY PROBLEM”

“Well, sure,” you say, “but I’m certainly not in any of those categories. My problem is not sin; it’s just that I feel listless and lackluster about attending worship. Perhaps if the sermons were shorter, the singing was more inspiring, and we had a few plays....”

Sorry, but the problem is still sin. Anyone who is bored, listless, and lackluster ought to begin to think, “Maybe the problem is me”—instead of fixing the blame on everyone else. Perhaps the problem is not being conscious of sins that are so obvious and well-recognized as adultery, stealing, etc.

But there are other types of sins. One affliction of this age is PROSPERITY. Are you absorbed with THINGS? No? Of course, we would all deny it. But really think about it. Compare yourself to what people in other countries have. Are we not just slightly slanted in the direction of materialism? It is still true that a person’s “life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15) and that all these things shall one day be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10-12). Jesus also said that “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word” (Mat. 13:22).

The church and its worship may not seem exciting to us when most of our life is spent among the tangibles. Spiritual truths have never seemed to inflame God’s people, but they should; they are of greater substance and duration than those things of a physical nature. And the
physical never satisfies; that’s why we’re always on the lookout for a bigger and more exciting “toy.” Forgiveness of sins, peace of mind, and eternal life do not seem to compare favorably with the short-term enjoyment of physical things.

Another distraction is ENTERTAINMENT. We live in the most amusement-oriented society (perhaps) in the history of the world. We have accelerated almost exponentially in the growth of the entertainment industry. A few centuries ago people might have been entertained by a court jester and a handful of wandering minstrels. Now we have “rock stars” and “movie stars,” and athletes in a variety of major sports who make salaries in the millions. And how many homes lack radios, televisions, VCRs, and stereos?

All of these things affect (and sometimes assault) the eyes and ears, the physical senses. Our society is virtually drenched in material things; spiritual concerns seldom see the light of day. When we allow the earthly to crowd out the heavenly, sin is at work.

SOLUTIONS

If salvation has ceased to be joyful, if worship seems to be flat, if spiritual pursuits seem boring, then sin of some sort is hindering you. The problem does not lie with the elders, evangelists, or brethren; the problem lies within you. Even Paul, who confided that he was “in perils among false brethren,” and constantly faced “deep concern for all the churches” (2 Cor. 11:26-28), wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice” (Phi. 4:4). It simply will not suffice to cast the blame onto others for your problem.

Returning to Psalm 51, we find several suggestions to improve one’s spiritual condition. The first is to acknowledge transgressions (v. 3). Unless we see the sin in our life and take responsibility for it, we cannot overcome it. David acknowledged his transgressions (v. 1), his iniquity (v. 2), his sin (v. 2), and the evil he had done (v. 4).

He also expressed a strong desire to be right with God, but he knew that only God could help him out of the ungodly position he was in: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity” (v. 2); “cleanse me from my sin” (v. 2); “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean” (v. 7); “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (v. 7); “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (v. 10); “renew a right spirit within me” (v. 10); “Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God” (v. 14).

David was aware that he could not undo what he had done; he knew there was no way to atone for his sins. Thus he cries out, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies” (v. 1). David certainly knew about God’s grace (even under the Old Testament system!). He also knew that offering up sacrifices to God would not compensate for his sins; the only thing that prevails with God is genuine repentance. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (v. 17). Since this relationship is between the individual and God, it cannot be faked—except by self-delusion.

If you need the joy of your salvation restored, ask yourself, “Have I been praying as I once did? Have I been reading and studying the Word of God as I did formerly? What has been the emphasis in my life?” If your love and zeal for God have cooled, take responsibility for your actions. Call upon God as David did; call upon God to renew you. Then you will not only be right with God—but useful once again (v. 13).
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father), Lucille Staples, Inez Brantley, Ida Williams, and William Weekley.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets July 21, 1996
Group 1 meets August 4, 1996
Group 2 meets August 18, 1996

READING/INVITATION
July 31, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Louis Herrington
August 7, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
July 28, 1996—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
July 31, 1996—Fifth Wednesday Singing.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable or Chicken Soups

THANK YOU
A heartfelt thank you is extended to those individuals who have donated food items to the Pantry. Your contributions help maintain the Pantry.

ISAIAH 53:5
“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”
WHO SHOULD
TEACH OUR
CHILDREN
Gene Burgett

A newsletter that I regularly receive came to me this week with a story about a ninth grade girl in middle Tennessee. Her teacher had assigned the students to write a research paper that was “interesting, researchable, and decent.” Brittaney Settle chose to write on “The Life of Jesus Christ.” Her teacher turned down the topic because of Brittaney’s “strong personal belief in Christianity that might make it hard for her to write a dispassionate research paper.” Now, it needs to be understood that this same teacher had accepted papers on reincarnation, magic and spiritualism, all of which are religious topics.

The case went to court. In the court case it was revealed that for the past 12 years this teacher had received research papers on reincarnation. This makes it very likely that the teacher has been pushing Eastern religious views since I doubt most kids in middle Tennessee would choose such a topic without encouragement.

I am sad to say that Brittaney lost the case. In fact, no court would even hear the case, including the Supreme Court (this ruling was made November 27, 1995).

A few thoughts should be mentioned in light of this situation. First, we need to be thankful for those Christians who are teachers in our school system. The forces in our society that oppose what is often called “traditional family values” (I prefer the phrase “biblical values”), have used things like classrooms, courts, and legislatures as
vehicles for furthering their views. We should be thankful for Christians who have continued to be a part of these arms of government.

Second, and I believe, most important, Christian parents need to recognize that they are ultimately responsible for teaching their children about God and instilling in them proper moral values. I could live with her rejection of Jesus as a topic for a research paper had she not deemed other religious views as acceptable. But, regardless of the religious views of a child’s public school teacher, a parent is woefully negligent that expects the school system to teach their children about God. God places this responsibility on parents with these words from Deuteronomy 6:6-9, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

So, mom and dad, who is teaching your children?

WHISPERING DURING SERVICES

Dudley Spears

I had occasion to visit the services of another congregation recently. I arrived late because I had preached at 6:00 p.m. and could not get there earlier. I took a seat near the rear of the auditorium, unfortunately, just in front of two high school girls. I could hear them whispering during the song that preceded the sermon. This I thought about a little, but did not become excited.

As the minister spoke, I was constantly annoyed by the whispering that came from behind me. Even though I tried very hard to hear what the preacher was saying, the continual disturbance by these two girls let me get little (if anything) from the sermon. It was like trying to hear the weather report on the news over TV when the children are yelling, laughing and playing.

These two young girls sang the song of invitation with as much fervor as any of the other worshippers present. I thought about speaking to them, but being a stranger in their service, I simply left. I could not but reflect that they did not know if I were a Christian or not, nor did they care whether I heard the sermon or not. They had no interest in the preacher’s sermon and through their muffled conversation killed the lesson for others who sat near them. I kept wondering why their parents did not check on them and stop their talking.

Those of you who whisper in church service, I appeal—either wait until services are ended, get your conversations over before they begin or stay home. I surely encourage everyone to attend service, but if your actions will disturb others who want to worship, you would be wasting your time and bothering them if you attend. I saw a little poster in the lobby of a church house one time that went like this: “If you must whisper, whisper a prayer.” I like that idea and encourage its practice. “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

HAVE YOU SEEN THE TATE FAMILY?

Do you know how many of the Tate family belong to our congregation? There is one man, Dictate, who wants to run everything, while Uncle Rotate tries to change everything. Their sister, Agitate, stirs up plenty of trouble with help from her husband, Irritate. Whenever new
projects are suggested, Hesitate and his wife Vegetate, want to wait until next year. Then there is Aunt Imitate who wants our church to be like all the rest of the churches. Devastate provides the voice of doom while Potentate wants to be a big shot.

But not all of the members of the family are bad. Facilitate is quite helpful in church matters, and a delightful member in the family is Miss Felicitate. Cousin Cogitate and Meditate always think things over and lend a helpful, steadying hand. And, of course, there is the black sheep of the family, Amputate, who has completely cut himself off from the church.

Note: If you’re not familiar with some of the names of the “Tate” family, you may wish to look them up in the dictionary.

HOW TO PREVENT A DIVORCE BEFORE YOU MARRY

Divorce has never been God’s plan. He permitted it in the days of Moses because of the cruel way men treated women: “because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so” (Mat. 19:8). But, what about some guidelines for today so that before you get into a bad situation, you will have done all you know to prevent divorce?

SOME SUGGESTIONS

If you desire a Christian home and family, then do not even consider marrying someone who is not a Christian.

If your parents violently object to your choice, then I would doubt if you should get married until you have had time to convince them of his/her character. Like it or not, you marry a person’s family.

Do not marry someone who drinks, even if it is “just for fun.” Remember, drinking/drunkenness is one of the chief causes for divorce.

Watch how your potential mate’s parents treat each other. If your don’t like it, remember that they have been his/her model, and probably that’s the way you will be treated. If you don’t like it, then don’t marry them.

Can he/she manage his finances? A young man who cannot manage his money when single will not suddenly change when he gets married. Many divorces are caused by “money troubles.”

Is he/she truthful? Can you depend on them to do what they say? Marriage is built on trust. If you do not have complete confidence in the person, don’t marry them.

Can he/she hold a job? A good test of a person’s ability to get along with others is in his/her job record. A failure here indicates a character flaw that should signal danger to you.

Is he/she a quitter? Character is seen in one’s ability to “hang in there” when the going gets tough, and not give up. One who gives up easily in other areas may give up easily on your marriage in the difficult times that are ahead. Don’t marry a quitter.

Does he abuse you physically or verbally now? If he/she does so now, what makes you think that saying the marriage vows will change such conduct? In fact, in most cases such conduct becomes worse after the wedding. Why borrow trouble such as this? There are plenty of eligible prospects who will respect you—Find a faithful Christian.

Be “picky” and patient. Don’t fall for the first person who pays attention to you just because others may not have done so. Marrying out of a sense of desperation often results in failure. Don’t lower your Christian standards or compromise them. Go where faithful Christians are to be found.

Via the “West End News”

9350 Natural Bridge Rd.; St. Louis, MO 63134
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father), Lucille Staples, Inez Brantley, Ida Williams.

RESTORED
Jeremy Caine was restored on July 21, 1996. Please keep him in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets August 4, 1996
Group 2 meets September 8, 1996
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
August 7, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Tim Lamb
August 14, 1996
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
September 8, 1996–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Vegetable or Chicken Soups

NEW BIBLE SCHOOL YEAR
September 1 is the beginning of the new Bible school year. Those adults who wish to teach a Bible class please contact Jerry Caine, the Educational Director. Everyone should be making plans to attend Bible classes. Start inviting your family and friends to Bible class and worship. Let’s make this next year a success!
BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

Michael Hatcher

The drinking of alcoholic beverages is a national problem in the United States. This has been the case for many decades, and at present does not seem to be getting any better. The advertisements say this will make you successful, attractive and that it’s the only way to have a good life. The peer pressure to conform to what others do helps to continue the problem. The Bible speaks loud and clear concerning drinking. Notice a few of the many passages of Scripture. In Leviticus 10:8-11 Aaron and his sons were not to drink while rendering service to God lest they die.

According to God’s law, if a child is a “glutton, and a drunkard” (Deu. 21:20), he was to be stoned to death. Notice what Solomon says, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pro. 20:1), “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Pro. 23:29-32). He continues by teaching that it fills men’s mind with impure thoughts, brings on danger, causes insensibility and is habit forming in verses 33-35. He says in Ecclesiastes 10:17, “Blessed are thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!” Some of
our Congressmen, Senators, and Presidents should take notice. Solomon was a man speaking from experience for he gave himself to wine (Ecc. 2:3) but came to the realization that it was vanity (Ecc. 2:11).

Isaiah writes, “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!...Who unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink” (Isa. 5:11,22). In Isaiah 22:13 he places drinking wine with carnal living. Not only is a woe placed upon the drunkards of Ephraim but Isaiah also says they will be destroyed (Isa. 28:1-3). Part of the reason is that wine has led them to err and thus, they are no longer able to lead others (Isa. 28:7). Daniel tells us of the tragic example of King Belshazzar who lead his people in drinking wine (Dan. 5:1-2) and the disastrous results (Dan. 5:25-30). Hosea teaches that immorality and drinking go together, “Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart” (Hos. 4:11). Joel tells of the depravity of those who drink, “And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink” (Joel 3:3). It will cause people to oppress others according to Amos 4:1, so God places a woe upon those that drink wine (Amos 6:1,6). Habakkuk says that pride and arrogance are inflamed because the people transgressed by wine (Hab. 2:5). Later he says, “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou are filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord’s right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory” (Hab. 2:15-16).

After taking this stroll through the Old Testament, to see what God had to say concerning drinking at that time; God’s attitude has not changed on the subject, as we observe from the New Testament. In Luke 12:45-46 Christ warns against drunkenness and says those who are such will be appointed with the unbelievers. Again in Luke 21:34 Christ cautions that drunkenness causes one not to be prepared. With all this evidence it is unbelievable to me that some would teach that our blessed Lord, who did no sin, would make beverage alcohol in John 2. All our Lord did was to make grape juice that was non-alcoholic.

Paul says we are not to walk in drunkenness but to walk honestly. Christians are encouraged that if a brother drinks, then we are to withdraw ourselves from him and not keep company with him (1 Cor. 5:11). Later, Paul shows the evil of alcohol by saying, “Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:10). Paul repeats this teaching to the Galatians in chapter 5 verse 21. In writing the Ephesian letter he contrasted being filled with the Spirit with being drunk with wine (Eph. 5:18). Obviously, you cannot be both; there is a decision you must make as to which way you want to live your life.

If we want to do that which is right why would anyone engage in drinking? The person who tries to do right will, “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:22).

That which goes along with drunkenness is always evil. Thousands each year are killed by drunken drivers. We still lament the tragedy of the lost lives from Vietnam, yet each year there are more deaths from drunk drivers than we lost in that tragic war. We should go back to prohibition!!! While we often hear that prohibition did
not work, the facts do not bear that claim out. In 1920 the 18th amendment to the Constitution was passed; in 1933 Congress repealed that amendment commonly called prohibition. When prohibition came into force 177,790 saloons were closed and 1,755 breweries were closed. Associated with these closings 77 of 98 alcoholic clinics were closed. The death rate due to liquor decreased by 42%; and insanity by 66%. In ten years of prohibition our crime rate decreased by 54%. After Congress repealed the law drunkenness increased by 350%. The major St. Louis Hospitals alone recorded a 400% increase in alcoholic patients. No, prohibition worked the first time and it will work and be profitable again if we would support it. Whether or not alcoholism is banned, Christians will not engage in drinking alcoholic beverages.

4850 Saufley Road Pensacola, FL 32526

LOOKING FOR TEACHERS

Once upon a time, there was an elder looking for teachers for children—preschoolers and youth. And some adults said, “I don’t want to leave the good fellowship and study in my adult class.” However, the drug pusher on the street said, “Not even the threat of jail will keep me from working with your children.” Some more adults said, “I could never give the time required to plan and to go to teachers’ meetings.” However, the drug pusher, the pornographic book dealer, and the movie producer said, “We’ll stay open whatever hours are necessary every day to win the minds of the children.” Some more adults said, “I’m unsuited, untrained, unable to work with children, preschoolers, or youth.” However, the movie producer said, “We’ll study, survey, and spend millions to produce whatever turns the children on.” So the adults stayed in their classes, enjoyed the fellowship, absorbed the good Bible study, went out of town often on the weekend, and were available to do whatever was good on Wednesday nights and Sunday nights instead of being in teachers’ meetings.

When Sunday came, the children came to their classes, and no one was there except the elder going from one room to another trying to assure them that someone would surely come to teach them some Sunday soon. However, no one ever came, and the young children soon quit coming because they had gone to listen to others who did care about the things they did and what went into their minds.

Harold and Lucille Staples will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary with a reception at Briarwood Manor on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Gonzalez Street on Saturday, August 17, 1996, from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M.

Everyone is invited.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxon, Inez Brantley, and Ida Williams. Don Linden (Pam Lewis’ father) had recent tests and his cancer is in remission.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets September 8, 1996
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
August 14, 1996
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Tony Liddell
August 21, 1996
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

MARK THESE DATES
August 18, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at Jay. Study 2 Timothy 2 through Titus 3.
September 8, 1996–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER
Ray and Martha Wilcoxson’s new telephone number is 334-961-7840. Please update your directory.

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS
New books are being added to the library all the time. Take advantage of this source of material for your study of the Bible.
FINDING THE RIGHT CHURCH

Garry Stanton

How do we find and identify the right church? By right church we mean the scriptural church, the one which is found in the New Testament. To find the right church we need to look for the church that has all the identifying features of the Lord’s church. Let’s notice some of the identifying marks of the church so that we will know which is the right church.

**FIRST**, to find the right church we must look for the church which has the right DESIGNATION. The designation of the church is important because it shows ownership and allegiance. There are many scriptural designations for the church, such as “the church” (Col. 1:18), “the churches of Christ” (16:16), “the church of the Lord” (20:28), and “the church of God” (1 Cor. Only about 10% of the church names in the phone book are also found in the Testament. Not every church which right designation is a scriptural church, you can be absolutely sure that if a has an unscriptural name it cannot be scriptural.

To find the right church we must look for the church which has the right ORGANIZATION. There can only be one head for church, Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18). The headquarters of the church is where the head and Jesus is in heaven (Eph. 1:20-21). is no governing body greater than the congregation, no ecclesiastical Each congregation is autonomous and decides for itself in the areas of expediency. The congregation’s organization involves elders, men who oversee the work of the local congregation and tend the flock entrusted to them. Among other qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Tit.
1) they are to be married and have children. There must always be more than one elder so that one man does not rule the church (Acts 14:23). The church’s organization also involves deacons who help the elders carry out the work of the Lord. The organization of the church involves evangelists and teachers who preach and teach God’s Word. The congregation’s organization involves members. Everyone in the church has a work to be carried out and the church functions best when each member does his part. A church can still be a scriptural church and not have elders and deacons because none are qualified. But a church cannot be scriptural when its organization goes beyond what God allows.

The right church must have the right BAPTISM. There is only one baptism just as there is only one God (Eph. 4:3-6). Many religious groups can be eliminated from being the right church because they practice or believe in two or more baptisms. Churches which practice the wrong baptism cannot be the right church either. Scriptural baptism is immersion in water as a response of an obedient faith and is essential to salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). A church may practice the scriptural mode and purpose of baptism and still not be scriptural. But you know for sure that a church which practices a baptism which is not the one baptism of the New Testament cannot be the right church!

The right church must have the right WORSHIP. There are several things that can render worship unscriptural such as: merely going through the motions of worship, being insincere (Mat. 15:7-9); doing one’s own thing in worship (Col. 2:20-23); worship just for the sake of worship (Acts 17:23-30). We must know God and what He wants in worship because only authorized acts of worship contribute to right worship! The scriptural church will imitate the worship of the first century church in every approved example and will obey every command concerning worship.

It is important to find the scriptural church because salvation is found in it (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).

OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

Roger Johnson

“Do you ever feel downhearted or discouraged? Do you ever think your work is all in vain? Do the burdens thrust upon you make you tremble? And you fear that you shall ne’er the victory gain?”

Well, it is fairly certain that you occasionally do!—for discouragement is a very common ailment. Perhaps you have had a spirit kindred to Elijah who felt all alone in his struggles (1 Kin. 19:8). There was a time in David’s life when he reached the point of despair, but he came out of it. How was he able to overcome his discouragement? Notice the antidote David applied to his life: “And David was greatly distressed...but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God” (1 Sam. 30:6).

What can be gained from the context of this passage that will help us overcome discouragement?

1. Get alone in the PRESENCE of God. David did that as he “enquired at the Lord” (1 Sam. 30:8). This is the first step we must take if we are to cast off discouragement. Get into the presence of the Lord and tell Him everything, “casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). There is wonderful relief and release even in the process of telling Him of our discouragement.

2. Seek the fellowship of the PEOPLE of God. David went to Abiathar the priest (1 Sam. 30:7). There is great value in sharing our joys, sorrows, and discouragements with others who are like-minded with us. If you are discouraged, try en-
encouraging someone else and it will help make your own discouragement disappear.

3. Lean hard upon the PROMISES of God. David depended upon God in this dark moment. Notice the words, “thou shalt surely...without fail” (1 Sam 30:8). There are many promises which God has made to us, and they are all “yea” and “amen” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20)—not one of them has ever failed, nor will one of them ever fail (Mark 13:31)! Is there anything, anywhere, that will more quickly banish discouragement than God’s wonderful promises?

4. Remember the PROVIDENCE of God. Although David was passing through a time of upheaval, of loss, of distress, and discouragement, yet God was silently planning in love for Him (read 1 Sam. 30:11-16). We must never forget God’s ability to make “all things work together for good” (Rom. 8:28) in our lives.

IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TOO TRADITIONAL?

Kenneth L. Jones

In recent years the affirmation has been made that churches of Christ have become too traditional in their worship. This charge is made by those who would introduce innovations into the worship and re-structure it along the lines of a more uncontrolled or “Pentecostal” fashion. Is the criticism just? Is the church of Christ too traditional in its worship?

The Greek word, *paradosis*, translated “tradition,” means literally “a handing down or on” (W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). It refers to any teaching or ordinance which is handed down or on to succeeding generations. The New Testament speaks of two kinds of traditions: the traditions of men which when taught as doctrines render one’s worship vain (Mat. 15:9); and the traditions of God which are to be held, and in which one is to stand fast (2 The. 2:15; 1 Cor. 11:2).

If the charge has reference to the traditions of men, the answer is no! In fact, of the many churches in existence the church of Christ is the only one that is not teaching nor practicing the traditions of men. There is New Testament authority for every act of worship in which it engages. The introduction of ordinances of human origin must be faithfully opposed, for they would render the worship vain.

If the charge has reference to the traditions handed down by the apostles, the answer again is no! How could the church possibly be too faithful in observing the ordinances which God has commanded? The Bible warns that those who fail to abide in the doctrine of Christ (i.e., Christ’s doctrine) are without God (2 John 9).

It is true that many in the church go through a mere outward form and fail to worship God truly from the heart. The problem, however, is in the heart, not in the Divinely appointed avenue of worship! The acts of worship which God has authorized are perfect for the expression of every ounce of love, devotion and gratitude the human heart can possess. To be acceptable to God, the worship must be both in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

The conclusion, therefore, is that the church of Christ is not too traditional. The traditions of God must be held fast; the traditions of men must be opposed. One tradition of men would be too many; one tradition of God omitted would cause our worship and service to be in vain. The human spirit must overflow with adoration for God, but this adoration must be expressed decently and in order through the avenues which God has authorized.

High Springs, FL
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Inez Bramley, and Ida Williams. Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece) has liver cancer.

BAPTIZED AND RESTORED
Angie Kelly was baptized on July 7, 1996 and Tim Lamb was restored on August 11, 1996. Please keep them in your prayers.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
David and Angie Kelly placed membership with the Bellview congregation on August 7, 1996. Their address is 201 Hermey Avenue; Pensacola, FL 32507.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets September 8, 1996
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
August 21, 1996
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith
August 28, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
August 18, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl at Jay. Study 2 Timothy 2 through Titus 3.
August 18, 1996–Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
September 8, 1996–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
IGNORING FUNDAMENTALS

Dub McClish

When “fundamentals” are ignored losses are sure to accrue, whether it be in the public education, professional football, business or the church. It is no secret that many congregations of the Lord’s church are spiritually sick, either through spiritual apathy or doctrinal apostasy. The cause of such can be traced to a neglect of fundamental matters. This certainly includes ignoring doctrinal basics (no church can be strong in the Lord while weak in the faith). However, doctrinal sickness can be traced to carelessness in some practical fundamentals in the local church, such as:

Careless elder appointments. If those entrusted with the very direction of a congregation are unworthy, the church is doomed. A congregation cannot rise above its leadership. If doctrinally and spiritually weak men are elders the church will be lost. Such men will not only not demand that sound doctrine be preached—they will not tolerate it. They will be more impressed with what brother or sister “Fullpockets” says than what the Lord or Paul decreed. Elders of this stripe are mainly interested in keeping the attendance and contribution increasing by whatever means it takes (soft preaching, entertainment, constant change, etc.). The wrong kind of elder will hire and keep the wrong kind of preacher. In spite of the gravity of elder selection, brethren are amazingly careless about the scriptural qualifications of these men.
Careless preacher selection. Next to the elders the preacher has more to do with the direction of a church than any other member. If the elders are weak, he may determine the direction completely. The pulpit diet of a church has much to do with its spiritual health. Many brethren have heard so little doctrinal preaching for so long they are about starved to death. If a real gospel preacher (say Stephen or Paul) were to somehow re-appear and be invited to some of our pulpits (a miracle in both cases!), he would be declared a heretic after one sermon. It has been so long since some brethren heard the unvarnished Truth from their pulpit that they think those of us who still preach it are trouble-making legalists! Instead of asking a prospective preacher what his doctrinal convictions are, modern elders are more likely to ask if he relates well to this group or that and if he is a good counselor. It is sad to note that some of our colleges now specialize in supplying the demand for this product! Woe to the man who stands in a pulpit and sends people out bloated on his 15-minute pop psychology lecture, thinking they have been filled with the meat of the gospel because a Scripture was mentioned! Woe to the elders who demand such!

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADING PUBLIC PRAYER

Whoever engages in the leading of a public prayer has a weighty responsibility on his shoulders. His prayer must be the prayer of all those whom he is endeavoring to lead into the presence of God if there is to be meaning and fellowship during this phase of the worship. Following are some suggestions for efficient, worshipful leading in public prayer.

Make Some Preparation. The man who leads should know early enough to think about it. He might even jot down some things, and the names of some persons for whom he should like to lead God’s people in prayer.

Speak Audibly and Clearly. Obviously, those present cannot pray with their leader unless he prays loudly and clearly enough to be heard and understood. The use of the public address (PA) system for assisted hearing is a MUST.

Address the Prayer to God, the Father. Do not speak of Him, but to Him.

Make it of Reasonable Length. Not too long is just as important as not too short.

Avoid Vain Repetitions. Some phrases have been used with such regularity among us that they have become meaningless. Use freshness of thought and language.

Refrain From Personal References to Your Own Life and Situation. Do your private praying in prayer.

Refrain From Preaching to God or Man. Pray in Jesus’ Name, Not in “Thy Name” When Praying to God.

Be Sincere and Natural.

“Hear my prayer, O L ORD, give ear to my supplications! In your faithfulness answer me, and in your righteousness” (Psa. 143:1).

Copied

GAY OR STRAIGHT

Mel Futrell

These are terms of the late 20th century used to describe those who either do or do not engage in homosexual behavior. And how sad it is, brethren, when our beautiful English language has legitimate words stolen from it by the sinful pirates of society only to have them now “reap-
pear” to be applied in a perverted fashion. As you well know, one cannot, for the most part, use the word gay today without projecting to one’s hearers the image of homosexuality. About a year and a half ago I called the folks at Webster’s Dictionary and inquired as the first time that the word gay carried the alternative definition of homosexual. I was told it was the 1953 edition, which was even earlier than I had expected. The 1992 edition of Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary carries six usages under the heading of GAY. Numbers five and six are as follows, “5. homosexual, -n. 6. a homosexual person, esp. a male. (p. 587).” With this article we hope to encourage you to re-think the practice of homosexuality from a biblical perspective. We ask you to do this in light of the fact that homosexuality is viewed so positively by the liberal media.

As New Testament Christians we believe homosexuality is sinful, while others view it as nothing more than a lifestyle choice. In fact, it has become a social taboo to speak reproachfully concerning the practice of homosexuality. Brother Bill Flatt of Memphis, TN, has correctly stated, “That there is considerable pressure in our society to accept homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle is undeniable. One sees it in the news media, politics, and everywhere. The person on most television programs who is depicted as abnormal is the person who believes homosexuality is abnormal and sinful.” Make no mistake about it brethren, homosexuality is a learned practice not a genetic predisposition and it is in opposition to GOD’s will. All perverted “lifestyles” are by choice.

I am of the opinion that our nation is basically being force fed on the acceptance of homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle. That it has permeated our society and government to the highest levels is beyond dispute. Consider this:

1. Our President is a Gay rights supporter.

2. Congressman Barney Frank is an openly avowed homosexual.

3. Our military is rapidly being forced to become homosexual friendly.

4. Dr. Jocelyn Elders, lately fired as Surgeon General for her lewd comments, recently stated on the Phil Donahue Show (April 4, 1995) that homosexuality could and probably should be taught in our schools as part of human sexuality courses. The audience applauded.

There are many biblical texts that allude to homosexuality. Beginning in Genesis 13:13 we read that the men of Sodom are, “wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.” In Genesis 18:20 their sin is said to be, “very grievous.” Genesis 19:4-8 describes the desire of the men of that city to have sex with the men in Lot’s company, graphically. Jude speaking of the occupants of Sodom and Gomorrah says they were, given over to “fornication” (Jude 7). The apostle Paul say that fornicators “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9). Brethren, if this were all the information we had it would certainly settle the matter. But there is much more.

At least five biblical texts deal with the sin of homosexuality in explicit terms (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24-28; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-10). Let’s take just a peek at Romans 1:26-27. These verses describe lesbian and homosexual behavior as being “against nature,” and that which changes and leaves “the natural use.” Paul says homosexuality is “unseemly” or indecent. Please notice that those mentioned in verses 26 and 27 have abandoned heterosexual behavior for homosexual behavior.

Brethren, if homosexuality was not wrong, GOD would not have condemned it. The truth of the matter is, GOD has always condemned homosexuality and it will always be sin.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Inez Brantley, and Ida Williams. Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece) has liver cancer.

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dick Cunningham in the loss of his sister, Nora Dismew, who passed from this life on August 5, 1996.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets September 8, 1996
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
August 28, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
September 4, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Corey Bittner

MARK THESE DATES
August 25, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ Meeting at 5:00 P.M., here at the building.
September 8, 1996–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:  
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES  
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP  
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS  
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff  
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher  
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine,  
Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy,  
Harold Maxey, Richard Parker  
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

CAN YOU FIND IT?

Wendell Winkler

Christ exhorted, “Search the scriptures” (John 5:39). The Bereans were noble for, along with receiving the Word with all readiness, they “searched the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). Today, we should heed the Lord’s exhortation and emulate the example of the Bereans. Kind reader, as you “search the scriptures,” can you find the following?

The name you wear in religion? Remember, speaking of the name Christ, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). In searching the Scriptures, you can find,

The church of which you are a member? If the Bible is our road map from earth to heaven, how can we expect to reach the desired destination being a member of some institution whose name does not even appear in its pages? Think it over! In searching the Scriptures, can you find,

The worship you render? Can you present divine authority and sanction for the burning of incense, washing of feet and instrumental music in worship to God today? Where is the Scripture? In searching the Scriptures, can you find,

The confession you made? What confession did you make before you were baptized? Did you confess, “I believe that God for Christ’s sake has pardoned my sins?” Can you find it in the Bible? In searching the Scriptures, can you find,

The baptism to which you submitted? Did you have water sprinkled or poured upon you when you were an infant—or maybe later? Can
you find book, chapter and verse from the Scripture for such a practice in the Christian age? Where can we read that sprinkling is baptism or that infants are proper subjects for such? Also, if you were baptized because you were already saved, where do you read of such in the Bible?

In conclusion, we ask, can you be satisfied rapidly and speedily marching toward eternity having patterned your life after matters which you cannot find in the Scriptures? This is a serious matter!

2704 Battlement Dr. NE Tuscaloosa, AL 35406

“A PRICE MUST BE PAID”

James Segars

Nothing is more thrilling than to be a part of a growing wide-awake church. It is deeply gratifying to see the work expand both physically and spiritually. If I had a choice, I would never elect to be a member of a sleepy, slow-moving congregation whose progress could hardly be measured. Nearly any congregation can be an active and dynamic church if its membership is willing to pay the price. This is the reason there are so few churches which truly conduct a great program of work. Are we willing to pay the price or are we content to rock along in sleepy indifference? The difference could well mean the salvation of our souls. Consider the price that must be paid.

Time—We must find the time in our busy lives to spend in the service of God. Not just a few hours a week—but as much time as it would take to operate a successful business or to farm in a profitable way. Each member must acknowledge that God has first claim of his time. It takes a lot of time to do the job right and if you don’t have the time., .then who does?

Effort—Nothing takes the place of work. It doesn’t matter how well organized we are if we don’t have a mind to work. There is no problem finding someone who will suggest a plan. The problem is in finding someone who will work the plan. We are rich in ideas. What we need is a few workers.

Moral Purity—The fastest way to kill a church is to tolerate sin. To be alive and active, discipline must be exercised. When members insist on being worldly or indifferent then our fellowship should be quickly withdrawn from them. No congregation can regard sin lightly and ignore God’s moral law and continue to do well.

Material Sacrifice—It takes money and material goods for the church to function. Many good works must be neglected simply because they cannot be financed. Do you believe that your financial contribution to the work of the church represents a genuine sacrifice? Perhaps the contribution is the truest test of your religion.

I wonder—would Christ be pleased with the church if he came tomorrow and reviewed our work and progress? Would he consider me a help to the church or a hindrance? There is a great price that must be paid if the church is to be a dynamic influence for good. Who wants to face God at judgment as a sleepy member of the church?

Tupelo, MS

ENVY—THE EVIL EYE

J. Noel Merideth

The word “envy” etymologically means to look with ill-will, to look against. By definition “envy” is chagrin or discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another; resentful, begrudging. Jealousy and envy are to be distinguished in the following manner. We are jealous of our own; we are envious of another mans possessions or good
fortune. Jealousy fears to lose what it has; envy is pained at seeing another have. In setting forth the sins that come from within, out of the heart of men, Jesus lists “an evil eye” in Mark 7:21-22. Sometimes “an evil eye” is translated “envy.” The sin of envy is indeed the evil eye.

Envy pains and destroys a man like a knife in the chest; it splits churches and causes murders. Envy can shrink our circle of friends, ruin our business and dwarf our souls. Our personality and spiritual welfare are ruined by envy. Proverbs 14:30 says, “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.” Job 5:2 says, “For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.” There is a Greek story about a young man who killed himself through envy that illustrates well the foregoing passage. This man’s fellow citizens had erected a statue to one of their number who was a celebrated champion in the public games. But this man, a rival of the honored athlete, was so envious that he vowed that he would destroy the statue. Every night he went out into the darkness and chiseled at its base in an effort to undermine its foundation and make it fall. It did fall—but it fell on him and killed him.

Sometimes we are tempted to envy the wicked man, but the Bible warns us of this. “Let not thine heart envy sinners” (Pro. 23:17). “Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness” (Psa. 37:1). Envy is the wickedness that makes them bitter or apparent happiness does not make us happy or rich. It does not add one dollar to our assets but it does bankrupt the soul.

Neither should we envy our closest friends. Joseph’s brethren were envious of him (Gen. 37:11). They soul him into Egyptian slavery. But in the end a perilous famine forced them to recognize Joseph’s superiority. Their envy impoverished their lives, but the intended harm to Joseph never came. Envy is a boomerang-like weapon which hurts the attacker more than the attacked.

The envious man somehow feels that other people’s fortune in his misfortune, that their success is his failure and that their blessing is his curse. The antidote for envy is genuine love cultivated for our fellow man. Paul said in First Corinthians 13:4, “love envieth not.”

NEW BIBLE CLASSES
BEGINNING

The 1996–1997 Bible school year will be starting soon. New Bible classes for all age groups (youth and adults) will begin September 1 for the Sunday morning classes and September 4 for the Wednesday evening classes. Make plans now to attend.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
ADULTS II—The Eternal Kingdom II, Paul Brantley, room 1.
ADULTS III—My God and My Money, Michael Hatcher, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Studies In Christian Doctrine and Practical Christian Living, Bill Gallaher, room 17.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE
ADULTS I—Ascertaining Bible Authority, Bill Crowe, room 7.
ADULTS II—Workshop On Biblical Studies, Scot Brazell, room 1.
ADULTS III—Preaching God Demands, Ray Foshee, room 5.
NEW CONVERTS—Studies In Christian Doctrine and Practical Christian Living, Bill Gallaher, room 17.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, and Ida Williams. Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece) has liver cancer.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets September 8, 1996
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
September 4, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Corey Bittner

September 11, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
September 8, 1996–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds. Invite family, friends and neighbors to Bible class and worship service.


September 21, 1996–Fellowship Picnic on the grounds. Activities are scheduled for the young people. Home made ice cream will be served for dessert. More information will be provided in the next few weeks.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
THE BIBLE IS RELEVANT
Tim Ayers

Frequently today we hear the charge that Bible teaching and preaching are irrelevant. Some claim that the church must change its message to fit today’s “modern society.” But think for a moment; are people today really different from any other time? Solomon said, “there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us” (Ecc. 1:9-10). Have the people of the 20th century really changed as much as some think?

Does this sound familiar? “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (Jer. 6:15). Surely we have all seen someone so engulfed in sin that he or she could not feel one ounce of shame. How refreshing it is these days to find someone who blushes at sin, who feels shame when he or she stumbles at temptation. God once called Israel “O nation that hath no shame” (Zep. 2:1). Is there nothing in our nation that should bring us to shame? Abortion on demand, divorce for any cause, secular humanism taught in our schools, bribery in government, etc.; the Bible isn’t relevant?

How about Malachi 2:17: “Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them.” Surely you have heard someone saying something like that. Years ago a book was published with the title, The Lord is My Shepherd, and He Knows I’m Gay. The author tried to show that God was responsible for his homosexuality, and that he was glorifying God by practicing that perverted lifestyle! Can you imagine anything so blasphemous? Further,
we have those who claim that there are no absolutes. Everything is relative to the situation or set of circumstances you happen to find yourself in, or so they say. With that kind of thinking, a person can justify lying, murder, rape, you name it! Are they calling those who do evil good in the sight of God? The Bible seems more relevant the more we study!

Consider Isaiah 5:11, where we find some who would “rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” Too, in Micah 2:1, some would “devote iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.” Or further, consider those in Zephaniah 3:7, who, even after being warned by God, “rose early, and corrupted all their doings.” The cry of irrelevant is becoming more and more absurd.

Is the New Testament irrelevant? Paul wrote of some who were “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5). This sounds just like those so-called ‘higher critics’ who claim that they are the only one who know which verses of the Bible are genuine and which should not be in the Scriptures. These self-appointed judges of God’s Word shout loud and long about “demythologizing” the Bible, which simply means taking out the parts that they don’t like! That sort of reminds us of king Jehoiakim cutting up the scroll of Jeremiah (Jer. 36). Isn’t it interesting that even the latest versions of the Bible still have included all those supposedly non-genuine verses.

Two verses later (2 Tim. 3:7), Paul describes these certain ones as “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Isn’t that the predicament some are in today? They are like the Athenians in Acts 17, who “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” These Athenians could be called early denominationalists, because they could have said, “Choose the god of your choice.” Luke records that Paul saw “the city full of idols.” Doesn’t this sound relevant to our time? Finally, we notice where Paul wrote of “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20). This is a perfect description of the theory of evolution. True science asserts nothing that cannot be demonstrated or tested in the laboratory. Evolution cannot be so demonstrated or tested. Of course, neither can creation. True science has no business saying anything about the origins of matter. These questions must be decided by looking at all areas of evidence, including the scientific. But science must stay in its proper realm, which is simply explaining how the universe works, not where it came from.

The charge of “irrelevance” has been shown to be false. From its own pages, the relevance of every principle taught in God’s Word is clearly seen. From cover to cover the Bible is truly a book for all ages and relevant to every generation. Let us always turn to the Word for guidance, comfort, and strength. The Bible has the answer to every question and every problem that men could ever encounter.

Via Church of Christ
PO Box 1255; Taylor, TX 76574

SCHEME OF
REDEMPTION AS TOLD
BY THREE TREES
Garry Stanton

The story of the scheme of redemption should be familiar to every Christian. It is a story that each and every man and woman in this world must hear! The scheme of redemption can by related in several different manners, but the resulting stories are all the same. One interesting way to view God’s plan for redeeming man is to look at it from the standpoint of three trees. These trees cannot talk, but the events that surround them speak volumes.
The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 2:16-17). The only prohibition God placed on man in the garden, the only “thou shalt not,” was the forbidding of their eating of this tree. Two things resulted from Adam and Eve’s partaking of the forbidden tree. **First**, as it’s name indicates, it gave them a knowledge of good and evil. After eating of the tree they became accountable to God for all that was evil in the sight of God. **Second**, Adam and Eve died when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). They did not die physically that day but spiritually (Gen. 3:22-24). Spiritual death is the separation of the soul, the eternal part of man, from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23; Jam. 1:14-15). As a result of their sin, man, from this point forward, is accountable unto God for good and evil! The end result of their partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was that man found himself in need of a savior, a redeemer!

This brings us to the **second** tree in the story of man’s redemption, the **Tree of Calvary** (Gal. 3:13). The emphasis on the birth of Christ is misplaced and without any scriptural authority. The crowning act of redemption, the greatest proof of God’s love was not the birth of Jesus but His death on the tree of Calvary. The tree of Calvary represents the very heart and soul of God’s plan for redeeming man (1 Cor. 15:1-2). Jesus was hanged on that tree because of sin (1 Pet. 2:24). He died to reconcile sinful man to God (Eph. 2:13,16; Tit. 2:14). This is the most valuable thing that could ever have been done for mankind! But if we do not take advantage of the Lord’s sacrifice it would be for nothing as it concerns us. We must be washed in the blood of the lamb in order to have our sins washed away (Rev. 1:5). This takes place when we are scripturally baptized (Acts 22:16). It is by baptism that we come into contact with the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb (John 19:33-34; Rom. 6:3-4). Jesus’ sacrifice can also be for nothing if the Christian fails to live as he or she should (1 John 1:7; Heb. 6:4-6). If the Christian is faithful, loyal, and dedicated then he will have access to the third tree!

The **third tree** is **The Tree of Life**. This is the same tree mentioned in Genesis 3 and is located in heaven (Rev. 2:7). It is located in the holy city with an eternal light (Rev. 21:10), an eternal city with an eternal light (Rev. 21:23). A city with the water of life and the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2). Who may enter into the city? “they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

If the world were to end today, would you be allowed to enter that wonderful city of God? Is your name written in the Lamb’s book of life? If the world were to end today, would you have access to the Tree of Life so that you could live forever? If the answer to any of these is no, won’t you repent and correct whatever is amiss in your life today?

2707 Mt. Holly Road Camden,AR71701
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxon, and Ida Williams. Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece) has liver cancer.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Kathy Brammer has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address and phone number are: 6511 Chicago Avenue; Pensacola, FL 32526; 941-1679. Please update your directory.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 2 meets September 8, 1996
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
September 11, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Henry Born
September 18, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THESE DATES
September 8, 1996–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds. Invite family, friends and neighbors to Bible class and worship service.
September 21, 1996–Fellowship Picnic on the grounds. Activities are scheduled for the young people. Home made ice cream will be served for dessert.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
**“TO GO OR NOT TO GO”**

**Larry Fluitt**

Imagine this situation. It’s Saturday evening and the family is getting ready for bed. The kids have been tucked in, “Good nights” have been said, and Papa turns to Mama and asks, “Are we going to Bible study and worship in the morning?”

What is wrong with this picture? It is typical of numerous Christians. The problem is that the issue of attending worship on the Lord’s day should never have arisen! It should be a foregone conclusion in every Christian household that the family is going to assemble with other Christians every Lord’s day. Period.

Weather, except in rare instances, should not be a factor! Fatigue should not be a factor—it isn’t on Monday morning when it is time to go to work! Relatives visiting should not be a factor—God has first priority (Luke 14:26)! House or yard work should not be a factor (Luke 10:38-42).

When one becomes a Christian he accepts every responsibility inherent in his calling and commits himself to utilize every opportunity provided for worship and service. The disciple, said Jesus, must “deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Again, “whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

In conversion, the penitent sinner “dies” to self and sin and rises from the “watery grave” a new person (Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17). Christ is now “his life” (Col. 3:1-4). Spiritual matters
I am thankful that when I was growing up this question was NEVER asked, not even one time! And we lived more than ten miles out in the country over the nearest (and roughest) road. It was understood in our family that the “Lord’s day” is just that, a day to worship and honor him. The thought of traveling or visiting or shopping or sleeping or working around the place was never entertained. If Sunday came, we were going to be at the house of worship! Will you and your family assemble with the saints Sunday? Must you “talk it over and decide?” Or has the decision already been made for you by the Lord? Do not permit any person or interest to keep you away from the place every Christian ought to be.

Via Church of Christ
PO Box 482; Olathe, KS 66051

JESUS OR JURASSIC?
Mel Futrell

It was just about three years ago that Shayna and I succumbed to the temptation and went to see the movie Jurassic Park. The movie is centered around the notion of a theme-park of sorts being built on an island off the coast of Costa Rica where both man and dinosaur roam. According to the movie, these dinosaurs were resurrected via dinosaur DNA that has been located in the stomachs of mosquitoes preserved in amber. The plot of the movie thickens when there is a security break-down on the island that thrusts man and dinosaur together (for the first time according to evolutionists). It is my understanding that it is the largest grossing movie to date. However, we were disappointed. Whatever measure of entertainment was achieved was soon fleeting as realism and Christian beliefs had to take over. It was clear that the movie, as well as the book, espoused a false view and hope about dinosaurs.

The false view advanced is the belief that dinosaurs and man were never concurrent occupants of this planet. Evolutionist propaganda supposes that dinosaurs lived on Earth some 65 million years before latecomer man arrived. This period of time is identified by the evolutionist as the Jurassic period of the Mesozoic epoch. Thus, the title of the movie, Jurassic Park. But the testimony of Scripture will not sustain that belief. Perhaps you will recall the statement of our Lord in Mark 10:6, “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.” Brethren, man is no johnny-come-lately to the Earthly scene. Jesus said we have been around from the beginning of the creation. So, you tell me who will we believe, Jesus or Jurassic?

Now to the matter of dinosaurs roaming the Earth. It would appear that Job 40:15-24 speaks directly to the issue. Job’s “BEHEMOTH” with a tail like a cedar tree (v. 17) and who is the “chief of the ways of God” (v. 19) cannot be equated with any present day creature. I believe the Lord is here describing a dinosaur (perhaps a Brachiosaurus?). If this is the case then clearly man and dinosaur were co-existent.

As to the false hope, many no doubt would revel at the prospect of man once again witnessing dinosaurs here on Earth. But let me assure you that man WILL NOT be resurrecting any of the extinct creatures of God, DNA or not. The Scriptures say Jesus Christ is our hope (1 Tim. 1:1), that hope is an abiding thing (1 Cor. 13:13), and that we have this hope as an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19). Again I ask you, will it be Jesus or Jurassic?

Please don’t mistake what I am saying. I do appreciate a little science fiction for science fiction sake. But I don’t and never will allow it to cloud or determine my thinking.

My final word would be this. I do believe that dinosaurs existed as part of the creation of God.
and that now, for presently unknown reasons, they have passed from the scene. But, “Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

149 Bay View Drive Daphne, AL 36526

THE CHARACTER OF JOB
David Musgrave

One of the most interesting characters in the Bible is the person of Job. Throughout the book which bears his name, so much can be learned to assist one in living a righteous life before God. It is Job’s character that teaches so much in this great book. While his attitude before the dialogue (beginning in chapter three) is exemplary, his ultimate reaction in Job 42:3,6, shows that even Job did not remain sinless.

Job 1:1 provides the most comprehensive description of Job’s character. The first term used to describe Job is the word perfect. While this does not mean that Job was sinless, it does suggest that he was a mature person. This maturity has the same meaning as the New Testament usage of the word teleiois, meaning perfect or complete.

The next word used to describe Job is the word upright. While perfect carries the idea of being in a right relationship with God, upright carries the idea of having a right relationship with other people; that is, to have an outstanding character before all of one’s acquaintances.

Job also feared God. Not necessarily in the sense that Job was constantly afraid of God, always afraid to make any move, but in the sense that he respected God, and loved God for the power and the glory that was his. The Book of Proverbs (1:7) says that this fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (see also Mat. 10:28). Job’s fear of God necessarily led to a life which turned away from evil. At times throughout the book of Job this characteristic is reflected (see 1:22; 2:10; chapter 31), but this verse is seemingly used to point out how Job was interested in avoiding that which was contrary to the will of God before his trials. His turning away from evil which could come between him and God shows a character which led to Job’s being able to hold to his faith in God through the midst of a long period of trials. If Job had no such strong relationship with God to begin with, the likelihood is that the trials would have brought him down very quickly.

From Job 1:20-21, one learns that Job must have had a close relationship with God, insomuch that such a great loss (cf., 1:13-19) only made Job turn to God rather than turn from Him.

Job’s character is further seen in Job 2:10, where Job upholds his faith in God in the face of negative encouragement from his wife. He told her that she is speaking “as one of the foolish women,” and that a person should receive evil from God as well as good. One would think that the tendency would be to complain to those around him; Job not only did not become bitter, but he even rebuked his wife for not supporting him in following God.

Job 42:1-6 also shows Job’s character, though it is seen after the trials he suffered. These verses are significant in that they show that Job still feared God. Job still recognized and acknowledged (1) God’s omnipotence, verse one; (2) that he had spoken without realizing his ignorance on certain matters, verse three; and, (3) that he had sinned, therefore needing to repent, verse six. Job’s character before his trials was outstanding, and after the speeches Job repented before receiving blessings from God (Job 42:10-17). This shows that Job still feared God, desired to be perfect, turned away from evil, and did not serve God for material advantage.

Truly Job had an outstanding character as a man who served as an example in the midst of his trials and suffering (see Jam. 5:11).
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Ida Williams, Bea Waters (Leon Waters’ mother), and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece). Alice Williams is in Sacred Heart Hospital after a minor stroke on Sunday.

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Sharon and Richard McCrory in the death of his mother, Louise McCrory, on September 1, 1996. Please remember them in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
September 18, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
September 25, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
September 21, 1996–Fellowship Picnic on the grounds. Activities are scheduled for the young people. Home made ice cream will be served for dessert.
October 27-November 1, 1996–Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
“RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION”

Harold Blevins

It was printed in the Commercial Appeal, July 28, 1990, section C, page 4; the following: “Comedienne Roseanne Barr Friday defended her off-key performance of the national anthem, saying she was not an opera singer. Ms. Barr, whose television series Roseanne is one of the nation’s most popular, stunned a crowd of 25,000 people at a baseball double-header in San Diego Wednesday by plugging her ears with her fingers and screeching out of the words of the Star Spangled Banner.

The crowd booed Ms. Barr.”

This country called America still aspires that our National Anthem receive admiration. Whether or not the singer is opera trained, country and western breed, or simply a singer common indeed—we the people require reverence for our anthem. Some things are above causal comedic clowning. The theme of the United States represents all that is good about this grand and great nation.

It ought to be scripturally shouted from shore to shore that not only is the anthem of America to be honored, so also must the God of all nations be happily honored, and homaged. “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people...God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Pro. 14:34; Psa. 89:7).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may..."
serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb 12:28; et al.).

Deity has declared it!—“Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD” (Psa. 144:15; 33:12); therefore, “let us exalt his name together” (Psa. 34:4).

Therefore, we the people shall never be lacking in respect, or reverence for God nor country.

380 Pine Butte Lane; North Augusta, SC 29841

INSIGNIFICANT FIGHTERS??

Robin W. Haley

I recently read the following statement made in defense of Christians involving themselves in the religious and “ethical movements” of men: “Almost always, those of our people who choose to wage a significant fight against evil threats to the community must enter into some kind of relationship with highly principled Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or Catholics who are leading the change for a moral and ethical community (my emphasis, rwh).” This was written by the editor of a well-known Christian University newspaper. It may be that I have misread and/or misunderstood my editor brother, but does this seem to suggest that if we do not “enter into some kind of relationship” with denominational errorists, our “fight against evil” is “almost always” insignificant? Is it the case that, for our fight against sin and evil influences to be effective and significant, we “must” work with these denominations? Let us consider this kind of reasoning.

First, “our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). Second, as to our effectiveness Paul said “for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). From these two passages we can learn this: our “fight” is against the forces of evil, to be sure, but can be and is waged in a spiritual way and setting by godly living. Also, when it comes to being equipped to handle this “fight,” the denominations simply have no weapons to help, in that they have nothing to do with God, and cannot call upon His help acceptably as they are not His children. How can we have relationship with such as these?

I am curious what our editor means by “highly principled.” We all know our denominational friends to be good, moral, honest and hard-working people. These are good traits. Many, no doubt, are “not far from the kingdom” (Mark 12:34). But these alone do not make one a “principled” person. A man of “principles” is one who follows a strict moral code. Obviously, although well intentioned, denomination people are in error regarding THE strict moral code (the New Testament). I deny that such people are “leading the change” in such matters, at least, in the Lord’s sight. It is the Lord’s people who alone can “lead” others into a real and absolute change in moral climate. Likely we fall short of our editor’s expectations, but that does not negate the truth of who is really to lead in moral, spiritual matters. Don’t forget, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Friends, this is the kind of thinking (as expressed by this editor) which has lead some to have fellowship with “ministerial alliances” and other such compromising situations, including the one he was defending. Please know that your fight against evil is significant and is waged all the while that you are being faithful! You need not engage the enemy with other enemies’ help. Remember, those who are not with Christ are against Him (Mat. 12:30). This includes every religion as listed by the editor of the “newspaper”
I mentioned, including the one he was attempting to defend, “Promise Keepers.”

Please hear and take courage that we are significant in the sight of God, when we live as Paul did when he wrote, “fight the good fight of the faith...! have fought the good fight” (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). Never forget: “be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

912 E, Teresa; Sapulpa, OK 74066

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING THE WORD

Tommy J. Hicks

Paul urged Timothy, “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2), and hold the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 2:2). Peter said, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Titus was told, “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1). John told us, “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). Paul declared that he was pure from the blood of all men, and he stated his right to make that claim by saying, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). By these inspired statements, we can see that we are to preach nothing more or less than the Word of God. That is Bible preaching!

Jesus gave the commission to preach when He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Why? Because, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16). By Christ’s statements, we can conclude that the gospel brings salvation to those who are lost. Paul is emphatic on this point as he says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Preachers are warned to be careful about what they preach in Paul’s admonition, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16).

Preachers should not attempt to modernize, glamorize, or homogenize the Word of God. God, being omniscient, knows best what our needs are and He has revealed His perfect and complete will for us in His unchanging Word (Mal. 3:6). Who is man to question God? Who is man to think he can improve upon what God has given us in truth?

Today, there is a crying need for churches to demand BIBLE preaching from their preachers. Souls (of hearers and preachers) and their SALVATION depend on it. Only the gospel will save; therefore, it behooves us to preach and teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

705 Melody Lane Gainesville, TX 76240

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Please make the following changes to your directory: Ray & Martha Wilcoxson’s new phone number is 334-961-7840; David and Angie Kelly’s phone number is 455-8820. Michael & Ieva Peters have placed membership at Scenic Hills Church of Christ.

PROUD GRANDPARENTS

Charles and Alice Williams are the proud grandparents of Michael Damian Williams, born on September 6, 1996. Michael’s parents are Buddy and Noelle Williams and his great-grandmother is Ida Williams. Our heartfelt congratulations are extended to the Williams’ family.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Alice Williams, Ray Foshee, Lucille Staples, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Leon Waters in the death of his mother Bea Waters, on September 14, 1996. Please keep the Waters’ family in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996
*Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.*

READING/INVITATION
September 25, 1996
  Reading: Jim Loy
  Invitation: Paul Brantley
October 2, 1996
  Reading: Harold Maxey
  Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
September 21, 1996–Fellowship Picnic on the grounds. Activities are scheduled for the young people. Home made ice cream will be served for dessert.
October 20, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Hebrews 5.
October 27-November 1, 1996–Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS:  Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER:  Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY:  Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

THE FAMILY

_Burt Groves_

God provided the family because He knew that it was “not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). God wills that one man and one woman should share life as husband and wife as long as both live, and Jesus warned, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:6). When man’s laws are considered the answer to the question of the Pharisees, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (Mat. 19:3), must be in the affirmative. But Jesus explained, “from the beginning it was not so” (Mat. 19:8). He then gave His decree which continues to be binding on all people. “And I say unto you,

Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Mat. 19:9).

The Marriage Scene

Perusing the statistics one might think that Americans are maturing in matrimonial practices. Today, first time marriages occur when an average couple is 26 years old (Statistics from _U.S. News & World Report_, 6-6-94). The average divorcing couple has continued married for 7.1 years. An estimated 50,000 marriage and family therapists attempt to aid failing marriages. While 97% of Americans claim to have happy marriages, one in three of those who exchange vows have done so before. Do these statistics suggest that Americans have learned the value of marriage and have chosen to abandon the permissive philosophy which encourages couples to share the
same dwellings without making themselves legally responsible to one another? Probably not. Rather, young adults want what works. Many have learned that selfishness spoils relationships. Pragmatism rather than faith in God causes members of a secular society to make commitments for life, but lack of faith in Christ permits vows to be broken without any sense of guilt. Why then do secular marriages endure?

Cost of Divorce
Few men can afford supporting two families. The woman who attempts motherhood and pursuit of a profession outside the home knows that an ex-husband who refuses to pay child support may find himself in jail, but that does not remedy the lost support. Just as two share in producing income they can share in household duties, but after divorce one finds he (usually she) must attempt to function as both wage-earner and home-maker. Children do need both parents together in the home. One who breaks his marriage vow is likely to neglect his parental responsibility. When both see disadvantages in divorce both may work to keep the family together.

Productive Principles
God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16, NKJV). The Creator has done more than command marriage for life of the participants; He has instructed His children how to live as husband and wife. Mutual love cements the relationship. The husband must love his wife “as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). No greater love can exist. God loves unlovable sinners and wants to save all; however, his love does not condone their evil. Love caused the Father to give the Son and the Son to give His life (Rom. 5:8). The sacrifice on Calvary makes possible the abundant life in Pensacola. Such love compels action on behalf of the beloved. Love seeks not to get but to give, not to be honored but to serve. No wonder love elicits love!

Aged women should teach young women “to love their husbands” (Tit. 2:4). The compound word “love husbands” in the original comes from a different word from the sacrificial love commanded of the husband. The love which seeks the welfare of the beloved causes the wife to love affectionately. Such friendship love makes the home very special, and invaders find no entrance. When the wife’s husband is her best friend she finds her freedoms in God’s plan for the home far greater than any that “liberated” women’s movements offer.

Obeying the husband who loves her does not make her inferior (Tit. 2:5). Just as the church must honor Christ as her spiritual head the wife must submit to the husband as the temporal head of the family. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22). Since no husband or wife is perfect, submission sometimes comes with difficulty, but the alternative hurts more.

Just as the wife must submit, the husband must lead. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). An indecisive man fails as the head of his family. He must be a good listener, and when possible he will please his wife. Many marriages fail because of financial disagreements. One wants to spend, and the other wants to save. Both must learn to read bank statements and credit card bills! No family can give generously while spending extravagantly, and the call of the gospel includes generosity (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

When children are born both father and mother must work to provide nurture and discipline. The wife must affectionately love her children and function as a “keeper at home” (Tit. 2:4-5). The husband must “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Discipline includes training and chastening, God
asks, “what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” (Heb. 12:7). The answer to this rhetorical query must be a lost son! “Adonijah, son of David who attempted to steal the throne of Israel prior to David’s death, and finally suffered execution at the order of Solomon, lacked discipline in his youth. “And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?” (1 Kin. 1:6). Yes, David ruled Israel quite well, but he failed as a husband and father.

Children are the most precious possessions of parents, and neglect ruins them. Both dad and mom must share in loving, training and disciplining. If one demands as a disciplinarian and the other pampers in the belief that spanking is inhuman, children learn to use one parent against the other to their own detriment.

Many can contribute to the spiritual growth of children, but none can take the places of loving parents. Parents who do well often experience some of their best rewards together as grandparents.

Make no mistake, God began the family, and he knows what makes the basic social unit prosper for the benefit of all.

P.O. Box 17066; Dallas, TX 75217

PREACHING
Ken Jones

Last evening, I finished rereading the little book, “Preciousness of Preaching,” by the late Eldred Stevens. As I carefully read Mr. Stevens thoughts concerning the special nature of preaching and the power of such work, I became painfully aware of our lack of emphasis on God’s method of reaching people. It pleased God to save souls through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, in our day, the preaching of the gospel has been shoved into a corner and labeled as “old fashion.”

My friends, it is not the world’s fault that our preaching has grown weak. It is our fault! Brother Stevens spoke of items such as preparation, prayer, perseverance and persistence. Preaching designed to save lost souls must be based on fervent, continual prayer. Effective preaching is only a result of countless hours of preparation through study. Those who preach are often afflicted with problems and must persevere. Most of all, our preaching must not be a socialized message to tickle ears of sinful people. It must be scripturally sound discourse primarily centered in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please don’t get the impression that I speak only to “professional preachers.” Somehow, we must all take part in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must all pray, prepare and persevere with the true message of salvation.

What kind of a preacher are you?

CHURCH BEHAVIOR

A preacher was annoyed by people talking and giggling during a church service. He paused, looked at the disturbers, and said: “I am always afraid to expose those who misbehave, for this reason: Some years ago, as I was preaching a young man who sat before me was laughing, talking and making uncouth grimaces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. After the services a young gentle man said to me, ‘Sir, you have made a great mistake. That young man whom you reproved was an idiot.’ Since then I have been afraid to reprove those who misbehave themselves in church, lest I should repeat the mistake and reprove an idiot.” During the rest of the service there was good order.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Ray Foshee, Lucille Staples, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

RESTORED
Angela Fletcher was restored on September 8, 1996. Please keep her in your prayers.

NEW ARRIVAL
Susan and Mark Hollowell are the proud parents of a baby girl, Brittany Kay, born on September 8, 1996. Our heartfelt congratulations are extended to them and Brittany’s grandparents Bill and Kay Hollowell.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
October 2, 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Bill Crowe
October 9, 1996
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
October 20, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Hebrews 5-9.

October 27-November 1, 1996–Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
BROtherly Considerations

Garry Stanton

If a brother has been overtaken in a sin we owe him the brotherly consideration of trying to restore him. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). We are to try and turn “the sinner from the error of his way” and thus “shall save a soul from death” (Jam. 5:19-20).

Secondly, if we have wronged a brother we are to go to him. “Go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Mat. 5:23-24). The obligation enjoined on the Christian who has wronged his brother is to take the initiative and go to that brother that has aught against us (whether real or imaginary) and straighten out the problem. Go is imperative—not a suggestion but a command. Be reconciled to thy brother, confess any wrong and ask for forgiveness. This relieves the Christian’s responsibility to the brother who has been wronged or believes that he has been wronged. The responsibility then rests on the wronged brother to forgive. The offending Christian will also seek God’s forgiveness for the wrong that he has done (Acts 8:22). Sins against brethren are sins against God (1 Cor. 8:11-12) and we cannot be right with God when we have not repented of sins against brethren! Most differences between brethren would be resolved if every Christian would practice Matthew 5:23-24.

Thirdly, if we have been wronged by a brother, we are to go to them about the wrong
we have suffered. “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mat. 18:15). The obligation of this passage falls to the one who has been wronged, it is this person who is to take the initiative. Many have the attitude, “He sinned against me, let him come to me!” But Jesus said, “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Luke 17:3). The specifics of the wrong need to be laid before the offender so that he will know exactly the problem. It could have been an inadvertent and unintentional act or they could have been taken wrongly and therefore it could be just a misunderstanding. He must be told his fault “between thee and him alone.” There is no need for others to know what has transpired at this point. How does this compare with the practice of going to everyone about the offence except the person we are supposed to? Talking to others about the problems makes two unrighteous, the one doing the talking and the one who encourages it by listening. And if the offender repents and asks forgiveness, no one else should ever know what happened. The matter should be left between the two people involved.

Brother Wendall Winkler said it well, “When the Bible is followed, both (the offender and offended) will take the initiative; and, will meet about halfway, and reconciliation will follow.”

HUMAN CREEDS

Any creed containing more than the Bible is condemned by Scripture (1 Cor. 4:6; Rev. 22:19). Any creed containing less than the Bible is condemned because of Revelation 22:19. Any creed differing from the Bible is condemned because of the teaching in Galatians 1:6-9. Any creed precisely like the Bible is useless, because we already have the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

GETTING BACK TO PERSONAL WORK

Dave Rogers

Acts 8:4 tells us that the early Christians responded to the fiery persecutions of Saul by going “everywhere preaching the gospel.” The church in that day grew at a tremendous rate, numbering thousands of converts in only a few months, and hundreds of thousands in only a few years! The key to that phenomenal growth rate lies in the fact that the gospel was being spread by individual saints. They did not rely on elders, bible-class teachers, and preachers to do all the teaching.

In the 1800s, this nation witnessed a profound surge in religious interest. A devoted band of men and women set themselves to return from denominationalism to plain New Testament Christianity, and ignited what we now know as the restoration movement. Through the mid-to-late 1800s, the Lord’s church grew by leaps and bounds, numbering substantially over one million members by the turn of the century. Again, this tremendous rate of growth was due to the efforts of
individuals, rather than simply the congregational leaders. In the 1950s and 60s, the church was recognized as the fastest growing religious body in the nation. Things have certainly changed in recent years, haven’t they!

Brother Terry Hill has well observed that “we have not restored the church until we have restored (the) personal work of the church.” Well said! Since we know that the church can grow, what should we do when she does not? The answer is simple! We need to do what Christians did in the first century, and in the 1800s, and in the 50s and 60s! We need to do (get back to) personal work!

How do you restore enthusiastic personal work today? You begin by following Jesus’ example! In Acts 1:1, He both taught and practiced the gospel. You next need to partake of His spirit (Rom. 8:9) a spirit of love for lost souls. When you follow His pattern (1 Pet. 2:21), you find that “personal work” is no burden at all, but a joy! These were the lessons Paul learned, as Acts 20:20 plainly shows. The message of salvation is the same today as yesterday, and it still has the same power to save (Rom. 1:16)!

To be effective in personal work, there are several things we absolutely must do. We must love Jesus, (John 14:15); He commanded us to spread the gospel, and we disprove our love for Him when we don’t. He taught in Matthew 22:37-39 that men should love one another (“neighbors”) as themselves; surely this includes caring for their souls! We cannot love God if we hate others (1 John 4:20). Are we keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3-4)? We also need to believe Jesus (John 14:12) if we are going to restore a firm commitment to personal work! Unless we take Him at His Word, the job won’t get done.

Our MISSION is to obey Him (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3) by following His example of care for the lost (Mat. 18:11; Luke 19:10). Our COMMISSION is in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16, to “go out and take” His gospel to the world He has given us. Will you obey? (Great appreciation is expressed to brother Terry Hill, of Tuttle, OK, for the idea behind and the outline of this article, DR)

P.O. Box 285 Lawton, OK 37502

CONFESSION OF FAULTS

Bill Jackson

One asks, “Is it an absolute requirement that an unfaithful child of God must come forward at the close of a service, and then confess his faults before the whole church?”

Of course, the idea of one in fault, and the concern of the saints, is that there be a restoration (Gal. 6:1). In the case of the child of God in error, there needs to be prayer to God—always—and also there needs to be the prayers of the saints for this one who is now penitent and returning to faithfulness. This is the basic point in James 5:16, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”

One who is truly penitent and desires return to faithfulness, and conscious of the manner of life wherein their own influence and the influence of the church has been damaged, surely will want the prayers of the brethren. Now, must there be that coming forward before the church? We say, “No, provided the person makes personal contact with each and every member of the church with the acknowledgment.” That would accomplish the same purpose, but it seems more expedient to do it before the church assembled.

Be it remembered that confessing faults is not punishment, but it is the sincere desire of the man making correction to no only pray to God for forgiveness, but also to request the prayers of those in Christ whose righteous prayers avail much (Jam. 5:16).

Deceased
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Ray Foshee, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 3 meets October 6, 1996
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996
Please note the changes in dates for the visitation groups. Each group will meet every three months.

READING/INVITATION
October 9, 1996
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Dodd
October 16, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
October 20, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Hebrews 5-9.
October 27-November 1, 1996–Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher.

ADDRESS CHANGES
Marilyn Hall’s new address is: 7139-A Pearson Road; Pensacola, FL 32526. Her telephone number remains the same. Lanet McManaman’s new address is: 1313 West Ten Mile Road; Cantonment, FL 32533. Her telephone number is 477-7025. Please update your directory.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Juice
TAME THAT TONGUE

Jesse Whitlock

James 3:8 states, “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” Sins emanating from the tongue are numerous. Perhaps profanity is one of the most common sins of the tongue to those both without and within the church of my Lord. In Exodus 20:7 the Record reads, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

Perhaps you are thinking to yourself that you would never take God’s name in vain. However, it is possible to do so and never realize or intend it to be that way. Webster defines “in vain” as to meaning “(2) in an irreverent or blasphemous manner (“you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...” Deuteronomy 5:11)...”

While we are in Webster’s Dictionary let’s notice a few words that you may have heard in the past few days:

- “Gosh”—a euphemism for God
- “Golly”—a euphemism for God
- “Gee”—euphemistic contraction for Jesus
- “Darn”—damn; a euphemism for the curse
- “Doggone”—a euphemistic remodeling for God, damn, darn
- “Heck”—an exclamation used as euphemism for hell

Have you been doing any “second hand” cussing “cursing” lately? We need to consider Webster’s definition for a “euphemism” —“the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant; also: the expression so substituted.” Perhaps we need to explain that substituted expression is intended not to offend
mankind, however, can we be certain that such is not offensive to God?

Christ said in Matthew 12:36-37, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

God’s Word says through James 3:9-11, “There-with bless we God, even the Father; and there-with curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?”

It is high time that many who are Christians learn to tame the tongue. If you have uttered careless words or second hand cussing, it may be time to “clean up” your speech in view of coming judgment. Tame that tongue or that tongue will tame you and take you where you don’t want to be!

607 McLish; Ardmore, OK 73401

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE NIV?

Gary Colley

It mistranslated Psalms 51:5 to teach the false theory of Total Depravity.

It changes “flesh” in Romans 8 to “sinful nature” teaching the false theory of original sin.

It denies the deity of Christ by removing “begotten” from every text referring to Jesus Christ (cf., John 3:16).

It deletes both the statement of Phillip on the condition of baptism and the eunuch’s answer (cf. Acts 8:37).

It falsely teaches the premillennial concept of the final and complete salvation of national Israel in Romans 11:26.

It falsely teaches that sinners are “included in Christ” at the point of hearing (Eph. 1:13).

It further tampers with the plan of salvation in Romans 10:10 teaching that justification is reached at the point of faith.

The same verse teaches that salvation is reached at the point of verbal confession (Rom. 10:10).

It lends itself to the Calvinistic view that the Holy Spirit opens our minds to understand the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:12-13).

It changes First Corinthians 1:6 from “the testimony of Christ” (the gospel) to “our testimony about Christ” (testimonialism).

It makes Peter teach that baptism is “the pledge of a good conscience toward God” advancing the false theory of faith alone (1 Pet. 3:21).

Many of these errors may be explained by the representatives of Oral Roberts (1), Rex Humbard (2), and the Nazarene Church (7) who served on the translating committees. May we remind you that God said to all “thought” translators: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah” (Isa. 55:8).

Southwest Church of Christ
8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

THE CARDINAL’S ADVICE

“Of all the counseling we can possibly give to your Holiness, we reserve the more important of it to the last. We must hold our eyes well open and intervene with all of our power in the affairs we have to consider. The reading of the Gospel must be permitted as little as possible, (especially in the modern languages, and in the countries under your authority). The very little that is read generally at the Mass should be enough and it should be prohibited for anyone to read more. (As long as the people are content with that small
part, our interests will prosper; but from the moment that the people desire to read more, our interests will begin to suffer).

Here is the book that more than any other provoked rebellions against us, storms that have been risky in bringing us loss in fact, if anyone reads accurately the teaching of the Bible and compares what occurs in our churches, he will soon find out the contradictions and will see that our teaching is far removed from that of the Bible and more often yet is in opposition to it.

If the people realize this, they will provoke us without rest until all become unveiled and then we will become the object of ridicule and universal hate. It is necessary that the Bible be taken away and snatched from the hands of the people, however, with much wisdom in order to not provoke trouble.”

(This advice was given to Pope Jules III of Rome in 1550 by his Cardinals. It is found in the National Bibliothèque in Paris, France. The Volume is Reserve 22719; Pages 101-102).

Author Unknown

Bellview Church of Christ

Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher

Instructor, Memphis School of Preaching

Memphis, Tennessee

October 27 - November 1, 1996

Sunday morning at 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.

“Is Your Heart In…”

Sunday Bible Study: “Worship”
Sunday Worship: “The Crucifixion”
Sunday Evening: “The Church”
Monday: “The Home”        Tuesday: “Heaven”
Wednesday: “Personal Work”    Thursday: “Restoration”
Friday: “Faithfulness”
SICK AND SHUT- IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Ray Foshee, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece). Tia Mcleod is in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 221.

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT FUND
Brother Don Ruhl, the preacher at Klamath Falls Church of Christ, Klamath Falls, Oregon, will be undergoing a kidney transplant. A fund to assist in the cost of this operation has been set up. Anyone desiring to contribute, please make your checks out to the Klamath Falls Church of Christ and designate them for the Don Ruhl Transplant Fund. The address is 2521 Nile Street; Klamath Falls, OR 97603. Please keep brother Ruhl and his family in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996

READING/INVITATION
October 16, 1996
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Ray Foshee
October 23, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

MARK THESE DATES
October 20, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Hebrews 5-9.
October 27–November 1, 1996–Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Corn, Green Beans, and Mixed Vegetables
Those who love the truth will give earnest attention to exegesis of the Scriptures, i.e., the “leading out” of the thoughts which the inspired writers placed in God’s Book. To insure that one neither adds to nor subtracts from the Heaven-given thoughts of the Bible, men must take care regarding (among other things) their lexical interpretation, i.e., the determination of the meaning of individual words as used in a passage of Scripture.

One abuse frequently occurring in lexical interpretation might be called misplaced meaning. Words often have more than a single meaning and one misplaces the meaning of a word when he takes one meaning of a word (a meaning appropriate in one or more contexts of Scripture) and assigns that meaning to the same word in another context which does not warrant that particular meaning. For example, the meaning of gospel, which in the New Testament is repeatedly used to refer to “the glad tidings of salvation through Christ,” is misplaced when one gives that meaning to the word gospel in its first occurrence in the following passage: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6-7).

The first mention of the word gospel in this passage has reference not to the gospel which saves souls, but to a perversion of the soul-saving glad tidings. The alert reader can see that the context plainly indicates this to be the case.
Gospel in both instances in the above quote is the same Greek word as the gospel found in Romans 1:16, but a different meaning attaches in the first instance because the context (the word setting, which like the word itself is given by the Holy Spirit) demands a different meaning. Failure to recognize the difference in the meaning of gospel in this text results in confusion.

As noted earlier, a meaning of a word is misplaced when that meaning is taken from one context and is assigned to the same word in another context which does not warrant that particular meaning. Baptists often err in this regard by misplacing the meaning of the word works, as found in Ephesians 2:9. Works, with the meaning appropriate to this context (i.e., deeds meriting salvation), is misused when this meaning is attributed to other contexts in order to support the false doctrine of salvation by faith only. Since works in this context labels a kind of man’s deeds which are excluded from God’s plan of salvation, faith-only advocates incorrectly assume that works in all other contexts are likewise excluded and therefore works of any and every kind are unnecessary to save the soul and thus one is saved by faith alone. However, there are Bible contexts where the word works is used to describe a kind of man’s deeds which are included in God’s saving plan and therefore essential to man’s salvation. For example, James 2:24 says, “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” The same word in both English (works) and Greek (ergon) is used in both texts, but a different meaning obtains in each as the inspired context indicates. The basic meaning of the word works, i.e., deeds or things done, is the same in each text, but the coloring of the word changes according to its context.

Consider some of the many other words with their different meanings in different contexts which make for big differences in the meaning of a passage:

Zeal from zeros has the meaning of envying or jealousy in the context of First Corinthians 3:3 and such is, of course, forbidden; however, the same word is translated as commendable zeal consistent with the context of Second Corinthians 7:7. The practice of the former alienates one from God, while the practice of the latter aligns one with God. The meaning could hardly be more different if different words were used.

P. O. Box 39; Spring, TX 77383

**WHAT A GOSPEL MEETING CAN DO FOR CHRISTIANS**

A gospel meeting is an effective means of reaching the lost with the message of salvation. It is also a means of helping those who are Christians. Here are some things our meeting will do for YOU:

**Revive you spiritually.** Through the period of singing, praying, working and listening to the Word of God, you should be strengthened in this world and know again the “peace that passeth understanding.”

**Restore you enthusiasm.** If your love and...
zeal for Christ and His work has grown cold, the same power (the Word of God) that moves the alien sinner to obedience can stir your soul and generate within your heart a glowing flame of enthusiasm for the Lord and His work.

Strengthen your confidence. There is nothing better than plain, positive gospel sermons, with the emphasis on fundamental principles, to strengthen your confidence in the church, God’s Word and in simple New Testament Christianity. You will be better prepared to go out and teach others the simple truth after the meeting is over.

Help you resist temptations. When you have grown discouraged in the continual struggle against the temptations of this world, a period of special feasting on God’s Word will give you a new strength and determination to live the victorious Christian life. Satan will not be able to cause you to fall, because you will be holding the Lord and His Truth!

Author Unknown

Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher
Instructor, Memphis School of Preaching
Memphis, Tennessee
October 27 - November 1, 1996
Sunday morning at 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.

“Is Your Heart In...”
Sunday Bible Study: “Worship”
Sunday Worship: “The Crucifixion”
Sunday Evening: “The Church”
Monday: “The Home”       Tuesday: “Heaven”
Wednesday: “Personal Work”    Thursday: “Restoration”
    Friday: “Faithfulness”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Ray Foshee, Tia Mcleod, Robert Bailey (Nancy Loy’s father), and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Nancy Wright in the death of her father-in-law, Harry Worley, who passed away October 10, 1996. Please keep Nancy and her family in your prayers.

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996

READING/INVITATION
October 23, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Gallaher

October 30, 1996
Gospel Meeting

MARK THESE DATES
October 20, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Foley. Study Hebrews 5-9.
October 20, 1996–Farewell reception for the Bittner family, after the evening service.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Corn, Green Beans, and Mixed Vegetables

DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIME
ENDS
Set your clocks back one hour before going to bed on Saturday, October 26. Day Light Savings ends on Sunday, October 27.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine,
Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy,
Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

PREACH THE WORD

Burt Groves

Do you get excited at the prospects of a Gospel meeting when you can bring your friends daily to hear Christ preached? All Christians should, but not many do. Some attend out of a sense of duty, and others make no changes during the meeting week. That’s why the largest crowds attend Sunday and Wednesday.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY: Gospel meetings are poorly attended because interest in preaching has waned. The trend of making sermons shorter and dismissing Sunday evening congregational services in favor of small group meetings in residences shunts that many members don’t want much preaching. Some today opt for community outreach through lectures about cancer that feature a doctor or discussion about human relationships featuring a psychologist. It seems that modern Christians have become more concerned about showing people the church is nice than telling them about Calvary!

Preaching Christ seems foolish only to the foolish. “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). In our day of luxury those running in the fast lane find little time for spiritual pursuits. Fifty-four-hour weeks are not unusual, and better incomes make more entertaining affordable. When both parents work outside the home family time is minimal. Generally, successful Americans are failing in what matters most. “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not
many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor. 1:26). Seeking to appeal to the interests of the world cannot save souls. Bringing the world into the church corrupts the church while converting the world to Christ enhances the kingdom. 

The need for preaching increases every day because the number of lost souls grows daily. We have not outgrown the great commission. Jesus urged, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). Further, our Lord required those baptized be taught “whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:20). Timothy was instructed to teach faithful men who would be able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). If we are the body of Christ we must be self-perpetuating by teaching and preaching Jesus. Those who choose otherwise abandon sound doctrine and perish. No wonder Paul taught, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

Our Opportunity: Every evangelistic service affords us opportunities to hear Christ preached and share that message with others. Most people will not come when invited, but that’s their problem. We must remember that most people are not invited to come, and that’s our problem!

Yes, most adults who convert to Christ do so after being taught privately by a dedicated Christian, but most who continue faithful to the Lord after baptism began attending worship and hearing Gospel preaching prior to being saved. Every Bible study, private or public, every preaching service, regularly scheduled or special series, affords opportunities for saving souls and strengthening saints.

Why aren’t we more successful? Let us confess that we need to be more diligent in our efforts. Suppose, however, the preaching is in complete accord with God’s Word and every member has prayed fervently and worked zealously to bring others to hear. Why do few convert to Christ?

“Sound doctrine” does not please most people. After instructing Timothy to “preach the word” the apostle Paul explained, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Earlier, our Lord Jesus explained why most sinners continue in sin by means of His parable of the sower. Seed will not produce when eaten by birds, planted in soil of insufficient depth, or deposited among thorns. Likewise the Word of God will not convert the unbeliever; neither will it secure a Christian unwilling to suffer persecutions or one bent on indulging in worldly pleasures or amassing material wealth (Mat. 13: 1-23).

Brethren, God calls us to serve Him, and the that watereth; but God that giveth the increase”

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT FUND
Brother Don Ruhl, the preacher at Klamath Falls Church of Christ, Klamath Falls, Oregon, will be undergoing a kidney transplant. A fund to assist in the cost of this operation has been set up. Anyone desiring to contribute, please make your checks out to the Klamath Falls Church of Christ and designate them for the Don Ruhl Transplant Fund. The address is 2521 Nile Street; Klamath Falls, OR 97603. Please keep brother and his family in your prayers.
greatest service leads the lost to the Savior. We
do not make Christians but we must teach the
Word! Paul explained, “I have planted, Apollos
watered; but God gave the increase. So then
neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he
that watereth; but God that giveth the increase”
(1 Cor. 3:6-7).

Never before has the world needed the Gospel
more than today. This is our opportunity!

Dallas, TX

Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting with Keith Mosher
Instructor, Memphis School of Preaching
Memphis, Tennessee
October 27 - November 1, 1996
Sunday morning at 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday evenings at 7:30 P.M.

“Is Your Heart In...”
Sunday Bible Study: “Worship”
Sunday Worship: “The Crucifixion”
Sunday Evening: “The Church”
Monday: “The Home”
Tuesday: “Heaven”
Wednesday: “Personal Work”
Thursday: “Restoration”
Friday: “Faithfulness”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Ray Foshee, Tia Mcleod, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

VISITATION GROUPS
Group 1 meets November 3, 1996

READING/INVITATION
October 23, 1996
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Gallaher
October 30, 1996
*Gospel Meeting*

MARK THESE DATES
November 17, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study Hebrews 10-12.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Corn, Green Beans, and Mixed Vegetables

MATTHEW 6:33
“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

HEBREWS 10:25-26
“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”
WILL WE LOSE OUR DISTINCTIVE MARKS?

Bill Jackson

The above is a haunting question. It is of concern to so many today because they sense that we are already losing those marks showing us to be the kingdom of the Lord. There was a time when a part of being in the New Testament church was that pride in knowing who we were, and being able to show who we were, right there in that volume. We were intent on “speaking as it were oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). In the great, great satisfaction of knowing what we were, and where we were, there was a clear picture of where others were—they were in sin. Many have been converted because they were able to see clearly the distinctions when the church of the Lord, and its marks, were charted out and laid alongside the sectarian systems of the day.

But an old device of Satan has come along. It came back in Israel’s history, when God’s people decided they wanted to be like the nations around them (1 Sam. 8:19-20). What was pitiful then, and what has always been so pitiful when that plea has been made, is that God’s people never were intended to be like those around them. The heathen world had other “gods,” but none like the God known as Jehovah. Those systems had many “lords,” but none like the Lord Christ. The world has seen a thousand religious institutions, but none like the church Jesus built. Men devise hundreds of plans whereby their pulpit men promise salvation, but there is just the one plan. There is God, and THERE IS GOD’S WAY!
The New Testament reveals the church of the Lord in all the marks wherein its distinctive-ness is set forth. Each mark is an “ancient landmark” allowing for no tampering by man. “Remove not the ancient landmark” (Pro. 22:28). From olden times, the rule of God has been that “thou make all things according to the pattern” (Heb. 8:5). With every step taken to protect the distinctive features of the New Testament church, we are engaging in God’s work and holding eternal things for ourselves and our children. With every bit of tampering, we endanger our own souls and the souls of succeeding generations. There is no quicker way for us to speed the souls of our children to hell!

We today, are blessed through the efforts of those long since departed from this life, and who themselves studied and fought their way our of sectarianism to find the truth, and we came along and had it handed to us when we did not bear the burden in previous battles. The question is, “What are we passing on to the next generation?” Already we are given reason to concern as men attack even the idea of Restoration, and as they so quickly wish to tamper with the doctrines of God, the worship ordained by God, and the church established by God.

If we, through indifference or a sinful tolerance, allow those distinctive features to be lost, how long will it be before the world again sees the pure and simple church that Jesus built in all of its purity? 500 years? 1,000 or more? Scary! It should scare us enough that we all will put forth renewed effort to guard the ancient landmarks!

Deceased

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WRONG CROWD

“I got in with the wrong crowd,” may be an effort to explain away our personal responsibility for our sins—or may express the situation accurately.

What you are is the main factor in determining the kind of friends you have. If the crowd is wrong, it is also true that you must have already been wrong to become involved with such people.

It may be that you began a friendship with a group whom you did not know well. HOW CAN YOU TELL IF A GROUP IS THE WRONG CROWD?

One of the first indications can be found in the things they think are funny. If their idea of humor is a dirty joke or being discourteous to older people, it is a sure sign that we are in with the “wrong crowd.” It is dangerous also when humor is turned to destructive activities. There is nothing really funny about destroying property or reputations.

The “wrong crowd” is marked also by impure speech. “Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth” (Eph. 4:29). Some of us would not think of violating this command ourselves but will tolerate the worst kind of language from our friends.

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT FUND

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Lack of reverence and respect for worship and Bible class teachers is another characteristic of the “wrong crowd.” Do your friends encourage you to be reverent, courteous, respectful and faithful in worship and Bible class? Does your crowd speak lightly of going to worship and class regularly?

A sloppy, droopy, dare-devil, reckless spirit is always found in the “wrong crowd.” There is little respect for dignity of behavior, or even for good manners. In the “wrong crowd” every effort is made to impress others with the fact that here are persons that will do as they like, regardless of others, right or wrong.

Your friends are the wrong crowd if they make it harder for you to be what God wants you to be. Do you find your interest in spiritual things decreasing when with them? If so, DO something about it NOW! Surround yourself with Christian friends and allow their encouragement to bless you. Don’t wait till you get so deeply involved that all you can do is blame the “wrong crowd” for disaster in your life. Decide NOW!

Do we find anything in the New Testament that would indicate to us whether or not we are being the best Christian we can possibly be? As we go through the Scriptures, we do find that there are certain things which have been left for us to do if we want to be found faithful before the Lord. We find certain responsibilities that we must meet. We all have the responsibility of the Christian walk. We have a responsibility toward our family, and we also have a responsibility to our fellow man.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to walk in a certain way. The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:14-17). We are commanded to walk as wise and not as fools. It is not up to us to decide which way is better to walk in this world of ours. But how do we accomplish this walk? Paul said unto the Ephesians, as well as to us, that we can do this by not walking as fools, and by redeeming the time. Looking at all the opportunities that come before us in our daily lives, where can we make a difference in the cause of Christ? Maybe by inviting someone to services, or perhaps setting up a Bible study with a friend, or just being a good neighbor to those about us.

In order that we make the most of our opportunities in the Lord, it is necessary that we always be prepared to give an answer to those who ask of us regarding the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). For us to be always ready, we must be good students of the Word of God and knowledgeable of all that is needed for the salvation of mankind. How are you meeting your Christian responsibilities?

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Tia McLeod, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to those members of our congregation who have lost loved ones.
Harold Cozad’s mother passed away on October 25, 1996, in Moberly, MO.
Dick Cunningham’s sister, Ann Thomas, passed away on October 25, 1996, in Saraland, AL.
Iris Gallaher’s brother, Regie Childs, passed away on October 26, 1996.

READING/INVITATION
November 6, 1996
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
November 10, 1996–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
November 17, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Corn, Green Beans, and Mixed Vegetables

ANNOUNCEMENT
Karen Hoffay is pleased to announce the adoption of her two grandchildren, Ryan and Heather Taylor, by her son-in-law Paul McManaman.
I GOT USED TO IT!

Barry Grider

A few years ago, during my college days, I heard a youth worker proclaim, “I, too, had a problem with hand clapping at youth devotionals, but I got used to it.” Is this not how all errors, innovations, and apostasies begin, people just get used to it?

Since Christ returned to His heavenly father some 2,000 years ago, after He had sealed His new covenant with His precious blood, men have sought to tamper and change His divine standard. For example, Jesus stated, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Along the way some began to teach otherwise, that salvation was not dependent on a person being immersed in water. Perhaps many cried out against such erroneous doctrine, but soon many “got used to it.”

Paul stated that baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:3-4). However, as time went by some began to substitute other modes such as pouring, dipping, or even sprinkling. Perhaps many cried out against such falsehood, but soon many “got used to it.”

Jesus declared, “upon this rock I will build my [singular] church” (Mat. 16:18). Paul so affirmed when he wrote “there is one body” (Eph. 4:4). It wasn’t long though until many began to divide into various religious groups or denominations. Perhaps many cried out against such division, but soon many “got used to it.”

The Scriptures are absolutely silent with regard to instrumental music being used in the worship assembly. Jesus tells us that the only worship pleasing to God is that which is done “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), and Paul said to sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). As time passed some thought wor-
ship needed to be “improved” and mechanical instruments were brought into the worship assembly. Perhaps many cried out against such heresy, but soon many “got used to it.”

We are told that the early Christians came together upon the first day of the week to partake of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7). Time would change this practice, however. “Scholarly” individuals decided that upon every first day of the week was too often, somehow the remembrance of the Lord’s death would lose its significance. Perhaps many cried out against its exclusion in worship, but many “got used to it.”

All throughout the centuries man has gotten used to doing that which God never authorized or not doing that which God did authorize. Even in the church today, it is amazing to find how God’s Word is disrespected and abused. Many in our younger generation who were taught the fundamentals of the faith since early childhood, now allow themselves, along with their children, to sit in buildings week after week whose pulpits are filled with liberal preachers who compromise or distort God’s truth. The heresies that abound in these pulpits are numerous: salvation by grace alone, total depravity, women teaching over men, cooperation with denominations, instrumental music in worship becomes a non issue. How do people begin to accept such doctrines that contradict dear and plain Bible teaching? They do so the same way they have accepted hand clapping at youth devotions—they “get used to it.”

Those who would teach these damnable doctrines and those who follow such teachers have left the doctrine of Christ and thus are guilty of sin (2 John 9-11). If one fails to repent, he will forever be lost in a devil’s hell (2 Pet. 2:1,4). One thing is for sure in eternal torment, it is eternal, and no one will ever “get used to it.”

IMPORTANT FACTS
Terry M. Hightower

A May 1996 Wirthlin Poll tells us that...only 28% of Americans know what a partial-birth abortion is. After receiving a factual description of it, 84% believe that it should be banned, while 11% disagree. At first, millions were outraged by it, but then the “spin doctors” went to work. The furor is behind us now, so we can focus on more important things—like a balanced budget, Medicare, farm loans, football, and vinegar in outer space! You need to know that the bill passed by Congress allows this abortion procedure to be performed if necessary to save a woman’s life, but pro-abortionists also demand an exception for “the health” of the mother—a huge loop-hole that would allow partial-birth abortions for “emotional well-being” or “depression.” In Doe v. Bolton, the 1973 companion case to Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court said that the “health” exception must encompass “all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman’s age—relevant to the well-being of the patient.” For sure, the baby’s health or well-being is not factored in! Some of the babies subjected to partial-birth abortions suffer from serious disorders, but the majority are perfectly normal and healthy. Most of their mothers are also healthy. Dr. Martin Haskell, who has performed over 1,000 PB abortions, said that he performs them “routinely” for non-medical reasons, and that 80% are “purely

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elective." Medical experts testified that it is never necessary to kill a baby that has been almost entirely delivered to preserve the life of the mother. "The Physicians' Ad Hoc Committee for Truth (PHACT) was formed because we, as physicians, can no longer stand by while abortion advocates, the President of the United States and the media continue to repeat false claims to members of Congress and to the public about partial-birth abortions...[it] is never necessary to protect a mother's health or her future fertility." Most of these doctors are specialists in obstetrics, gynecology, maternal/fetal medicine and pediatrics. The anesthesia given to the mother has little or no effect on the baby according to leading anesthesiologists, including the president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists. Medical experts testified that babies at this age can experience great pain. Psalm 139.

WHO ARE WE TO PLEASE—SELF OR GOD?

Al Brown

"Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12:28).

How does one serve God "with reverence?" The dictionary defines reverence as: "A feeling of profound awe and respect and often love; veneration." This was what Paul told children to do when he wrote: "Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise)" (Eph. 6:2). Does a child show his parents respect if he talks back or disregards what his father tells him to do? No; on the contrary, he dishonors his parents and is an embarrassment to them.

When men and women do the same thing in response to their heavenly Father's commands, they shame God instead of showing Him reverence, regardless of what they may claim. If reverence honors God, then irreverence shames Him.

The Lord said to Israel when they were replacing His will with the traditions of men: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is mine honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of hosts...And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar. And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of Jehovah is contemptible. And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil! and when ye offer the lame and sick, it is no evil!...Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you...neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles;...But ye profane it, in that ye say, The table of Jehovah...is contemptible. Ye say also, Behold, what a weariness is it!...And ye have snuffed at it, saith Jehovah of hosts; and ye have brought that which was taken by violence, and the lame, and the sick;...should I accept this at your hand? saith Jehovah. But cursed be the deceiver, who...sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles" (Mal. 1:6-14).

Don't the sounds and actions coming from some brethren today remind you of irreverent Israel? They are tired of the "old" ways, and they never seem to understand the "old" ways are God's ways. Worship and service is to be done His way. Christianity's goal is not lifting the economic level of the underprivileged. Its aim has a greater burden than catering to the social needs of man. Its worship is not designed to furnish entertainment to amuse us. The work is God's work; the worship is God's. We are to do what pleases Him, not what satisfies our cravings. The only way we can show true reverence for God is by doing His will; anything else is vain.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Tia McLeod, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece). Diana Brazell and Angela Fletcher had surgery on November 4, 1996.

BAPTIZED AND RESTORED
Darlene Simmons was baptized on October 31, 1996; Devon Bittner was baptized on October 31, 1996; and, Theodore Simmons was restored on October 31, 1996. Please keep them in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
November 13, 1996
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Tim Lamb
November 20, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
November 10, 1996–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
November 17, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

MOVED
Corey and Joanna Bittner and their family have moved to Virginia. Their address is 118 Thames Drive Apt. 201; Virginia Beach, VA 23452. Please keep them in your prayers.
HELPING THE HOMELESS

Al Brown

A great deal of emphasis is placed on the care of the “homeless.” Special efforts are made each year to provide food, clothes and shelter for them. Cutting across sectarian lines, many religious groups are deeply involved in this work. Some may wonder why the churches of Christ do not participate.

The Lord’s church is dedicated to practicing the religion of Christ just as it is revealed in the New Testament. This is the only way men can please God (Mat. 7:13-14, 21-27; John 8:31-32; Gal. 1:6-9). According to the New Testament pattern, each congregation is independent. Hence, we cannot speak for other churches of Christ, but we will show, by the Scriptures, why we must remain aloof from these efforts.

For several decades the chief concern in the denominational world has been to promote the social and economic well-being of man. This, in itself, is a noble task, but it is not, according to the priorities set by God, the primary work of the church. The major mission of Jesus Christ was to save men from their sins (Luke 19:10), and it was the principle assignment he gave the apostles and all those through all time who would follow the Son of Man (Mat. 28:19-20; Eph. 3:10-11).

When people in the denominational world speak of preaching the gospel, they do not mean telling people the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world, died and rose again in order that men might be saved. They are not talking about the remission of sins, reconciliation and peace with God, or the hope of eternal life. They certainly do not intend to proclaim the God-given requirements by which all men can receive these
spiritual blessings. Their goal is not to practice Christianity just as it is revealed in the New Testament.

The thrust of their preaching has to do with raising the social and economic level of men. If this seems difficult to distinguish from socialism and secular humanism, it is because they are identical. Many of their aims may seem worthwhile, but such “gospel” preaching should not be confused with what Christ commanded His followers to preach.

Jesus was a benevolent, compassionate person, and those who belong to Him are to follow His example (Mat. 7:12; Gal. 6:9-10; Jam. 1:27; cf., Mat. 25:1-46). At the same time, He and the apostles gave other principles with which true Christians must comply. One of those principles states that the end does not justify any means by which that end may be attained (Rom. 3:8). Therefore, Christians cannot ignore or violate other commands or principles in doing a good work, no matter how noble it may be. This does not mean they can ignore a work God has given them to do. They just have to work within the boundaries set by God.

For instance, Christians are to help the needy (Gal. 6:10; Jam. 1:27). They are also told not to get into entangling alliances with unbelievers. Helping the “homeless” is usually done through the United Way. They, in turn, utilize many religious groups who do not teach or practice the Word of God. The Salvation Army and various other shelters and distribution centers for the “homeless” are such religious institutions. Hence, a Christian cannot endorse them or give to them without violating New Testament principles (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

By its very nature, denominationalism is the massive fragmentation of religious unity. Division, based on human creeds and other opinions of men (theology), is condemned by God (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1-6; Jude 3). If Christians do anything to support, endorse or encourage such religious error, they are as guilty as the perpetrators themselves (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). It makes no difference how noble or needed their social work may be. God’s people are to obey another command: “If any will not work, neither let him eat” (2 Th. 3:10-12, 14). This command has always been a part of God’s moral law. We are to help the needy who are worthy of help. We are not to help people sin. If a person refuses to work to support himself and his family, he is sinning (1 Tim. 5:8).

If we condone or excuse sin, or do anything to support or encourage others to violate God’s law, we are also sinning (cf., 2 John 9-11). Many of these people are living off the benevolence of others while they are nothing more than deadbeats, bums, drug addicts and drunks who have run away from their responsibilities.

The Scriptures do not require, or even permit, Christians to help in such situations (2 Th. 3:10). When men choose to sin, they will not only suffer the eternal consequences of those sins, but some sins, such as this one, can result in physical consequences as well. Present efforts by worldly groups (including religious denominations) provide help to the “homeless” indiscriminately and “without being judgmental.” This means assis-

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT FUND

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tance is given whether a person is worthy or not. Many sophisticated appeals that tug at one’s emotions are used. The fact still remains that we are to practice the religion of Christ based on His revealed will. Acting out of emotional fervor alone lacks the approval of God. Emotional appeals that, if indulged, would cause us to violate the principles and commands of God’s revealed will must be ignored and condemned.

P. O. Box 39; Spring TX 77383

HOW CONTENT ARE WE?

Al Macias

As we go through this life, we will have many distractions that could jeopardize our salvation. The Christian life, like the national life of Israel in the wilderness, is full of dangers and obstacles that can cause one to lose more than the Israelites lost—that is, the loss of our souls. In the first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote about some of the dangers that are in this world which have been the downfall of so many. In First Timothy 6:6-7, we read: “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” In this passage of Scripture, we find that the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, informs us why godliness with contentment is great gain. First, we must understand why Paul said what he said at this particular time. The reason behind Paul’s writing was that there were some false teachers going around teaching that gain was godliness. Because of this belief, these false teachers were making merchandise of the brethren.

Paul wanted to make it clear to the brethren that gain was not equal to godliness, but rather godliness with contentment was great gain. Many times we tend to forget that we are only strangers, and our time in this world is just a journey which will eventually come to an end.

What we do with the time that God has granted us while we are journeying through this life will determine where we will spend eternity. Because we sometimes forget that our time on earth will be brief, we somehow begin to believe that accumulating more and more is what life is all about. The apostle Paul said that such is not the case. He said that living godly lives and being content with what we have is what life is all about. He reminds us that we came into this world without a thing to our name and when we make our exit, that is how we will leave—with nothing! Therefore, since it is the case that we will take nothing with us when we die, we should not make worldly possessions our main goal in this life, but rather we should strive for godliness with contentment, for that we will take with us when we leave. How content are you?

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

I’M A GAMBLER...

I’m a gambler. Oh, not the kind that frequents places behind doors in some secluded spot. Nor, do I “play the ponies” or bet on sporting games. You see, I gamble with my soul as the stake. I’m betting that I can live a life of indifference, a life of neglect of those things that are of the Lord, and still receive His blessings.

I’m gambling with the souls of my children as the stake. Although I neither live righteously nor influence them toward unrighteousness, I’m betting their souls on the hope that they will have wisdom to guide their own lives unto the Lord.

I’m betting that I can remain indifferent to Christ’s teachings, that I can fail to give as prospered, and that God will still bless me eternally: I’m betting I can still have a nonchalant attitude toward the lost, and still please God.

Yes, I’m a gambler—the most reckless type: I’M A LUKEWARM CHRISTIAN!

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Tia McLeod, Diana Brazell, Angela Fletcher, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

READING/INVITATION
November 20, 1996
Reading: Bill Cline
Invitation: Tony Liddell
November 27, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith

MARK THESE DATES
November 17, 1996–Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Fairhope. Study Hebrews 10-12.
November 17, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

THINGS WE MUST NOT COMPROMISE
The Name of Christ Acts 4:12
The Gospel of Christ Romans 1:16
The church of Christ Ephesians 3:21
The Plan of Salvation Acts 8:12
The Perfect Example of Christ 1 Peter 2:21
The Sacred Scriptures 2 Peter 1:21
The Authority of Christ Matthew 28:18
Purity of Life Titus 2:12
The Purpose of Existence Philippians 1:21
The Hope of Heaven Titus 1:2

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SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Baling Up the Liberals
Jerry C. Brewer

Sitting under the tent at the Red River, New Mexico family Encampment June 22-26, I recalled the words of Foy E. Wallace, Jr., I’d heard 26 years earlier. During a gospel meeting at Chillicothe, Texas, in 1970, he said, “There was a time when you couldn’t shake a liberal out of the churches of Christ with a fine-toothed comb, but now you can take a hay rake and bale them up.” Had I possessed a hay rake at Red River, I could have baled them up by the ton. The raucous, hand clapping, joking, laughing, casually-dressed crowds and speakers bore no resemblance to New Testament Christians in demeanor nor doctrine. My reaction was one of profound sadness and righteous anger for what heretics are doing to the body of Christ.

Longing for sound speech (Tit. 2:8), I heard only the corruptions of Ashdod. Hungry for the bread of life, I was fed the husks of worn-out denominational doctrines. Thirsting for Living Water, I choked on the brackish waters of humanly-hewn cisterns (Jer. 2:13). The agents of change were alive, well, and duly supported by ears that itched for jokes, “scholarly” dissertations and personal experiences. “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jer. 5:30-31).

It was difficult to believe I wasn’t attending a holy-roller convention. Oral Roberts, Pat Boone and every other holy-roller, Assembly of God, Pentecostal or Nazarene would have been right at home. The Red River Family Encampment is a
paradise for false teachers who regurgitate denominational doctrines all over a crowd that loves it. Three predictable patterns emerged in all of the speeches. (1) The speakers believe in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. (2) They believe and preach a subjective/experiential religion. (3) They read their heresies out of the New International Version. From Edwin White’s opening salvo on Saturday until our departure on Wednesday, we were blasted with religious subjectivism based on the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. White, of Phoenix, Arizona, used the word “experience” 13 times in his 40-minute speech on The People Who Know Their God. He further said many of those who have a knowledge of Scripture “can smell unsound doctrine a mile away,” but don’t really know their God. I was sitting only 60 feet from him and the stench was unbearable. If he can “know God” apart from Scripture, let him demonstrate it (1 Cor. 2:4). As goes the proposition, so must be the demonstration.

The highlight of “Heresy Week” was Stanley Shipp’s tribute to every Assembly of God preacher I ever heard. Full of himself, Shipp made joke after joke while relating a string of personal experiences and saying the Holy Spirit delayed a man’s flight in Oklahoma City so Shipp could talk with him. The climax of his clown-act in this three-ring liberal circus was the evening he had the audience “give God a standing ovation.” Like sheep plunging into a canyon after a blind leader, the audience arose and clapped for God—all except those of us from Arapaho, Oklahoma. Speaking on The Majesty of God, Shipp said he felt irreverent “to even speak of God.” That was a strange statement since he didn’t mind turning an hour of worship of the Almighty into a holy-roller, hand clapping hour of jokes and personal experiences. His act included the statement that “God loves you with unconditional love.” Liberals love that word, “unconditional.” It fits right in with their Calvinistic agenda, eliminating any conditions on man’s part for salvation. Faith is excised from Ephesians 2:8-9 and it’s all a matter of grace.

While I’m sure he didn’t intend to take issue with any of the other speakers, John W. Smith of San Diego, California contradicted Shipp in a later speech.

The God of unconditional love is a just barely divine being who wouldn’t hurt anybody. He would never ask you to change or do anything that would violate your rights or self image. He is a God who gives “high fives,” who makes requests. He never makes demands. When this God speaks about hell, He really doesn’t mean it, because He doesn’t believe in fear motivation. Hell is just a cosmic joke, sort of a weak threat to get you to do better. The God I hear about today is so inoffensive that He’s hardly worth believing in. (The Goodness and Severity of God, John W. Smith, Red River Family Encampment, 9:00 a.m., June 25, 1996).

Chris Altrock of Las Cruces, New Mexico began his speech June 24th by saying he hoped he wouldn’t have a topic like The Wrath of God. He said he would rather speak on God’s love or grace. Then reading from Jeremiah, he launched into a plea for the church to embrace the “social gospel.” Quoting secular sources on the income gap between the rich and poor, he said Judah was carried away captive because she failed to produce social reforms. Punctuating his speech with
the language of Ashdod, he said Judah’s “church was full” but they failed to manifest love for each other. This, he said, was what brought the wrath of God upon them. Then, like a true “change agent,” he said “external reform must come or churches will die in this post-Christian age.”

Speaking on The Love of God, Joe Beam of Augusta, Georgia, had the unmitigated gall to compare his fellow heretics with those heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11.

Some of my heroes in the faith are sitting here. There’s Willard Tate and Stanley Shipp and Jim Bill McInteer and if God were writing the 11th chapter of Hebrews today they and other people in this group here would be in that chapter (The Love of God, Monday, June 24, 1996).

Beam didn’t manifest the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12) so I don’t know how he knows what God would include in the Bible if he wrote it today. His speech was filled with subjectivity, from personal experiences of his childhood to stories of his own children. Then he took a swipe at the church for not making people feel loved. “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Jesus loves me this I know, though the church has seldom made me feel quite so. Jesus loves me this I know, for the Father let him go. Jesus loves me this I know, for in my life he’s made it so” (Emph., JCB).

He not only took a shot at the church but, in Billy Graham style, said he knows God is real and Jesus loves him because he feels it in his life. When I finally let God love me, I learned how to love God. And now it’s not just something I sing. It’s something I feel and I can say it in front of you. I love you, God and I’m not embarrassed. I love you, Jesus for what you’ve done for me and I love you Spirit for putting up with me and living in me anyway/ Rom. 5:5 which I read by mistake (Ibid.).

A final example of the sectarian mush that was palmed off as God’s Word was the direct indwelling/leading of the Holy Spirit taught by Phil Ware of Austin, Texas. Speaking on the topic of Abba Father, Ware demonstrated his ability as a spiritual contortionist. He twisted and wrested the Scriptures to explain that Abba meant something more special than Father. Had he ever known the Scriptures, he would understand that Abba is the Hebrew word for father and Paul made the point to the Galatians that, in Christ, God is the father of both Jews and Gentiles.

Like the others, Ware echoed the old Calvinistic doctrine that “we are given the Spirit in Baptism,” gave personal experiences and praised Jim Bill McInteer, Stanley Shipp, Harold Hazelpip, Tom Miholland and Willard Tate. Of course, he was warmly applauded at the conclusion of his speech. “The ways of Zion do mourn...Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper...Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow” (Lam. 1:4-5, 12).

The Red River Family Encampment, run by Jerry Lawlis of Pueblo, Colorado, isn’t worth attending if you want the truth, unless you have a hay rake and just want to bale up liberals. On the other hand, if you want the kind of preaching you’ll hear there, I recommend you save your money, stay home and watch Jan and Paul Crouch on TEN.

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RELIGION TO DIE BY

A father on his death bed called his two sons. They gathered around him, and to the one he said, “Good-night, son.” To the other he said, “Good-bye, son.” The second noticed the difference and asked his father, “Father, why did you say ‘Good-bye’ to me?” The dear old man who loved both of them so much said to the boy, “Son, John is a Christian; I will meet him in the morning of eternity. So it is just ‘Good-night’ to him; but son, you are not a Christian. I will never meet you again. Unless you change, it is ‘good-bye,’ my son, throughout all eternity.”

Think! Unfaithful, Think!

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Ida Williams, Tia McLeod, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

READING/INVITATION
November 27, 1996
Reading: Mike Dobbs
Invitation: Jerry Lindesmith
December 4, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

WILL OUR CHILDREN GO TO HEAVEN?
“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pro. 22:6).
A survey showed:
1. When both parents are active in the work of the church, 93% of the children remained faithful.
2. When one parent was active, 73% of the children remained faithful.
3. When both parents were marginally active, their children remained faithful 53% of the time.
4. When both parents attended infrequently, only 6% of their children continued in the faith.

Which describes your child’s future?
Author Unknown
THE CHURCH

MILITANT

David P. Brown

In exposing error and those who advance it (one cannot do one without the other), we must not wait until we are put on the defensive before we attack and expose false doctrine and teachers. There are those who hold a false view that unless the church is attacked for speaking truth we must not expose false doctrine and teachers.

Of course this view has no biblical foundation. In fact, it is impossible to preach the gospel and not engage error. The old saying that the “best defense is a good offense” is in complete harmony with every biblical concept. How can we preach God’s Word and not immediately be opposed to atheism (Gen. 1:1)? Should the agnostic feel comfortable when we emphasize Peter’s statement to Christ, “And we believe and are sure [know, ASV] that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69)? Can the denominationalist find peace when the truth of First Corinthians 1:10 is declared? With the Psalmist we again may say, “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:128).

The church is the army of the Lord (Eph. 6:10-20). Every Christian is to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). To understand that the church is the Lord’s army is to realize that it faces a battle. In carrying out the great commission the church can be nothing less than aggressive (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:4). A tragic mistake is made by Christians when we fail to emphasize that “we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19).

The enemies of the cross said of the early
church that they had “turned the world upside down” and that “every where it is spoken against” (Acts 17:6; 28:22). The Lord’s army was advancing and in doing so, they held the banner of the “captain of their salvation” aloft (Heb. 2:10). One is not amazed then, that Paul could announce that the gospel “was preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23). Christians, like Paul, met every challenge against the faith by being aggressive and by not waiting to be assailed before attacking the various and sundry false doctrines that even today grip “the whole world...in wickedness” (1 John 5:19).

The early church would not be silent in a religiously indifferent Roman Empire. Christ was not to be looked upon as one savior among many (John 8:24; Acts 4:12; Acts 3:19-21: 2 The. 1:7-9).

In the midst of many religious views, the faithful saints of the early church boldly declared that the gospel was the one and only message whereby men could be saved (Rom. 1:16). This spiritual army militantly rejected the view that one system of salvation was as good as another (Eph. 4:6). In doing this they eagerly “contended” for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Rom. 10:17; John 8:32; 17:17; Luke 8:11; Jude 3).

When because of persecution these early Christians “were scattered abroad,” they went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). This meant that they went into the midst of both the Jewish doctors of the Law as well as the Greek doctors of philosophy. They refuted the traditions and twisted scriptures of the Jews and preached “Christ the wisdom of God” to the Greek philosophers (Acts 13:14-43; 1 Cor. 1:22-23; Acts 17:18-34).

On the inside of the church faithful brethren of the first century worked to keep the church faithful (Gal. 6:1). The church was warned regularly about the danger of false teachers from within (Acts 20:29-30). Their subtle tactics and selfish motives were noted, and the church was taught how to deal with such characters (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 2:26; Gal. 2:4; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 The. 3:6).

When fornication reared its ugly head in the church at Corinth, Paul, in no uncertain terms, commanded the church to discipline the one guilty (1 Cor. 5). Faithful Christians of the first century understood fully that if they truly loved God, the gospel and the church, that that love would be demonstrated by being concerned about the conduct of every child of God (Gal. 2:1; 6:1; Jam. 1:16; 3 John 9-11; Rev. 2:2-6).

People of that early day either loved or hated the church! When we do like those faithful brethren of old did, we will have a tremendous impact on the world for good and with the same results. The world must learn that the difference between truth and error is the difference between eternal life and eternal punishment for every accountable person (Mat. 25:31-46). Soldiers of Christ arise and take the battle to the foe!! Ever forward and ever onward under the banner of Prince Immanuel until the victory is won!

25403 Lancewood; Spring TX 77373

BUILDING UP THE LOCAL CHURCH

Billy Bland

Be Faithful In Attendance. “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25). Do I encourage or discourage? Do I put the kingdom first? (Mat. 6:33).

Be Strong. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10). “Only let your conversation be as it cometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come

25403 Lancewood; Spring TX 77373

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Be Strong. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10). “Only let your conversation be as it cometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come...
and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phi. 1:27).

**Be An Influence For Good.** “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:13-16).

**Give As Prospered.** “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

**Be Hospitable.** “Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:1-2).

Let us do what we can to help build up the local church.

4400 Knight Arnold Rd; Memphis TN 38118

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**KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WORD**

**Jerry Joseph**

In John 8:32, Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” In Second Peter 3:18 we learn we are to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Knowledge of God’s Word does not come by chance but by our choosing to learn. It does not come by accident but by acquiring a desire to know and a determination to fill our hearts, mind and lives with God’s Word. It takes diligent effort on our part in reading, studying and meditating upon His Word (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; Psa. 1:1-2). When we come to understand the blessings of knowledge this will install in us a greater love for knowledge. Why should we have knowledge of His Word?

To **save our souls** (1 Tim. 2:4; John 8:32),

To **separate sound doctrine from false doctrine** (1 John 4:1; Eph. 5:11),

To **serve and worship God acceptably** (Col. 3:17; John 4:24),

To **settle problems between brethren** (Mat. 18:15-17),

To **succeed against the devil** (Psa. 119:11; Jam. 4:7-8),

To **speak the Truth** (Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:24; 1 Pet. 4:11),

To **stand for the Truth** (Jude 3; 1 Cor. 16:13),

To **supply scriptural answers to questions** (1 Pet. 3:15),

To **sustain faithfulness** (2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18),

To **seek the right things in life** (Mat. 6:33; Col. 3:1-3).

**KIDNEY TRANSPLANT FUND**

Brother Don Ruhl, the preacher at Klamath Falls Church of Christ, Klamath Falls, Oregon, will be undergoing a kidney transplant. A fund to assist in the cost of this operation has been set up. Anyone desiring to contribute, please make your checks out to the Klamath Falls Church of Christ and designate them for the Don Ruhl Transplant Fund. The address is 2521 Nile Street; Klamath Falls, OR 97603. Please keep brother and his family in your prayers.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Tia McLeod, and Patty Cody (Marilyn Hall’s niece).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Daniel Denham and his family in the death of his father, Howard Denham, on November 22, 1996. Please keep them in your prayers.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Jesse Cozad has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is 6545 North Blue Angel Parkway; Pensacola, FL 32526.

READING/INVITATION
December 4, 1996
Reading: Howard Johnson
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
December 11, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THIS DATE

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

DEUTERONOMY 28:9
“The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.”
MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES’ BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

SOME FACTS ABOUT CHRISTMAS

Garry Stanton

1. Christmas is not found in God’s Holy Word the Bible. Neither is the idea that we are to celebrate the birth of Jesus found in the Bible. Christmas is not commanded, nor is it authorized, it’s institution is the product of human invention and not divine instruction.

2. We are to “shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26), not his birth. The Bible says that the day of death is better than the day of one’s birth (Ecc. 7:1). We are to celebrate Jesus’ death as we partake of the Lord’s Supper each first day of the week (Mat. 26:26-29).

3. In A.D. 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate Christ’s birthday on the 25th. Prior to this decree Christians had not heard of the celebration of Christ’s birth.

4. The evidence from the Scriptures points to Jesus’ birth during a warm time of the year. The shepherds did not leave their sheep out in the fields at night in winter. They had been kept in some kind of protection from the cold. Had God intended that we honor the day of Jesus’ birth He surely would have revealed which day to do so.

5. The Bible says nothing about there being three wise men who visited Jesus. God did reveal there were wise men, but did not reveal unto us how many wise men there were.

6. The Bible does not say that the wise men visited Jesus in the manger but in a house (Mat. 2:11).

7. The visit by the wise men did not occur on the day Jesus was born but several days, weeks,
A Stumbling Block

Romans 14:13 says, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” If for no other reason but this one, the occasional drink is sin. If one was to come into your home and see beer or wine in your refrigerator what would they think? If you were to be seen by a fellow Christian going into a bar with some friends after work, what kind of example would you be giving? First Thessalonians 5:22 says, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” Anything that you would do to cause a brother to stumble, including having the occasional social drink, would be sin. “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Rom. 14:21).

“Drunk” and “Excess” of Ephesians 5:18

Ephesians 5:18 states, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” To be “drunk” with wine is derived from the Greek, meaning to intoxicate. Or the process of becoming drunk. At the point an individual has one drink he has become intoxicated. Certainly everyone has a different tolerance level, the fact remains that after one drink a person begins to become drunk.

Now for “excess.” Please read First Peter 4:4 which says, “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.” Now in light of the logic used by some in Ephesians 5:18 it would certainly be okay to riot a little bit as long as it was not to an excess. This is ridiculous! Second Peter 2:13 states that those who riot “shall receive the reward of unrighteousness.” Does it matter whether it is just a little, controlled, social riot or an excess? The answer is unequivocally, “NO IT DOESN’T!”

First Timothy 5:23

Paul wrote to Timothy, “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake.
and thine often infirmities." Many have used this verse to justify the use of alcohol as a beverage. It does no such thing, in fact it does quite the opposite. We can all learn a great deal from Timothy’s approach to his Christianity. Timothy refrained from the drinking of wine and strong drink completely, even when sick. This was done not only as a good example unto others but also as a matter of Christian purity. In today’s society of sin and evil we ought to be even more careful with our example to those round about us.

We have also made great advancements in the medical field. I know first hand, from my work at a local hospital, the amazing things our medical professionals are able to accomplish. If your doctor tells you that you need to “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake,” then my suggestion to you would be, find a new doctor!

Don’t Be A Fool

Proverbs 20:1 says, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” The writer here warns us of the dangers of wine and strong drink, and that those who do not abstain from this evil are not wise. Proverbs 14:16 states that, “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.” Those who are wise will avoid wine and strong drink. I need not tell you what will happen to the foolish. Simply read what God has to say in Matthew 25:1-13.

Conclusion

Psalms 75:8 says, “For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.”

What shall be of those who partake of that which the Lord Himself has discarded?

I have shown unquestionably, from the Scriptures, that drinking, no matter to what degree, is sinful. Still not convinced? Talk to someone who used to be an alcoholic, sit outside of a tavern at 2 a.m., come spend an evening with me at the hospital and see the effects that alcohol has on a life. Better yet, hear what God has to say about it. “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (Pro. 23:29-35).

YOU ARE DIFFERENT

Al Brown

Some people are exemplary in morals, They treat others as they would like to be treated. They have integrity. They take pains to rear their children to be men and women of high moral character. In all truthfulness, however, it seems such people have gone the way of the buffalo—they are rarely seen.

While such people are something of an oddity in modern society, this is a required characteristic for Christians. We are different from people of the world. We must not be conformed to the way they are—in what we think or do, or the attitudes and aspirations we have (Rom. 12:2). We are to strive diligently to have the same traits of character Jesus had. We are even to think as he did (Phi. 2:5). If we are successful in following Christ, we certainly will be different—made over into the image of our Creator (Col. 3:10).

P.O. Box 39; Spring TX 77383
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, and Marilyn Hall.

READING/INVITATION
December 11, 1996
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Henry Born
December 18, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THIS DATE

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

1997 DIRECTORY UPDATE
The 1997 Bellview Church of Christ Directory will be printed shortly. If there are any changes for your family, please notify the secretary by December 11.

GRADUATE
Jamie Loy will graduate from the University of South Alabama on December 8, 1996, with a B.S. degree in Psychology. Our congratulations are extended to her.

NEW ARRIVAL
Eddie and Tia Mcleod are the proud parents of a baby girl, Asia Rae, born on November 26, 1996. The grandparents are Paul and Phyllis Brantley and the great-grandparents are Hairston and Inez Brantley. Congratulations to all!
MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES' BIBLE CLASS
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine,
Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy, Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

GOD’S HAPPINESS IS SPIRITUAL, NOT MATERIAL
Harrell Davidson

Everyone is seeking happiness. Millions of dollars are spent each year in the pursuit of happiness. We read a piece recently that quoted some figure in the millions of dollars in RV sales alone. Fame and fortune are just around the corner and we are looking for it. Are we looking in the right places? Some of the most miserable people in all the world have riches beyond comprehension. The big business buys out the little business. The big farmer is slowly taking the small farmer out of the markets and away from a livelihood. What produces happiness for one is misery for another. What does the Bible say?

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). What we own or what we enjoy doing is not necessarily that which pleases God. One should be right toward God. In Luke 12:21 Jesus said: “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” If we are to please, we must be rich toward Him. Jesus asks us to, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

When the apostle Paul wrote to the young man Timothy he said, “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10). Some say that money corrupts people. We need to be careful and note the “love” of money is that which causes many sorrows and heartaches and
not just the money. One who is wealthy and rich toward God is one that makes God rejoice. There is true happiness in peace and tranquility. Without true peace man would be and will be miserable. True peace comes from our Lord. “Peace I leave with you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). While this statement was made to the apostles it is certainly appropriate for us to note today. That kind of peace can only come through obedience unto, and following Christ. Paul, by inspiration said it this way: “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phi. 4:4). Jesus said that: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Since God is a Spirit, in order for Him to be happy, we must live and participate in spiritual things, that is, things that He has directed.

P. O. Box 358; Obion, TN 38204

SHARING CHRIST WITH OTHERS
If you don’t have the ability or the confidence to talk to someone about Christ, then try to share your faith with these suggestions:

1. Put a tract into the envelope when paying bills by mail.
2. Instead of sending general cards (birthday, get well, anniversary, etc.), send cards with a Scripture reference.
3. Leave gospel tracts with your tips at restaurants (Be sure you have conducted yourself in a Christian manner as a customer!).
4. Invite the children of your neighborhood into your home to watch a Christian video.
5. Give Christian books as gifts or awards.
6. Carry a supply of information regarding the church with you to leave in bathrooms, etc.
7. Invite non-churchgoing friends to social activities.
8. Put a “flyer” about gospel meetings, lectureships, etc., on car windshields.
9. Refer your friends who are having marital or family problems to Christian counseling.
10. Contribute Christian books and videos to your local public library and church library.
11. Put a Christian message on your telephone answering machine.
12. Have a fellowship in your home and invite Christians and non-Christians to your home.
13. Send a note through the mail to invite your friends to church services or church lectureship.
14. During the week while out driving with a friend, pay the church building a visit, which breaks down fear of the unknown and “strangeness.”

CHRIST AND CHANGE

Al Brown

We live in a constantly changing world. Man has made marvelous progress in so many areas. He has significantly changed his environment. This is in keeping with the Lord’s command to have dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). In the process, he has also lost respect for the God who endowed him with this ability and provided the raw material with which he could work. Hence, he has no great purpose to which these wonderful advances can be employed beyond supplying creature comforts.

Regardless of the extent to which his environment may have changed, man’s nature has remained constant through the centuries. He has the same selfishness, lust, greed, and pride that have always cursed humanity. It never seems to occur to him that these things disrupt and splinter society. They destroy individual peace and happiness. Affluence, technological advance, or education cannot control or supplant them.

Man has always had the potential to be pure...
and selfless, righteous and humble even if these qualities seem to be in short supply. His basic physical requirements have remained constant. He needs these, but if he is to have a full and happy life, something more is necessary. It is precisely in this area—the quality of life—that affluence, technological advance, and an education in which God is ignored are incapable of providing what he needs most. These things supply fleshly desires, but they offer nothing that will ennoble the soul, fulfill its longings, enrich a person’s life, or strengthen his moral fiber.

Man needs some one to love and some one to love him. A set of values by which to live and a challenge for which to live are also necessary. No one is more unhappy than the person who has everything with which to live but nothing for which to live. He is in dire need of guidance (Jer. 10:23). He may control his many inventions, but, spiritually, he cannot direct himself. He needs encouragement and help because of weakness; sympathy and compassion, for no one is a stranger to grief. Man must have someone to worship. If he does not worship the true God, he will deify things, money, pleasure, power, or even himself. His sins need to be forgiven (Rom. 3:23). He needs hope, for he will surely die (Heb. 9:27).

In a world of constant flux, man desperately needs something permanent to which he can anchor his life. This cannot be found in material surroundings or goals. Concrete and steel, test tubes and flights to the planets, stock portfolios and bank accounts cannot supply food for his starving spirit. They cannot provide contentment for his restless soul, or peace to calm his contentious nature.

These treasures are found only in God. The psalmist wrote: “Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; And the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end” (Psa. 102:25-27).

Only God provides these intangible, but surpassingly valuable necessities. In the home and the church of Christ, as God designed them, man can love and be loved (Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Eph. 5:25-33). In Christ, he is given meaningful values by which to live and a supreme challenge for which to live (2 Cor. 3:18 Eph. 4:13; Col. 3:1-10). Only Christ can free him from sin and guilt (Tit. 2:11-14). God’s Word furnishes divine wisdom for life’s vexing problems (Jam. 1:5; Psa. 119:98-100). It gives guidance and direction for abundant living (John 6:63; 10:10). It is the source of true comfort, consolation, and peace for life’s darkest moments (Mat. 11:28-30; John 1:25f). It is the only basis of faith (Rom. 10:17; 1 John 5:4) and hope (Rom. 8:24f) which is the very fiber of life. Belief in and worship of God stimulates the worshippers to worthwhile, lasting activity and elevates the soul (Heb. 10:24).

Today, the capability of technology to destroy everything on the planet makes it more imperative than ever for men to find a way to live in peace. In his selfishness, greed, and lust for power, he is not only making a chaos of our world, but plunging himself headlong toward a terrible, fiery destiny. The world never needed Christ more than it does right now. He alone has the only workable plan for this world and salvation in the one to come.

How comforting it is to know that no matter what changes occur, how much chaos is created in world affairs, how often the crises may come or how deep they may be, Christ is constant and unchanging. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). Regardless of how weak the body may be, what man may do to it, or how close death may be, the Christian can say, “It is well with my soul” (Heb. 13:5ff)!

P.O. Box 39; Spring, TX 77383
SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, and Marilyn Hall. Martha Wilcoxson is in the Navy Hospital, room 4040.

SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Eddie McLeod and his family in the death of his grandmother, Emma Shaffer, on December 5, 1996. Please keep them in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION

December 18, 1996
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley
December 25, 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Jeremy Caine

MARK THESE DATES

December 15, 1996–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.
December 22, 1996–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED

Canned Meat

SINGLE FILE

It’s unbelievable, but if all the unsaved people in the world were to line up single file at your front door, the line would reach around the world 30 times. And horror of horrors! This line would grow by twenty miles each day! If you were to drive 50 miles an hour for 10 hours a day, it would take you 4 years and 40 days to get to the end of this line of lost souls. And by then it would have grown by 30,000 miles. What are you doing about it!

*Author Unknown*
ACCEP'TING PEOPLE INTO THE LORD’S CHURCH ON THEIR DENOMINATIONAL BAPTISM!

Ronald Gilbert

If denominational baptism is valid then one can be taught a lie, obey the lie, and still be saved. In order to be made free, one must know the truth (John 8:32). Denominational-ism teaches error about salvation and the church. How can one hear a lie, believe a lie, obey a lie, and be a part of the true church, the saved body?

There are some who say only God knows all things and we therefore cannot know who is saved and who is lost. One does not have to know everything to know some things. One can know the will of God on the topic of salvation. One can know, based on God’s Word, whether or not he has obeyed the Gospel of Christ. Jesus said in John 7:17 that we can know of the doctrine. In John 8:32, we learn not only can we know the truth but that we must know it in order to be saved. From a study of God’s Word we learn that scriptural baptism removes one’s sins and places a person in Christ where all spiritual blessings are found (Acts 2:47; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 1:3).

Accepting people on their denominational baptism is no new thing. This has been discussed and even practiced by some for hundreds of years. If one can be accepted into the Lord’s church on denominational baptism, then denomi-
national baptism is valid. If denominational baptism is valid then the following things would also be true.

One, if denominational baptism is valid then one can be taught a lie, obey the lie, and still be saved. In order to be made free, one must know the truth (John 8:32). Denominationalism teaches error about salvation and the church. How can one hear a lie, believe a lie, obey a lie, and be a part of the true church, the saved body?

Two, if denominational baptism is valid then there are many ways to the Lord and not just one way. In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus spoke of two ways: the broad way and the narrow way. Jesus did not authorize denominational-ism. If one can come to the Lord through a man-made way, the Bible contradicts itself. In John 14:6 Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” In Ephesians 4:4 Paul talked about the one faith and the one body. Does the one body include denominations?

Three, if denominational baptism is valid then there are at least some saved people outside the Lord’s church. There can be erring Christians within the body of Christ but there can be no saved people outside the body or the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). Salvation is a spiritual blessing and the Bible says that all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). The same process that makes one a Christian adds him to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:47).

In Acts 19 we read of twelve men who had been baptized unto John’s baptism. After these men were taught the gospel of Christ, they were baptized into Christ. Some today contend that if a person is baptized for “a scriptural reason” then his baptism is valid. For example, some would say that if a man was baptized understanding at that time that it was the Lord’s will for him to be baptized, that would be good enough. Still others have contended that if a man understands that baptism is for the remission of sins that is all he needs to know and his baptism is valid. These arguments, however, will not hold up when they are viewed in the light of God’s Word. In Mark 1:4 we are told concerning John’s baptism, “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Why, then, were these twelve men of Acts 19 baptized again? They understood at the time of their baptism they were doing the will of God. John’s baptism was for the remission of sins. The baptism of John was not the baptism of the great commission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). At one time John’s baptism was approved by God, having heaven’s authority. (But not since Pentecost.) Acts 19:4 says that they were taught to believe on Jesus Christ. Many of our brethren today would have accepted these twelve men into fellowship on their former baptism, but not Paul. In Ephesians 4:5 Paul mentioned the one Lord, one faith and one baptism. Denominational baptism, on the other hand, has never had God’s approval and never will (Mark 7:7).

If Paul would not accept those in Acts 19 on their baptism, by what authority today could one be accepted into fellowship on their denominational baptism?

The only valid baptism today is the one baptism of Ephesians 4, that is, the baptism of the Great Commission. Denominational baptism is not the baptism of the Great Commission. Therefore, one cannot be accepted into the Lord’s church on his denominational baptism.

P.O. Box 865; Cookeville, TN 38503

LAWS OF PARDON

Mel Futrell

We consider it axiomatic that all understand that man is in need of pardon (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom.
To deny such would be to deceive ourselves, void the truth, and make GOD a liar (1 John 1:7-10). The above being true we proceed to this question: What is pardon and how is it obtained? This would seem to me to be not only a fair question but also a relevant one. Wester’s Unabridged Dictionary defines pardon as, “2. Law. a. A release from the penalty of an offense; a remission of penalty. 3. forgiveness of an offense or offender. 6. to release (a person) from liability for an offense” (Unabridged, 1992, p. 1048).

Young Analytical Concordance to the Bible says of the word Pardon, “to pass over, forgive” (p. 730, n.d.). Now, I can’t imagine anyone having any problem having any problem understanding such a basic word and its application in our Christian lives. But it is only right that we should appeal to the Scriptures for the specifics of how this pardon is obtained.

Brethren, it won’t do to deny that there is a law of pardon. But more to the point, are there two laws of pardon? This question needs to be asked if we’re going to determine biblically how pardon is obtained. In his 1943 debate with C. J. Weaver, over some of the differences between the church of Christ and the Church of God (Holiness), Gus Nichols made this statement in his third negative:

He denied that there are two laws of pardon—one for the alien sinner, and another for the erring child of GOD. But let him explain why Peter told aliens to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, in Acts 2:38, then told a baptized man who later sinned, to repent and pray for pardon? (Acts 8:18-22). In fact, our friend says there is no “law of pardon.” Paul says “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free” (Rom. 8:2). That is the trouble with my friend’s plan. You must seek and experiment and grope your way in the dark trying to be saved. Thee is no law, no regulation, or system about it. But such is not GOD’s way (Nichols-Weaver Debate, Gospel Advocate Co., 1944, p. 46).

There you have it brethren, a clear and concise statement representing the Bible truth for two laws of pardon, one for the alien sinner and another for the erring child of GOD. Let’s take another look at these two laws.

The first law of pardon pertains to those outside of Christ. Compare Peter’s wording of it in Acts 2:38 with his wording in Acts 3:19.

Repen—Be baptized—For remission of sins
Repen—Be converted—Sins be blotted out

If it is the case that this represents GOD’s pattern for pardon to the alien sinner, and we certainly believe it does, what about those who reject this pattern?

Now, the second law of pardon pertains to those who are in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:10) and I would like for you to consider these questions from the pen of brother Robert Taylor as they relate to this matter of pardon.

Is there no pattern in GOD’s second law of pardon as set forth in Acts 8:22 and later alluded to in James 5:16 and 1 John 1:9? Could Simon have established his own subjective manner of return and thus rejected Peter’s objective directives of walking the route of repentance and prayer? Would he have been condemned had he rejected Peter’s inspired counsel to him? (“Restoration Movement-Valid Today?,” In Music in New Testament Worship, Southwest Publications, 1995, p. 165).

Surely it is evident to all that our GOD has made pardon available to all, both the alien and the erring. May we ever be wise enough to avail ourselves of it. With the writer of the song we concur, “To GOD be the glory, great things he hath done.”

450 Harleston Road Irmo, SC 29063
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Han, and Martha Wilcoxson. Ida Williams is in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 451.

RESTORED
Robert Fletcher was restored on December 15, 1996. Please keep him in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
December 25, 1996
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Jeremy Caine
January 1, 1997
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Harold Cozad

MARK THESE DATES
January 19, 1997—Monthly Bible Bowl, 2:00 P.M., at Bellview. Study James 4-First Peter 3.
December 22, 1996—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., at the building.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

“And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.”
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
5:00 P.M. LADIES' BIBLE CLASS

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

“HE THAT HATH MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY”
Jeremiah 3:28

Tim Smith

God, through the weeping prophet, said, “I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:25-29). It would seem as though they had a problem with preachers in those days who would preach whatever pleased themselves and those who listened to them. It would seem also that they were condemned in no uncertain terms for their dereliction of duty. It would seem also that they were shown the folly of trying to seek authority for matters of spiritual concern from any source shy of the Word of God. Sadly, it would seem that we have the same problem today.

I have given many hours of thought to why some preachers seem content to “evacuate” the safe ground of Scriptures to appease those dull of hearing. Why would any one presume to speak in the name of the Lord when the message they are
bringing has no authority from the Lord? We have grown accustomed to this practice in the denominational world, and that is bad enough. But now we have it even in our pulpits. Pulpits that were once filled with real gospel preaching are now, in many places, filled by those who could not even open the door for the ones holding candles for bygone preachers. People say that it is because of the difference in the generations that “old fashioned” preaching simply won’t do. Some say that a “modern world” needs a “modern gospel.” If they would say it that plainly from their pulpits we would not have half of the problems with them that we do, for then we could mark and avoid them and be on our way. But they do not say it like that, they just write their sermons and articles with that rule guiding them. This way, you see, those among the congregations who would oppose outright evacuation of the “Old Paths” might not realize that they have been evacuated until a generation has arisen who like the new ways well enough to refuse to give them up without a fight. Those who have adopted the idea that we can speak anything that pleases our audience as though it were the will of God have no place in the pulpit.

Paul’s attitude of gospel preaching and that of many in our day differ greatly. Paul said, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Why cannot some just do what Paul said? It is not hard to open the Bible and preach what is written there. Some may fear their position being taken from them and therefore not preach it like it ought to be preached, but many are going much further than this. They seem to have a vendetta against the truth, and they seem bent on going as far from it as they possibly can. One would think that the farther from the truth the preacher got the greater the rebellion would be among the people, but hear again Paul, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). People who are regularly subjected to the modern errors are apt to accept them as truth in time.

We need elders and concerned Christians to rise up and put a stop to these “Johnny-come-lately” preachers before they do any more harm to the body of Christ in our nation. The Lord’s church is just that, the Lord’s church. It belongs to Him, and we should suffer no message to be preached that is not His message. Elders, you have the ability to stop the mouths of the gain-sayers who would lead your people astray by simply not allowing them to preach there. Members, go to your elders and ask that they stop the mouths of them who will not abide by the Lord’s rule. The proverbial “Ship of Zion” is afloat today, not because someone in the past compromised controversial issues; but because they stood their ground “like a tree planted by rivers of water.” Let us take that stand. Let us “Preach the Word...”

7272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

IS APPLAUSE APPROPRIATE IN WORSHIP?

Bill Lockwood

The following remarks I recently found in a Lutheran publication, written by John Brug, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Though Brug believes that the evidence points to the conclusion that applause is ultimately a matter of cultural judgment, it cannot be successfully denied by those who claim to do Bible things in Bible ways that the following reasons ought to eliminate applause altogether.

First, Brug points out that “we have traditionally regarded applause as the appropriate response to a performance, which may be judged by our subjective opinion, not to the preaching of God’s Word, which is not subject to our judgment. We don’t customarily applaud the condemnation heaped on us by God’s law...we don’t
cheer...or give a standing ovation to the Lord’s supper, though we fully approve of their content. We don’t usually interrupt the sermon with applause when we like its content or style.”

Second, Brug asks why we don’t applaud the “biting condemnations of God’s law” when they are preached? These are as much of God’s Word which should “celebrated” as the rest. The absence of cheering when hearing criticisms from God indicates that the “cultural excuse” offered for cheering—that it celebrates God’s Word—is merely an afterthought. People have no real reason for clapping in worship other than that they are being pushed around by cultural currents which turns worship into performance-oriented acting instead of bowing before God’s throne.

Third, clapping or cheering indicates that worship has indeed turned into “drama performances” designed to stimulate audiences rather than sincerely offering to God our hearts. “If the music and drama in the church are intended to present the Word rather than perform a show, it would seem most appropriate that we respond to them as we would to any other presentation of the Gospel...just as wedding bulletins often ask guest to refrain from flash photography to preserve an atmosphere of worship.” The fact is, applause is usually offered during certain selections of worship that more nearly lend themselves to performance perversions than devotion. This alone indicates that cheering, since it is not offered during “all” the acts of worship, is a cultural peculiarity that only now scrambles for justification.

Fourth, “another consideration is that people who experience the concert or drama as worship and as an occasion for meditation, consider applause a disruption of the mood and spirit of worship. A glorious anthem takes our minds soaring to a contemplation of heaven, but jarring applause brings us crashing down to the earth.”

Fifth, “mingling worship and applause also creates practical difficulties. If worship is treated like performance,” why do we “withhold applause when beautiful truths of the

Word are presented in less than elegant style or when the content doesn’t appeal to” us? Once more, this question, considered rightly, shows that the real purpose of applause is to uphold the messenger of the “people’s choice”—not God’s Word. When preachers succumb to the “people’s choice” award instead of the approval of God, there is something certainly gone awry. “We teach [preachers] that the goal of good preaching is to direct attention and honor to the message, not to the human messenger or his eloquence.”

Sixth, a most important consideration is that applause is without New Testament authority. Christians ought to abstain from applause in worship.

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Dub McClish

The average sermon contains 5,000 words. Most preachers deliver at least 90 sermons per year. This totals 450,000 words per year. An average full-length novel contains 50,000 words, so this means that a preacher is producing the equivalent of nine full-length novels each year. Whew! No wonder I feel tired! In twenty years a preacher produces the equivalent of 180 full-length novels. In fifty years that would be a whopping 450!

How many authors do you suppose could produce nine full novels each year for twenty (or forty) years, using the same basic theme and “plot” without sinking to the depths of repetition and boredom even if he could do it at all? Can you imagine the study, preparation, research, time and effort that would go into such a project? Neither can I! but it does answer a question that sometimes bemuses brethren concerning what preachers do. One thing for sure, preaching is no place for the lazy, unmotivated person who is looking for a soft way to make a living.

908 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Mary Muldoon, Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, and Martha Wilcoxson

READING/INVITATION
January 1, 1997
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Harold Cozad

January 5, 1997
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
January 19, 1997-Monthly Bible Bowl, at Bellview, at 2:00 P.M. Study James 4-5 and 1 Peter 1-3.

PANTRY FOOD NEEDED
Canned Meat

JOHN 12:44-50
“Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

MEETING TIMES
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10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
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WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

“HE THAT HATH MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY”
Jeremiah 3:28
Tim Smith
God, through the weeping prophet, said, “I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?” saith the L ORD. “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the L ORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:25-29). It would seem as though they had a problem with preachers in those days who would preach whatever pleased themselves and those who listened to them. It would seem also that they were condemned in no uncertain terms for their releriction of duty. It would seem also that they were shown the folly of trying to seek authority for matters of spiritual concern from any source shy of the Word of God. Sadly, it would seem that we have the same problem today.

I have given many hours of thought to why some preachers seem content to “evacuate” the safe ground of Scriptures to appease those dull of hearing. Why would any one presume to speak in the name of the Lord when the message they are